

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE JOURNAL

QUICK REFERENCE

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THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE JOURNAL

VOLUME 1, 2007

Rocky Mountain Rivalry: The Hudson's Bay Company's Involvement in the American Fur Trade Rendezvous System

by Dale F. Topham

Extensive new research into the Hudson's Bay Company Archive sparks a fresh evaluation of the Hudson's Bay Company's presence at the American Rendezvous during the late 1830s.

Forgotten in the Fur Trade: The Deerskin Trade of the High Plains and Intermountain West, 1540-1882

by Ken Zontek

Often overlooked, commerce in deer, elk, antelope and mountain sheep skins was significant throughout the West well before and after the buffalo and beaver trade.

"The Superior Dignity of Such a Character:" Nineteenth-Century American Manhood and the Image of Kit Carson

by Dr. S. Matthew DeSpain

Kit Carson was one of the first heroes in popular culture to come out of the American West. The fictionalized Carson communicated changing values to the nation's men and boys.

Hawaiians in the American Fur Trade

by Keith "Moki" Hipol

Hawaiians participated in the fur trade of the Pacific Northwest from the very start, helping to build Fort Astoria in 1811. Their legacy is still present in the West today.

The Yankee Pedlar: Introduction of Percussion Lock Firearms into the Far West

by Alex Miller

A Boston business man, Nathaniel Wyeth, helped expose the new percussion technology to mountain men who were dependent on the flintlock.

Perceptions of a Mountain Man: John "Jeremiah Liver-Eating" Johnston at Old Trail Town, Cody, Wyoming

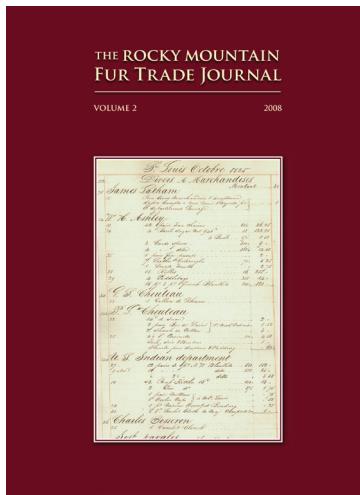
by Nathan E. Bender

Although John Johnston emerged long after the mountain men of the rendezvous era, his legend has come to represent the mountain man in popular culture.

Fame Over Misfortune: La Verendrye and the Opening of the Western Fur Trade

by Brad Tennant

Well before Lewis and Clark, Pierre Gaultier La Verendrye and his sons used profits from their Great Lakes fur trade to finance risky expeditions in a search for the "western sea."



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VOLUME 2, 2008

The Legend of Jedediah Smith: Fact, Fantasy and Opinion

by James C. Auld

This article reexamines popular characteristics attributed to Jedediah Strong Smith.

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

by Clay Landry

An investigation of the supply list for Jedediah Smith's southwest expedition, illuminating the role of a variety of trade goods and equipment carried West in the quest for beaver pelts.

Antonio Montero and the Portuguese Houses: An Outpost on Powder River

by Gary Peterson

Montero began his fur trade career as an employee of the American Fur Company in 1833, but played an integral role in Benjamin Bonneville's plans. Montero built the so-called Portuguese House and directed the activities of a number of trappers from that post.

Sweet Encounters: Mountain Men and the Honey Bee on the Fur Trade Frontier

by G. Gage Skinner

Much has been written about many of the creatures that influenced the fur trade—beaver, bison and grizzly bears. The author uses diary accounts to highlight the impact of bees, honey and byproducts on the fur trade for the men and women who moved West. The honey bee, a non-native insect, often served a sentinel of the advancing frontier.

Mountain Man as Mountaineer: Fur Trappers and John C. Frémont's Ascent in the Wind River Range

by Terrence Ian Dunn

The author investigates the role mountaineers, and especially Kit Carson, played in Frémont's drive to conquer the Wind River Range of the Rocky Mountains. Fur traders were not just participants in the exploration, but were critical to his success.

"To Preserve Peace on the Frontiers": Federal Regulation and the Fur Trade

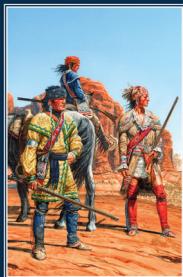
by Dr. Brad Tennant

This article examines the federal government's impact on the early trading practices along the frontier.

Sheltering the Fur Trade: Portable and Improvised Shelters of the Rocky Mountains

by Doyle Reid

This article discusses various shelter types built and used during the fur trade era.



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VOLUME 3, 2009

Revisiting the Colter Legend

by *John C. Jackson*

The author details the lack of primary documentation regarding John Colter. Second-hand stories and rumors contribute to the myth that surrounds the man's exploits. The author draws from many sources to draw into question the authenticity of his many adventures.

The Taos Whiskey Trade

by *Joe Kierst*

The number of mountain men involved in producing and distributing the fiery concoction known as "Taos Lightning" in northern New Mexico in nefarious trade for nearly three decades may come as a surprise to some readers.

An American Fur Company Northwest Trade Gun

by *Barry C. Bohnet*

Gunbuilder Barry Bohnet examines an early Northwest trade gun that was found in the storeroom of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. Photos help detail the gun's construction.

"Formidable Men and Heroes": The Forgotten Delaware Mountaineers

by *Doyle Reid*

Using journals and diaries, the author details the regularity of this tribe's involvement with Euro-Americans in the fur trade, and their forgotten role in the western expansion of the United States.

Alfred Jacob Miller: The Artist and the Greenhorn, Lost and Found in Wind River Country, 1837

by *Chavawn Kelley*

Artist Alfred Jacob Miller was hired by William Drummond Stewart to document his exploits on his western expedition in 1837. Though Miller only attended one rendezvous, his artwork is forever connected to our understanding of the fur trade story.

The Spanish Saddle: Choice of the Rocky Mountain Fur Men

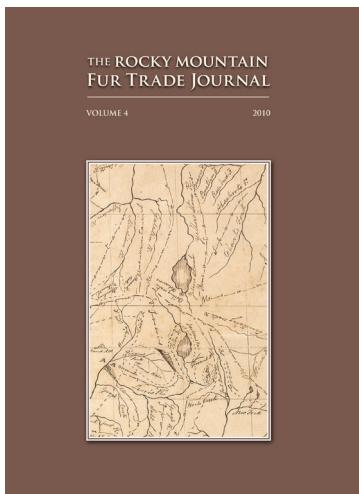
by *Clay Landry*

Using period records, the author documents the use of Spanish saddles during the Rocky Mountain fur trade era.

A Fur Trader's Tale of Saving the Bison

by *Ken Zontek, Ph.D.*

As bison populations dwindled, former fur trader Charles Aubrey told of a lone Pend d'Oreille Indian's involvement in what essentially became the seed herd for Montana's National Bison Range.



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The Sublette County Fur Trade Papers

A collection of rare and historic papers, letters, and documents from the fur trade, recently acquired by the Museum of the Mountain Man, is introduced.

Was Meriwether Lewis the Godfather of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade?

by Thomas C. Danisi and John C. Jackson

This paper examines the role of Meriwether Lewis and his outspoken viewpoints on commerce in the early exploration of the recently acquired Louisiana Purchase and the hunt for beaver pelts.

Going Indian! The Use of Leggings and Breech Clout by the Euro-American Trapper of the Rocky Mountains

by Clay Landry

The author makes extensive use of primary sources to describe types of legwear worn by men of the fur trade. Whether trappers wore breech clout and leggings has been hotly debated among material culturalists.

Union Pass: A “Mountain of Many Waters”

by Stephen V. Banks

How well was Union Pass known to fur trappers? Using period journals and diaries, the author documents the repeated use of this pass and what made it beneficial to travelers.

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

by Tim V. Tanner

Period art plays an important role in research, and research plays an important role in creating period art. Author Tim Tanner painted *On the Headwaters of Spanish River* to illustrate the effort that goes into researching historical accuracy in creating artwork.

Warren Ferris, the Hudson’s Bay Company, and the Rendezvous of 1834

by Scott Walker

The author looks at Warren Ferris’s relationship as a trader, rather than a trapper, with the HBC during the Joint Occupancy of the Oregon Territory, and the impact on the rendezvous system.

Wheels to Rendezvous

by E. Rick Williams

Caravans of pack mules brought many goods to the fur trade, but the fur trade also brought the first wagons over the Continental Divide. Rendezvous supply routes opened the road for emigrants.

Goggles in the Rocky Mountain West

by Alida Boorn

Fur trade records dating back as early as 1733 show the early use of sunglasses. Primary documents from journals to newspaper advertisements show that goggles shielded the eyes of trappers, Native Americans, and overland travelers during the Rocky Mountain fur trade era.



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VOLUME 5, 2011

Tracking Jim Bridger: Finding the Trail of Old Gabe

by Jerry Enzler

It is time to take a new look at one of the most celebrated figures in the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

Was Fort Bonneville Simply Nonsense?

by O. Ned Eddins

Did a Fort Bonneville exist on Wyoming's Green River during the Rocky Mountain fur trade era? Warren Angus Ferris was the only Green River rendezvous participant to leave a physical description of a Fort Bonneville, or use the term Fort Nonsense. Contemporary fur trade journals, lack of physical evidence, and no verifiable artifacts suggest a bastioned Fort Bonneville did not exist.

St. George and the Dragon Sideplate: An Art History for North American Trade Guns

by Nathan E. Bender

A thorough examination of dragon imagery shows the serpentine design of trade gun sideplates is tied to western artistic traditions.

"A Life Wild and Perilous": Death in the Far West among Trappers and Traders

by James Hannon, Jr.

Dime novels, early "historical" biographies, Hollywood and individuals' imaginations have often done a great disservice to the accurate reconstruction of the mountain men's lifestyle by ignoring the risks involved in the occupation and the frequency of death. Research quickly reveals the often brutal conditions in which the mountain men truly worked. Yet it seems that the routine occurrence of death and mayhem in their daily lives is often lost among romantic tales, imagination and persistent myths.

Lock, Stock and Barrel: Arming the Far Western Mountaineers

by Doyle Reid

When wielded by men who understood their limitations, muzzle-loading firearms made possible the exploration of the Far West.

Myth and Mountain Men Analyzed: Heroes and Heroines

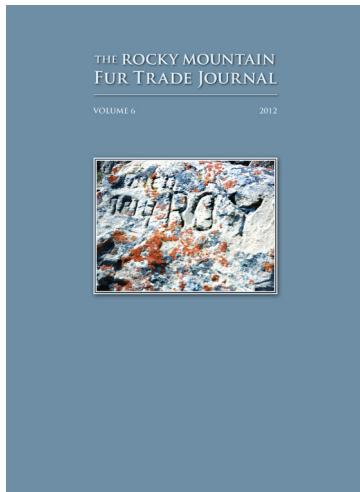
by Ken Zontek, PhD

Whether Joe Meek or Luke Skywalker, Kit Carson or Sinbad, the hero adventurer is vital to our social-psychological essence.

An 1824-1825 Columbia Fur Company Ledger

by Jim Hardee

A recently discovered ledger adds new light to the business of CFC and some of the men employed in the fur trade of the upper Missouri River.



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VOLUME 6, 2012

Zackary Perch Claims the Northwest

by John C. Jackson

Who was the man behind two mysterious 1807 letters challenging British encroachment on the waters of the Columbia?

Who Was Roy?

by John Eldredge

Discovering whose name was chiseled in 1814 on a rock in southwest Wyoming provides the earliest evidence for American traders west of South Pass.

The Mexican Connection

by Dr. James A. Hanson

The Southwest trade with Indians of the northern Rockies and western Plains endured for nearly three centuries.

Jedediah Smith's Journeys of "Secondary Consideration": New York to St. Louis

by James C. Auld

Jedediah Smith is arguably one of the most written-about personalities of the Rocky Mountain fur trade. His career, spanning a short nine years from 1822 to 1831, was packed with penetrating explorations of the American West. But his adolescence in Pennsylvania and Ohio remains relatively undocumented. Still, faint clues hint at his motives for leaving family behind for the frontier.

Although impossible to prove using extant sources, these clues suggest that Smith's choices may have hinged partly on the girl he loved marrying his older brother.

India Rubber in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

by Clay J. Landry

Until the advent of India rubber items, rain and snow gear for feet or body was limited to heavy leather or double-layered boots and shoes, oil cloths, canvas and densely woven wool or other fabric. These methods proved marginally successful in keeping a person dry, which accounts for the general acceptance and demand for the first India rubber items imported into the United States in the 1820s. These unique items found their way to the Rocky Mountains during the latter days of the region's fur trade.

Eavesdropping on Fur Trade Mail

by Jim Hardee

Fur trade history is replete with shrewd business dealings giving one company a strong advantage over another. A classic illustration of such cunning tactics was when William Sublette beat Nathaniel Wyeth to the 1834 rendezvous at Ham's Fork stealing the bulk of the trade away from the Bostonian in spite of Wyeth's contractual agreement for the delivery of goods. A letter penned on September 24, 1834, by Edward M. Samuel reveals interesting information about this incident and the inner workings of a fur company.



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Arikara Niituníšu' Beliefs and the Fur Trade

by *Dr. Mark van de Logt*

The article shows foreign traders gradually losing their status as supernatural spirits and becoming something more darkly human in the eyes of the Arikara. The perception of the Arikara were that of the Euro-Americans bringing recurring epidemics that devastated the tribes.

Fact and Fancy in Alfred Jacob Miller's Early Watercolors, 1837-39

by *Dr. Lisa Strong*

Many readers are familiar with the artwork of Alfred Jacob Miller the only artist who attended a Rocky Mountain rendezvous. Many historians use Miller's images as historical evidence of fur trade material culture. The article shows the insightful comparisons of various phases of the artist's career and illuminations of the pitfalls of assuming that Miller's artwork can be considered historical data.

Where was Fort William?

by *Scott Walker*

Miller's paintings of Fort William (later known as Fort Laramie) are examined for evidence of that structure's historical location. Though the original site is yet to be determined by archaeologists, Scott Walker shows that careful attention to detail – in both the artwork and Miller's commentary – can yield interesting results.

Commerce in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade: Two 1830 Promissory Notes

by *Clay J. Landry*

This article explains the financial system of the fur trade and highlights the significance of these drafts for the two illiterate men who held them.

Bartolomé Baca and the Opening of the Mexican Southwest

by *J. Ryan Badger*

Baca, governor of the province of Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexico from 1823-25, helped initiate commerce by sidestepping Mexican statutes to encourage beaver trapping. J. Ryan Badger demonstrates how Baca's independent streak affected the American fur trade.

Trappers' Brides: Intercultural Marriages in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

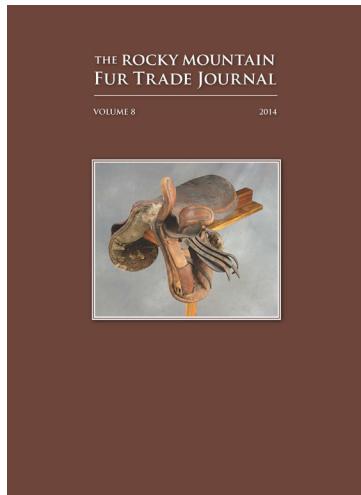
by *Dr. Kathleen Barlow*

Parsing the fantasy and the reality in Miller's artwork to separate Euro-American assumptions about Native American women reveals the actual roles those women fulfilled in their societies. Ultimately Dr. Kathleen Barlow offers a way to reframe Miller's images and writing to better appreciate Indian women's place in the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

Murthly: Castle of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

by *James C. Auld*

The author provides a glimpse into the personal life of Sir William Drummond Stewart that is anchored in the history of his ancestral home, Murthly Castle. Stewart came to the Rockies in 1833 and spent nearly a decade attending rendezvous, adventuring with fur trappers, and collecting artifacts. When he returned to Scotland, he renovated his ancestral home as a memento of his American experiences.



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William H. Ashley's Newly-Discovered 1826 Fur Trade Journal

by Dr. Jay H. Buckley

Published for the first time, this 1826 diary which appears to have been kept by William H. Ashley on his expedition to the second annual rendezvous. Buckley discusses how the diary was found and how it ultimately made its way to the Campbell House Museum in St. Louis, Missouri, then explains the significance to the fur trade record of Ashly's time on the trail.

Ashley's 1826 Journal and Transcript

with an introduction by Andrew W. Hahn

1836 and 1838: When White Girls Crashed the Party

by Jill R. Ottman

Euro-American women appear infrequently in period journals and letters. American missionary wives appeared late in the rendezvous era. Their detailed deacriptions and observations in letters and diaries allow historians a female perspective on a culturally mixed but male-dominated event.

Smith, Jackson & Sublette: A Difficult Partnership

John C. Jackson

The author challenges accepted viewpoints regarding the business dealings of the three men. Drawing from many sources, he questions whether Smith was an asset or a liability to the partnership.

The Blackfoot Road to Plunder

by Paul M. Raczka

This paper explores Blackfoot interactions with other tribes along a tribal migration and trade route leading north and south along the Rocky Mountain Range from Alberta, Canada, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, based on an 1801 map drawn by Blackfoot Chief Old Swan for HBC fur trader Peter Fidler.

Jedediah Smith's Disaster at Defeat River

by James C. Auld

The author attempts to identify the location of a fatal encounter between Smith's party and Native Americans on the banks of the Umpqua River in 1828. Drawing on first-hand reports and on-the-ground research, the author pinpoints a potential location of Smith's camp on the banks of today's Smith River in a massacre that left few survivors.



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The Mystery of Alfred Jacob Miller's Portrait of Captain Joseph Reddeford Walker

by Vic Nathan Barkin

This article questions long-held assumptions about a portrait painted by the only artist to attend a rendezvous. The author builds an intriguing case for the image of the famed brigade leader not being Joe Walker at all.

Wolverines in the Fur Trade

by Fred F. Poyner IV

Although beaver was the primary animal trapped during the Rocky Mountain fur trade era, many other creatures sporting fine fur were also trapped or otherwise harvested. The author uses current scientific information, as well as 19th century primary sources, to illustrate trapper encounters with the animal and its role in the marketplace.

The 1808 Murder Trial of George Drouillard

by Melissa Tiffie

This article takes an in-depth look at an early St. Louis legal case involving George Drouillard, who years earlier had been an indispensable member of the Lewis & Clark Expedition and later was a part of Manuel Lisa's venture to the upper Missouri. He later got into trouble leading to this trial.

Exploring Rocky Mountain Trapper Productivity

by Jim Hardee

Have you ever wondered how many pelts an average trapper could expect to harvest and sell each year during the Rocky Mountain fur trade?

Blackfeet Peacemaker: The Search for Nicholas the Small Robe

by George Capps

One Piegan man urged his people to work together for peaceful trade with neighboring tribes and trappers. The author researches genealogical records, census data, and Jesuit journals to propose a possible mistaken identity of the man baptized and given the Christian name Nicholas.

Jim Bridger Challenges the HBC in the Post-Rendezvous Era

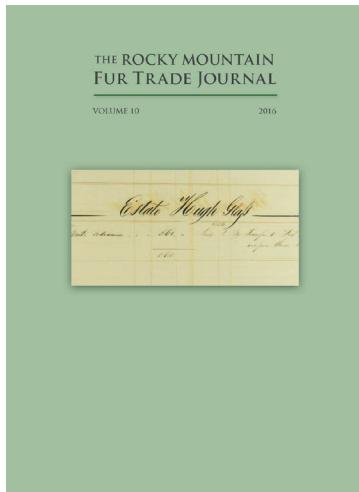
by Jerry Enzler

The author looks at the post-rendezvous era of the fur trade when trappers continued to find relatively untrapped regions in the southwest. The author examines recently discovered documents in the Hudson's Bay Company archives to provide new information about an overlooked period of the fur trade.

Archibald Pelton, Mad Man of the Mountains

by Larry E. Morris

This article charts the life of young mountaineer Archibald Pelton, a contemporary of Andrew Henry, Manuel Lisa, and Wilson Price Hunt. Pelton's case is the first mention of mental illness of Euro-Americans entering the Pacific Northwest. In Chinook Jargon, a language of mixed Native American and English vocabulary, the word for "crazy" stems from the forlorn tale of this early trapper.



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Hugh Glass: The Rest of the Story

by Clay J. Landry

In the wake of the Hollywood movie, *The Revenant*, this article investigates new and rarely-considered data, period accounts and letters to build a more complete picture of this remarkable man and his circumstances, especially later in his life.

“This Outrageous Disease”: Charles Larpenteur’s Observations of the 1837 Smallpox Epidemic

by Michael M. Casler

This article is an investigation of the 1837 smallpox epidemic that killed many Native Americans and other people in the upper Missouri area. Using Charles Lapenteur’s first-hand account, other primary sources, and modern understanding of the pathogen, the author advances a nuanced picture of how fur traders dealt with the situation.

The Rats at Fort Clark

by Don Arp, Jr.

This article looks at statistics compiled by Francis Chardon from 1834 to 1839, revealing how a rat infestation affected the daily life at Fort Clark, an American Fur Company fur trade post on the Missouri River.

The Influence of the Fur Trade on John Sutter

by Jim Hardee

John Sutter is the man who owned the sawmill where gold was discovered in California in 1848, setting off a massive rush to the Pacific Coast for riches. The author examines his life ten years earlier, in 1838, on his trip West when he rubbed shoulders with mountain men, affecting the history of what became the Golden State.

Naturalists in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Era: “They Are a Perfect Nuisance”

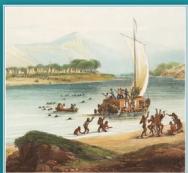
by Carol Kuhn

Numerous scientists went West traveling with fur trapping forays. The author offers a unique angle on the business of studying western flora and fauna, examining not just how, but why these men ventured into the Rocky Mountains. These naturalists collected plants not only to increase scientific knowledge, but also to gain profit through sales in the burgeoning commercial botany trade.

Mountain Men and the Taking of California, 1845-1847

by Larry E. Morris

With the decline of the beaver trade, many former trappers got involved with American military ventures. The author explores the integral roles mountaineers played in the Mexican-American War.



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VOLUME 11, 2017

The Henry & Ashley Fur Company Keelboat Enterprise

by Clay J. Landry and Jim Hardee

In 1822, an entire boatload of equipment and supplies belonging to the Henry & Ashley Fur Company sank to the bottom of the Missouri River—and probably lies deep in the mud, awaiting discovery.

Appendix: Wheel-powered Keelboats?

More than Just a Rock: the Manufacture of Gunflints

by Michael P. Schaubs

Mountaineers relied on their firearms for survival, and the flintlock mechanism on those firearms relied on a proper flint. This article details how an industry thrived on the mining, shaping, and export of prized flint.

The Hudson's Bay Company and "Youtah" Country, 1825-41

by Dale Topham

Information pulled from the Hudson's Bay Company archives show the company's plans for working with the Ute Indians and competing with Americans in the region south of the Great Salt Lake.

Appendix: Politics of Oregon Country: a US Military Presence on the Columbia River

Otholoho and Grohean: Two Fast Horses, One Set of Tracks

by Jerry Enzler

This is the story of two race horses whose tracks might have merged—one steed the pride of William Drummond Stewart, the other the favorite of Jim Bridger. Could they have been the same horse?

Traps: the Common Denominator

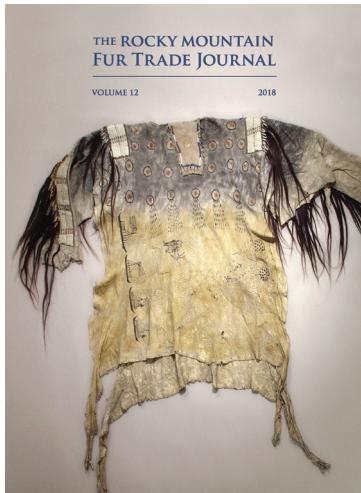
by Dr. James A. Hanson

The author provides a linear history, and new details, about the steel trap, an indespensable tool used by Native and Euro-American trappers.

Bad Pass Trail: Gateway between the Wind and Yellowstone Rivers

by Mike Bryant

This article focuses on the use by many brigades of Bad Pass Trail between the Wind and Yellowstone Rivers during the fur trade years. This rough pass provides direct access between the lower reaches of the Yellowstone River and the Big Horn Basin. The author makes the case that mountain men used this trail since at least 1808, seventeen years prior to William H. Ashley's first accounts of Bad Pass in his 1825 journal.



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The Bones of More and Foy

by Michael J. Everts

This article looks at a relatively obscure event from July 1832 when trapper Alfred Stephens felt he had been swindled by Rocky Mountain Fur Company partner Thomas Fitzpatrick. Stephens assembled a small party to remedy the perceived deception, but they were ambushed by Gros Ventre Indians and members of the party were killed. The author examines the probable route, the location of the ambush, and other facts of the incident.

A Keelboat Petroglyph: A New Discovery in the Northern Bighorn Basin of Wyoming

by Michael T. Bies

A rock art panel documented in the northern Big Horn Basin of Wyoming includes a petroglyph depiction of a keelboat associated with the early fur trade of the upper Missouri River. Dated to from 1807 and 1813, it represents the earliest known rock art image of a fur trade era keelboat.

A Warrior's Pride: Native Illustration and the Written Record

compiled by Journal Staff

This article highlights a Native American war shirt that has artwork portraying keelboats and a battle. The shirt is in a collection of a museum in Frankfurt, Germany. There is a strong belief this is a Sioux account graphically depicting the opening minutes of the Arikara War of 1823.

"Now We Go": Snake Country Freemen and the Desertions of May 1825

by Thomas H. Holloway

This article is an indepth and fresh assessment of the desertions from Peter Skene Ogden's brigade in 1825. The author presents more background information on the men and an alternative view of what led so many to depart from HBC service. How "free" were the freemen?

Appendices - Deserters from Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Brigade, May 24-29, 1825; and Historiographical Background

The Spark in the Powder: Iroquois Freemen Trappers in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

by Dr. Jay H. Buckley and Lyn S. Clayton

Racial and economic discrimination by the HBC toward Iroquois freemen trappers caused a negative impact on the financial success of the Snake Country expeditions which ultimately led deserters over to American fur companies. This article looks at differences in management styles.

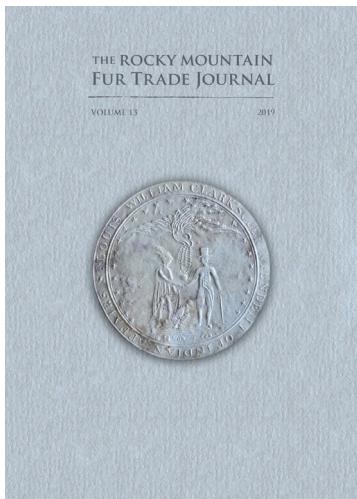
Appendix: Iroquois in the British Fur Trade, 1790-1825

"The Hunters of Kentucky" Reach Rendezvous

by Scott Walker

This article discusses a musical composition that can be clearly placed at one of the annual trade fairs of the period. The author offers the history of the song and substantiates its effect on some of those who heard or sang the melody.

Appendix: Music to Rendezvous By



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VOLUME 13, 2019

Distant Thunder: Ghost Artillery in the Early American West

by Mike Bryant

The author has collected accounts of early western travelers who noted sounds that reminded them of far away cannon. These unexplained booming sounds fuel the imagination and defy clear explanation to this day.

The Cost of Shooting a Gun in the Rocky Mountain West

by Michael P. Schaub

Based on information from two trading posts, this article estimates the cost of ammunition for mountaineers of the rendezvous period. Lead for bullets, powder for propellant, and flint or cap were basic necessities provided at the end of a long supply line, making them precious and costly.

William Drummond Stewart, The H'ar of the Grizzly in Him

by Alan McFarland

This article sets the record straight about Stewart's service record as a teenaged cavalryman in the British Army during the Napoleonic Wars in Waterloo. Stewart's military service helped finance his travels to the West, gave him credibility among the mountaineers, and may have been why he was given responsibility in fur trade caravans, despite being neither trapper nor fur trader.

Nathaniel Wyeth: Double-Crossed on the Green River

by Jim Hardee

The author makes the case that the rendezvous of 1834 was not held entirely at Ham's Fork, but 25 miles to the northeast at a site along the Green River.

American Contracted Rifles of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

by Vic Nathan Barkin

This article describes the basics of the American-made trade rifle available to trappers from 1800 to 1840. The evolution of these guns was influenced by a combination of regional styles and requirements of government and company contracts.

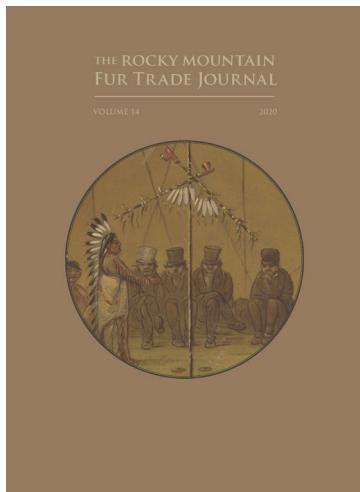
Appendix A: The Gunsmiths

Appendix B: English Trade Rifles, a Circle of Design

Licenses to Trade with Indians

by Journal Staff

The business of the fur trade was licensed according to Federal law, and those licences were carried by traders as they traveled beyond the settlements to show they were in compliance with those laws. This article details two such licenses issued during the 1830s and includes tables of licenses granted between 1824 and 1834.



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VOLUME 14, 2020

Phillip Covington, A Year in the Mountains, 1827-28

by Scott Walker and Jim Hardee

This article brings to light a series of articles Phillip Covington wrote reminiscing about a year he spent as a young man in the mountains working as a mule packer and trapper. More than fifty years later, these articles were published serially in a series of 14 issues of an 1859 Colorado newspaper.

Robert Campbell's 1832 Financial Journal

by Clay J. Landry

The author examines the business records Robert Campbell kept of his 1832 rendezvous outfit at Pierre's Hole. The article looks at Campbell's choice goods, the markup between wholesale and mountain retail, and the list of the people who were his customers at rendezvous.

Appendix A: Transcription of Goods Sold

The "Beaver" Hat of the Rendezvous

by Arlaina Goddard

In the early 1800s, the beaver top hat was the height of fashion. The beaver pelts from the Rocky Mountain rendezvous (1825-1849) were primarily sold to meet the demands of the hat making industry. This article discusses the factory production of a felted hat using various period sources, how it was made, and the role of mercury in the process.

Appendix A: Medical Implications in the Use of Mercury

Stereotypes of Rocky Mountain Trappers and Traders Revisited

by William R. Swagerty

The author surveys period literature, first-person accounts, and works by well-known historians to identify popular stereotypes of the mountaineers.

Appendix A: Mountaineer Stereotypes at the Movies

Appendix B: Statistical Approach



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In the Absence of the Indians: Looting of American Indian Graves During the Fur Trade

by Mark van de Logt, PhD, and Dan Jibréus

In the 19th century, scientists, ethnologists and naturalists, sometimes with the help of fur traders, took human remains from Native burials throughout the West in the name of science to study and characterize different peoples of the world based on precise measurements of their skulls.

Welcome to my Indian Weed! Tobacco and the Fur Trade

by James A. Hanson, PhD

Tobacco was a trade item that made its way from the Americas to the rest of the world and back again as an item of international trade. Tobacco was an integral part of the western fur trade.

Grand Ignace: Apostle of the Flatheads

by George Capps

Grand Ignace was an Iroquois trapper, raised near Montreal, who settled among the Salish people in what is now Montana. Brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, Ignace became part of a quest for missionary priests to bring the religion of his youth to his new homeland. His efforts led to Father Pierre-Jean De Smet attending the rendezvous of 1840 and the missionary work that followed.

Sublette's Trace: The Fur Trade's Influence on Emigrant Trails

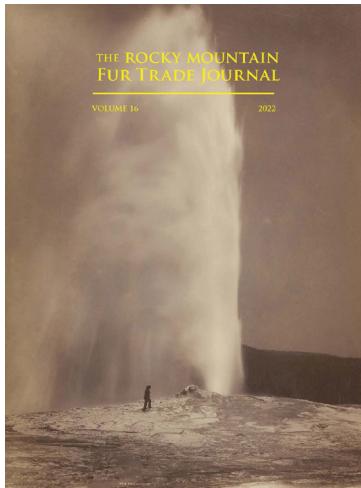
by Jim Hardee

The trails followed by tens of thousands of westbound emigrants following the rendezvous era were pioneered by trappers, who in turn learned the routes by observing the Native American's seasonal travel. This article examines and locates a fur trade road used by William Sublette that grew into an emigrant trail.

The Fort Hall Account Book: Sales Patterns and Seasonal Cycles

by Michael P. Schaub

The business records of Nathaniel Wyeth's Fort Hall provide an invaluable early record of a list of goods brought from far distances for customers of the mountain fur trade. The author uses these lists to analyze purchase patterns of daily life at Fort Hall.



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Mountain Men Reveal Yellowstone: Observations of Daniel Potts, Warren Ferris, & Osborne Russell in the 1820s and 1830s

by Dr. Jay Buckley and Nathan Benavidez

Decades before Yellowstone became a national park, the area and its thermal features enthralled mountain men just as they do visitors to the park today, inspiring them to be the first to write down impressions of these wonders.

The First American Mountain Man

by Jim Hardee

The author presents a case for a person who should be in consideration for the title of first American mountain man, and he probably isn't the one who first comes to mind.

“Natural Born Indian”: The Apprenticeship of Edward Rose, 1807-1810

by Larry E. Morris

An examination of Edward Rose's first years in the mountains, as he mastered the skills of a mountaineer, to become both famous and infamous in the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

Movement & Protection for Rendezvous Caravans: The Ashley System

by Alan McFarland

William H. Ashley, put his experience as a militia officer during the War of 1812 to use as he established methods for moving groups of men and trade goods across western distances, a system that continued in use by Ashley's successors in the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

Jedediah Smith's Twice-Stolen Pistol

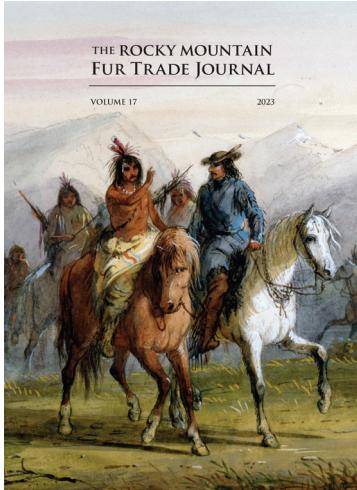
by James C. Auld

The author traces the story of Jedediah Smith's pistol, recovered by his brother after Jedediah's death, treasured by members of the Smith family for a century, and finally placed on public display to become the centerpiece of a cold case mystery.

Guiding the Pathfinders

by Jerry Enzler

The government expeditions that explored and surveyed the trapper's west in the decades following the end of the rendezvous were often guided by experienced mountain men whose knowledge of the country made them indispensable living maps.



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Killing Competition with Kindness: Jedediah Smith, George Simpson, and the Aftermath of the Umpqua Massacre

by Thomas H. Holloway

In 1828, Jedediah Smith arrived at Fort Vancouver, the regional headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Columbia River, to report that Indians had attacked his camp on the Umpqua River. Everything of value was gone and most of his men were dead. Why did the Hudson's Bay Company, a competitor, help him?

Jedediah Smith's Search for Melish's River

by Sheri Wysong

To some historians, Jedediah Smith's actions during his southwest expeditions of 1826-28 made little sense. This article discusses geography, contemporary geopolitics and cartography to hypothesize Smith's real goals.

Mountain Men and Shoshone: Two Cultures Intersect During the Fur Trade

by Jim Hardee

Using period dairies and writings of trappers, the author investigates ways in which the values and customs of mountain men and Shoshone Indians overlapped and, at least from the mountain man's point of view, both societies seem to have found mutual benefits from working together.

Ambush in the Coriacan Defile: Unlocking the Secrets of a Fur Trade Mystery

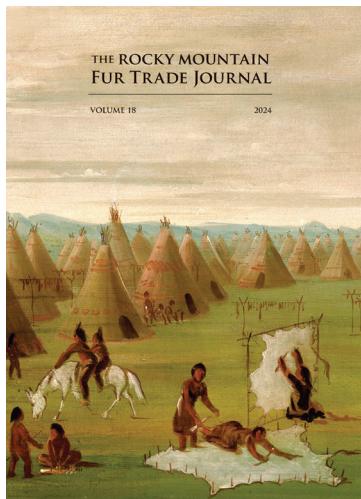
by George Capps

Sometime in the 1830s or 1840s, Indian raiders ambushed a Hudson's Bay Company pack train in today's O'Keefe Canyon, outside of Missoula, Montana. During the attack, a young Hawaiian employee was slain. This article looks at the cross-cultural connections of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific maritime fur trade enterprises that were influenced by Polynesian, English, Russian, and Alaskan Native peoples and their languages.

"Destroying the Pious Monster": The Collapse of the US Indian Factory System

by James C. Auld

Decades before the rendezvous era, the US government had created a federal program to control trade with indigenous people living throughout the wilderness of America's new boundaries. This article looks at the role Ramsay Crooks played in the demise of the US government's Indian factory system to create opportunities for private enterprise.



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Three Early J. & S. Hawken Presentation Rifles

by *Nathan E. Bender, Robert A. Tetro, and Daniel W. Phariss*

The story of a trio of remarkable weapons that helped define the craft of these famous gunmakers, the Hawken brothers.

Packing Fur: A Pressing Matter

by *Jim Hardee*

The preparation of beaver hides for transportation to fur markets included compacting bulky stacks into more manageable bales. Numerous entries from period journals are examined to provide insight on baling, weighing, pressing and packing bison robes, beaver skins, and other furs.

Who's Buried in Pinckney's Tomb? The Two Deaths of Pinckney Sublette

by *Carol Kuhn*

Pinckney Sublette, younger brother of William, was the middle of five Sublette siblings. The struggle to settle elder brother William Sublette's estate dragged Pinckney into the middle of a decades-long legal battle to determine if he was the last survivor, whose heirs stand to make millions.

The Cost of a Hide Lodge

by *Bradley C. Bailey*

The author breaks down the cost to purchase a tipi during the fur trade period, in terms of dollars, as well as trade goods. These skin lodges, typically made of tanned bison hides, required a monumental amount of work to make.

Chief's Coats, Capotes, and Calico: Clothing Traded at Fort Hall - 1834 to 1837

by *Clay J. Landry*

The business records for Fort Hall are stored at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. These account books and ledgers are a veritable gold mine for the material culture researcher. The tailor shop at Fort Hall was an innovative enterprise of the entrepreneurial Nathaniel Wyeth. Transactions are listed chronologically, showing both debits and credits, for each day of the year providing a good picture of the variety and list of goods available for sale during the fur trade era.

Governor Simpson & the HBC Snake River Brigades: 1818 to 1846

by *John C. Jackson*

This article is a critical review of how Hudson's Bay Company Governor George Simpson micro-managed trapping brigades in the Pacific Northwest and Snake River Country.

Three Worlds Meet, Interpreting the 1837 Rendezvous with Alfred Jacob Miller: From Pencil Sketches the Live Theatrical Performances

by *James C. Auld*

Founded in 2011, the production was staged in Wyoming, Scotland and Ireland. It used artwork by Alfred Jacob Miller in *tableau vivant* format to demonstrate the collaboration of trappers and Native Americans, and high-class Euro-Americans at rendezvous and throughout the mountains. This article looks back at this memorable production.



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Beaver Hats: Material Culture and the Perception of Dignity

by Maya Peters-Greño

This article looks at three North American communities – Euro-Americans, enslaved people and indigenous populations – to show how beaver top hats were used to navigate racial hierarchies from Early America through the post-Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Era.

The Eloquence of Mountain Man Lingo

by Jim Hardee

A mountaineer's speech pattern is often as defining of a frontiersman's character as are his actions, ranking as high as trapping beaver, hunting buffalo or fighting a grizzly bear – but is it truly accurate or based on historical works?

La Prairie de la Messe: Reconstructing Father De Smet's Mass from the 1840 Rendezvous

by George Capps and Polly Capps Paule

By examining primary sources and material culture, this duo makes an artistic, yet historically correct, painting of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet's Catholic Mass at the final rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Era.

Two Long Walks: James Clyman and Thomas Fitzpatrick, 1824

by Scott Walker

This article re-examines the dramatic adventures of two early mountain men in their attempts to get packs of fur from the Green River Valley, back across South Pass, and down the Platte River to market their catch.

Swords of the Fur Trade

by Donald Wade Davis

It is easy to visualize swashbuckling Musketeers, Vikings, pirates and cavalry soldiers flashing their sabers about, but the idea of a mountain man defending himself with a lengthy blade is less common. This article explores the presence and use of swords during the fur trade era.