



# CASTOR CANADENSIS

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

FALL 2018

## Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures

BY, CLAY LANDRY

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION: *THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE JOURNAL*, VOLUME 2, 2008

ALL LEDGER AND JOURNAL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE MISSOURI HISTORY MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS

*Contemporary business records list items and prices for outfitting Rocky Mountain trapping enterprises of the early 1820s.*

A recent trend at national and local historic sites and museums that are relevant to the early nineteenth-century Rocky Mountain fur trade is to utilize interpretive techniques and living history demonstrations to portray the historic events and personages pertinent to each site. This methodology has resulted in a renewed emphasis on proper use, identification and understanding of the material culture items germane to certain locales and specific to the historical period known as the Rocky Mountain fur trade. The educational concept of teaching history by learning about the material culture items that were used to “make” history seems to be enjoying a widespread acceptance. This philosophy is based on the notion that grasping an understanding of the challenges endured in “everyday” life creates a lasting appreciation and unique understanding of the events, places and persons who created the history of the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

In the early 1820s loosely organized groups of fur trappers, referred to as “trapping brigades,” traveled throughout the Rocky Mountain region in search of prime beaver. These brigades originated from areas far removed from the “trapping grounds,” such as the British-owned fur trade posts of the Pacific Northwest, Santa Fe and the settlements of the Spanish Southwest or the American gateway city of St. Louis, Missouri. The nearest major supply point for these men was some 1500 to 2000 miles distant. This meant that most trapping groups had to carry with them, on the backs of pack horses or mules, all necessary replacement supplies, tools and trade goods. In order to warehouse these extra goods, while the trappers were scattered throughout the mountains in their quest for beaver, the brigade Captain would order a “deposit” made.

This consisted of digging a cave-like hole in the bank of some ravine or stream, placing the goods inside, carefully replacing the soil, and throwing the excess dirt in the stream, so as to not allow the disturbed soil to give away the location. These deposits of goods and equipment were commonly known among the mountaineers by the French term “cache,” which means “hidden reserve.”<sup>1</sup> In the perilous profession of the Rocky Mountain trapper, the ability to tap these supplies for replacement items such as gun parts, powder, shot, trap parts and knives, could often determine the success or failure of the trapping venture or, in the extreme, mean the difference between survival and death.

### Historical Setting

In 1822, William Ashley and Andrew Henry formed a partnership to enter the upper Missouri River fur trade. By 1824, after several disasters, Andrew Henry left the fur trade

### Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Featured Article .....	1-12
Newsletter Guidelines.....	12
Wall and Interactive Website Maps .....	12
Editor's Note .....	13
President's Message .....	14
Upcoming Events .....	14
Archives Corner:	
The Dr. TGV Simons Family in Indiana, Part II.....	15-16
Members' Section: New Members, Donor List, JSS Officers, Relatives of JSS .....	17

Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith

163.

St. Louis Octobre 1825

Divers & Marchandises

152					
78	James Catham	Montant		3053	20
18		Pour divers Marchandises & acceptances d'après Comptes & Vous Tenir à Regarder par le Département Sauvage		1000	
114	W. H. Ashley				
19	42	Paires Tera Chaines	62 $\frac{1}{2}$	26	25
20	11	Baile Sugar No 940	15	122	20
		4 Baile	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	50
	3	Cards spurs	300	9	
	4	" ditto	362 $\frac{1}{2}$	14	50
25	1	pair Feu pumps		2	
	7	Leather & Cords	75	5	25
	1	Small trunk		2	75
28	18	Rifles	16	288	
29	4	Saddles	350	14	
	15	3/4 p. 3/4 p. French Blankets	810	120	
					605.40
31	G. S. Chouteau				
22	1	Gallon de Rhum			2.25
142	P. J. Chouteau				
22	14	de Sucre		2	
	2	pair Bas de Laine		1	50
	2	Shawls de Cotton		3	
25	4	3/4 p. Casimere	100	4	50
		Toile, Ser & Boutons		1	
		Shawls pour doublers & PADDING	62 $\frac{1}{2}$		12.60
144	U. S. Indian department				
27	12	pair 3/4 p. N. W. Blankets	850	102	
9 Nov?	10	" ditto	850	85	
	2	" 2 1/2 "		3	50
10	4	Prap Kittles 18"	100	18	
	2	Ten d"	87 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	75
	1	pair Mittens			75
	1	Woolen Caps 3/4 Col. Lewis			50
24	1	ft Shaving Wooded Binding			25
30	3	3/4 p. Scarlet Cloth to Maj. Edwards			207.75
26	Charles Bosseron				
28	1	Camlet Black			18
72	Sos. Navales	A compte Nouveau			
28	1	Saddles			3.75
27	Louison Pinconneau				
28	2	Chemises de Cotton			1.50

Papers from the Bernard Pratte and Company of St. Louis show William Ashley's purchases for October 1825, probably outfitting Jedediah Smith's next trip west.



**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

nd Jedediah Smith became Ashley's partner. That same year, their trapping brigades pushed into the fur-rich streams of the upper Green River. In July of 1825, Ashley arrived in the mountains with a pack train of goods to replenish the trappers' supplies, and the first Rocky Mountain rendezvous was held on the Henry's Fork of the Green River. This new summer rendezvous supply system allowed trappers to stay in the mountains on a year-round basis.

Records that provide information on the goods, equipment and supplies used by these trapping parties include Harrison Rodgers' daybook and journal, Jedediah Smith's journal, and the William H. Ashley trade ledgers and journal. This material culture study will draw from these documents to describe and explain many important items stored in the caches made by these parties and used to outfit the Rocky Mountain trapping enterprises of the early 1820s.

**William H. Ashley records**

One of the earliest extant written records to describe the goods purchased by trappers while in the field is the journal that William Ashley used to record the transactions of the first rendezvous. The format of this book is the combination of a diary-styled narrative and an accounting ledger that itemizes the furs received and goods sold to various individuals or groups of trappers. The original Ashley journal is kept in the archives of the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>2</sup> The Ashley narrative and ledger accounts of the first rendezvous have also been published in Dale Morgan's book, *The West of William Ashley*.<sup>3</sup>

On April 29, 1825 Ashley's journal entry describes the location and the property that was cached on a stream referred to as "Randavouze creek." This deposit contained

bags of coffee, packs of powder, pounds of lead, horse shoes, large and small beads, packs of sugar, a pack cloth containing some knives, a pack of seven dozen knives and an item called "hams goods."<sup>4</sup> This was probably a pack of goods specifically destined for Zachariah Ham, one of the trapping brigade leaders. Labeled "Cash No. 2," Ashley's journal records that on May 18, "we made a cache and deposited the greater part of my goods."<sup>5</sup> This second cache contained a larger variety of goods than the deposit made earlier in April, and, as shown by the entries in Ashley's account book, most of these items would later be purchased by the trappers at the July rendezvous.

The men who are listed in the Ashley account book reflect three different origins. Some of the trappers at the first rendezvous were a contingent of Hudson's Bay Company men who had collectively "deserted" from the Peter Skene Odgen 1825 trapping brigade in order to join with the better-paying American venture.<sup>6</sup> Men from this group, who made purchases from Ashley, include "Purdum" (Brazill Prudhomme), "J.B Finly" (Jacques B. Finlay), "Montour"



**Figure 1: Ashley Account Book**

Mr. Gadan		138-Due \$86.56
46 lbs. Beaver		
Sugar & Coffee		7.75
3 Knives		3
2 lbs Beads		10
doz. Rings		2
½ doz. all		1
Yd cloth		6
doz. flints		1
Tobacco		7.25
Powder & Lead		12.50
fire steel		50.50
		1
J B Finly		58.50
13 lbs Beaver		49
2 Knives		7.50
Sugar & coffee		7.50
2 ½ lbs Beads	5	7.50
1 doz. Rings		2
2 yds. Ribbon		1
Comb		.50
Buttons		1
Scarlett		1
powder & lead		12.50
		43.50

A version of this paper was presented at the California History Institute and the Jedediah Smith Society, University of Pacific, Stockton, California in 1999.

### Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures

(Nicholas Montour), Alexander Carson, Pierre Tivanitagon, "Lolo" (Charles Loyer), John B. Alessa, Sanicce Lardemarke, Joseph Anance, John Gray and "Godan" (Thyery Goddin).<sup>7</sup> There is also a ledger page that appears to consolidate the purchases of Etienne Provost and three of his trappers. Provost and his thirteen men had migrated into the Green River country from the Spanish village of Taos, encountered Ashley on the Duchesne River and agreed to return with him to the rendezvous site on Henry's Fork.<sup>8</sup> The rest of the names in the Ashley ledger are men who were part of Ashley's own trapping party, including Ephraim Logan, David Cunningham, Johnson Gardner, Caleb Greenwood, William Bell, Ezekiel Able, Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, Stephen Terry, Robert Nutt, Thomas Virgil (Virgin), Isaac Gilbreth, Thomas Eddie, Davey Jackson, James Clyman, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Zachariah Ham, A. Goodridge and a man referred to as "Williams."

The items that the HBC deserters purchased are typified by goods charged to "Godan" (Thyery Goddin) and "J. B. Finly" (Jacques B. Finlay) (Figure 1). Both men purchased coffee, sugar, knives, yards of ribbon, pounds of beads, powder and lead, a dozen rings, and yards of cloth. Goddin added a dozen flints, ½ dozen awls, tobacco and a fire steel to his list. Finlay also bought buttons and a comb. The price that they received for beaver in order to pay for these goods was three dollars a pound. Items not purchased by these two men yet equally popular among the other former HBC employees were fish hooks and yards of blue and scarlet cloth at six dollars per yard. In somewhat unique purchases, John B. Alessa is recorded buying a "Breach cloth" (breech cloth) for \$2.50 and "Mr. Monteau" (Nicholas Montour) uses his beaver "plews" to buy a pistol for twenty dollars.

Looking ahead to Ashley's return to the mountains in the fall of 1825, some men placed orders for goods. A ledger page entitled "Pierre" (probably refers to Pierre Tivanitagon) contains a list of goods that has no prices and is not written in the normal debit/credit format, causing speculation that it is a request for the listed items. This order included cochineal,<sup>9</sup> sewing silk, small white beads, very small needles, alum, fine cloth, assorted ribbon, a penknife, gallon of rum and thirty pounds of flour. Considering the fact that the men employed in the Hudson's Bay Company trapping brigades were usually accompanied by their Indian wives and families, the request for and purchase of ribbon, yards of cloth, rings, buttons, awls and beads were probably made at the behest of these trappers' wives.<sup>10</sup>

On the ledger page entitled "Mr. E. Provo" (Etienne Provost) is a list of goods purchased and associated prices. This list is organized in column form, with lines drawn, in order to segment parts of the list. In each of these segments a man's name has been entered. The first segment has "self" written

near the middle of a list which contains "3 yds Scarlet, 2 yds Blue Cloth, 10 yds. ribbon, 9 lbs. sugar, and 7 lbs. coffee." This notation meant that Provost had purchased these items for himself. The other three segments of the list have a man's name entered perpendicular to the items purchased. This format indicates that in addition to sugar, coffee, cloth and ribbon, men by the name of Pino, Adams, and LaBontee also made purchases of "1 doz Rings, fish hooks and tobacco." The facing page of the ledger shows that Provost purchased "3 lbs. Beads" for \$9 and "5 lbs. Tobacco" for \$10. All total, Provost and his men end up buying \$153 worth of Ashley's goods and paying for them by a credit for eighty-three pounds of beaver at \$2.50 per pound for a total of \$207.50.

In dealing with his own men William Ashley seems to have had various agreements. Virgil (Virgin), Gilbreth, Greenwood, Logan and Gardner all have accounts which show goods being charged to them, with the price being the same as paid by the former HBC men and the Provost trappers. Still other ledger pages, such as the ones for "Logan & Cunningham" and "Bell & Able," show specific goods listed, but no item prices or totals of charges are included.

Other Ashley men such as Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, James Clyman and Thomas Fitzpatrick are credited in the ledger for large amounts of beaver, however have no entries for goods purchased. The copy of the ledger pages for Jedediah Smith and James Clyman are shown in standard accounting practice format. This means that the "debit" portion of the ledger is the left side of the page, denoted by a "D" or "Dr" and the "credit" ledger is the right hand side of the page, also denoted at the top of the page with a "C" or "Cr." Each man's account takes up half a page, evidently in anticipation of future debits (purchases of goods) and credits (value of furs turned in). For some unexplained reason both men receive no charges for goods but are each credited with pounds of beaver. Surely these mountaineers were in need of some supplies by the time they reached the July 1825 rendezvous?

A further demonstration of the apparent inequality with which Ashley dealt with his men is demonstrated in the price credited to each man for his beaver. One page of the ledger shows "Gilbreth, Vergil and Able" all being credited at three dollars per pound for beaver while the same ledger shows "Nutt, Terry and Eddy" being credited at only two dollars per pound. A possible explanation for these variations may lay in the kind of business arrangement Ashley made with some of his men. According to one of his competitors, Thomas Hempstead, Ashley made an agreement with his men "to have one-half of the fur they made; the company to furnish them with guns, powder, lead, etc."<sup>11</sup> This arrangement would serve to greatly simplify the bookkeeping task and may provide an explanation for the fact that several of the Ashley

**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

**Figure 2: Gardner/Williams Merchandise Order**

Memorandum of goods for Mess. Gardner & Williams  
pr their order (July 1825)

1 doz razors.....	24	24	12 Bolts ribbon .....	3	36
50 3 pt N W. Blanketts .....	9	450	1 pc. Green Flanel .....	1.50	60
25 Kettles .....	14.0		do Red do .....	1.50	60
50 pipes .....	1.75	87	do Yellow.....	1.50	60
50 Coffee .....	1.75	87	2 doz pans.....	18	36
75 Sugar .....	1.00	75	2 doz tin cups.....	9	18
150 Powder .....	1.50	225	20 fusils .....	20	400
200 Lead .....	1.00	200	12 pr. W. shoes.....	3	36
2 doz Bridles.....	36	72	6 do mens .....	4	24
6 doz Knives.....	9	54	10 Gallons rum .....	10	100
1 doz gun Locks.....	8	96	1 doz pomatum pr yd .....	1	6
[deleted: 1/2 doz rifles]			2 doz files asst. ....	1.25	30
500 flour .....	1.00	500	25 Beads asst.....	3	75
20 yd Coth .....	.5	100	1 pc Scarlet yd.....	6	120
20 Soap.....	1.00	20	12 doz flints .....	50	6
2 doz penKnives .....	1.00	24	8 lbs. Vermillion.....	3	6
1 gr Blacksilke HKg .....	2.00	40	2 lbs. Verdegreaase.....	3	24
1 pc Rasha Sheeting.....	1.50	75	1/2 doz shalls .....	6	36
2 doz naped Hats .....	8	192	6 doz Looking glasses .....	6	6
			200 lbs. Tobacco .....	1.25	250
			12 [deleted: chissels]		
			2 doz Sersingles .....	21	



**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

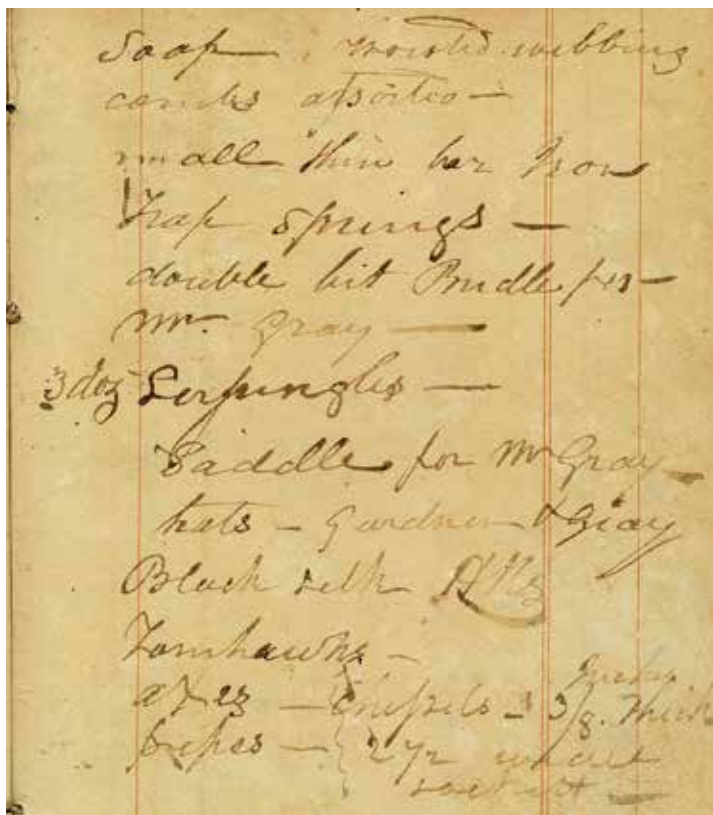
men, such as Smith and Clyman, have no recorded “debits” for goods received, yet show “credits” for beaver turned in. The fact that Ashley recruited and outfitted two or three groups of men from 1822 to 1825 makes it entirely possible that he had negotiated several layers of compensation with the men who were at the 1825 rendezvous.

Most of the interesting information concerning the material culture items used by the mountaineers of the fledgling Ashley-Smith fur company is contained in a list of goods ordered by “free trapper” Johnson Gardner.<sup>12</sup> An entire page of the Ashley ledger is devoted to a list entitled “Memorandum of goods for Mess. Gardner & Williams pr their order” (Figure 2). This itemization provides some insight into both the variety of goods available from the St. Louis merchants in the early nineteenth century and the items that a seasoned mountaineer deemed necessary to carry on his trade. The significant items from the Gardner/Williams memorandum are listed below.

- Camp gear such as tin cups and pans, kettles.
- Razors (straight razors), soap for shaving and washing, and pomatum for dressing the hair. Pomatum is defined by the 1828 Webster’s dictionary as “an unguent or composition used for dressing the hair, sometimes scented with Rosewood.”
- Supplies desired by the trappers’ Indian wives included women’s shoes, shawls, flannel cloth in red, green and yellow, yards of scarlet broad cloth, bolts of ribbon, pounds of beads, “vermillion” (vermilion) and

“verdegreafe” (verdigris). Vermilion, more accurately called sulfur of mercury, was a reddish-colored mineral used by Indian women for facial coloring.<sup>13</sup> Verdigris is green colored copper sulfate used as a green dye.<sup>14</sup>

- The amount of clothing items in these lists are not as plentiful as seen in later rendezvous supply lists and only included men’s shoes, black silk handkerchiefs, and napped hats.<sup>15</sup>
- Other important items listed were three-point-size “N.W.” (Northwest) blankets, both butcher and pen knives, flour, files, flints, tobacco, rum, “Rusha” (Russia) sheeting and fusils. Russia sheeting was a light-weight duck material used in several ways, such as pack covers, tenting, and material in making trousers or pantaloons.<sup>16</sup> “Fusils” or Fusseses were the smooth bore trade guns, using a flintlock ignition. These guns had been an integral part of the fur trade since the mid-1700s.<sup>17</sup>
- A “dozen Bridles and 3 dozen Sersingles” (surcingle) were the only horse tack requested. A surcingle is a large belt-like strap, made from either leather or webbing, used around the saddle as an additional cinch.<sup>18</sup> Surcingles were used on the U.S. dragoon saddle of the early 1800s and may have had application among the trappers to secure the large piece of tanned buffalo hide, or sometimes a blanket, used to cover the seat of their saddles. This piece of robe, called an ephisamore, aphisamore, or ephisamon,<sup>19</sup> added padding to the saddle’s seat and was also used as a ground covering or pallet for sleeping.



**Figure 3: Ashley Account Book**

Soap          Worsted Webbing  
Combs assorted ----  
Small thin bar iron  
Trap Springs  
Double bit Bridle for  
Mr. Gray ----  
3 doz. Sircingles ----  
Saddle for Mr. Gray  
Hats Gardner & Gray  
Black silk HKS  
Tomhaws –  
Axes ---- chisels - 3/8 inch thick  
pipes ---- 272 –(unreadable)

Another page of the William Ashley account book (Figure 3) shows a list that has all the appearances of being another order. Unlike the Gardner “Memorandum,” the goods on this list are not priced. Instead it reads somewhat like a shopping list with “double bit bridle for Mr. Gray,” “Saddle for Mr. Gray” and “hats for Gardner and Gray.” Also itemized

are “3 doz Sircingles” as well as “worsted webbing.” Tomahawks, axes and 3/8-inch-thick chisels, along with trap springs and thin bar iron are some of the hardware items listed. Soap, black silk handkerchiefs, assorted combs, and pipes are the personal-use items requested.

**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

**Figure 4: Transcript of Ashley Purchases from Bernard Pratte & Co., St. Louis, October 1825**

October 12		
42 pairs trace chains.....	62½ .....	26.25
4 Barrels Sugar net 9.40.....	13.....	122.20
4 Barils .....	37½ .....	150
3 Cards Spurs.....	3.00 .....	9—
4 " ditto .....	362 ½ .....	14.40
1 pair fine pumps.....	" .....	2"
4 Leather Cirsangles .....	75 .....	5.25
1 small trunk .....	" .....	2.75
18 Rifles.....	16.....	288.
4 Saddlebags.....	3.30 .....	14 "
15 pr 3pt french Blankets.....	8.00 .....	120.00
		605.45
October 31		
65 beaver traps w/out chains .....	2.75.....	178.75
47 do w/chains.....	3.25.....	152.75
29 do do.....	3 .....	87.-
11 do do .....	2.75.....	30.25
8 dressed deer skins .....	75 .....	6.00
63 do.....	50 .....	31.50
1 pisce Russa sheeting.....		16.-
2 do imitation do .....	14.....	28.-
¾ yd blue cloth.....		1.50
3 " red flannel.....	62½ .....	1.88
3 ½ doz powder horns.....	7.50.....	24.25
		557.88

The "Mr. Gray" mentioned in the Ashley records is the infamous Iroquois John Grey, or "Ignace Hatchiroaquasha." Infamous in the eyes of the Peter Skene Ogden and the Hudson's Bay Company because he, in cooperation with the American free trapper Johnson Gardner, was the leader and instigator of the 1825 desertion in which twenty three men left Ogden's trapping brigade to trade with and trap for Ashley and the Americans. Many of these deserters left with debts owing to the HBC.<sup>20</sup>

William Ashley departed the rendezvous with his furs on the 2nd of July 1825 in the company of twenty of his men. They proceeded to the mouth of the Yellowstone River where they encountered the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition which allowed Ashley to transport his furs down the Missouri to St. Louis via the expedition's three wheel-powered keel boats.<sup>21</sup>

Ashley and Smith arrived in St. Louis on October 2, 1825. Twenty-six days later, Jedediah Smith was headed back to the mountains at the head of a group of seventy men, 160 horses and mules and an outfit valued at \$20,000.<sup>22</sup> The business records of St. Louis merchants Bernard Pratte and Company<sup>23</sup> show purchases on October 12 and October 31, 1825 that appear to be some of the items used to send Smith and his caravan back to the mountains (Figure 4). The October 12 purchases included "trace chains," which

were normally associated with the rear rigging on wagons, however Jedediah Smith's caravan had no wagons. The forty-two pairs of trace chains, eighty-four total, could have been destined to be used as trap chains or some could have been adapted for use on the pack mules. Spurs were sold mounted on "cards" or heavy paper, usually three pair to the card.<sup>24</sup> The "7 cards of spurs, 18 rifles, 15 pairs of 3 point size French blankets, 4 barrels of sugar and 4 leather surcingles" were all items necessary to outfit a caravan headed to the mountains. It is interesting to note that the three-point French blankets cost Ashley eight dollars a pair in St. Louis while the three-point "N.W." blankets listed in Gardner's order, taken at the 1825 rendezvous,

were nine dollars each, or eighteen dollars a pair. The 152 beaver traps, even though a large quantity, at the standard issue of six traps per trapper, were only enough to outfit twenty-five trappers.<sup>25</sup>

Gardner's order had contained "Russa" (Russia) sheeting, so the piece that Ashley bought on October 31, 1825 may have been intended to fill that request. The small amount of blue cloth and red flannel do not seem to go with the other items, which are all fairly large quantities. The fact that Ashley would buy a total of seventy-one "dressed deer skins" from a St. Louis merchant while he had trappers in the field raises several questions. First and foremost, why weren't his trappers in the mountains able to supply Ashley with needed deer hides? Was he buying these dressed hides to have garments made from them? Or were dressed deer hides an important item of trapper re-supply and routinely purchased from the company stores in the early days of the Rocky Mountain fur trade? Harrison Rodgers, the clerk for Jedediah Smith's 1826 expedition to California, also records in his daybook (Figure 7) that several of Smith's men bought dressed deer hides from the company stores. Cumulatively these two records provide a documented pattern of Rocky Mountain trappers purchasing dressed deer hides for personal use.

**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

**Harrison Rodgers' Daybook**

The clerk for the Jedediah Smith trapping brigade, from 1826 until the Umpqua massacre on July 14, 1828, was a Virginian by the name of Harrison Rodgers.<sup>26</sup> In this capacity Rodgers' duties included accounting for the furs received, goods traded to Indians, and the goods purchased or received by the men working in the trapping brigade. Any transaction that affected the financial aspects of the brigade would be recorded. The common practice of the fur companies was to record the daily transactions in what was called a "daybook." This book was more like a daily journal because it listed all the transactions, both credits and debits, that occurred on each day. These daily entries would then be recorded in the company's "general ledger book," which was an alphabetized listing of every person or entity who did business with the company. In the ledger book each man had two pages. The left hand page was the debit or "debts" side listing all of a man's purchases from the company stores, while the page on the right was the credit side and listed a man's earnings such as wages if he was an engagé, or furs sold to the company if he was a "skin" trapper. The entries made on a man's pages in the general ledger summarized his day-by-day trades as recorded in the daybook. This two-book system<sup>27</sup> allowed the clerks to keep precise records of each daily transaction while still being able to monitor a trapper's overall debt situation with the company.

The original Harrison Rodgers daybook is stored in the archives of the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, Missouri<sup>28</sup> and has been published in George Brook's volume entitled *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah Smith*.<sup>29</sup> The Rodgers daybook provides supplemental information about the supplies and gear used by the Ashley-Smith trappers because it begins with an entry dated "August 15, 1826." This is a little over one year after Ashley distributed goods and collected furs at the first Rocky Mountain rendezvous held in July 1825. Due to the fact that Harrison Rodgers' name does not appear in any rosters of

Ashley's men previous to 1826, it is entirely possible that his first trip to the mountains was with Ashley that spring.<sup>30</sup>

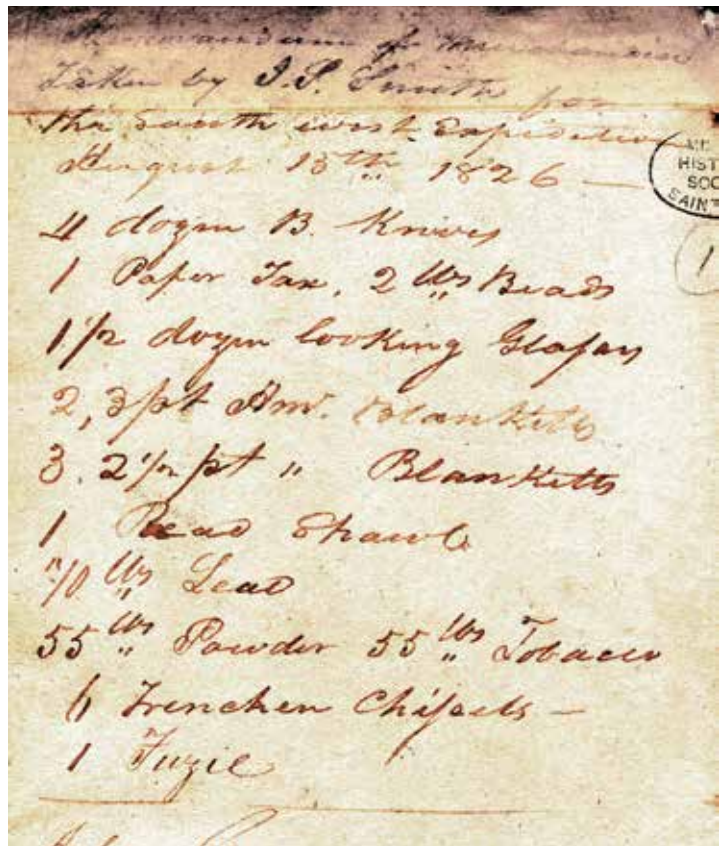
Jedediah Smith wrote in his journal that upon leaving the 1826 rendezvous, he camped three days on the Portneuf River. During this time his party dried three horse loads of meat. He then says that the party started for Cache or Willow Valley because they needed "to procure some things from our cache and to make some repairs on our Guns for at that place we had a set of Black smith tools. Crossing Bear River and making several days at quick traveling I arrived at the Cache on the 15th of August."<sup>31</sup> Smith goes on to say that the first order of business was to burn some coal and erect a forge. The visit to the cache was only three days in duration, as Smith notes, "Took such things as I wanted from the Cache and on the 18th of August I struck over west to the Big Salt Lake."<sup>32</sup>

The first entry in the accounts of Rodgers' daybook, dated August 15, 1826, is a list of supplies and goods entitled "Memorandum of Merchandise Taken By J.S. Smith For the South West Expedition"<sup>33</sup> (Figure 5). The large quantities of lead, powder and tobacco taken from the cache indicate that Smith was planning to be away from his supplies for an extended period. Rodgers' daybook later records Smith's men making purchases of several items that are not listed in this "Memorandum of Merchandise." This might imply that not everything taken from the cache was listed, or it could mean

**Figure 5:  
Harrison Rodgers' Daybook**

Memorandum of Merchandise Taken by J.S. Smith for the Southwest Expedition August 15, 1826

- 4 dozen B. Knives
- 1 Paper Tax. 2 lbs. Beads
- 1 ½ dozen looking glasses
- 2, 3 pt Am. Blanketts
- 3, 2 ½ pt " Blanketts
- 1 Read Shawl
- 70 lbs. Lead
- 55 lbs. Powder 55 lbs. Tobacco
- 6 French chissels
- 1 Fuzil





### Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures

that the brigade already carried with it a quantity of supplies and goods.

The first item of note on this list is the reference to "Am. Blankets," meaning American or domestic-made blankets. Both French and "N.W." (Northwest) blankets were included in the goods purchased by William Ashley from Pratte & Company, but there was no mention of "Am." or American-made blankets. Most of the published information on blanket sources for the North American fur trade indicates that the wool blankets made by the British and French dominated the trade with little mention of domestically manufactured blankets.<sup>34</sup> The "Red" or red shawl seems to be a curious item for Smith to take from the cache.

A half dozen shawls were on Johnson and Williams' order from Ashley at the 1825 rendezvous, however no color was specified. A comment in Smith's journal states that two of the men, "Robeseau and Nipsang," on this expedition had their wives and children with them. Perhaps the extracting of this red shawl from the cache was at the specific request of one of these men's Indian wives. Chisels were also listed in the Ashley ledgers but none were described as "Frenchen." The paper of tacks or "Paper Tax," as spelled by Rodgers, may have been the solid brass tacks that were a very popular decoration item among the Plains Indians during the early nineteenth century. Looking glasses, or mirrors, were an item that was used by the trappers and also for trade with the Indians. Quite often inventory lists such as this one do not differentiate between items destined as Indian trade and the goods used by the trappers. Many of the trade goods, such as tobacco, mirrors, razors, powder and lead, were traded to both the Indians and the trappers. Harrison Rodgers, however, did make several daybook entries specifically describing the goods that were traded to Indians.

During the three days that Smith's trapping brigade of eighteen men were camped at the cache location in Willow Valley, some trappers took advantage of this opportunity to procure several hard-to-get items. Entries in the daybook for August 15 show that Smith and "Furgerson" bought cakes of "shaving soap" for one dollar each, while Laplant and Reubaseau bought "soap" for \$1.50. Three men and Smith also replaced their ramrods by purchasing "wipeing sticks." Coffee, sugar, and tea was purchased by the cup, or portion of a cup, by five of the men. The cache must have contained a keg or two of rum because thirteen of the eighteen trappers incurred charges for rum in amounts varying from a "gill" to a pint. Tobacco was equally popular among the men, selling for \$1.50 a pound. Manuel Eustavan used one beaver skin valued at three dollars to purchase a "Sursingle" and Reubaseau was charged five dollars for "Shewing [shoeing] one horse."

The first transaction recorded in the daybook after leaving

the cache is dated August 22, 1826 and lists goods presented to the "Eutaw" Indians. These items included the usual trade items such as ribbon, awls, arrow points, powder, balls, and tobacco. "One razor, dirk knife and brass handled knife" were the somewhat unique items given to the Utahs. The dirk knife of the early 1820s was more like a small sword than a knife as it could be up to nineteen inches long with a brass hilt and straight handle.<sup>35</sup> A common item of trade in the early nineteenth century was a "cartouche" knife with brass-cast scales<sup>36</sup> on the handle and this style of knife could be the "brass handled knife" that is listed in Smith's goods.

The remaining pages of Rodgers' daybook includes the transactions of Smith's trapping brigade from August 1826 to January 4, 1827. During this time they traveled from the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake to the mission at San Gabriel, California. It should be noted that during this trip there was a constant and steady trade between the men of the brigade and the company stores. Presents made to various Indian tribes were also recorded. Unlike the modern myth of the lone independent trapper braving the wilds and savage Indians, Smith's men traveled as a fairly well-organized group with ready access to many of the hardware items required by their profession.

The items purchased by the mountaineers during this trek provide some interesting information regarding the types of supplies and equipment they carried with them. The fact that the daybook records no rum being purchased by the men since leaving the cache seems to indicate that it was all used up or any extra was left at the cache. Since departing Willow Valley, no food items, including sugar, coffee or tea, are mentioned in the daybook entries.

One of the more interesting items listed in the accounts is a "Beaver chissel & spear," with both Reubaseau and Nipsang purchasing one (Figure 6). Other fur men record the use of a spear with a sawtoothed blade called a beaver spear,<sup>37</sup> but the combination of a spear with a chisel is very unique. It was not uncommon for large slick chisels of this period to be made with a socket in which to fit a handle.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps this implement was made with a spear blade on one end and a socket-fitted chisel on the other end of a long wooden handle. The daybook also shows that both "Wilson" and "Wilkerson" brand butcher knives were carried in the company supplies and sold to the trappers for \$1.50 each. Both brands were manufactured in England and very popular with the fur men.<sup>39</sup>

Black silk handkerchiefs, just as in the Ashley accounts, were a popular item and purchased by several trappers, including the brigade leader Jedediah Smith. No other clothing items appear in the daybook, however many trappers are charged for "Deer skins" and "dressed skins." The price of these skins varies from 75 cents to \$1.25 each. Variations in size were the usual reason for price differences in hides

**Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing  
of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures**

from the same species. Rodgers, however, gives no indication for the price difference in these hides. Some of the most expensive hides purchased were “2 sheep skins for \$2.50” by Rodgers and Arthur Black’s “1 sheep skin for \$1.50.” No indication is given in the daybook nor Rodgers’ or Smith’s journals as to what use the men made of these hides. Two men who bought hides, Reed and Gaiter, were also given a credit for turning in “1 Pair of Mockasons.” They paid \$1.25 each for the deer skins yet only received a credit for 33 and 40 cents per pair of “Mockasons.” The amount of tanned hide required to make an average-sized pair of moccasins is at least a third of a normal-sized deer skin so the material cost would equal Reed and Gaiter’s entire payment. The economics of this situation leads one to speculate that the payment received by these men was for the labor to build a pair of moccasins with the company furnishing the hide. Nathaniel Wyeth’s Fort Hall records show that both trappers and their Indian wives received ledger credits as payment for the labor in making moccasins.<sup>40</sup>

In a group of daybook entries occurring during the month of October 1826, with the heading “Siskadee” (Colorado River),<sup>41</sup> Rodgers records selling “1 3pt Blankett” for fifteen dollars and “2 Skeins silk” for one dollar to Jedediah Smith. Considering the fact that Jedediah Smith’s partner, William

**Figure 6:  
Harrison Rodgers’ Daybook**

Neppasang .....	Dr.	
To 1 Beaver Chissel & spear		
-----		
September 23rd 1826		
Arthur Black.....	Dr.	
To 1 Knife .....		\$1.50
-----		
Robert Evans.....	Dr.	
To 1 Knife .....		\$ 1.50
-----		
Silas Gobel.....	Dr.	
To 1 Knife .....		\$ 1.50



Ashley, paid only eight dollars a “pair” or four dollars each for blankets from his St. Louis suppliers in October of 1825, fifteen dollars for one three-point blanket seems quite exorbitant. Even Ashley’s agreement to supply goods at the 1827 rendezvous for the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette set the price on three-point blankets at only nine dollars each, with green ones bringing eleven. Combining skeins of silk thread and a three-point blanket may have meant that Smith was having a blanket coat or “capote” made for him.

On October 24, while still on the Colorado River, Adam Laplant, listed in Jedediah Smith’s journals as being from Indiana, received a credit for \$2.50 described as “difference in Breach Cloths.” Selling goods or equipment to the company for credit on the books was not an uncommon practice among trappers and the notation “difference” usually meant that one item was traded in on another. In this case Laplant received

a credit, so he traded in a higher-priced breech cloth on a less-costly one. His reasons for making this trade may never be revealed. This transaction, and the John Alessa purchase recorded in the Ashley accounts, does indicate that an item called “breech cloth” was carried in the brigade’s stores and purchased by a non-Indian American trapper. Putting this breech cloth with the “1 pair of sheep skin leggins” (Figure 7) bought



**Figure 7  
Harrison Rodgers’ Daybook**

21 st.		
John Hannah .....	Cr.	
By 1 wiping stick for JS Smith ..		\$1.50
-----		
John Gaitor .....	Dr.	
To 1 pair Sheep Skin leggins..		\$1.50
To 1 Deer skin .....		\$1.25
-----		
James Reed.....	Dr.	
To 1 Deer Skin.....		\$1.25
-----		
Silas Gobel.....	Dr.	
To 2 skins.....		\$ 2.00



## Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures

by John Gaiter, from Kentucky, the previous month, places in the company stores all the items necessary to outfit Euro-American trappers with breech cloth and leggings. Whether this “savage” garment combination was actually worn by the Euro-American trappers is the subject of an unsettled and ongoing debate among many living history and material culture historians.<sup>42</sup>

Once the Smith party arrived at the mission near San Gabriel, California in December 1826, several of the men purchased “1/2 doz finger rings” for one dollar and a pound of “chewing tobacco” for \$1.50. The finger rings were probably gifts for some of the Indian women who resided at the mission. While the accounts section of the Harrison Rodgers daybook concludes at San Gabriel on January 4, 1827, Rodgers faithfully maintained a diary throughout his association with Jed Smith. Harrison Rodgers, along with the entire party, except for Smith and three men, was killed by the Kelawatset Indians in mid-July 1828 while camped on the Umpqua River.<sup>43</sup>

### Conclusions

The study of the supplies, trade goods and equipment of the Ashley-Smith trappers and mountaineers indicates that the fur company's cache and traveling supplies held many items needed by the trappers to survive in the harsh wilderness of the early nineteenth-century Rocky Mountains. Powder, shot, lead, knives, guns, fire steels and flints were always in demand and formed the core of most supply lists. Also a high priority was the gear necessary to carry on the craft of the fur trapper such as traps, trap springs, chisels, horse gear, blankets, axes, horse shoes, and blacksmith tools. Dry goods such as tobacco, various cloths, ribbons, mirrors, threads, beads, awls, vermilion, and finger rings appear on most trade goods lists because these items were inexpensive yet yielded huge profits when traded to the Indians for valuable furs. At the inaugural Rocky Mountain rendezvous, supplied foodstuffs were meager and consisted of coffee, sugar, salt and flour. References to “spirits” at the first rendezvous are surprisingly few, yet rum was stored in Jedediah Smith's Willow Valley cache and purchased from the company by the men in his trapping brigade.

The chronological entries of Harrison Rodgers' daybook demonstrate that Jedediah Smith's trapping brigade took with it a “company store” containing a quantity of basic Indian trade goods and trapper accoutrements. Taken collectively the Harrison Rodgers daybook and Ashley account book illustrate that, no matter what their location in the Rocky Mountains, the trappers of the Ashley/Smith fur company generally had ready access to a wide variety of goods and equipment.

*Clay Landry of Whitehall, Montana, is a material culture expert of the fur trade with numerous articles, seminars and presentations to his credit over the last sixteen years. Some of his major topics include the gear, clothing and food of the trapper, trade goods, and trade ledgers of Fort Hall. He is a member of the American Mountain Men.*

### NOTES

- 1 For first person descriptions of the process of digging and concealing a “cache or deposit” see Warren A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains: A Diary Of Wanderings On The Sources of The Rivers Missouri, Columbia, And Colorado 1830-1835*, (Denver, CO: Old West Publishing Co., 1983), 66, and Zenas Leonard, *Adventures of a Mountain Man: The Narrative of Zenas Leonard* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 158.
- 2 Ashley Papers, Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis, Missouri. Includes the Rodgers Daybook and the William Ashley Journal and Account book.
- 3 Dale Morgan, ed., *The West of William H. Ashley, 1822 to 1838* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1964), 118-130.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 112.
- 6 Peter Skene Ogden, ed. by David E. Miller, “Peter Skene Ogden's Journal of His Expedition to Utah, 1825,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 20, April 1952, 160. Also see Dale Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West, 1953* (reprint Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 150-151.
- 7 William H. Ashley Journal, in the Ashley Papers, Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis, MO.
- 8 Morgan, ed. *The West of William H. Ashley, 1822 to 1838*, 283.
- 9 A crimson dye derived from a small red insect.
- 10 Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Northwest*, (London: 2 Vols, 1855), Republished, Kenneth Spaulding ed., (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 99.
- 11 Letter from Thomas Hempstead dated April 3, 1822, published in Morgan, ed. *The West of William H. Ashley, 1822 to 1838*, 3.
- 12 Leroy Hafen, ed. *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, 10 Vols. (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1965-72) Vol. 2, 157-159.
- 13 Carolyn Gilman, *Where Two Worlds Meet*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1982), 33.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Both napped and un-napped hats appear in the inventories and trading ledgers of the Rocky Mountain Fur companies. Napped means a fabric with a fuzzy or downy appearance. See Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America, 1650-1870*, (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), 228.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 James A. Hanson, “British Indian Fusees,” *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly*, 33:4 (Winter 1997), 7-13. and Carl P. Russell, *Guns on the Early Frontiers*, 1957, (reprint Barnes and Noble Books. New York, 1996), 103-105.
- 18 Randy Steffan, *The Horse Soldier*, Vol. 1. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 13.



## Trappers' Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures

- 19 For different spellings of the word see Osborne Russell, *Journal Of A Trapper*, 1955, (reprint, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 82; William Drummond Stewart, *Edward Warren*, (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1986), 426; Warren Angus Ferris, *Life In The Rocky Mountains*, 198.
- 20 William Kittson, ed. by David E. Miller, "William Kittson's Journal Covering Peter Skene Ogden's 1824-1825 Snake Country Expedition," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 22, no. 2 (1954), 149-151.
- 21 Morgan, ed. *The West of William H. Ashley, 1822 to 1838*, 113.
- 22 Ibid., 176.
- 23 American Fur Company Fur Trade Ledgers, 1802-1871. 74 Vols. Microfilm. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society. Volume M, 163.
- 24 Charles E. Hanson, Jr., "Trade Goods for Rendezvous," *Book of Buckskinning V*, (Texarkana, TX: Rebel Publishing Co., 1989), 78.
- 25 Osborne Russell, ed. by Aubrey Haines, *Journal of a Trapper*, (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1969). 82.
- 26 George R. Brooks, ed., *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith, His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827, and Harrison G. Rodgers' Daybook*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 38.
- 27 For more detail on this accounting system see Clay Landry, "Rolling A Stone Into the Garden: The History and Ledgers of Fort Hall, 1834-1837," presented at the Fur Trade Symposium, Pinedale, WY, 1997.
- 28 Ashley Papers, Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis, Missouri. Includes the Harrison Daybook and the William Ashley Journal and Account book.
- 29 Brooks, *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith*, 40.
- 30 Morgan, ed. *The West of William H. Ashley, 1822 to 1838*.
- 31 Ibid., 40.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Harrison Rodgers' Daybook, Missouri Historical Society.
- 34 Charles E. Hanson, Jr., "Some Additional Notes on Trade Blankets," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly*, 24, no. 1 (Winter, 1988), 5-11.
- 35 George Neuman and Frank Kravic, *Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, (Texarkana, TX: Rebel Publishing Co., 1989), 98-99.
- 36 James A. Hanson, *Fur Trade Cutlery Sketchbook*, (Crawford, NE: The Fur Press. 1994), 12.
- 37 References to trappers using spears can be found in Gilman, 71 and Carl P. Russell, *Traps, and Tools of the Mountain Men*, (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 320.
- 38 Eric Sloane, *Museum of Early American Tools*, 1964, (reprint, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), 52.
- 39 James A. Hanson, *Fur Trade Cutlery Sketchbook*, 18.
- 40 Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. Fort Hall Accounts, 1834-1837, 3 Vols, Microfilm, Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society.
- 41 Smith records in his journal that he and the men encounter "the Colorado (river) of the west, which in the Mountains we call the seetes-kee-der," in Brooks, *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith*, 66.
- 42 Clay Landry, "Going Indian: The Use of Leggings and Breech Clout by the Euro-American Trapper of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade," Unpublished MS, 1993.
- 43 Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*, 268-270.

### 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 Kevin Kucera at [kckucera@msn.com](mailto:kckucera@msn.com)
2. Submit in MS Word.
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.

**Please remember to go to our website: [www.JedediahSmithSociety.org](http://www.JedediahSmithSociety.org)  
to check out the interactive maps that have been created by our map team. They're unbelievable!**

**Also please consider purchasing a map for your wall.**

They come in 2 sizes: 24" x 36" and 16" x 20". You may order the historic style or one with modern highways added. You will find the order sheet on-line with instructions.

## Editor's Note

### From the *Castor* Editor - Kevin Kucera



Our feature article, *Trappers Cache: Trade Goods, Equipment and Clothing of the William Ashley and Jedediah Smith Trapping Ventures*, by Clay Landry, is a master work on the material trade goods used in the early fur trade. With much gratitude we sincerely thank Clay Landry, Scott Walker, Clint Gilchrist, The Museum of the Mountain Man, and The Missouri Historical Society for the opportunity to reprint in full this great article.

The business arrangements documented in this article alone raise several questions including the business practices of Ashley and Smith. For example, selling alcohol and luxury items (at great profit) to a captive work force makes for ill will and possible conflict. “Working for the company store” has historically had issues in the west, and we can best remember that with the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado where the core issue was that the miners were forced to buy their groceries and other goods from the company store at grossly inflated prices. This wonderful article also helps us better understand the material culture and respective business relationships including compensation of the early fur trade at the beginning of the Rendezvous era. Men like Ashley and Smith had an indomitable spirit to succeed in a fast growing fur trade industry that was filled with significant personal and professional risk. Going west to the unknown wilderness to make money was not best suited for the faint of heart, but rather a best fit for the risk taking entrepreneur.

Unfortunately due to a health issue, Richard Gould was not able to complete his article for this issue on the Pawnee Village site visited by Stephen Long, Jedediah Smith and Robert Campbell. We wish Richard the best with our positive thoughts for him. Smith and Campbell had to have had an amazing yet tough experience wintering in the Pawnee Village – What a Midwest winter storm survival story coupled with a major cross-cultural immersion! As a result of this experience, Campbell and Smith became best friends. They say in life you can count your best friends on one hand – with that said Jedediah Smith had great taste in choosing close friends including; Harrison Rodgers, Robert Campbell, William Ashley, William Clark and Dr. TGV Simons.

The Simons Family in Indiana articles’ intention was, in the spirit of Maurice Sullivan and Dale Morgan, to get the information out there for benefit of others who are interested in the Simons and Smith families. My hope is others, including professional writers and genealogists, take this information as a motivator and do more research on these families. In the Preface of *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*, by Dale Morgan, 1953, he states in the last paragraph the following: “Letters, accounts, maps, every kind of family document to illuminate and extend the record of Jedediah Smith’s life, may await discovery. Perhaps this book will provide some incentive for search in attics, old desks and elsewhere. I should be happy to learn of anything they found.” The Jedediah Smith Society mission dovetails with this statement by Morgan, and anything new that we find helps the membership fulfill the mission of the Jedediah Smith Society.

In closing, the Simons Family wanted to leave a timeless message about their position in society which is best represented by the massive 55,000 pound family tombstone which was quarried in Scotland and shipped to Plymouth, Indiana. Transporting this massive tombstone in itself was an incredible feat. Dr. TGV Simons was father figure, mentor, friend and teacher of Jedediah Smith. He lived his life as a great example to all around him; by teaching and helping other people as a frontier and pioneer Physician his entire adult life. His final message to all is his high quality and somewhat timeless 1851 headstone, and his internment as the only Simons buried in the Methodist Allen Chapel Cemetery, Kendallville, Indiana.

The local historical societies in Indiana and Ohio where the Smith and Simons families lived, have limited or no information on these amazing American families, including Jedediah Smith, and their respective stories going west. The Jedediah Smith Society is working on changing that, so within the next couple years we plan to put Jedediah Smith back on the map in his hometown of Perrysville, Ohio.

Thank you for your membership. I hope you enjoy this issue.  
Happy Trails, Kevin

## President's Message - Jim Smith, Helena, Montana



The focus of this message is organizational. I'd like to begin by inviting all Jedediah Smith Society members, and their guests, to the Society's 2019 Annual Meeting. This will be on March 30, 2019 at the San Joaquin County Historical Society in Lodi, CA. Please watch your mail and your email these next few months for more news and details on this upcoming meeting. But, go ahead and mark your calendars now to save the date, and plan to attend this meeting.

There will be an excellent speaker on the Fur Trade Era, and a nice luncheon for Society members and their guests.

In addition to serving the Society's members, and our outreach to the rest of the Fur Trade universe, your Board of Directors has been working on the internal and organizational aspects of the Society, and the 2019 Annual Meeting will reflect those efforts. Here are some of the highlights:

**The Election of Directors and Officers of the Board.** With that in mind, Nominations to the Board for 2019 are being solicited from the members until December 31, 2018. If you are willing to serve on the Board, or know someone who is, Nominate yourself or that person (with their permission) to the Board. Call, write, email or text myself or any member of the Board of Directors with a nomination.

**Review and approval by the membership of amendments to the Society Bylaws.** The current bylaws are in need of amendments to reflect the Society's current reality: that the Society is an independent non-profit corporation, chartered in the state of California; that it has received designation as a tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. The proposed amendments will be sent to all 2018 members early next year for review. We will take action on them at the Annual Meeting.

**Progress reports from Committees, and updates on the activities and projects the Society has continued or undertaken the last year or so:** Castor Canadensis, the Map Project, the Web Page, the Facebook Page, the Utah Rendezvous. We would most appreciate your feedback, criticism, and ideas on these initiatives; and your suggestions on how to improve them.

Again, please watch for additional information. After meetings in Wyoming and Utah these last two years, it will be great to be back in California in 2019. Through the efforts described above, we are reaching more people in more places with the story of Jedediah Smith. Please plan to join the Society March 30, 2019 in San Joaquin County (Lodi), CA to celebrate, reflect and share.

Sincerely, Jim Smith  
jim@smithandmcgowan.com

## Upcoming Events



**2019 ANNUAL MEETING**

**MARCH 30, 2019**

**SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY**

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**LODI, CA**



### The Dr. TGV Simons Family in Indiana, Part II

by, Kevin Kucera



**Photo 1 - Plymouth Pilot front page, 10-26-1931**

In Photo 1 you will find yourself on the Maurice Sullivan trail looking for the immediate family of the legendary, yet forgotten, Jedediah Smith. Sullivan was doing research for his book: *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*, The Fine Arts Press, 1934. This October 26, 1931, front page article in the Plymouth Pilot Newspaper indicates Sullivan was already hot on the trail with accurate information on the family of Titus Simons, son of Dr. TGV Simons, in Plymouth, Indiana. Sullivan was able to get at least a few Midwest newspapers to run his request for information on the Simons and Smith families. From this author's research, a few individuals responded to his 1930's articles as late as 1985 claiming to be Smith and/or Simons relatives. These mailings, however, were not sent directly to Sullivan in California, but rather to the local papers and subsequently to the local historical societies.

The focus of this second part of the article is on three sons of Titus and Mary (Mitchell) Simons: Oscar Simons (1833-1866), William Henry Harrison Simons (1840-1917), and Millard Winfield Simons (1852-1906). The oldest child of Titus Simons (and Mary Smith), is TGV Simons (1830 – 1897), and his record of death shows he was a Railroad Engineer. I was not able to find any information on the other two children of Titus and Mary (Mitchell) Simons; Feleciana Celeste Simons (1836-1901) and David Emmett Simons (1842-1902).

Per the Marshall County Indiana land sale records, Titus Simons arrived in Plymouth, IN, in 1847, and immediately began clearing the wooded property on his new farm of eighty acres. The farm sits on a high point, and has a stream running through it. In Photo 2 you see the current farmhouse, and the current owners shared when they recently renovated the home they found inside the center section



**Photo 2 - Simons 1847 Farm current farmhouse**

some early construction foundation and other segments where nails were not used in this construction. This is an indicator of old construction so it may be part of the original 1847 farmhouse.

In Photo 3, the old barn is the oldest standing building on the property. It is a beautiful farm that is still family owned, including the original "Simons 80" (as referred to by locals) acres which lies behind and to the side of the field behind the home and barn. The Titus Simons Family was both personally and professionally successful in Plymouth, IN. The family thrived and they seemed to have a sense of entrepreneurship in that they were always working on the next venture. Titus was a successful farmer, and had a general store in downtown Plymouth on Michigan Street in what is now a Dentist office. As the family prospered they built city homes that were located on the site of Jefferson Middle School in Plymouth.



**Photo 3 - Simons 1847 Farm Barn**

Oscar Simons, the first child of Titus and Mary (Mitchell) Simons, moved to Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1866 to take advantage of the post - Civil War economic boom. He became involved in the promotion of Ft. Wayne Electric Light Utility, was the President of the First National Bank, an official of The Pennsylvania Railroad, and many other projects. He owned much property in Allen and Marshall Counties, and was one of the first millionaires in Northern Indiana. Oscar was a single man with no children, yet he kept in close relation with his family in Plymouth. Apparently his health became unbearable to him, and he shot and killed himself on December 16, 1886. His will left his youngest

## Archives Corner

### The Dr. TGV Simons Family in Indiana, Part II (Continued)



Photo 4 - Simons Building downtown Plymouth

is local record of an 1893 ball at that location. Having been inside the funeral home, it is clear to the author that Willard spared no expense being that the home of is full of beautiful hard to find wood, stained glass, etc. Unfortunately, Willard's investments dropped in value and he moved west to Denver, Colorado, to retrieve his fortune by investing his remaining funds in mining stocks. In Colorado it wasn't long before Willard was admitted to a sanitarium where he died penniless.

Another son of Titus and Mary, William Henry Harrison Simons, also received an inheritance from his late brother, Oscar. William Henry Harrison was a Civil War Veteran having served with the 73rd Indiana Volunteer Infantry. He returned to Plymouth in 1869, and married Orianna Russell. They had four children who also resided in Warsaw, IN. He was the last Titus Simon child to have possession of the 1847 family farm which was a source of pride for the family. He was noted as a capitalist, and also as a noble Christian man. He was quiet and unpretentious, as well as a philanthropist, having been noted to make many quiet benevolences upon-worthy institutions.



Photo 7 - Tombstone of Titus Simons Family, Plymouth, Indiana



Photo 8 - Headstone of Dr. TGV Simons, Kendallville, Indiana

brother, Willard, as his estate administrator and Willard himself inherited \$350,000. With his new wealth, Willard established the Smilley Bicycle Factory in Plymouth employing 150 people. He also had interests in a Novelty Company and organized the first electric light plant in Plymouth. He invested in properties, and there is still the Simons Building in downtown Plymouth as seen in Photo 4.

The most lasting memory of Willard is the beautiful home and carriage house he built in Plymouth. This home is now the Van Gilder Funeral Home - See Photos 5 and 6. Willard installed a carbon arc light in front of this beautiful home on the corner of Madison and Plum Streets. This was the first street light installed in Plymouth. He even had a ballroom on the second floor of the elegant carriage house, and there



Photo 5 - Simons City Home



Photo 6 - Simons Carriage House

Titus Simons was like a younger brother to Jedediah Smith as they were only four plus years apart in age. Jedediah and Titus grew up together in Pennsylvania and Ohio in the unique intertwined Simons/Smith family unit which intermarried and moved west together. The Dr. TGV Simons Family in Indiana was by and large an industrious, honorable, and successful family as described in third party handwritten genealogical information and newspaper copies located in the Marshall County Historical Society archives. This was the main information source for this article. Simons and Smith family members, as well as researchers and authors, can contact the Editor at [kkcucera@msn.com](mailto:kkcucera@msn.com) for more information.

## Members' Section

### New Members

Please welcome our new members to the Society. We welcome you to our events and participation on various committees. If you'd like to write an article please see the guidelines under the editor column.

**Jay Buckley**                      **Orem, UT**

**William B. Horst**                **Porterville, CA**

### Donor List

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

#### Sponsors

Anthony Rantz  
Eldon Knauf  
Irene Steiner  
Kevin Kucera  
Mike Mc Whirter  
Russel Clough  
Steve & Amanda Cottrell  
Thomas Allyn  
Troy Tuggle  
Fred Gregory

#### Patrons

Jim Smith  
Jon Warn  
Milton von Damm  
William Rich

*Thank you*

## Your Officers & Board Members

### President

**Jim Smith**

Jim@smithandmcgowan.com  
406-949-1002

### Vice President

**Joe Molter**

### Secretary

**Kevin Kucera**

### Treasurer

**Milton von Damm**



### Board of Directors

Jim Smith  
Joe Molter  
Kevin Kucera  
Milton von Damm  
Wayne Knauf  
Bob Shannon

### Executive Committee

Jim Smith  
Joe Molter  
Kevin Kucera  
Milton von Damm

### Jedediah Smith Relatives:



Barbara Bush  
Jeff Bush  
Jessica Bush  
John Felt  
Loretta Smith Buxton  
Marlene-Smith-Baranzini



## 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.

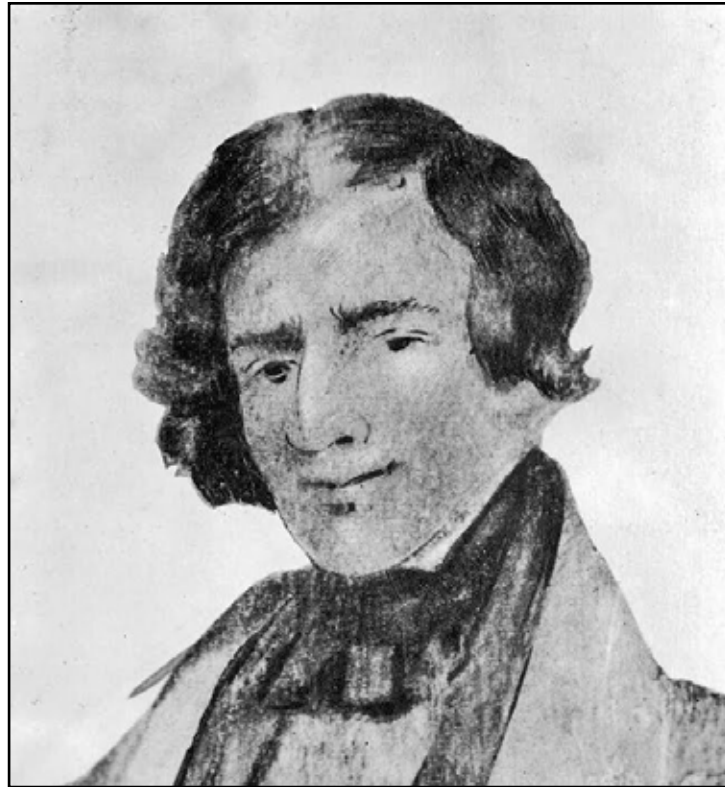
Student \$10.00	Individual \$30.00
Sponsor \$50.00	Patron \$100.00

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

Please make check payable to: JEDEDIAH SMITH SOCIETY  
Mail to Treasurer: 1322 Shattuck Ave. Apt. 401, Berkeley, CA 94709

Need a Membership Application?

See website: [www.jedediahsmithsociety.org](http://www.jedediahsmithsociety.org) Go to Membership then click "Application"



**Your dues will expire on Jan 1, 2019**



Jedediah Smith Society  
1322 Shattuck Ave. Apt. 401  
Berkeley, CA 94709