

would be to go through Washington Irving's charming narrative of the Astorians, then into Bancroft's purported review of this narrative, not neglecting the many insulting flings that are wholly without basis in fact, as to Irving's sycophancy and relationship with John Jacob Astor. Then read John C. Fremont's charming and simple-hearted descriptions of his entrance into the wonderful valley of the Great Salt Lake, and Bancroft's insulting diatribe, flinging aspersions at the man whose work counted for so much in the bringing of the West to attention of the United States government.

And so, forgetting Bancroft as truly as possible, and approaching such a man as Jedediah Smith, prepared to do credit to the men who had the nation-making hardihood to push out into country really unknown, search out its highways and byways, we find first of all that he was devotedly a Christian, that his sense of honor was of the highest order, that much of his wealth (and he accumulated a fortune), went to the Methodist church, and that he carried always with him a copy of the Holy Bible, for solace when out in the wilderness, and for comfort upon all occasions. Once even he abandoned a great trapping area out of a sense of honor, and a pledged word to a British claimant.

There is on file with the Missouri Historical society a document having much more to do with Utah than with Missouri history. It is a remarkable bill of sale, executed "near the Grand Lake west of the Rocky Mountains, July 18, 1826."

The seller was William H. Ashley, whose two years of adventure in Utah ended with this date. The buyers were three men of the hundred and twenty who served under Ashley. Jedediah Smith, of these, was the senior, and the others were Jackson, and William L. Sublette. The firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette came into being in Great Salt Lake valley, from this incident. Its trappers were dispatched from the rendezvous held here that summer, to gather again with their catches in the same place in the summer of 1827.

While some of them scattered to the north and east, Smith, with a considerable party, determined to prospect to the south and west. That was the trip that carried him past Los Vegas, through the Cajon pass and into Los Angeles. To return to his Great Salt Lake valley meeting arranged for 1857, it was that he crowded back over the Sierras, and crossed the desert west of Great Salt Lake, bringing with him only a few of his men, and leaving the rest there to fall into serious trouble with the scared Mexican governors.

His return to them in the fall, their arrest, confinement, and banishment from California, over a route which brought them to the American river when it was so high that they could not ford and were forced to make a camp, from which the Spaniards gave it this name, is trace-

able through his letters and reports to friends and government officials.

There is first a letter to General Clark, written at Great Salt Lake in the summer of 1827, and published in the Missouri Republican for Oct. 11, 1827. All the writer has seen is a reference to it, but for a Utah historical society would it not make a document worth while?

Then there is a letter from Capt. Cunningham, of the ship Courier, dated at San Diego, December, 1826, and published in the Missouri Republican for Oct. 25, 1827. The Kansas Historical society possesses the letter book of the superintendent of Indian affairs, and in this is a statement of Smith's explorations as furnished by him at the request of the agent.

The first that is heard of Smith on the plains and in the mountains was in 1823, when his name appeared among the "hundred adventurous young men" that Ashley wanted for mountain work. A native of New York state, he was then 18 years old. Andrew Henry had already built a fort on the Yellowstone, and when, in 1823, Ashley's caravan, outbound, was surrounded by Aricara Indians on the Missouri, and stopped after a serious battle, a volunteer became necessary to push on alone to Henry's fort and carry the message as a warning. Smith came into notice in that he volunteered for the service and carried the message, his power at concealment and cunning in eluding Indians being all he could depend on to take him through.

His career ended in 1831. In the meantime he kept his senior membership in the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, after Ashley sold out in 1826, until 1830, when Jim Bridger, in turn, bought him out, with other associates. Then he went into the Santa Fe trade out of St. Louis, and in 1831 he lost his life.

The trapper era leaves little credit for Fremont as a "pathfinder." Like Capt. Bonneville, whose greatest achievement was to fall into the hands of Washington Irving, and to be written up in the period of interested readers, Fremont served in that he carried the message of a country over which he was guided by companions of Smith and Bridger, on their earlier trails, to people in a ferment of interest concerning it. His government report, 20,000 copies of which were printed, won converts to the idea of California and Oregon emigration, and served as a guide book to the colonization era. Much of it, by the way, was reprinted in the Millennial Star, preceding the Mormon emigration westward. And a presentation copy of it was made by Senator Benton, of Missouri, to Joseph Smith, while a digest of the book, written by Orson Hyde, was sent to Joseph Smith, he having been loaned a personal copy by Senator Benton to read up on, while in Washington on business.

But a glance over Jedediah Smith's western adventures will show well that he and his men



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