



# CASTOR CANADENSIS

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

SUMMER 2020

## Jedediah Smith in Popular Culture: Frontier Fighters and *The Romance of The Ranchos*

BY, JIM STEBINGER

*Mr. Stebinger is a freelance writer, journalist and amateur historian living in Los Angeles. As a UCLA graduate he has had a lifelong interest in history with a focus on western expansion, Jedediah Smith and the mountain fur trade.*

One of the great surprises of the internet is the extent to which people will work, research, publish and upload huge amounts of material without recompense. Of course Wikipedia is the prime example but of perhaps more immediate interest to members of the Society has been the uploading of vast amounts of “Classic Radio” including at least two radio biographies of Jedediah Smith.

The first piece, which runs 15 minutes 10 seconds, was the sixth episode of a 39 part series called “Frontier Fighters”<sup>1</sup> that briefly depicted the lives of men (and some women) central to the westward expansion of the United States. *Frontier Fighters* dramatized soldiers, explorers, mountain men, bankers, doctors and some famous battles including the fall of the Alamo. The subjects chosen lived or the events occurred from before the founding of the United States up to about 1900. Although the series is easily available for download little is known of the production and crew. The airdates are uncertain, evidently it aired sometime between 1935 and 1937 and was a creation of the Transcription Company of America.<sup>2</sup> The episodes are said to have been rebroadcast into the 1950’s.

Jedediah Strong Smith, as the episode is titled, opens with a stately march of about 92 seconds. The ending march is about the same length. The march exists to allow commercials to be aired.

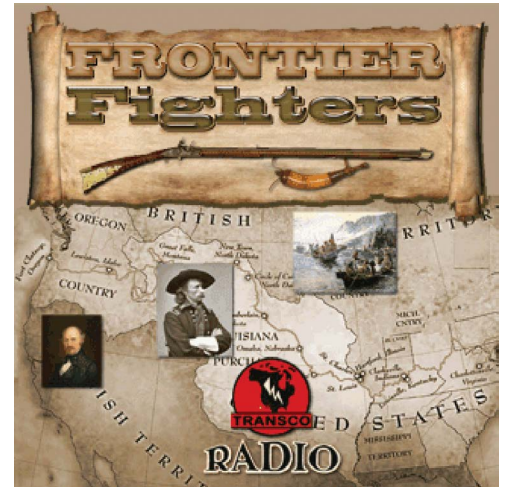
As the march ends the voiceover introduces Smith as a “giant” and one of the “epic wanderers and adventurers” who settled the west and describe Smith as carrying his “rifle in one hand and his precious Bible in the other”.

The drama begins on May 20, 1823 as Smith, James Clyman, William Sublette and Thomas Fitzpatrick are met on a street corner in St. Louis, reading and discussing William H. Ashley’s famous letter seeking men for his expedition

up the Missouri. The men go to Ashley’s “mansion” to enlist.

On May 20, 1823 we hear raging battle “near the present boundary of North and South Dakota” Between the Ashley party and an enemy

identified as “Arickarees.” Smith is tending to the wounded when Ashley calls for a volunteer to seek aid from Andrew Henry. Smith volunteers but Ashley is reluctant to send him as he says Smith is young and inexperienced. Smith admits youth and inexperience but says he can “Outwit, outfight or outrun” any Indians and he will go “alone with my rifle and my Bible. I will even go without my rifle but not without my Bible, it goes where I go.”



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**Jedediah Smith in Popular Culture:  
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Smith of course reaches Henry and we are told he is now known as the man who saved the expedition. The action moves to 1826. We are told he has been near the Great Salt Lake but is now on the Colorado River. Smith and 15 men are passing a Native tribe said to be “peaceful looking.” “When Indians look peaceful, be on your guard,” Smith says. <sup>3</sup> Immediately, a man is shot between the shoulders with an arrow, the party is attacked and 10 of the 15 are killed.

The narrator tells us that Smith walked into California trying to find help for his men but was “seized” by Mexican authorities near San Jose and taken to Monterey. He is brought before the “High Military Court” and charged with “armed invasion.” He denies the jurisdiction of the court and warns the judge that if he or his men are harmed the court will answer to the US Government and to “God, Our Guide and Protector.” He demands to see the governor and is transported to meet him. The governor is about to send him to Mexico City, presumably to be imprisoned, when a sea captain named Cooper puts up \$30,000 in gold to secure his release and gives him two gold coins for clothes and “the best meal in Monterey.”

The narrator then tells us that Smith now goes from hardship to hardship and in July of 1828 he is in the Oregon country and once again attacked by Indians who kill 12 of his 14 companions. He finds his way to John McLoughlin the factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Smith accuses McLoughlin of inciting the Indians, a claim McLoughlin denies. The factor then agrees to pay Smith \$3,200 <sup>4</sup> to recover his losses as proof of the “integrity” of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The two men make a point of going to church together to show their amity and because each says he will not miss a Sabbath except when in the wilderness. The narrator tells us Smith vowed never to trap Hudson’s Bay territory again as a result of McLoughlin’s kindness.

Finally, we find Smith and Fitzpatrick along the Cimmaron and out of water. He instructs Fitzpatrick to make camp while he rides along the riverbed to find water. Fitzpatrick warns him the Arapahos are “looking for scalps to decorate their lodgpoles,” The warning goes unheeded. “There ain’t an Indian worth the name within 50 miles.” Smith says “But if I meet any I’ll bring back their scalps to make a wig for your old age.” The two men, apparently alone, laugh.

Smith is watched by Red Fox of the Arapaho from high ground. Red Fox says to a companion that the whites have slaughtered the buffalo, driven off other food animals and at this moment Smith’s horse is drinking their water, defiling it. Smith must die, they agree. Other warriors are also watching who join Red Fox in the attack. The narrator eulogizes Smith as a great figure of western expansion and notes that neither his body “nor a single page of his tattered Bible” were ever found.

What to make of this?

One very interesting aspect is the timing. *Frontier Fighters* aired as Smith was coming out of the obscurity which followed his death. In fact, the episode aired around the time the first full length biography by Maurice S. Sullivan reached bookshelves and libraries.



**The sponsor was the Title and Trust Company of Los Angeles. This is a picture of their building which still stands in an historic downtown Los Angeles district. It was home to city government offices for more than 30 years and has recently been for sale. The owners wished to develop it for condominiums prior to the pandemic.**

Another issue that must be mentioned is the format. Without the march the program runs about 11 minutes with perhaps half of that as dialog. The unknown writer had a formidable task of trying to distill the last monumental eight or nine years of Smith’s life into 11 minutes. Format explains truncation of events such as the simple description of his travels in California, the omission of the discovery of South Pass and the deletion of his travel into Blackfoot country. It does not explain why McLoughlin is said to have paid Smith more than he did or why the Arapaho people are blamed for his death. <sup>5</sup>

But even with allowance for brevity Jedediah Smith seems to be without historical context in this piece. He seems to simply be in places and do things for no other reason that he is an American in the wilderness trying to get by. The opening suggests, but does not clearly state, he is a trapper. His exploration, map finding, important discoveries and overall importance to history are simply unmentioned. Taken in context of other episodes in the series, his lack of context actually becomes context. That is to say the *Frontier Fighters* of the series were not all actual fighters in the specific pugilistic or military sense. Rather they were individuals who did not give up in the face of hardship and “fought” for what they believed in whether an exploratory goal, or the creation of a bank, the finding of gold, or establishing a mission. What a current audience might see as lack of context, therefore becomes context to a Depression era “Greatest Generation” audience who probably believed

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life is tough and Americans simply needed to be tougher. Taken in that light the vignettes become the story of one man overcoming odds. He fights the Arikara because they attack him, as do the Natives on the Colorado and in Oregon. He is harassed by Mexican leaders, and the bond offered sounds like a bribe in the show. He reaches a wary compromise with Hudson's Bay, representing our English cousins, who are themselves working against perceived American interests and with whom we were at war during Smith's adolescence. Perhaps this is why his middle name is listed in the title and frequently repeated in the brief biography. It becomes, in effect, a shorthand method of denoting character for a scriptwriter writing in a very tight format.

Writing in 2020 it is impossible not to note the very heavy emphasis on his Christian faith. He is referred to as a young man of faith, his Bible is explicitly mentioned and it is made explicit that he attends church in the one vignette where it is logical to do so. This emphasis on his Bible and churchgoing was clearly in no way uncomfortable to a 1930's audience, although it may be less comfortable to more recent audiences raised on *Mountain Men* as more nihilistic and antisocial figures in our culture where churchgoing is often left unmentioned and even questioned by some. It may also raise historical questions as the strength of his religious belief is no longer unquestioned.<sup>6</sup>

His references to Native Americans are undoubtedly off-putting to a contemporary audience and may be simply dismissed as a product of a generalized racism toward Native Americans. However, there may be something a counter-argument to that belief in the actions of Red Fox and the Arapaho. Had the Arapaho simply killed Smith with no reason or explanation, as the attacking Indians try to do in the other three encounters, then the case for simple racist attitudes would be stronger. However, Red Fox and the unnamed tribesman he is talking to pronounce a death sentence on Smith. It is made clear that Smith must die as a representative of a race that is destroying the Arapaho. Red Fox is actually prophetic as none of the crimes he attributes to Smith were particularly evident in 1831 but the fact that the scriptwriter felt the need to give the Natives a reason to kill Smith, and a reason with historical basis, seems to argue that the writer was not seeing the Natives as soulless, mindless stock villains killing with little reason. Instead, they could be seen as acting from similar historical imperatives to Smith himself.

There is another line of thought here. The Jedediah Smith of this piece seems to be entirely static. In his first encounter, he can outdo any Native and in his last encounter he talks in almost the same terms of childish bravado despite 9 years of experience and two other near fatal encounters. It seems

entirely possible that the anonymous writer didn't quite know how to approach Smith and so he gave him attributes of the rather well-known "Ring Tailed Roarer" folklore creation. Thus he is more like the Davy Crockett of the totally fictional Crockett Almanacs than he is like the David Crockett of history. It is even possible that the writer's research led him to Mike Fink, who was a Ring Tailed Roarer and was briefly part of the Ashley expedition before an alleged drunken exploit involving firearms and broken friendship sent him off to the realm of folklore.

In sum, *Frontier Fighters* tried to distill Jedediah Smith into something easily understood. In place of the cartographer, premier explorer, businessman, trapper and rough hewn diplomat were are left, with a simple Biblically inspired traveler. Perhaps that is all he was understood to be in the 1930s. We can be glad that the intervening years have expanded our knowledge so much that we can see a complex actor in the fascinating panorama of our shared history.

Smith, and history, fare much better in episode 20 of "The Romance of the Ranchos." a series of radio plays based on California history which was broadcast on CBS Radio between 1941 and 1946. Episode 20 aired on January 21, 1942, which was not an auspicious day for the Allied cause in World War Two. General, later Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was counter attacking in North Africa, the Japanese were bombing Singapore and had breached American and Phillipine defense lines on Luzon while German U-Boats were sinking unescorted Norwegian freighters. It was, however, a good day for a radio episode about "a gallant young man" who was "the personification of all those heroic virtues bred by the American frontier." An explorer who "stands without superior."

Romance of the Ranchos starred radio stalwart Fred Graham, who narrated events as the "Wandering Vaquero" and was a fixture of Golden Age radio starring frequently in famous shows such as *Cavalcade of America* and *Suspense* until his suicide in 1950. Known as a "man of 1,000 voices" it is unclear if he played Smith or other characters. Ted Bliss directed many episodes and was a frequent director of *Hopalong Cassidy* episodes. The writer was John Dunkel who contributed frequently to "Escape" and "Gunsmoke."

The semi-documentary tone of the piece is established during the credits when three headline teasers spotlight 1826 as the year Smith first crossed the desert, 1826 as the year of his arrest and 1827 as the year of his escape from the Umpqua Massacre.

The "Wandering Vaquero" greets his audience in Spanish and then introduces the tale as that of "A great man, one of

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the true unsung heroes of the west” whose story is “rich in the romance of the ranchos.”

Briefly, he notes the importance of beaver to world trade and then quickly covers Smith’s first 20 years before placing him on a freight hauler on the Great Lakes listening to “Sam” and other trappers yarning about trapping. He tells Sam he wants to be a trapper in order to find adventure and excitement and do something with his life. He says he is unafraid of the dangers Sam lists and is then directed to head for St Louis. He Joins Ashley and rapidly proves himself. The Arikara battle is not mentioned but the famous grizzly attack is. “Jumpin’ Jupiter,” Mountain Man John Turner says, “he’s big as a house!” as the bear breaks out of the brush. The bear tangles with Jed, and Turner says “Glory Be! Look at his head, the bear near scalped him.” “I guess I am banged up a little,” Smith replies as Turner calls for needle and thread.

Our narrator says that Smith helped find the Great Salt Lake, pioneered South Pass making westward travel possible, before attending the 1826 Rendezvous at Great Salt Lake where Ashley retires and Smith, Jackson and Sublette take over. Smith announces his intent to find new sources of beaver and new markets and speculates about opening a China trade via California.

The trip is rough and the narrator paints a bleak picture of the desert travel via modern day Needles and the Cajon Pass to reach the “cool green paradise” that is California. They find their way to the Mission San Gabriel where Father Sanchez defuses their suspicion of the mission Indians by calling them “fine peaceful children” and then tells the near starving band “the mission is yours, we are your servants.” Although the reception is warm Fr. Sanchez eventually tells Smith that the government forbids foreigners to travel in California. Smith must go to Gov. Echandia in San Diego. He leaves his men and heads to the governor. Although Smith is conciliatory he is greeted by a curt and hostile governor who rebuffs his request to leave California by a northern route, demanding he return the way he came. Echandia says were it not for the intervention of unnamed sea captains his treatment would be harsh. He heads back to mission and gathers his men and leaves. At the head of the Cajon Pass he tells his men he plans to take a northern route after all. “We’ve got a job to do and no one is going to stop us.” He says. The men object but he wins them over. They travel and trap their way to some point north of Sacramento where they attempt a winter crossing which fails. Smith sends his first party back to camp at lower elevation while he takes John Turner and one other and makes a perilous mountain crossing and goes to Great Salt Lake for men and supplies. He decides to return via Mission San Gabriel and once again stops at the Mojave village. He passed the same village earlier in the radio play

and this time notices just too late something is wrong this time. “We can’t do anything for those poor devils,” he tells his remaining party, “but we can sure save ourselves.” Smith and the survivors head back to the mission. Father Sanchez again greets them warmly and Smith leaves two men behind he heads north to the American River to his original party. Lack of supplies force him to head to San Jose and face the wrath of the governor. He is jailed and has to await the governor’s convenience. The second meeting is less cordial than the first. Smith complains about the “pigsty” he has been thrown into and the governor demands a \$30,000 bond or else he will be jailed. Ship captains again bail him out and he returns north to lead his men out of California. The trip is arduous and there are sound effects of horses falling from cliffs to illustrate. John Turner warns him just in time and he escapes the Umpqua massacre. He goes to factor McLoughlin who praises his deeds and asks to hire him. Smith tells McLoughlin he wants out of trapping and into other safer work. McLoughlin offers to send trappers to bury the dead from the battle and says he will pay Smith 2/3 of the value of the furs he had tried to bring north. Smith does leave the mountains, we are told, and wants to go into freight hauling. He is said to be leading an “emigrant train” when the party runs out of water. He decides to seek water and, as in *Frontier Fighters*, is warned about the dangers of Indians. He laughs a rueful laugh and says “after the experiences I’ve been through this is nothing.”

Smith and his horse Betsy succeed in finding water. He talks to his “old girl” as he drinks, advising her not to drink too much, and he dismounts to drink himself. Betsy senses Indians and bolts with Smith calling after her. Two unidentified Indians shoot him with arrows from ambush and he dies cursing “Red Devils” for shooting him in the back. The announcer ends the piece by praising Smith and his discoveries which “opened up California to American immigration overland.”

The contrasts with *Frontier Fighters* are stark. This is a CBS network production and the production values are high, as opposed to the earlier show which was produced as filler for radio stations to plug in to schedules. The Smith of this show is portrayed as level headed and a born leader with ambition and courage. He has an arc in that he sets out to explore and trap and then said to be moving on to new adventures when he is killed. The death scene is a little puzzling as it is without context and without motive. He is simply killed by unseen assailants for no discernible reason. Red Fox at least gives clear motive.

Taken together the two radio plays were created at a time when the name Jedediah Smith was starting to escape undeserved obscurity and represent a link in chain of popular

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recognition that would result 11 years later in the bedrock of modern scholarship, Jedediah Smith and the *Opening of the West* by Dale S. Morgan.

*Notes:*

1. <https://www.overdrive.com/media/3117490/frontier-fighters>
2. The company specialized in providing radio programming for radio stations to supplement regular programming.
3. Something of a cliché in television and movie westerns.
4. The actual amount was much less.
5. For a complete discussion of Smith's demise and a thorough discussion of the possible alternate identity of his killers see *Castor Summer Winter 2019*.
6. For a thorough discussion of the current view of Jed Smith's character and attitudes see *Castor Winter 2018-2019*.

## In Memoriam

Early this year, the Jedediah Smith Society lost two of its long time and most faithful members who contributed their time and talents for over 20 years, serving to promote the purposes and goals of our society. Both served on the Board of Directors for over ten years as well as other positions. Both of these men were friendly, kind and generous, having a strong faith in God. We that knew them can attest to their character and they will be missed.



**Robert E. Shannon**

1934 – 2020

“Big Foot Bob” served as President multiple times, Vice President, Treasure and on various committees. Bob passed on 04/07/2020 and now resides in heaven.



**Darrell D. Thomas**

1929 - 2020

Rev. Thomas could always be counted on for an invocation, was the speaker at several events and was on various committees. Darrel passed on 03/28/2020 and now resides in heaven.

## Upcoming Events



**New Date: Sept. 8-11, 2021  
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park**

### Call for Papers!

The focus of the 2021 symposium will be on the era of trade on the Missouri River between the return of Lewis and Clark in 1806 through the abandonment of Fort Atkinson in 1827.

**We are looking for:**

- Papers pertaining to notable individuals, companies or events occurring in that time.
- Papers about the impact of the U.S. Army and the implementation of federal law upon the fur trade and the Missouri River native tribes.

Email a copy of your paper, abstract or outline to [Jason.Grof@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Jason.Grof@Nebraska.gov) or mail a hard copy to **Fort Atkinson SHP, PO Box 240, Ft. Calhoun, NE 68023** by June 1, 2021.



Visit us at [OutdoorNebraska.org/FortAtkinson](http://OutdoorNebraska.org/FortAtkinson)  
f Find us at “2021 National Fur Trade Symposium”  
201 S 7th St. | Fort Calhoun, NE. 68023

## President/Editor's Comments - Kevin Kucera



**Kevin Kucera**  
President/Editor

It can be quite fun to reflect on how the media has portrayed Jedediah Smith over the years. In this issue we have variety of media types covering Jedediah. Our feature article by member, Jim Stebinger, gives us a great account of how JS was on the airwaves during the golden era of Classic Radio. We are most appreciate to Jim for writing this article which is both entertaining and insightful. The Editor's favorite funny Smith item herein is the ugly postcard which describes JS Smith as a bungler with receding hairline!

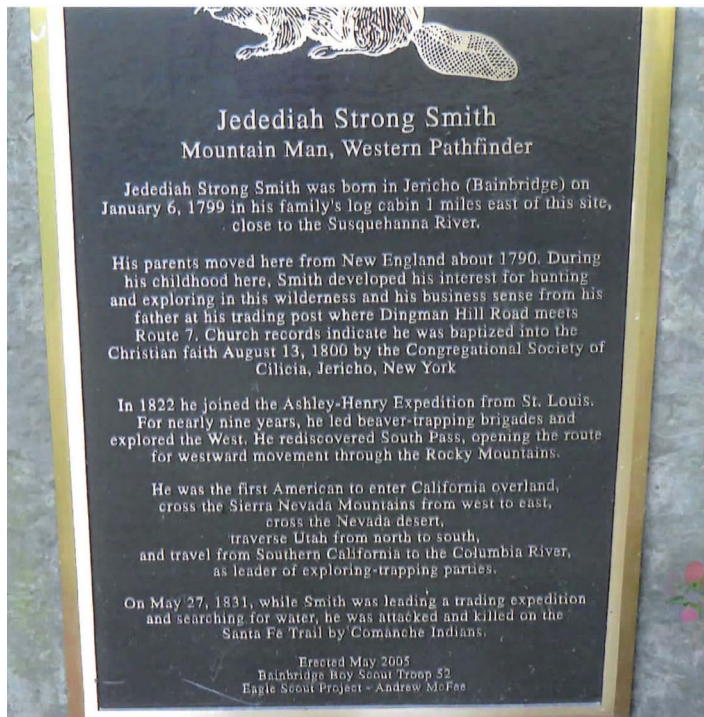


The one constant on Jedediah in the media over time is his Christianity. In this column we can see his Christian beginnings on the plaque in Bainbridge/Jericho, N.Y. Moving forward to today, we have in the photograph Jedediah riding into the 2019 Green River Rendezvous reading a bible. I trust he was reading fire and brimstone to prepare for the mayhem and debauchery of Rendezvous! I expect Jedediah will be back this July at the Museum of the Mountain Man's Green River Rendezvous.

It is the dream of many American children to someday have a Topps Trading honoring their accomplishments. To make it more special; Jedediah's card is a limited numbered edition which makes it even more valuable to the collector. Pretty cool stuff for big dreamers like Jedediah Smith who get their names on these popular trading cards because they did accomplish their dreams!

Have a great summer!

Kevin Kucera  
June, 2020



### 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 [kkcucera@msn.com](mailto:kkcucera@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.

Comics

APRIL 13, 1958

# TOMAHAWK TRAIL

Story of Jedediah Smith...man of God who helped to open the West

SUNDAY PIX

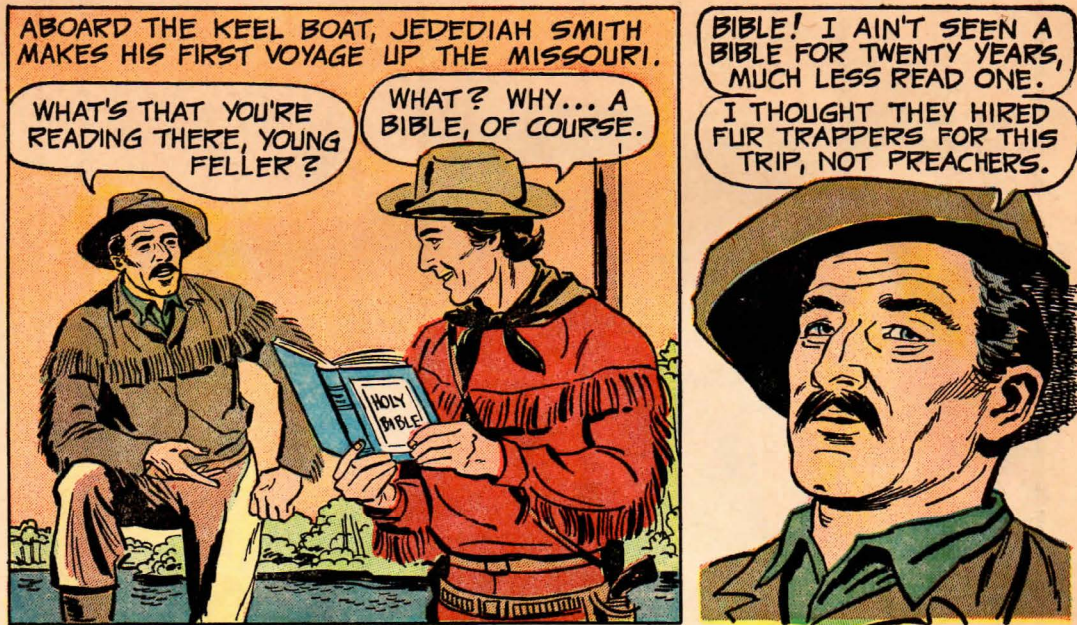
A David C. Cook Weekly



Keelboat carrying fur trappers being "poled" up Missouri River in 1822

THIS IS THE EXCITING STORY OF JEDEDIAH SMITH, THE FIRST MAN TO REACH CALIFORNIA OVERLAND FROM THE EAST. LIVING AMONG THE ROUGH, HARD-FIGHTING PIONEERS OF THE WEST, "JED" SMITH NEITHER GAMBLED, NOR DRANK, NOR SWORE. A METHODIST BY FAITH, HE ALWAYS CARRIED HIS BIBLE WITH HIM, AND FOUND STRENGTH IN ITS MESSAGE. DIFFERENT AS HE WAS, HIS COURAGE, STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE MADE HIM RESPECTED BY ALL.

# Archives Corner



SUNDAY PIX . . . America's favorite Sunday-school weekly for Juniors and Teen Aged  
 PRICE: 25c for 13 issues (5 or more to one address). Single yearly subscriptions, \$1.50

Sunday Pix, incorporating Girls' Companion, Boys' World and What to Do, is published weekly by the David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois, U.S.A., and entered as second-class matter March 29, 1949, at the post office at Elgin, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. David C. Cook III, Editor-in-Chief; Iva S. Hoth, Executive Editor; Hiley H. Ward, Editor. Copyright, 1958, David C. Cook Publishing Co. Volume 10 Number 15

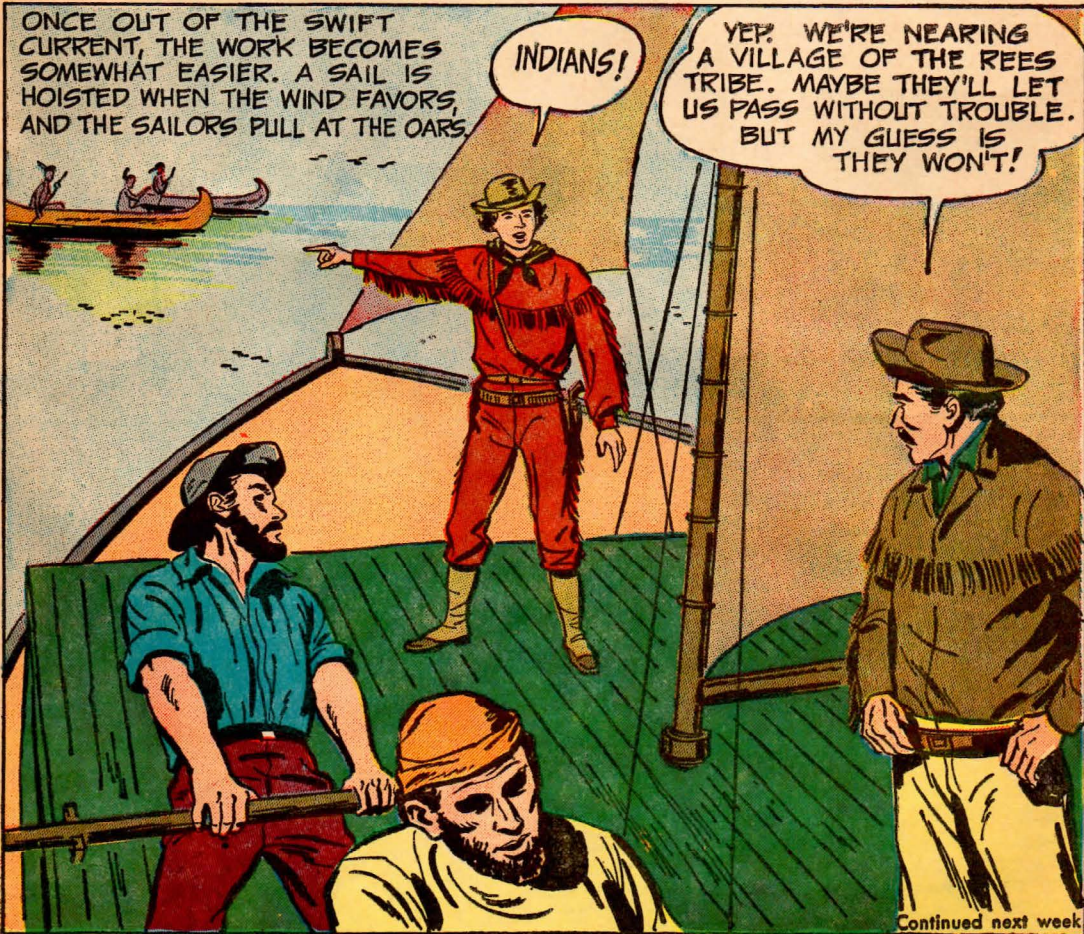


# Archives Corner

IN "CORDELLE," A STOUT ROPE IS STRETCHED FROM THE BOAT TO THE SAILORS WHO GO ASHORE. THEN, INCH BY INCH, TEARING AND STUMBLING THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH, THEY DRAG THE BOAT AGAINST THE CURRENT.



ONCE OUT OF THE SWIFT CURRENT, THE WORK BECOMES SOMEWHAT EASIER. A SAIL IS HOISTED WHEN THE WIND FAVORS, AND THE SAILORS PULL AT THE OARS.



Continued next week

April 13, 1968

8

More Comics

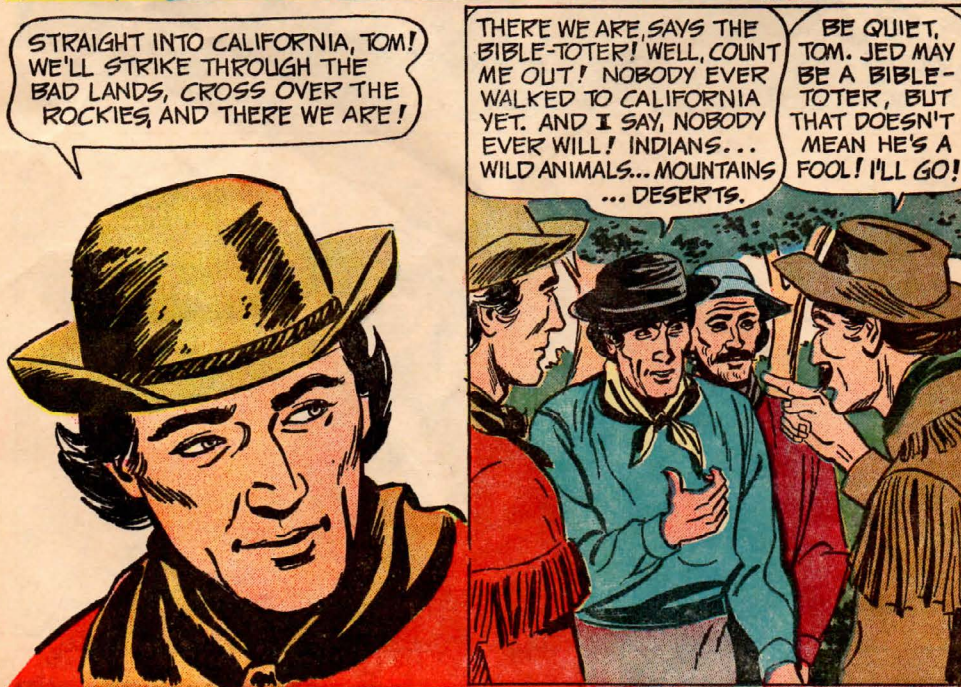
MAY 18, 1958

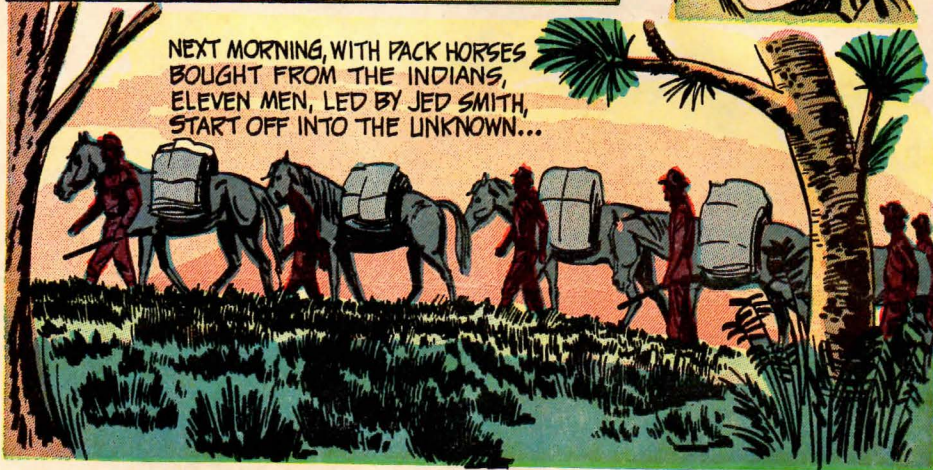
# TOMAHAWK TRAIL

Story of Jedediah Smith... man of God who helped to open the West

## SUNDAY PIX

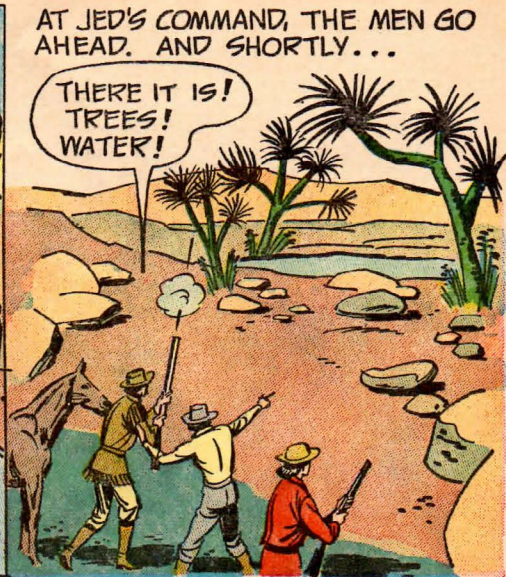
A David C. Cook Weekly







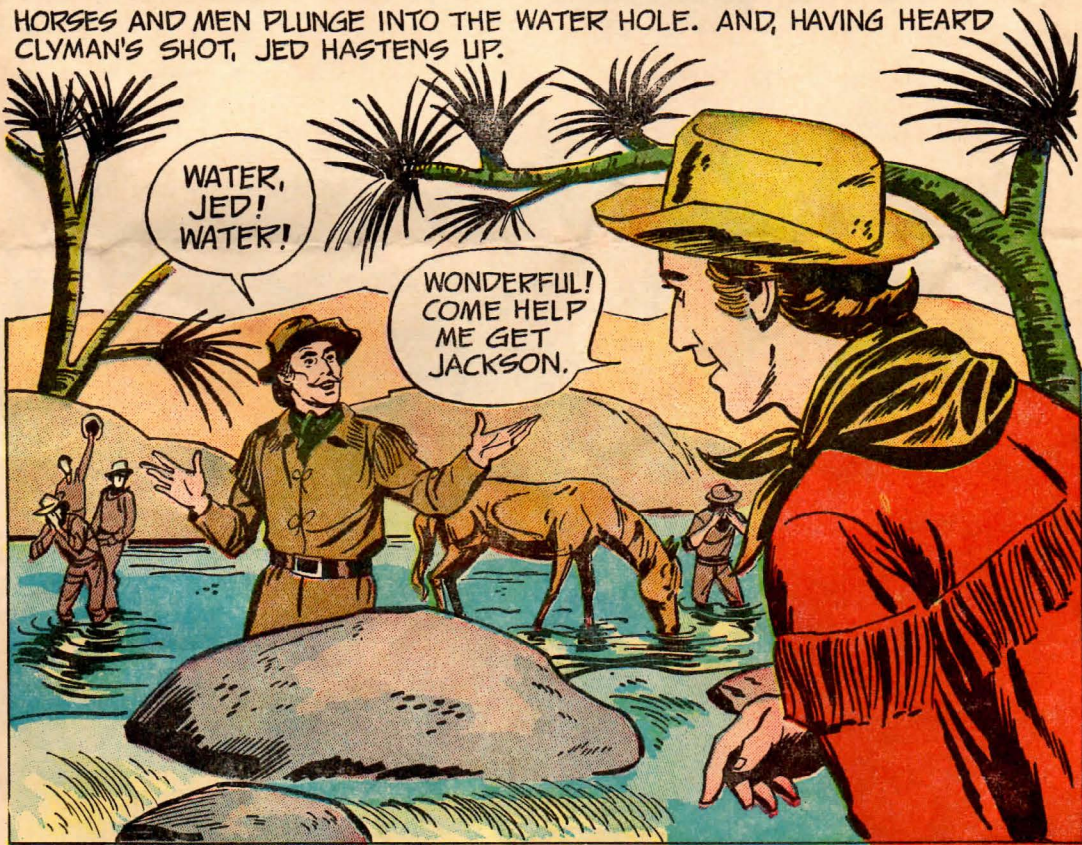
FAINTED. TOO MUCH SUN, NOT ENOUGH WATER. YOU BOYS GO ON AHEAD. FIRE A GUN IF YOU STRIKE A WATER HOLE. I'LL STAY WITH JACKSON.



AT JED'S COMMAND, THE MEN GO AHEAD. AND SHORTLY...

THERE IT IS! TREES! WATER!

HORSES AND MEN PLUNGE INTO THE WATER HOLE. AND, HAVING HEARD CLYMAN'S SHOT, JED HASTENS UP.



WATER, JED! WATER!

WONDERFUL! COME HELP ME GET JACKSON.

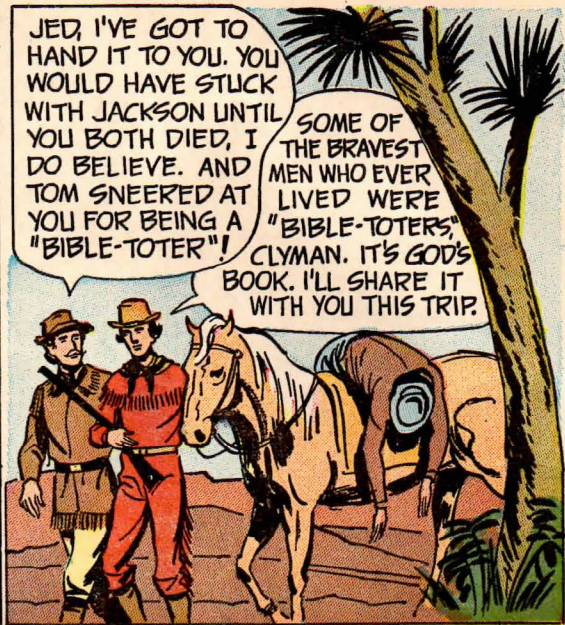
SUNDAY PIX . . . America's favorite Sunday-school weekly for Juniors and Teen Agers  
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YOU BURIED HIM!  
IS HE DEAD?

NO. THAT'S TO GET HIM OUT OF THE SUN, AND TO HELP HOLD SOME MOISTURE IN HIS BODY. HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT I THINK, ONCE WE GET HIM TO WATER.



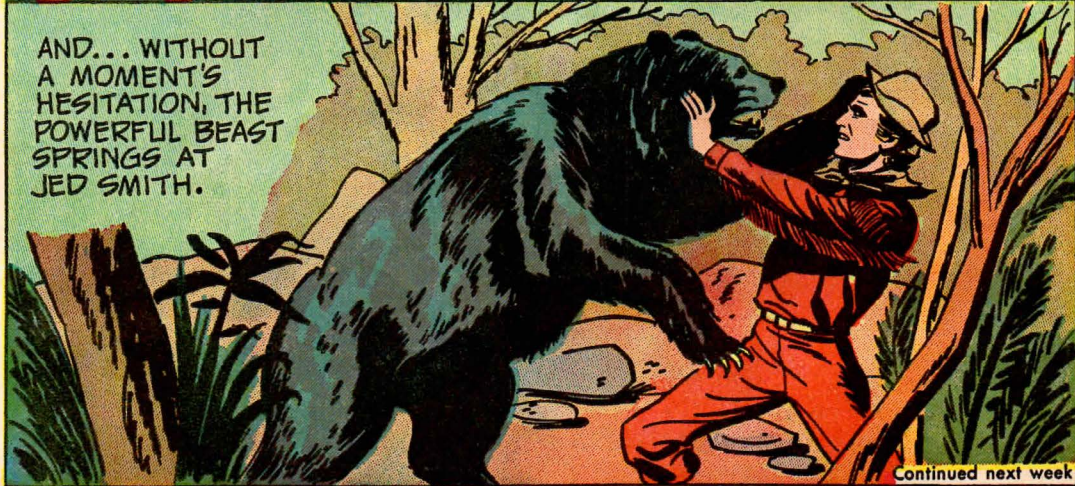
JED, I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU. YOU WOULD HAVE STUCK WITH JACKSON UNTIL YOU BOTH DIED, I DO BELIEVE. AND TOM SNEEKED AT YOU FOR BEING A "BIBLE-TOTER"!

SOME OF THE BRAVEST MEN WHO EVER LIVED WERE "BIBLE-TOTERS," CLYMAN. IT'S GOD'S BOOK. I'LL SHARE IT WITH YOU THIS TRIP.

REFRESHED, THE PARTY GOES ON. TOWARD EVENING, AS THEY THREAD THEIR WAY THROUGH A VALLEY, THE THICKET SUDDENLY PARTS.



GRIZZLY!



AND... WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, THE POWERFUL BEAST SPRINGS AT JED SMITH.

Continued next week

# Archives Corner

The below items were in reference to a play developed for the 1926 Centennial. This program was found in a document called: *Jedediah Strong Smith Centennial 1828-1926*, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1927. The newspaper photo on the next page is from the *L.A. Times*, 1/13/27.

## The Pathfinder of the Sierras

A Historical Drama

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM C. ISETT  
and

Presented by the

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Board of Education  
Native Sons of the Golden West  
Native Daughters of the Golden West  
History and Landmarks Club of California  
Carthay Center Community Council

To Commemorate

THE JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH CENTENNIAL  
"The First American Overland into California"

Bovard Auditorium

January 14th and 15th, 1927

Mr. William R. Bacon, *General Chairman*  
Dr. Owen C. Coy, *Chairman, Centennial*

### PRODUCTION STAFF

Robert L. Maurice, <i>Producer</i>	Mrs. Marguerite Conkwright,
W. R. Bacon, <i>General Chairman</i>	<i>Staff Secretary</i>
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Mrs. Florence D. Schoneman,	Booth Bowers, <i>Junior Usher</i>
<i>Patriotic Clubs</i>	

### THE CAST

JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH.....	Señora Magdalena .....
James Orr Ryan .....	Mrs. Julia St. Clair .....
Harrison G. Rogers.....	Señora Benicia.....Mrs. R. J. Dunn
.....Stephen A. Benton	Ila .....
Governor José Maria de Echeandia	Rosa .....
.....H. C. Stinchfield, M. D.	Matron of Governor's Household....
Robert Evans.....	.....Mrs. Gladys Moore
Captain Cunningham.....	Matron of San Gabriel Mission.....
.....Chester E. Bowers	.....Mrs. Dora L. Glossop
Captain Davis.....	Trappers with Smith—William H.
Padre Sanchez.....	Wilson, J. Smith Bacon.
Padre Duran.....	Spanish Gentle men—E d w a r d
First Priest.....	White, C. Kay, Raymond Ander-
Second Priest.....	son, Lester Anderson, Ernest
Señor Morengo.....	Hood.
Señor Rodriguez.....	Indian Men—Prince Catlen, Mor-
Daniel Ferguson.....	ris Wasserman, Jack Pava, Ar-
James Reed.....	thur Siflin, Harold S. Dalton,
Indian Messenger.....	Charles O. Walter.
Overseer of Mission.....	Spanish Ladies—Dorothy E. Mis-
.....C. Kay	ner, Miriam Webb, Henrietta
Indian Scout.....	Dunn, Florence Dunn, Mrs. E. C.
Isabella, Daughter of Governor.....	Bruns, Gloria Kay, Gertrude I.
.....Ruth Mason	Isett.
Margarita.....	Indian Maidens—Anita Gaedke
Señora Morengo, Jean H. Stinchfield	Grace Clarke, M. Fawkes, Claire
Helena, a friend of Isabella.....	Feanstein, Olive Frost, Florence
.....Reita Fisher	Weling.
Maria, a friend of Catherine.....	Indian Children—Gerald Isett, Ruth
.....Marguerite Conkwright	Loeb.
Julia .....	.....Lenore Severson

(Over)

## THE PATHFINDER OF THE SIERRAS

An Historical Drama in Three Acts

William Clement Isett, <i>Director</i>	Edmund Lytton, <i>Musical Director</i>
Thomas C. Regan, <i>Asst. Director</i>	Charles St. Clair, <i>Art Director</i>
Mrs. Maybelle Bruns,	Harry L. Siegelman,
<i>Asst. Casting Director</i>	<i>Make-up Director.</i>

### FIRST ACT

#### Scene 1

Courtyard of Mission San Gabriel, showing, in pageantry, the Indian life of the Missions. Incidents and conversations are historic.

#### Scene 2

Garden of Gov. Echeandia's house at San Diego. Introducing the following specialties, the Governor being partial to beauty contests. Soprano Solo, "Canula" (Old Spanish), by Mary Belle Chapman, a direct descendant of the Santa Cruz family, in her own costume. Solo Dance, "Alegrías," by Miss Martha Gill, teacher of dancing in the Studio of Classic Art, Carthay Center. A group Dance in the custom of one hundred years ago, with the Master of the Dance officiating. "El Choelo," by C. Kay, Raymond Anderson, Lester Anderson, Dorothy Misner, Florence Dunn, Henrietta Dunn, Edward White, Dece Andelin. A couple Dance, "La Paloma," by Mr. Hood and Reita Fisher. Costumes worn by Mrs. Schoneman and her mother, Mrs. Dodson, are heirlooms in their family.

### SECOND ACT

#### Scene 1

Courtyard of Mission San Gabriel. Wash day at the mission was the occasion for a gala picnic. The marriage of Spanish girls to American men was usually discouraged by the old Spanish families. Soprano solo at close by Ruth Ryan Pederson.

#### Scene 2

Desert scene, through which Smith was trying to work his way north. Chief Yowlache, who sings the solo at the opening, is of the Yakima tribe of Indians in Washington. He is a chief by descent on both sides of his family.

### THIRD ACT

#### Scene 1

Mission San Jose de Guadalupe, courtyard. The incident happened during Smith's second visit to California, but is introduced here for dramatic effect.

#### Scene 2

Courtyard of Mission San Jose de Guadalupe. Introducing a Spanish dance by Mrs. Loeb, which she has used on the stage. Mexican dance, by Miss Dorothy E. Misner, in her own Mexican costume.

### Author's Note:

In dramatizing the Story of Jedediah Strong Smith for presentation I have adhered to the historical facts very rigidly, sacrificing dramatic effect throughout for the sake of historical accuracy. However, I have taken some dramatic liberty. For instance, I have incorporated incidents of Smith's second expedition, such as the Indian attack in the plot. The letter which I have him write to the Governor was actually sent from San Gabriel instead of San Jose. There is no record that one of the trappers married a Spanish girl, but, at that time, Americans were marrying into Spanish families. The love episode of the Governor's daughter is historic.

I have introduced as much of pageant value as possible for its historic value and color effect.

William C. Isett.

### THOSE TO WHOM WE ARE INDEBTED FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Walter R. Bacon	Mrs. Susan M. Dorsey
Mr. L. L. Hill	Music by Panatrop, courtesy
Mr. J. F. Sartori	Martin Music Co.
Miss Harriette Saxton	Boy Scout Troop No. 162
Miss Grace Tower	Jonathan Club
Miss M. Eva Thacker	The Daily Press
Mrs. Florence D. Schoneman	University of So. Calif.
Mrs. Gertrude J. Isett	Beverly Hills Nursery
J. Harvey McCarthy Co.	Far West Theatres, Inc.

(Over)

# Archives Corner

## Trading Cards

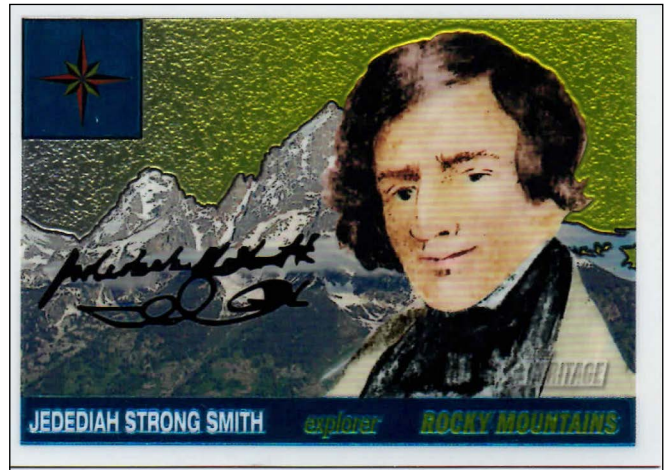
### ROLES IN HISTORICAL PLAY PERFECTED

L.A. Times 1/13/27  
Portrays Arrival of First White Man in State

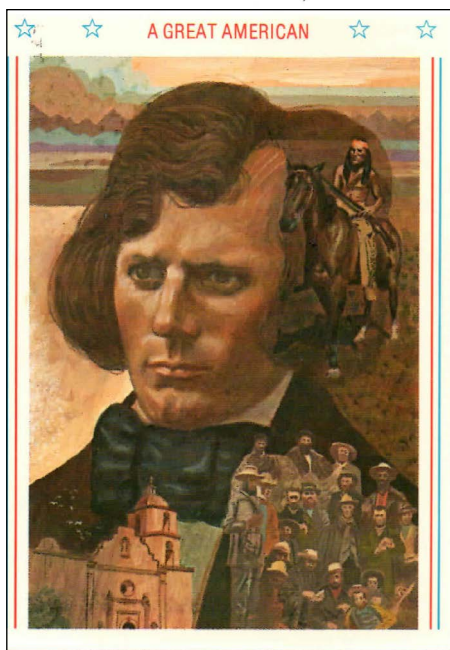


Leads in "The Pathfinder of the Sierras"

James Orr Ryan, is shown as Jedediah Strong Smith and Ruth Ryan Federson as Marguerita.



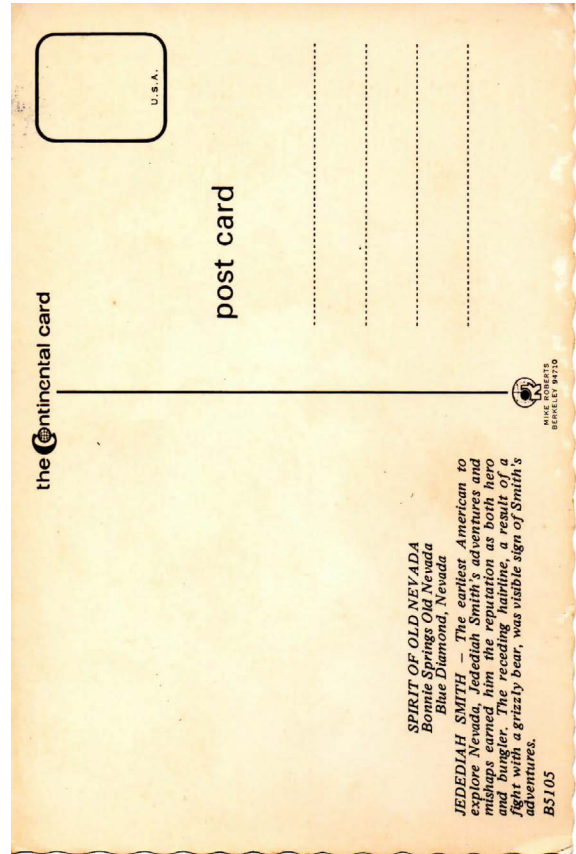
<b>JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH</b> American Explorer		<b>TRUE or FALSE</b>
<p><b>Born:</b> January 6, 1799 <b>Died:</b> May 27, 1831 <b>Nationality:</b> American <b>Conquest:</b> Exploration of Rocky Mountains</p>	<p>Trapper, fur trader and explorer Jedediah Smith became one of the greatest pathfinders in American history. From 1826 until his death in '31, Smith's exploration of Nevada, California, Oregon and Utah (including the Rocky and Sierra Mountains and the Great Salt Lake desert) blazed the trail for settlement of the West, especially during the California Gold Rush.</p>	<p><b>S</b> MITH WAS ONCE MAULLED BY A GRIZZLY BEAR AND NARROWLY ESCAPED DEATH.</p>
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☆ ☆ A GREAT AMERICAN ☆ ☆
<p><b>Jedediah Smith</b> Card No. 43 of 50 (1798-1831) Trader, explorer, one of the "Mountain Men"; his explorations removed the geographic barriers to California and opened the West Coast to military conquest and settlement. Born in Bainbridge, New York, on June 24, 1798; in the 1820's he moved to St. Louis and worked for a fur-trading company; his courage in the wilderness became legendary—at one time a grizzly bear attacked him and tore off one ear and part of his scalp, but one of the men stitched him up, and he continued trapping. He was one of the first white men to cross the continental divide along what became the Oregon Trail, and at the age of 28 he became the first white man to reach California by an overland route. On November 27, 1826, he reached Mission San Gabriel but was imprisoned by the Mexican governor for illegal entry into California; he was released on condition that he leave and never return. He and his party settled in the San Joaquin Valley and trapped along the Stanislaus and Kings Rivers. In May of 1827 he and two companions became the first white men to cross the high Sierra Nevada Mountains. On his return to California he again was imprisoned at Mission San Jose but was released and led his expedition northward to Oregon. While crossing the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico on May 27, 1831, he met his death, probably at the hands of Comanche Indians.</p> <p>Good Things are goin' on </p> <p>©1976-Christian Hansen, P.O. Box 1776, Summerland, CA 93067</p>

# Archives Corner

## Post Card



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.





## 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.

**No new members this quarter.**

### Donor List

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

#### Special thanks to:

- Theresa Melbar donated \$1,000 to our Society to help fund a replacement of a Jedediah Smith monument near Bakersfield that was stolen. The Bakersfield Historical Society has the lead in this project.
- The James Irvine Foundation has awarded a grant of \$500 to the Jedediah Smith Society to help pay for the costs associated with having Professor Stephen Beckham speak at the 2019 Annual Meeting. This grant came from the Staff Discretionary Grants Program through Adam Cimino. His father is Rich Cimino, a member of our Board.
- Jim Smith donated \$150 to help pay for printing expenses associated with the Annual Meeting.
- Member Jon Warn made a general donation of \$100 over and above his dues which will be used to help fund the map project.
- New member, Kenneth Rendell made a general donation of \$100 when paying his initial dues making him a JSS Patron.

*Thank you!*

## Your Officers & Board Members

### President

**Kevin Kucera**

### Vice President

**Jim Smith**

### Secretary/Treasurer

**Milton von Damm**



### Board of Directors

Kevin Kucera

Jim Smith

Milton von Damm

Rich Cimino

Luke Kucera

Bob Shannon

Sheri Wysong

### Executive Committee

Kevin Kucera

Jim Smith

Milton von Damm

## 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.

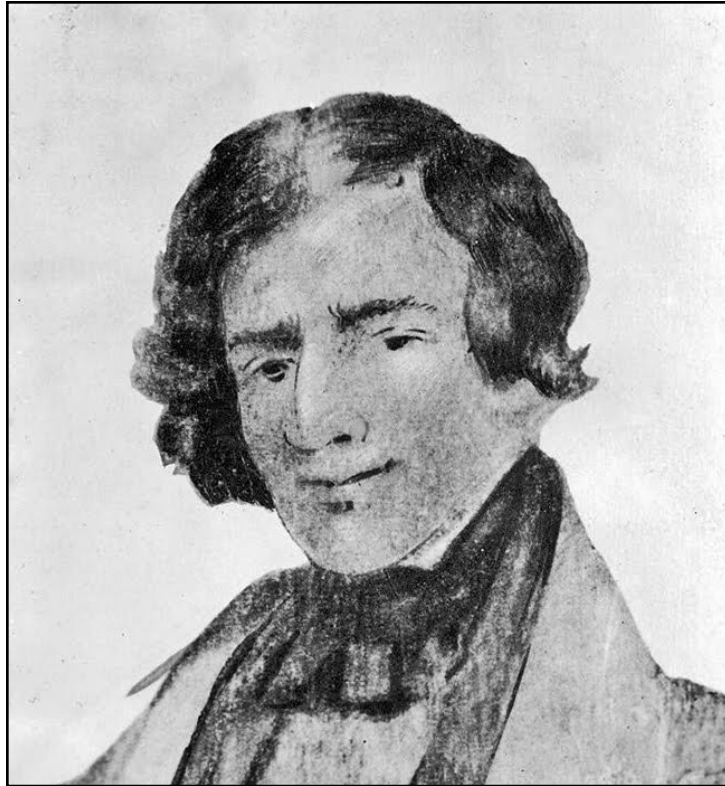
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Please make check payable to: JEDEDIAH SMITH SOCIETY  
Mail to Treasurer: 1322 Shattuck Ave. Apt. 401, Berkeley, CA 94709

Need a Membership Application?

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



Jedediah Smith Society  
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