

11

Fort Leavenworth  
4 February 1833.

Dear Son

This leaves us all in good health -  
we received by last, a letter from Maritta,  
and also one from Caroline - The letters  
left them all well on the first of last  
month - I have written by this mail  
to Maji Dougherty and have requested  
him to let you have fifty dollars  
which I expect he will do; but  
should he be from home, I want  
you to ask the Gentlemen you  
live with for that amount, and  
if you get the money of the men  
you live with, you must write  
to me immediately and I will  
enclose them the money by the first  
mail - so soon as you get the money



wait on her, and pay strict attention  
to her - I have full confidence in  
you, and you must have confidence  
in yourself - Be ashamed or afraid of  
no one - suffer no one to insult your  
sister.  
Very affectionately yr. father  
R. P. Beauchamp

set to

Cant. Linn. m. m. m.  
Feb 4

Paris 1834

To John Arthur Beauchamp

H. Louis

Care of  
Messrs. Thau & Coys.  
March 6.  
2-4-1833

Mrs

P.S. you had better procure a larger trunk  
than yours is to hold your clothes and your  
sister's. you must see before you start from  
Paris that your sister has suitable clothes to.





*A Muskogee Indian on Horseback*



THE WESTERN MAILS

PRATTE, CHOUTEAU & CO.

[Translation:]

Eau qui Court (i.e. Running Water), May 29, 1837.

My dear Cousin.

By Mr. Leclerc (?) who will be leaving in 3 or 4 days, I hurry to give you our news, which from any angle is of the worst nature. First we have been short of water since the beautiful sunny summer and since then I have not done anything but 'portage'. Afterwards I have been obliged to wait for the water below Mahas, twice more between there and Vermillion, and once more at 10 or 12 miles above the said river; having sunk the Barge with 160 (140?) lead bars, and 8 to 10 axes, our 'wheel arms & bucket planks' (in English in the text); as a further benediction I have 'picote' (could be either measles or smallpox) on board. This morning we have buried Vital Papin, and we have 8 new cases, 2 of which since yesterday. I have no idea where it will stop. I have, in agreement with the instructions of my cousin, wanted to buy the packs (of furs) of Leclerc but the latter did not want to hear about this. Following the same instructions I have delivered to Dixon only the aftermentioned, and I am planning to leave the balance of his equipment at Lower Missouri; the articles left behind '1 pair of cartwheels, 1 medicine chest, 1 demijohn of vinegar, 1 cast iron kettle, 4 pigs or 285 lbs lead, 1 Boston 13 lb, 2 boxes tobacco, 700 lbs powder, 2 B[arrel]s flour, 1 B[arrel] pork, 2 scythes & swords (?), Box N° 8, Bale N° 380, 1 Box Sugar' (in English in the text); he has to go down to St. Louis

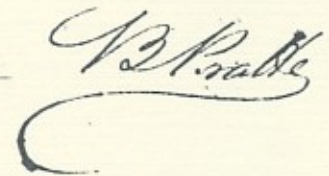
[p. 2]

but it is understood that he has to leave his packs at Vermillion in care of Mr. Labruyere, & that I will pick them up on my way back. The water has risen a little, but gone down again since dinner. I do not believe I will reach Lower Missouri with this outfit. Good-bye my dear Cousin. I am so tired in body and in spirit that I cannot continue, so excuse me for lack of detail &c. I would have enough energy for courtesy. Give the news to my wife. My respects to my uncle Labbadie & Mr. Cabanne

[signed:] B. Pratte.

[address-leaf:] Mess<sup>rs</sup>. Pratte Chouteau & Co., St. Louis. Politeness of Mr. Leclerc.

[docket:] Bernard Pratte. Eau qui Court May 29. 1837. Received July 1. 1837.



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**NOTES & CORRECTIONS**, from translation from the French on the above.

**Narcisse Leclerc** independent trader. May have worked for Pratte & Chouteau. **MAHAS** indian village.

**HONORE PICOTTE** worked for the American Fur Co, was in charge of FORT PIERRE in 1839. See letter of Dec. 15, 1839 in this collection.

**VERMILLION POST** located near the mouth of the Vermillion with the Missouri River in present day South Dakota.

**VITAL PAPIN** may have been one of the many Papins of St. Louis in the fur trade.

**LOWER MISSOURI** should be **LITTLE MISSOURI** as from "petit" in the letter.

**JOHN PIERRE CABANNE, Sr.** and **SYLVESTER LABBADIE**, as well as **PIERRE CHOUTEAU Jr.**, were brothers-in-law. Cabanne married Charles Gratiot's daughter Julia. So blood lines run in all directions when it comes to the fur trade.

**BERNARD PRATTE** is listed as having died April 1, 1836, but if he wrote and signed this letter he was still living over a year later! He had a son, Bernard Jr., who assumed his partnership in Pratte & Chouteau, but if he wrote the letter, and if his father was dead, would he have addressed it "My dear Cousin"??

And why did he leave off the "Jr." when signing as well as the recipient did when docketing the letter? If the death date is correct, the signer is B. Pratte Jr!

**EAU QUI COURT** was the French name for the **NIOBRARA RIVER** in northern Nebraska.



1837

Oau qui Court  
May 29. 1837.

Mon Cher Cousin

Par Mr. Lictore qui doit partir  
en 3 ou 4 jours Je m'empresse de te donner de  
nos nouvelles; les qu'elle sont tous les rapports sont  
des plus fâcheuse - D'abord l'eau nous a manqué  
depuis l'île a beau soleil & depuis lors Je n'ai fait  
que portage - inutile ite obligé d'attendre l'eau  
en bas des Mahas, deux autre fois entre cela & le  
Kormillon & une autre fois a 10 ou 12 mille au dessus  
de la dite rivière; ayant calé la Parge avec  
1 bo barres de plombs, & 8 ou 10 haches, nos wheel arms  
& 1 Pucket planks; pour benediction J'ai la  
picotte a bord - Nous avons enterré ce matin  
Titab Papiu, et avons 8 nouveau Cas; dont 2 depuis  
hier - Je ne sais ou ça arriera - J'ai voulu  
d'après les instructions de mon Cousin acheter  
les paquets de Seclere mais celui ci, n'en a pas  
voulu entendre parler - D'après les mêmes  
instructions Je n'ai livré a Dixon que ce qui  
suit & me propose de laisser la ballance de  
son équipement au petit Missouri; articles laifs  
1<sup>er</sup> Cast wheel, 1 Medicine chest, 1 Demi John vinegar  
1 Cast Iron Kettle 4 pigs or 285<sup>lb</sup> Lead, 1 Portia 13<sup>lb</sup>  
2 Box tobacco, 700<sup>lb</sup> powder, 2 100<sup>lb</sup> flour, 1 Blk pork  
2 scythes & ~~axes~~, Box N<sup>o</sup> 8. Pale N<sup>o</sup> 381.  
1 Blk Sugar; il doit descendre a St Louis



Ms. South American Co

St. Louis

Post Office of  
Mr. Secler

Permanence South  
East  
St. Louis  
29th May  
1837  
Received July 1 1837



[Translation:]

Mr. J. Bte. Jaspy, at St. Louis. S.N. 5 Jan. 1832 [i.e. 1833?]

Dear friend,

It is as yet impossible for me to give you the result of my business. Only about one third of my Indians have come out and I have approximately 80 packs but no beaver. In another eight days I hope to know more.

All I can tell you is that our nephew has done important work. It is too bad that he is not alone. He has gone into partnership with a young farmer who had something that he is about to lose. I no longer believe he will come back for more.

Nothing else. All is well. Give my regards to Mr. Rainchan (?), & I wish you a happy year, & believe me your friend.

[signed:] Th. Robidoux

[address-leaf:] Mr. J. B<sup>te</sup> Jaspay, St. Louis.

[docket:] Robidoux, 5<sup>th</sup> Jany. 1832. Received Febry. 3, 1833. Answered ... none.

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Missed: "None J. Bte Sargy St. Louis"

Search: "Robidoux 5th Jany 1832/Received Febry 3 1833 (in error for 1832)"

Rechecked: "Can't Leave Worth Jan" - 22 Jan 1833? (with postage).



"Mon. J. Bt Sarpy, at St Louis/S.N. 5 Jan. 1832

Dear Friend -

It is as yet impossible for me to give you the result of my business. Only about one third of my Indians have come out and I have approximately 80 packs but no beaver. In another eight days I hope to know more. All I can tell you is that our nephew [?]\* has done important work. It is too bad that he is not alone. He has gone into partnership with a young farmer who has something that he is about to lose. I no longer believe he will come back for more. Nothing else. All is well. Give my regards to Mr. Rainchan [?], & I wish you a happy year, & believe me your friend. Jh: Robidoux"

\*\*\*\*\*

*Jh: Robidoux*

Addressed: "Mons J. Bt Sarpy St. Louis"

Docket: "Robidoux 5th Jany 1832/Recieved Febr'y 3 1833 (in error for 1832)?"

Postmarked: "Cant Leavenworth Jan" - rated "183/4" cents postage.

*Cant Leavenworth  
5th Jany 1832*

*183/4*

*Mons  
J. Bt Sarpy  
St Louis*

1832

*Robidoux  
5th Jany 1832  
Recieved Febr'y 3 1833  
Answered - Nov*





## Chronology

### THE SOUTH WEST EXPEDITION

1826-29

- July 18, 1826—General William Ashley sells out to Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette at the Cache Valley summer rendezvous.
- August 16—Jedediah Smith leaves Cache Valley on the South West Expedition with seventeen men.
- August 25—The expedition reaches the Sevier River, which Smith names Ashley's River. "Sampatch" (Ute) Indians encountered.
- September 15—Reaches the Virgin River; Smith names it Adams in honor of President John Quincy Adams.
- October 1—Salt cave discovered.
- October 3—Reaches "Seedskeeder," or Colorado River.
- October 25—Reaches the Mohave villages.
- November 10—Leaves Mohave villages; begins crossing of Mohave Desert.
- November 27—Reaches San Gabriel Mission.
- December 8—Governor Echeandía orders Smith to report at San Diego. Peter Ranne accompanies him.
- December 12—Smith, Ranne, Captain William Cunningham and a Mexican guard arrive at San Diego.
- December 20—American ship captains in San Diego harbor vouch for Smith; Governor Echeandía orders the expedition out of California.



## ☛ *Chronology*

- January 10, 1827—Smith and Ranne reach San Gabriel.
- January 18—Expedition leaves San Gabriel.
- April 30—Reaches American River after trapping north through the San Joaquin Valley.
- May 5—Attempt to get over the Sierras by way of the American River fails.
- May 20—Base camp established on the Stanislaus River. Smith, Evans, and Gobel leave to attempt Sierra crossing.
- June 27—Smith, Evans, and Gobel reach Great Salt Lake.
- July 3—Smith, Evans, and Gobel reach the summer rendezvous on Bear Lake.
- July 13—Smith starts for California again with a party of eighteen, including Gobel.
- August 18—Expedition is attacked by Mohave Indians while crossing the Colorado River. Ten killed, Thomas Virgin and Isaac Galbraith wounded.
- August 28—Survivors enter San Bernardino Valley; Galbraith quits; Virgin is left at Rancho San Bernardino to recuperate.
- September 18—Smith and six survivors of the Mohave massacre reach the base camp on the Stanislaus.
- September 20—Smith and four men leave for San José to explain the presence of Americans on Mexican territory.
- September 23—Smith and companions reach San José, are put in the guardhouse by Father Durán.
- October 5—Smith leaves for Monterey under guard to see Governor Echeandía.
- October 8—Smith reaches Monterey and is promptly jailed.
- November 15—American ship captains in Monterey harbor vouch for Smith; he signs bond and agrees to leave Mexican territory at once.
- November 26—Expedition reassembled at San Francisco; leaves San Francisco with sixteen men, sixty horses.
- December 30—Expedition leaves San José with 310 horses.
- January 18, 1828—Reed and Pombert desert.
- March 8—Harrison Rogers badly mauled by a grizzly bear.
- 
- June 23—Expedition enters Oregon.
- July 14—Encampment on Umpqua River attacked by Kelawatset Indians; only Smith, Black, Turner, and Leland survive.
- August 8—Black reaches Fort Vancouver.
- August 10—Smith, Turner, and Leland reach Fort Vancouver.
- September 6—Alexander McLeod leads a party of Hudson's Bay Company men south to the Umpqua to try to recover the expedition's scattered goods. Smith, Turner, Leland and Black accompany the party.
- October 28—McLeod reaches massacre site and buries bodies.
- December 14—McLeod party reaches Fort Vancouver with recovered furs and horses.
- March 9, 1829—Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company buys expedition's furs and horses for \$2,390.60.
- March 12—Smith and Black leave Fort Vancouver by canoe, up the Columbia River.
- August 20—Smith and Black reach the summer rendezvous in Pierre's Hole.



# THE WESTERN MAILS

[Jedediah S. Smith to Hugh Campbell]

St Louis Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> 1830

Mr Hugh Campbell

Dear friend

On the eighteenth of the present month I received your Epistle, which I perused with a mixture of gratitude and regret—I have great reason to feel thankful to You My Dear Sir, for the trouble you put your Self to on my account—but, with pain did I peruse that part of your Epistle, which Speaks of the ill health of My *much valued Friend*—Oh is it possible I Shall never again See him in the Land of the living? My Prayer to Almighty God, is, that I may again be allowed the Privilege of passing some time in company with my *Friend*—

I have not written directly to Robert, for this reason, I thought Your Letters would be more certain of their place of destination [Ireland], consequently it would be better for us to correspond, as, in the mean time I shall be in pleasant converse with two friends in stead of one.

I have been under the necessity of going forward with a partnership amounting to part of My Capital, but Shall Still, unavoidable accidents excepted, have eight, or, perhaps, ten thousand Dollars, in March, or April next, which Could not be vested in any way to please me so well, as to have it aid both my *FRIEND* and me.

According to your intimation, and to my great satisfaction I received from Mr Kyle a price Current of Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, together with such information as that Gentleman was able to collect, for this I render my grateful acknowledgments, but Since I wrote, We have engaged a Gentleman (Gen. W<sup>m</sup> H. Ashley) to take our Furs forward to Philadelphia and N. York and dispose of the Same

With what pleasure would I have embraced the opportunity of comp[li]ying with your friendly invitation of visiting Mrs Hugh Campbell at Richmond? but my business compells me to remain in St. Louis this Winter.

As you mention Mr Keyte, I will tell what I know of that Gentleman, I had not the honor of a personal acquaintance with Mr K. but on my arrival here this fall (as I knew Mr R. C. had been intimate with him) I called on the Gentleman and made inquiry for my friend, I got little, or no satisfaction.

Mr Keyte has now removed from St Louis, near to a Small Town, called Chariton, in this State.

After the perusal of these two Letters, which I have had the pertinacity to write, it is hardly necessary for me to tell you that I am much more in my element, when conversing with the uncivilized Man, or Seting My Beaver Traps, than in writing Epistles.

[Addressed:] Mr Hugh Campbell  
Richmond  
Va.

[Postmarked:] St. Louis, Mo. Dec 1  
[Rate:] 25

believe me  
Dr. Sir your  
Sincere friend and  
Hub. Servant  
Jedediah. S. Smith



*Jedediah S. Smith*



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## JEDEDIAH SMITH'S SOUTHWEST EXPEDITION 1826/1827. DEPOSITIONS OF ORVILLE D. SHANKS & ROBERT EVANS.

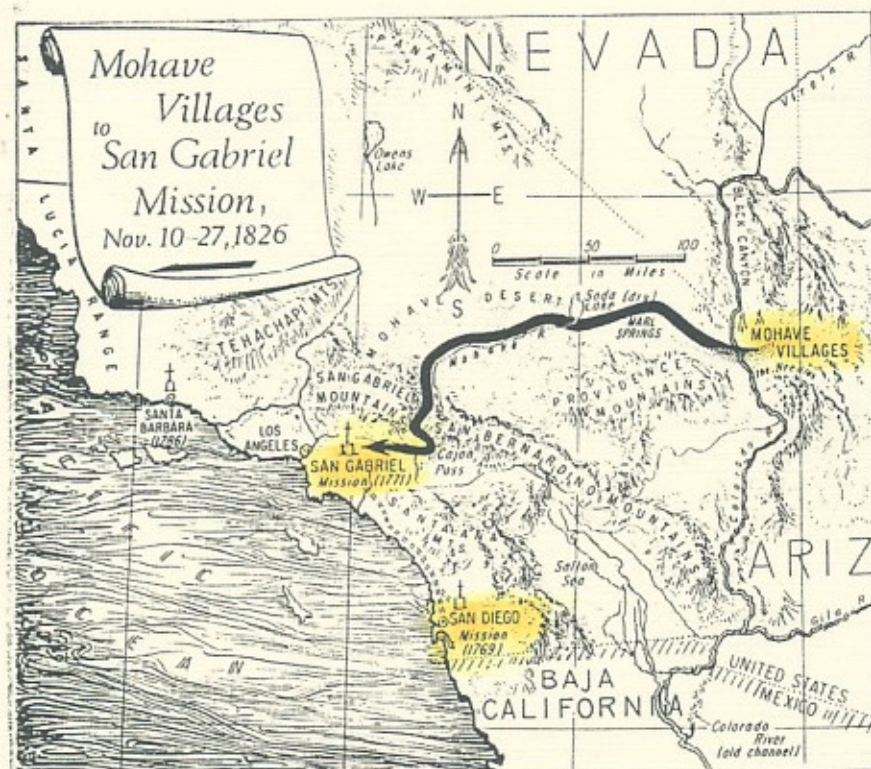
At the Cache (Willow) Valley Rendezvous of 1826 General Wm. H. Ashley sold out to the new firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette. On the 16th of August Jedediah Smith left the rendezvous with a trapping and exploring party of 17 men including Robert Evans for California. They reached the Mohave villages on October 25th, and arrived at the San Gabriel Mission November 27th. On December 20th the Mexican Governor ordered them to leave California. Instead Smith headed north to the Stanislaus River, where he established a base camp May 20, 1827. Leaving his party Smith, with Robert Evans and Silas Gobel, headed back east to meet with his partners at the summer rendezvous at Bear Lake, Utah. After getting across the Sierra Nevadas they run into trouble - no wild game and very little water. By the time they reached the Great Salt Lake Desert they had shot their horses for food. On June 25th Robert Evans laid down under a small cedar unable to continue further. Smith and Goble forged ahead and within a few miles they found water near the foot of the Stansbury Mountains. Smith took a small kettle of water and some meat back to Evans, who was still alive and in time to revive him. SEE map. They finally reached Bear Lake on July 3rd, 1827.

On July 13th Jedediah again started for California with a party of 18, including Silas Gobel and David Cunningham, the subject of the two depositions. Robert did not go along. After reaching the Mohave Villages on the Colorado River in the Mohave Desert, they spent 3 days with the Indians who appeared to be friendly. On the 18th of August while Smith and eight of the party were crossing the river, the Indians killed the remaining 10, including David Cunningham and Silas Gobel. The survivors, without horses, 15 pounds of dried meat and no water, reached the base camp on the Stanislaus River on September 18th. SEE deposition of Arthur Black in this collection for the journey north to the disaster that befell the party on the Umpqua River in Oregon.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

**ORVILLE D. SHANKS** states that during the winter of 1829 Smith, Jackson & Sublette were camped on the **BIGHORN RIVER** and NOT on the Powder River as previously thought by Dale Morgan. He also quotes Jedediah Smith concerning the death of David Cunningham.

**ROBERT EVANS** states that when he came back from California to the Bear Lake Rendezvous in 1827, he hired out to **BRUFFEE & SCOTT** and NOT to General Ashley. He also states that he came down (to St. Louis) in 1830. So he had remained in the mountains after he came back from California. There is a record of a Robert Evans who was killed at the Alamo in February of 1836. It could be that they are one and the same! SEE Bruffee letter to Campbell September 10, 1829.



The route followed in 1826 is the same as 1827, following the attack at the Mohave Villages on the Colorado River. Smith did not go to the San Gabriel Mission, but turned north after getting across the San Bernardino Mountains and headed up the San Joaquin Valley to the base camp on the Stanislaus River.



such information as that Gentleman was able to collect, for this  
I tender my grateful acknowledgments, but since I wrote, we  
have engaged a Gentleman (Gen. Wm. H. Ashley) to <sup>take</sup> our Fair por-  
tion to Philadelphia and N. York and before of the same  
With what pleasure would I have embraced the opportunity  
of complying with your friendly invitation of visiting Mr. Hoop Campbell  
at Richmond? but my business compels me to remain in St. Louis  
this Winter.

As you mention Mr. Heyte, I will tell what I know  
of that Gentleman, I had not the honor of a personal acquaintance  
with Mr. Heyte, but on my arrival here this fall (as I knew  
Mr. R. C. had been intimate with him, I called on the Gentleman  
and made enquiry for my friend, I got little, or no satisfaction

Mr. Heyte has now removed from St. Louis, near  
to a small Town, called Charleston, in this State.

After the perusal of these two letters, which I  
have had the pertinacity to write, it is hardly necessary  
for me to tell you that I am much more in my element  
when conversing with the uncivilized Man, or setting my  
Pocahontis Traps, than in visiting Epistles. believe me

Yr. Sir your  
Sincere friend and  
Hub. Susant

Richard, J. Smith



26

M<sup>r</sup> H. Campbell  
Richmond  
Va<sup>n</sup>

Frederick S. Smith  
24<sup>th</sup> Nov 1830





Question. Was not Joseph Cunningham, administrator of David Cunningham deceased, your brother-in-law?

Answer. He was married to my sister - she is now dead and he has since married again.

Question. Did you ever hear Joseph Cunningham say that he had received money from Smith Jackson & Sublette on account of the services of his deceased brother David?

Answer. Yes. I have heard him say that he had received two hundred and fifty dollars, it was last fall a year ago that I heard him say so, and he said that he received it since the death of his brother -

And further this deponent hath not sworn to and subscribed before the day & year first above written

Wilson, Pimm & P.

Erville D. Shanks

Robert Evans being produced sworn and examined on the part of the defendant, deposes and says

In the year eighteen hundred and twenty five, I started to the Rocky Mountains in the employ of Ashley and Smith

and thirty three between the hours of eight o'clock in the forenoon and six o'clock in the afternoon of that day at the office of Wilson Pimm Esq in St Louis before me the said Wilson Pimm, a Justice of the peace within and for the County of St Louis, in a certain cause



THE WESTERN MAILS

"ORVILLE D. SHANKS being produced Sworn and Examined on the part of the plaintiff deposes and says,

"In the fore part of the winter of Eighteen hundred and twenty nine I was in the Employ of Smith, Jackson & Sublette of which firm the present defendant William Sublette was one. At that time the party under the command of Smith Jackson & Sublette were Encamped on big horn river among the rocky mountains. I went to the lodge of the defendant & Smith and began to inquire into the affairs of David Cunningham who from the statement of the Company, had been killed about two years before by the Mackhaba Indians. [Aug. 18, 1827] I had taken a letter for him, but finding that he was dead, I was induced to inquire into his affairs - Smith answered me in these words as near as I can recollect, "He had been doing very well before he was killed, we owe him Eleven hundred dollars." I understood that at the time of his death he was in the Employ of Smith Jackson & Sublette.

Question by defenant. Do you know if Cunningham was in the Employ of Smith Jackson & Sublette?

Answer. I do not - I only understood it from Mr. Robert Evans and several other men in the Employ of Smith Jackson & Sublette.

Question. Do you know who did business in the rocky mountains in Eighteen hundred and twenty seven - whether it was Smith, Jackson & Sublette, or Ashley & Smith?

Answer. I do not -

Question. Is not Joseph Cunningham, administrator of David Cunningham deceased, your brother-in-law?

Answer. He was married to my sister - She is now dead and he has since married again.

Question. Did you ever hear Joseph Cunningham say that he had received money from Smith Jackson & Sublette on account of the services of his deceased brother David?

Answer. Yes. I have heard him say that he had recieved two hundred and fifty dollars, it was last fall [1832] a year ago that I heard him say so, and he said that he recieved it since The death of his brother- And further this deponent saith not -

Sworn to and subscribed to before  
Wilson Primm Jr. [Dec. 24, 1833].

*Orville D. Shanks*

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"ROBERT EVANS being produced Sworn and Examined on the part of the defendant deposes and says / In the year Eighteen hundred and twenty five, I started to the Rocky Mountains in the Employ of Ashley and Smith - In the year following, Smith and I went away to the South to California and returned on the fourth of July Eighteen hundred and twenty seven [SEE below]. From the time of my arrival at the Rocky mountains until I returned from California David Cunningham was a free man, working hunting and trapping for himself. On my return from California Bruffee & Scott were doing business in the Mountains for Ashley & Smith - they employed me to come home - I know not that Smith, Jackson & Sublette Ever bought any furs of Cunningham. I understood from reports in Camp, that Cunningham had hired himself to Smith Jackson & Sublette for one year from about the tenth of July Eighteen hundred & twenty seven, together with his horses & Equipment for something like nine hundred dollars and reports came in confirmed to me by Smith himself when I saw him again that Cunningham had been Killed about the thirteenth of the following month - When I came down in Eighteen hundred and thirty I wrote to Joseph Cunningham to come and settle with Smith Jackson & Sublette as I understood that there was something due his deceased brother- Some time after about the first of November of the same year I saw him and he informed me that he had settled with them and showed me the money that they had paid him - the amount I do not know and further this deponent saith not"

*Robert Evans*



number of the killed in said attack - The said deponent further states that the said John Hanna was in the service and employment of the said firm or company for one year previous to the year 1826, that he had served with the said John Hanna in the employment of the said company or firm during that time, but that he does not know what were said Hanna's wages during that year (1826) -

Arthur Black

Sworn and subscribed to before me,

of the killed in said attack. The said deponent further states that the said John Gaither was in the service and employment of the said firm or company for one year previous to the year 1827, that he had served with the said Gaither in the employment of the said company or firm during that time, but that he does not know what were said Gaither's wages during that year (1826)

Arthur Black

Sworn and subscribed to before me, on the day, at the place, and within the hours first aforesaid

Patrick Walsh  
Justice of the Peace  
St. Louis County

I, Patrick Walsh, a Justice of the Peace within and for the



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## DEATH ON THE CIMARRON

William L. Sublette, returning to St. Louis with 50 pack of beaver and 800 buffalo robes, reports the death of his partner, the renowned mountain man/explorer, Jedediah S. Smith at the hands of the Comanche Indians:

"Walnut Creek Near the arkansaw Sept 24th 1831

Dear Sir I am now this fair On my Way Back - We have had some hard luck Since we left St Louis - On our Way out to Santafee we lost Mr Minter killd On On (sic) the pawnee fork we suppose by the pawnees - it hapened On the 19th of June - Mr J.S. Smith was Killd On the Cimeron June 27th by the Comanches - We met with no Other losses by indians & arive in Santafee July 4th - the trace to Santafee has been well Watcht by diferent nations of Indians this Season anoying the tradres there & Back to this place - we have not lost any men as yet On Our return & but fiew animals although there is about 300 head of loos Stock in Company - we are now within 260 miles of Indipendence & will be Spliting in 2 or 3 days more - it will be about 20 days yet be fore I will reach Indipendence as my mules are much fatigue & my Waggon s tolerable Well Laidened - I have about 55 pack of Beaver furr & 800 Buffalow Robes On hand - Mr. Jackson & my Self have drawn on you for about 17600 \$ paid for Beaver furr & 4500 \$ On act of Mr. Jackson himself - I sold Out to Mr Jackson all the goods On hand & he is gone to the Callifornias in partnership With doctor Walldoe - the Santafee traders maid out poorly this year generly speaking - there is 49 Waggons coming in there is between 50 & 60 pack of Beaver in company besides ours & 200 Buffaloe Robes & about 30000 \$ in Specea - if You Wisht to purchase furr I think you Could doe So as there is men here that has furr who are bound to make Salle to raise Cash - furrs Sold this Season in Santafee from 4 \$ to 4.25 Cents pr lb at Santafee & Buffaloe Robes at 2 \$ Each - I Would like to Get 3500 \$ at Franklin if Convenient as I have Borrowed Money of men living there & there about who prefer it there though if it is not Convenient it Will make no great diference - Our draughts On you are at 5 & 10 days after Sight - please Wright to me where you think a letter will likely meet me first at Lexington or Franklin - let me Know the prospect of Beaver furr &c - I will Write by the first Oportunity again - We have not got any returns from the rocky mountains - young Mr Austin Smith (brother of Jedediah) is in Company - Mr Peter Smith & Mr Parkman is in the Spanish Cuntery - I dont think they have maid any money On this trip - Peter Smith ( also a brother of Jedediah) started for the California a fiew days before I left Santafee - We Equipt M Thomas Fitzpatrick Out from Taos (N.Mesico) with about 40 men & Supplies & Expected if he had time he would have returned before we left there but the time was two Short - we heard from Milton Sublette (brother of William) by the Santafee trapers & they Said they understood he had taken about 50 pack of Beaver in the Spring hunt which Was nearly Our pack to the Man - they Said they had heard from the Company that had Crosst the mountains Last fall & they had maid a good hunt - if you Can make araingements to Sell Our Robes & furr please doe so - Our furr is generly of an Excelent quality taken in the mountains but Not So well handled as Our furr generly - Excuse haist your most obt/W.L.Sublette "

Genl Wm H. Ashley

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See opposite page for commentary on this letter by the late Dale L. Morgan, author of the definitive biography of "Jedediah Smith And The Opening Of The West".



## DEATH ON THE UMPQUA RIVER

Depositions of **ARTHUR BLACK** on the deaths of **JOHN GAITHER** and **JOHN HANNA**, who were killed by the Kelawatset Indians, on the **UMPQUA RIVER** in Oregon on July 14, 1828. Sworn to before Patrick Walsh, Justice of the Peace, St. Louis County, in the case against WM. L. Sublette on November 21, 1832.

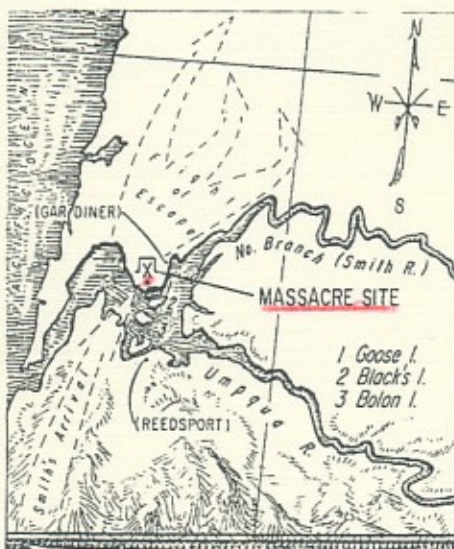
"**Arthur Black** of lawful age, being produced Sworn and Examined on the part of the plaintiff, deposes and saith, that he knew John Gaither deceased, to have been in the Employment of Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson and William Sublette partners under the name and Style of Smith Jackson & Sublette in the year 1827 as well as deponent recollects, that said John Gaither deceased was Employed by the aforesaid firm in the year aforesaid at the rate of three hundred and fifty dollars per annum; that said Gaither Served the said firm one whole year at the above rate - that on the Second day of July in the year 1828, the said Gaither and others including this deponent had been engaged by Jedediah Smith, one of the partners of the aforesaid firm or Company to go to the Rocky Mountains at one dollar per day - the aforesaid Gaither & the others including this deponent started for the Rocky Mountains in conformity to the said Engagement, and they were attacked & defeated by the indians, that in said attack and in the Engagement which consequently ensued fifteen of the men engaged by the firm or Company as aforesaid were killed, and this deponent verily believes that the aforesaid John Gaither was one of the number of the killed in said attack. The said deponent further states that the said John Gaither was in the Service and employment of the said firm or Company for one year previous to the year 1827; that he had Served with the said Gaither in the employment of the Said Company or firm during that time, but that he does not know what were Said Gaither's wages during that year (1826) **Arthur Black**"

\*\*\*\*\*

NOTE: Black, Gaither & Hanna were hired at Cache Valley Rendezvous in July of 1826. Not 1828 as stated in the deposition. They left for California with Smith Aug. 15th. See deposition of Robert Evans for more on this expedition 1826/1829. THE following extract is from the report of Dr. John McLoughlin, Chief Factor, Hudsons Bay Co., Ft. Vancouver, August 10, 1828, to his superiors, as related to him by Arthur Black.

they left St. Francisco January last with about three hundred Horses bound for their Depot at Salt Lake.

Leaving St. Francisco they ascended the North Branch of the Bonaventura trapping Beaver as they went along till the 14th May, when finding it impossible to cross the Mountains with their Horses in an Eastern direction they turned West and fell on a River which took them to the Coast, and proceeded along it to the Umpqua where they were defeated. At the moment of attack Mr. Smith was off with two men in a Canoe to ascend and examine Bridge River, a stream that flows into the Umpqua, to see if he could find a road to take his Horses . . . a short time after Mr. Smith's departure, there being about a hundred Indians in the Camp and the Americans busy arranging their arms which got wet the day previous, the Indians suddenly rushed on them, two got hold of his (Black's) Gun to take it from him, in contending with them he was wounded on the hands by their Knives and another came with an axe to strike him on the head, which he avoided by Springing on one side and received the blow on the back. He then let go his Gun and rushed to the woods, as he was coming away he saw two Indians on one Virgil [Thomas Virgin], another, Davis [Thomas Daw], was in the water and Indians were pursuing him in a Canoe, a third was on the ground and a band of Indians were butchering him with axes . . .



Camp of July 13-14, 1828; site of the massacre of the morning of July 14, 1828



Cunningham had been killed about the thirtieth  
of the following month -

When I came down in eighteen hundred and  
thirty I wrote to Joseph Cunningham to come and  
settle with Smith Jackson & Seabette as I understood  
that there was something due his deceased brother -  
Some time after about the first of November of the  
same year I saw him and he informed me that  
he had settled with them and showed me the money  
that they had paid him - the amount I do not know  
and further this deponent saith not.

Sworn to & subscribed before  
me the day & year last above  
written

Wilson Primm J.P.

Robert Evans

I Wilson Primm a Justice of the peace within and for the  
County of St Louis in the State of Missouri, do hereby certify, that  
Owille D. Shanks and Robert Evans the foregoing deponents  
were by me severally sworn to testify the whole truth of their  
knowledge touching the matter in Controversy aforesaid;  
that they were examined and their Examination reduced  
to writing, and by them respectively subscribed in my presence  
on the day, between the hours and at the place in that  
behalf first aforesaid

Wilson Primm J.P.



Walnut Creek near the Arkansas Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 1831

Dear Sir I am now this fair on my way back  
We have had some hard luck since we left  
St Louis on our way out to Santa Fe we lost  
our minter killed on the Pawnee path  
we suppose by the Pawnees it happened on  
the 19<sup>th</sup> of June Mr J. S. Smith was killed  
on the Cimarron June 27<sup>th</sup> by the Comanches  
We must still be at the ... Fair

Independence Mo 1831  
October 1<sup>st</sup>  
Wm H Ashley  
St Louis  
Mo

Santa Fe  
nations  
the traders  
we not  
and but  
500 head  
are now  
the  
T...

DEATH OF JEDEDIAH S. SMITH ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

Historic letter written by William L. Sublette from Walnut Creek, near the Arkansas river, on September 24, 1831, to Wm. H. Ashley. Placed in the mails at "Independence Mo October 1st" 1831. Rates 18 3/4 cents to St. Louis.

\*\*\*\*\*

"The letter is paralleled somewhat by two extant letters written from the same locality on the same day, by Austin Smith to his father and brother, and all three letters setting forth the circumstances of the death of Jedediah Smith at the hands of the Comanches, besides detailing Peter Smith's venture (in association with Samuel Parkman) in the California/ New Mexican trade. In addition, Sublette's letter gives a much more detailed account of Minter's being killed by the Pawnees, the only source to date the occurrence (stated as June 19, but transparently May 19; Sublette dates Smith's death for June 27, a similar mistake for May 27). Moreover, Sublette provides details as to the dissolution of his partnership with David E. Jackson (Smith, Sublette & Jackson), recounts the mountain news insofar as it has filtered south to Santa Fe, remarks on the returns of the traders, and indicates something of the nature of his own business relationship with Ashley. The letter is a major documentation of fur trade history." Dale L. Morgan, October 2, 1956.



Gen. Ashley April 9<sup>th</sup> 1831  
 will do me a favor by pay-  
 -ing to the wife of John B Smith  
 five dollars per month for six suc-  
 -cessive months as requested in a  
 memorandum given you before leav-  
 -ing St Louis  
 S Parkman  
 J S Smith  
 Secretary of War

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
 EXPEDITION**

On Feb. 28, 1831, Lt. Reuben Holmes, wrote to General Atkinson a proposal to lead an expedition to the Rocky Mountains. It would be a reconnaissance to observe the geography, mineralogy, statistics &c, useful to the government, both civil and military. The War Dept. was willing to give him 3 years leave, but would not finance the project. Before Holmes could get financial backing, he died on Nov. 4, 1833. He had been promoted to Captain on Mar. 4th. Apparently he had asked Jedediah S. Smith to act as guide to the expedition. SEE Dale L. Morgan's letter on opposite page. Then note the cover and note to General Ashley on this page, which is signed "J.S. Smith" by S. Parkman, who also wrote the address on the cover to the Secretary of War. Both are clearly in the hand of Samuel Parkman, who was Smith's clerk. Apparently Morgan did not compare the handwriting of Parkman with the cover. Dale Morgan died before this discovery was made.

free  
 Hon John H Eaton  
 Secretary at War  
 Washington  
 1831

J. S. Smith  
 St. Louis, 2 Mar '31.  
 Application to accom-  
 -pany Lieut Holmes to  
 the Rocky Mountains

Docket note on reverse of cover



St Louis Missouri 2<sup>d</sup> March 1831

The Hon John H Eaton  
Secretary at War

Sir

I have received the information that it is the intention of the Government to send an exploring party to the Rocky Mountains under the direction of Lieut Holmes of the United States Army. Lieut Holmes has manifested a desire to engage my services in guiding him through the country and although I cannot consent to take a subordinate part in a journey that several years of experience has qualified me to control if placed by the executive in a position that would meet my wishes I would most ardently devote my services to the objects of the expedition. In these remarks it is far from my intention to detract from the merits of Lieut Holmes for as a man of science and enterprise he is perhaps as well calculated to conduct the proposed expedition as any man who has not the benefit of experience in these particulars necessary to traveling with safety and dispatch through a new and generally dangerous country. Further I have no desire to supplant Lieut Holmes but rather to do all in my power to promote so desirable an object as that of developing the resources of our extended Western Territory. Under the impression that my services might be valuable to the United States and feeling confident that I do not hazard



the most enthusiastic devotion to the objects  
of the expedition. I must request that you  
will not let me remain long in suspense  
on this interesting subject

I am Sir

Your most Obedt Servant

Jedediah Smith

The Hon John H Eaton

Secretary at War

Jedediah Smith



Morgan City Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> 1839

Mr. Fitch Sir

having wrote you one letter to which I never rec<sup>d</sup>. an answer; & being quite anxious to hear from that quarter, I have come to the conclusion to send this. I have had no news from my concerns since I left Ash<sup>n</sup> & of course have some anxiety concerning them; therefore if you will oblige me by giving ~~me~~ some account of them, I shall be thankfull, please give me a full detail of all,

I am now in business <sup>at this place</sup> ~~here~~, & am much in want of money, therefore if it is a possible thing I should be glad if you could send me what you may have in your hands of mine, (if any) please give me a speedy answer, as I have an opportunity of disposing of the Brick Store &c, in case you have been enabled to get a D<sup>d</sup>;

times are hard at this place, money is quite scarce, provisions are plenty; in my respects to all friends; please tell Gen. Willard to write me a long letter

Direction,

Bethel Post-Office  
Morgan Co.  
Mo

tell Sir that  
we are all  
in good health  
and write

faile not to write directly to your  
Ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>  
Peter Smith



Bethel, Ill

Dec 1. 8<sup>th</sup>

O. W. Fitch

Capt

Whitabate

Whitabate Co

Ohio

Brother of  
Jed S. Smith



Dear Brother  
Received of Mr. Deas 24. 1835



Mt Pleasant June 33<sup>rd</sup> 1842

O.H. Fitch Esq

Sir, in yours of Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1840 you stated that after selling the land of M. Hubbard, on which I had a mortgage that there was still due me about \$85.00 & I see an advertisement in the Sentinel of an Execution in my favor & v.s. M. Hubbard, but the Co<sup>l</sup> says it has been paid in full therefore to satisfy myself I came to the conclusion to write you for the information, which you will please give by return mail, you will please state how my acct stands with you, if Mr H. is under a mistake as to its having been paid, I can make a term of it here, & secure

**JEDEDIAH S. SMITH'S BROTHER**

**PETER SMITH** to O.H. Fitch at Ashtabula, Ohio, wants information regarding a mortgage he holds in the amount of \$ 85.00. In the letter he mentions his youngest brother Ira, which helps identify him and Ira as brothers of Jedediah Smith, the mountain man/fur trader and explorer. He notes the hard times they are having - "we have very little money that will pass, State Bank of Ill- 60 percent discount Shawny Town [Shawneetown] Ill do = do all currant funds we have, is Specie & Inianna P. Smith"

Letter bears a nice strike of the territorial postmark of Mt PLEASANT IOWA JUN 25, (1842).

all the currant funds we have, is Specie  
& Indiana

Yours in haste,  
P. Smith



Peter Smith  
McKean & Sons June 23, 1842

July 12, 1842  
City with

Bro. of  
Q. S. Smith  
for papers  
Explorers!



Ohio

Attabula Co

Attabula

C. J. Smith Esq

25



17-50

9/12

1842

1842



1849 November 8

Camisbell

Austin Shelton Adm<sup>r</sup>  
of John Gaither dec.<sup>d</sup> Action of Assumpsit in the  
St Louis Circuit Court  
William Sublette

The above named defendant will take  
notice that the depositions of witnesses will also be  
taken at the same time and place above mentioned  
to be read in evidence on the part of the plaintiff  
at the trial of the Cause last above named. St Louis

A

St Louis  
Received the nineteenth day of October, A.D. 1830;  
from Smith, Jackson & Sublette, the sum of Two  
Hundred and Fifty Dollars in full of all demands  
of David Birmingham, deceased, as per Settlement

Josephs Cunningham  
Administrator

AND SHEET PROJECTOR WY 11



Saint Louis, Nov 3<sup>d</sup> 1849

Mr M. Bleifus & Co St Genevieve

Bought of R. & W. CAMPBELL,

Wholesale Dealers in Foreign and Domestic Dry Goods and Indian Goods,  
NO. 137, N. MAIN STREET.

2 doz White French 3/4 Mac Blkts	\$150	\$110
1 doz Ox for Mex Salts	33	43
1 doz Marzani Blue Pinty	34 <sup>3</sup>	8 <sup>3</sup>
1 doz Solid Wash	35 <sup>2</sup>	10 <sup>2</sup>

Rec<sup>d</sup> Payment  
R. W. Campbell

Mr Hanna Cash of

John Hanna Secy.

Mr Sublette

Arthur Shelton Cash of  
John Scithus Secy

Mr Sublette

Notice to take disposition



Santa Fe New Mexico 21st August 1831

\$ 1000,00

Five days after sight of this my  
second of exchange & first of same tenor and  
date not paid by Wm L Scott or order  
One Thousand Dollars and charge the same  
without further advice to

Samuel L Arkman  
agent for  
J S Smith deceased

Genl William H Ashley

St Louis Missouri

Entered in no-accounts  
St Louis Oct 26 1831  
Wm L Scott

Entered in no-accounts  
St Louis Oct 26 1831  
Wm L Scott

5539  
28



2501 Benvenue Avenue, Apt. 14  
Berkeley 4, Calif.  
March 27, 1962

Mr. Floyd E. Risvold  
9321 Bloomington Freeway  
Minneapolis 20, Minn.

Dear Floyd:

This is a fascinating piece from a puzzle that you have sent me. It does seem that this letter must involve Jedediah Smith, but as you note, it is not addressed in his hand (nor in Ashley's; and Ashley was not entitled to the franking privilege in March, 1831, anyhow). I wondered if the hand could be that of Samuel Parkman, Jedediah's clerk in 1830-1831, but that doesn't pan out either.

The logical place to look is in the National Archives, and accordingly I have written a friend who does research chores for me on occasion to see if there is any record of such a letter ever having been received in the War Department, and any follow-up that may present itself. If I am not mistaken, I have myself in times past checked the registers of letters received in the War Department for 1831 without having come across any Smith entry. But maybe the entry could have been made under the name of Holmes; so I have requested a search in widening circles.

I should presume that Holmes is Reuben, then 1st lieutenant in the 6th infantry, who died on November 4, 1833. He turns up occasionally in frontier annals of the late 1820's, and published in the St. Louis Beacon in 1829 the first account of Edward Rose. But I have seen no intimation of a government expedition to the Rockies in 1831, involving him or anybody else, so I have asked Joe Colgan to look into this Holmes angle, too. It may even be that it was Holmes who franked the latter "free," though he should have known better than to have called Eaton Beaton, or addressed him as "Secretary at War." This latter phrase was also used in the manuscript copy of the Smith, Jackson & Sublette letter of October 29, 1830, but the handwriting on your address leaf is not the same as that on the 1830 letter in the National Archives.

I'll let you know what I may find out, and if any information comes your way, I would be pleased to have you share it with me.

With cordial regards,



Dale L. Morgan



St. Louis 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 1831

General

Through you will receive a Communication to the Secretary of War on the subject of my Mountain trip.

Allow me to request that you will transmit it to him with such comment as your views of the objects of the Expedition and your feelings towards its projector will permit.

I have also sent a memorial to Col. Benton and shall write to Gen. Ashley, both of whom, previous to their departure, kindly promised to aid me so far as their influence extended.

With great respect  
I have the honor to be  
Your most obt. Serv<sup>t</sup>

Brig. Gen. G. Atkinson  
Cory. R. King W. Dep  
N. S. A.

R. Hobson  
St. Louis



Washington City, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1832

General

I have a desire to take charge  
of a party of men, properly equipped with  
arms, instruments &c., and march them to  
that portion of our Territory embraced betw-  
een the 49<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>d</sup> degrees N. Latitude on  
the North & South, and the eastern base  
of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific  
Ocean on the East & West, for the purpose  
of making a military reconnoissance of and  
of reporting upon that region of Country -  
as there are no means in the War  
Department for carrying such an expedition into  
effect, Genl. Ashley, friendly to the plan, will,  
as soon as it is ascertained that the President  
has no objections, offer a resolution upon  
which, it is hoped, a bill will be reported  
giving the means and authority to send  
the Expeditions - Should you General  
(St. C. Lu.)



Notice waived in open court by J. F. Darby  
This 5<sup>th</sup> of Nov. 1835 C. Ro

My Sir

I had have four table cloths  
of a fair material made and sent to me  
as soon as you conveniently can - The  
table is six feet by four - you can add  
about three feet to the length and about  
20 inches to the breadth -

Yours truly

H. C. Stolome  
U. S. Dragoon

Amjedded Morrison  
St Louis

Oct. 7, 1833



## THE WESTERN MAILS

### GROVONT VILLAGE ON THE MISSOURI 1833

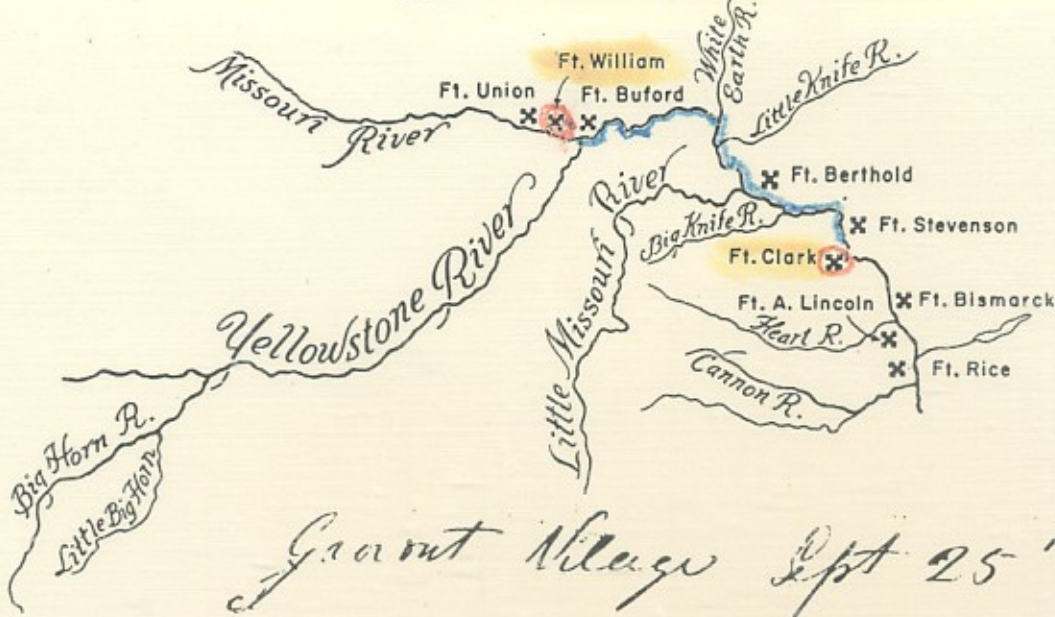
"Grofont Village      Sept 25th 1833

Mr. Robt Campbell      Dear Sir I arive here this Evening and found all well the Mandans & Grofonters have Just Maid peace with the Yancktonais & two hundred Lodges Left here to day - I shall take Sabille [Sibille & Adams] down with me to traid with the Yancktonaies - Mr. Daugherty [John] has traide upward of One hundred Roabs & Nine Beaver - they are in want of Copper Kettles here & wish you to Send all down you think you Can Spare - Some Chiefs Coats Say a half doz (ten or fifteen pouns of Stone Stone [sic] white & Blue Beads Small - Some 6 Doz Best Red Handle Knives - 1 Doz 6 inch flat & 3 Square files - 2 quire of paper - 10 lbs Vermillion - Some Small Brass Wire & Some Iron wire or or [sic] Large Brass for Rist Bands - Some Oval Blue Beasds & white if you have them to spare - 1 gross the Largest fire Steels & few pair of Striped Blankets - the Old man Charbino [Toussaint Charbonneau\*] thinks he will Want Some more powder & Ball in the Spring - Mr daugherty has got Out all his pickets for the fort and the Indians are determined to have a fort here or they will be much disatisfied - I think you had better Send two more good working hands [who] under Stand Rafting down here that they may be getting out timber this winter & have all ready for Spring - they want a cross cut Saw whip & Frow [?] if you can have one maid - they are in great need of a cart here & I think you had better Send down a pair of Wheels & two Set of harness & they have halling to doe - if you Could get a Bull Boat for those things to Come down in it will be Best - John Reshaw talks of Staying here in pontoes plaice if he does he will fetch you this Letter - the Indians apear in fine Spirits & have furnisht the Men with meat for nothing whilst they was Geting out the pickets and Say as Soon as the hunters are ready they will help down with them (Some of those articles I have written for Sabille thinks he will want - there was Six of the Assinouoines [Assiniboin Indians] here a fiew days Since and after Some difficulty they Smoak & maid a treaty with the grofonters - Mr McKenzie maid a Lengthy Speach at the Mandans I have been informed & gave out the Bigg talk as the saying is - they [American Fur Co.] have one traider here he has traided about thirty Roabs whilst Daugherty has nearly thrubled him - give these goods at the Same price as we doe excepting the amunition & they Give 70 Loads whilst we give 60 - I stated above that a Skin [Bull] Boat would be Best but on Reflection those articles I Expect will have to Come down in a Canoe & I cant See how the Cart wheels will manage which is wanting here worst of any articles likely - they Can be arange on a Canoe in Some way - you will Excuse this Letter & try to make Out its Contents if you Can - it is now Late at night & my health is not of the Best But I am Some better than when I Left you - I have Instructed Mr Daugherty to buy 50 or 60 Bushels of Corn as you may Send down for it Soon - I think if you was to Send down two more Keggs of Powder & Ball it would not be a miss as Sabille thinks he will want it as there is Some of the Souones [Sioux] with the Yancktonaies, and intend wintering with them & he thinks his Supplies will fall Short -      Yours with Respect/Wm L Sublette

Capt Robt Campbell      I have been thinking if you Could Send down a mackinaw Boat here Early in the Spring that is as Soon as the Ice is Out of the River it would be Well to take the Robes from this place & those that Sabille may have traided down as I think there will be a mackinaw Boat Load down from those two plaices - if Mr Daugherty thinks if he does not Get those articles down this fall his traid will fall much Shorter as the Copper Kettles are all out - He is Scarce of Knivs also as it takes a great many Knivs to traid Corn - You will have to Send two or three man down as Ponto have been trying to kill him Self & I am force to take him down and have got Van Vulkenburg to Stay in his plaice which is a bad chance - they want a machin for Gulowing [drilling post holes?] out posts - Mr Daugherty is plaice here in rather an awkward Situation - the Old man Sharbino has become quite childish & has to be



# THE WESTERN MAILS



Folded letter written by William L. Sublette to Robert Campbell on September 25, 1833, from the "Grovent Vilage" near the Mandan towns. After laying in an outfit with Ashley's help in the winter of 1832-33, the new partnership Sublette & Campbell mounted a two-pronged trading venture, Campbell taking an outfit to the mountains and afterward descending the Big Horn and Yellowstone to meet Sublette at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri, while Sublette brought two keelboats up the Missouri, en route establishing opposition posts near the establishments of the American Fur Company. Near the junction of the Yellowstone and the Missouri, in the vicinity of Fort Union, the two partners established Fort William, concerning which a good deal of information has been preserved by Prince Maximilian,....Campbell remained to supervise the building of Fort William and take charge of it afterwards, while Sublette slowly moved back down the river, attending to the business of the firm at each established post. This letter written some time after the partners separated is the only intimate communication between the two which has survived from the time they were in the mountains, and it is full of interesting details about their situation and plans in opposition to the powerful American Fur Company. Dale L. Morgan, October 2, 1956.

\*\*\*\*\*



heumored much which makes it very disagreeable and to turn him off it will offend the Indians as he has much Influence & will have much his Way in traid - yesterday they had some words & Daugherty told him if he was not Sattisfied he might gou & he Informed the Indians he was gouing which maid considerable disturbance but I have Settled the matter to day & we must try & Rub out the year with the Old man in Some way & Likely there can be Some chainge maid next year plaicing him in one Vilage to him Self with Some goods - I think Daugherty will doe all in his power & I feel in hopes they will make a good traid this year if the Buffaloe Comes in it would be well for you to Come down here when the **Yellow Stone** [steamboat] returns Comes down Or take a Single horse & Come down Some time in the Spring - if possible please let them Know here if the Mackinaw Boat will be down in the Spring Early or no, that Sabille may Know how to make his araingements as he will have to purchaice Some Skins of the Indians for a bull boat - three men will fetch the Boat down Empty or if you have a few pack[s, of furs] to Send down in the Boat you might doe So & if they Could not take all Some might be Left here & Daugherty will Know what Sabille has done through the winter - I will Write by Mr. McKenzie from the Teton or Little Missouri Riv -"

-THE FOLLOWING IS WRITTEN FROM THE MANDAN VILLAGE-

"Sept 27th

Old Mack Kenzie [was 36 years old] has told them here that you Brought down the yellow stone [river or boat] a Boat Load whiskey & that Our Men was drunk all the time & that we had been Selling it & the news Certainly would gou below - I am now at the **Mandans** & wind bound - the Indians apear much please here and talk fair - they talk of Brass Kettles all - Chief Coates - the time - Daugherty will be Scarce of Knives & a fiew doz of comon ones would doe well for to traid Corn - I shall propose to McKenzie what was talk of But I think he will not take yet if you Should Sucede with him try to Get a division of the Cuntery - Keep tour Eye Skind about traiding whisky Wine - I have under Stood that Likely two or three of the men that is with Sabille will Remain in the Cuntery next year to trap on their account or Engage to the Company to trap by the Skin or in Some way - I have told them I will furnish them with an Equipmt next year - One of Daughertys man Said Holcom have maid aplication to trap nex year - he will hire or take Equip or hire for that purpose - if you Should Send the Makinaw Boat Likely you had Better Send the more men with it as I think some of those will wish to Stay with Sabille and Daugherty will want all with him until the Last Boat will Come down

Robe acts Daugherty traided

at the Grovonts Vilages----- 84  
 Beaver-----11  
 Daron [probably Martin Dorion] at  
 Mandans Robes----- 30"

"  
 [addressed] Capt Robt Campbell  
 Fort William  
 [Endorsed] Received October 12th  
 1833"

\*\*\*\*\*

*J. L. Sublette*



\*Toussaint Charbonneau was the husband of Sacagaweah the Snake squaw who helped guide the Lewis & Clark expedition in 1805/1806. Their halfbreed son, Jean Baptiste, was born at the Mandan Village Feb. 11, 1805. According to Dale Morgan, Sacagaweah died at Manuel's Fort on the upper Missouri Dec. 20, 1812. Baptiste was sent to St. Louis where his education was financed by Wm. Clark and in 1823 he was taken to Germany by Prince Paul, Duke of Wurttemberg, and given an extensive education, before returning to the upper Missouri and the fur trade. He died in 1866 .

BULL-BOATS AT MANDAN VILLAGE





*Mandan Chief*

Engraved expressly for Orsham's Magazine



Remd payment in full  
 of the wild note by the  
 hand of M.L. Sublette due  
 by Smith Jackson & Sublette  
 three letters on the waters of  
 Columbia July 28<sup>th</sup> 1830.

Martin X sword  
 m/s

Witness  
 R. Campbell

JOSHUA PILCHER fur trader, Indian agent  
 and Superintendent of Indian Affairs at  
 St. Louis for a short time following the  
 death of Gen. Wm. Clark in 1838. Died at  
 St. Louis in 1843.

MARTIN SWORD an Iroquois Indian trapper.  
 A promissory note issued at the Wind River  
 Rendezvous on July 28, 1830 in the amount  
 of \$1,452.40 for beaver, receipted for on  
 reverse by the X mark of Sword and witness-  
 ed by Robert Campbell. The statement marked  
 by the X of Sword in in the hand of William  
 L. Sublette.

St Louis Aug 14<sup>th</sup> 1831

Remd of M.L. Sublette two hundred  
 Dollars due me by Smith Jackson  
 & Sublette whilst in the Rocky Mountain  
 as per letterment

Joshua Pilcher



Wind river July 28<sup>th</sup> 1830

On a settlement of an acct. up to this date with  
 Martin Iroquois there appears a balance due  
 by us to him of fourteen hundred & fifty two  
 dollars forty cents which we promise to pay him on  
 demand

~~\$1452.40~~

Witness  
 Smith Jackson & Sublette





*by Adolphus*

*L. Prunier sc.*

DIE ELKEHOORN - PYRAMIDE

*am oben Alpenen*

THE ELKHOORN PYRAMID

*on the upper Rhodan*

LA PYRAMIDE DES CORNES D'ELK

*sur le haut Alpenen*





*Après le jour de l'arrivée*

*Après le départ*

*Après le départ*

CAMPIRENDIE PUNKA - INDIANIER

INDIENS PONCAS CAMPÉS

*sur les bords du Missouri*

PUNKA INDIANS ENCAMPED ON THE BANKS OF THE MISSOURI.



Wind river Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1830

On a Settlement of acct with Johnson Gardner agt  
 to this date there appears a bal due by us to him  
 of fifteen hundred twenty dollars <sup>73 3/4</sup>/<sub>100</sub> which we promise  
 to pay him <sup>on order</sup> on demand  
 Just and Fitzpatrick  
 \$1520. <sup>73 3/4</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

Thos Fitzpatrick  
 agt  
 Smith Jackson & Sublette

WIND RIVER RENDEZVOUS 1830

The 1830 Fur Trade Rendezvous was held at the confluence of the Popo Agie with the Wind River near Riverton, Wyoming. The promissory note in the amount of \$1,520.73 3/4, was for beaver skins bought from Johnson Gardner, an independent trapper, working with Smith, Jackson & Sublette. It is signed by Thomas Fitzpatrick, as agent for the company, under date of "Wind River Augt 1st 1830". See below for endorsements on reverse by Fitzpatrick, R.M.F.Co. agt, Pr. Chouteau Jr. agt. Am. Fur Co., Wm. L. Sublette and the X mark of Johnson Gardner, which is testified by Kenneth McKenzie. On August 4, 1830 Smith, Jackson & Sublette sold out to Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, Milton Sublette, Henry Fraeb and Jean Gervais under the name of The Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Shortly after this the Rendezvous broke up - the trappers going back to their trap lines and Smith, Jackson & Sublette going back to St. Louis loaded with beaver.

Paid in the  
 File 6448 1831  
 Henry Chouteau  
 within 1200  
 per hundred &  
 twenty nine <sup>25</sup>/<sub>100</sub>  
 R. M. F. Co.  
 Thos Fitzpatrick  
 agt  
 Pr Chouteau Jr  
 agt Am. Fur Co.  
 Paid Balance due  
 On this within 1321 48  
 Wm L Sublette Pr Chouteau Jr  
 Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 1832  
 Johnson Gardner  
 mark  
 Wm L Sublette  
 agt



JAMES BRIDGER & HENRY G. FRAEB

"State of Missouri  
County of St Louis

John B. Sarpy being sworn upon his oath says, that on the 8th day of August [1832] last he was appointed by the judge of the Probate Court for the County aforesaid, administrator of the Estate of Henry Fraeb then lately deceased. Said Fraeb had been a trader in the mountains, & was at time of his death in partnership with a man of the name of James Bridger; & said Bridger & Fraeb were indebted to the firm of Pierre Chouteau Jr Co, & it was feared by the members of said firm that unless some one became the administrator of the said Fraeb, the said Bridger might interpose difficulties in the settlement of the accounts getting between them & Bridger & Fraeb - & for the purpose of doing justice to themselves, as well as to the said Fraeb the said Sarpy applied for letters of administration, which were granted to him as above mentioned - The said Bridger has however since this time been here & has settled in full the accounts getting between the firm of Pierre Chouteau Jr Co & the said Bridger & Fraeb. And the said Sarpy says that no property has come into his hands as the administrator of the said Fraeb, although it may be that the said Fraeb has property in the indian country or in the hands of James Bridger his former partner

John B. Sarpy"

Sworn to & subscribed before me this  
twentieth day of June 1843  
Geo A Hyde Justice"



\*\*\*\*\*

**Henry Fraeb** - pronounced **FRAPP** by the trappers. No record of his birth or age. He was one of five men who bought out Smith Jackson & Sublette, at the Wind River Rendezvous in 1830, forming The Rocky Mountain Fur Co. See Thomas Fitzpatrick's note to Johnson Gardner for beaver skins at Wind River August 1, 1830, in this collection. In 1837 Fraeb formed a partnership with Peter Sarpy, a brother of John B. Sarpy. They built Fort Jackson on the South Platte and in 1838 sold out to Bent & St. Vrain. In 1840 Fraeb formed a partnership with James Bridger as noted in the deposition by J. B. Sarpy. In August of 1841 Fraeb led a brigade of trappers in the valley of the Little Snake River, near the Wyoming line in Colorado, where they met a large party of Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Sioux. A pitched battle occurred in which Fraeb was killed as described by Capt. Howard Stansbury:

Capt. Howard Stansbury, guided near the site of the battle by Jim Bridger in 1850, was told of the fight by Fraeb's partner. Stansbury reports in his *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, etc. (Washington, 1853), 239, a preliminary fight and then the main attack about ten days later. Fraeb "had but forty men; but they instantly 'forted' in the corral attached to the trading post and stood on their defence. The assault lasted from noon until sundown, the Indians charging the picket several times with great bravery; but they were finally repulsed with the loss of forty men. Frappe himself was killed, with seven or eight of his people."



State of Missouri  
County of St Louis

John B. Farby being sworn  
upon his oath says, that on the 8<sup>th</sup> day  
of August last he was appointed by  
the judge of the Probate Court for the  
County aforesaid, administrator of  
the Estate of Henry Frack then lately deceased.  
Said Frack had been a trader in the moun-  
tains, & was at the time of his death in  
partnership with a man of the name of  
James Budget; said Budget & Frack were  
incorporated in the firm of Pierre Chouteau  
Jr & Co, & were held by the said members of  
said firm that unless some one become  
the administrator of the said Frack, the  
said Budget might interpose objections  
in the settlement of the accounts & settling  
between them & Budget & Frack - & for the  
purpose of doing justice to themselves, as  
well as to the said Frack the said Farby applied  
for letters of administration, which were  
granted to him as above mentioned - The  
said <sup>Budget</sup> has however since that <sup>time</sup> been here  
& has settled in full the accounts & settling



State of  
I have subscribed before me this  
twentieth day of June 1843

Geo A Hyde Justice



OLD FORT UNION, ON BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN MONTANA AND NORTH DAKOTA

1743

Henry Fraeb

affiant of his office above

as to Secretary

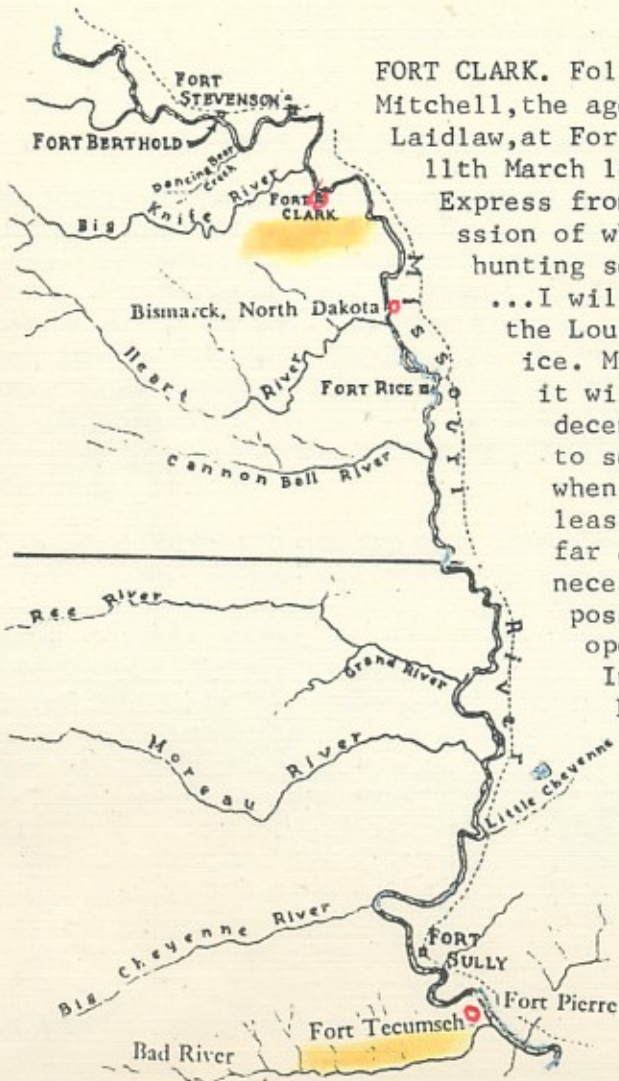
between the town of Pine Bluff and the  
& the river bridge & track. And the said  
daying day the no party has come  
into his hands on the 20th of the  
said track, although they in the do  
said track on party in the morning  
over the hands of James Taylor his former  
partner

1843



# THE WESTERN MAILS

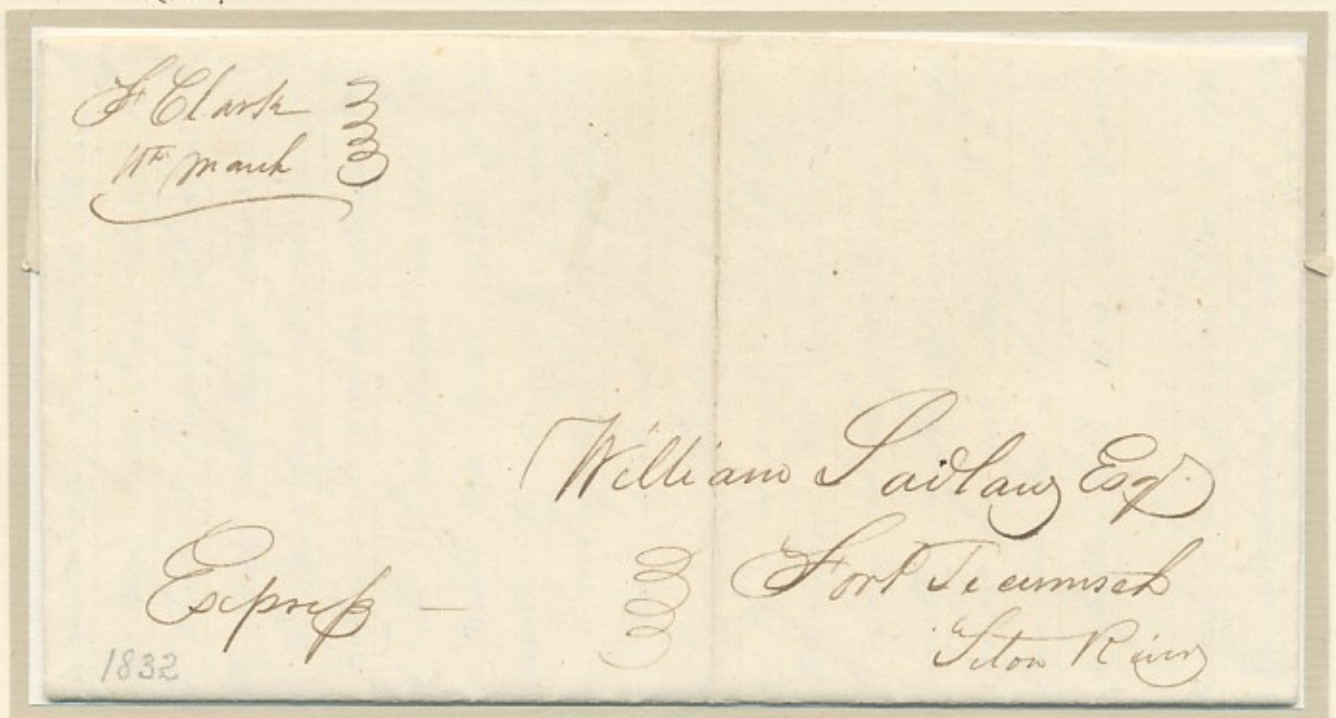
## FUR TRADE EXPRESS ON THE UPPER MISSOURI



FORT CLARK. Folded letter below was written by David Dawson Mitchell, the agent in charge, to his counterpart, William Laidlaw, at Fort Tecumseh. It is datelined "Mandan Village 11th March 1832". Mitchell writes: "...the arrival of an Express from Fort Union enables me to put you in possession of what little news we have at this place...The hunting season is now over...trade will be much better ...I will send down my men as you request to bring up the Louisville (steamboat) on the breaking up of the ice. Mr. Cerre (Gabriel Pascal) writes me word that it will be impossible for him to make cannoes to decend for want of skins. So I have requested him to send Lachapelle (Dominique) to this place - when I would Endeavour to furnish skins for at least one canoe - for Lachapelle to go down as far as the Rees (Indians) - Suposing it would be necessary for him to be there as early as possible to commence his trade for fear of oposition - his presence will encourage the Indians to dress their Robes...from what Lachapelle tells me the Yanctona (Indians) returns will be very poor..."

The letter was carried by an Express of the American Fur Company to Fort Tecumseh, which was close to Fort Pierre, on the present day site of Pierre, South Dakota.

It is the earliest recorded letter to bear manuscript transite markings from the Upper Missouri Country before the establishment of the Dakota Territory in 1861.





THE WESTERN MAILS

Independence May 12<sup>th</sup> 1832

ENROUTE TO PIERRE'S HOLE & FUR TRADE RENDEZVOUS OF 1832.

Wm. Sublette writes to Genl. Wm. H. Ashley "from Independence May 12, 1832, on setting out for the mountains on his solo trading venture of that year... it illuminates the continuing business relationship of Sublette and Ashley, and shows something of the problems of supply and procurement that attended all these mountain ventures. Also it includes information on the more or less independent trading ventures of Robert Campbell and Thomas Fitzpatrick, and notes that 24 Bostonians were in company - a group from which Nathaniel Wyeth was shortly to emerge as a major personality of the fur trade." Dale L. Morgan. SEE Wyeth letter in this collection. The Judge Wash referred to was Patrick Walsh, Justice of the Peace, at Saint Louis.

"Independence May 12th 1832

Dear Sir tomorrow morning I leave this place for the mountains - I am about 12 days later than I Expected but it has been partly Owing to the delay of my goods from St Louis & partly o[w]ing to heavy rains [w]hich has raised all the small Creeks on the road - it has raised nearly Every day for about two weeks - I have about One hundred & 65 head of mules & horses though nearly all mules as I could not get pone[s] that would Suit the trip. My mules Cost me from forty to fifty five Dollars Each that I have had to purchase - it took more mules than I expected by about 10 head to take Out the Supplies for the mountains - since I purchase those of Mr. Smith [Jedediah S.] Last fall I have lost Out of my Band 11 head of Mules & One horse in Spite of all the Care I Could take of them & I have 5 yet that is Scarcely able to pack there Saddles though I have Enough without them to get On & I Intend to make them Carry my provisions On as I have hired a waggon to gon with me 4 or 5 days - I have not Lost any men Since I started from St Louis & I have drawn Sundry Small Orders on you for them to the amount of about three hundred Dollars - I will here give you the amount of Money Rece [owed] by me & also alist [sic] of drafts Drawn On you & notes in Bank & c which I wish you to Settle -

	March the first	Cash Recvd-----	2079.00
	April 4th-----	Cash-----	2000.00
			4079.00
March 29th	Draft to Saville & Morton on <del>act of</del> Kenerly		
	On the act of Mr Fitzpatrick due 29th July---		500 --
April 19th	Draft in favour of E. Tracy due five days after		
	sight		712.00
19th	Order to Henry Shaw On Judg Wash/Due June 20th		488.85
	Draft to Thornton Grimsley Due June 20th for		215.00
April	My note in Bank Endorsed by T Grimsly		
	due June 20th 1832-----		675.00
April 20	Draft to John H. Gay for five days after sight		150.63
	Draft to Hawkens [Jacob]* five days after sight		272.62½
April 23	My note in Bank August 23d/Endorsed by Judg		
	Wash for		1500.00
May 9th	Draft in favour of James & Robt Aull due 5 days		
	after sight for-----		600.00
	My Note due Judg Wash for-----		200.00





THE WESTERN MAILS

this is about the amount I believe that I am Owing as fair as I know it amounty to about One thousand dollars more than I told I Expected it would & I had money to pay for Mr Fitzpatrick more than I Expected - provisions & grain has been Verry high - Corn from 50 to 75 Centy pr Bushel - Bacon 8 Centy - flower 3\$ p hundre & Every thing in proportion - I have 50 hans hired On my Own act. Mr Cambell has five besides him self & Mr Fitzpatrick & 4 trapers that is going Out forms our Company - there is 24 Bostonians [Wyeth's Company] Going On with me if they can Keep up as they are On foot - They was 28 strong when they Left St Louis but 4 have left them

I have now paid my hans One thousand One hundred & twenty Six dollars 70/100 towards there wagers - I have also let Mr Fitzpatrick have Since he Come in last fall \$1373.70 cents besids the draft of five hundred to Kinerly - I belive this is the Standing of my affairs - I will leave here with Mr Owens alist of the mens acts - a note On Mr Burch for \$221.69 cnt - also Some other papers & Receipts of different persons & if any acident should happen to me I wish you Would Send & get them or if I should not return this fall - as business as well as life is un-certain it is my Intention to try & Be back to St Louis about the first of Oct if no accident happens - Nothing more at present but remain yqur most

Genl Wm.H.Ashley"

Obedent Svt/Wm.L.Sublette

\*\*\*\*\*

*Wm L Sublette*



Postmarked at "Independence Mo/May 12th" 1832 and rated "18 3/4 " to Saint Louis.

Sublette left Independence the day after he wrote this letter - May 13th. His supply train consisted, according to the letter, of a wagon and 165 head of mules and horses and 85 men including Robert Campbell, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Nathaniel Wyeth and the Bostonians. They arrived at Pierre's Hole on July 8th, in the beautiful valley on the west side of the Grand Tetons, in what is now known as Teton Valley, Idaho. This was probably the largest and most picturesque rendezvous ever held in the Rocky Mountains. It was attended by the American Fur CO., the Hudson's Bay Co. and the Rocky Mountain Fur Co., as well as independent trappers and a host of Nez Perz and Flathead Indians. In all there were probably 1000 people and more than 2000 horses and mules.

\*Jacob Hawken was a well known gunsmith of St. Louis, famous for the rifles he made under his name - the Hawken rifle.



SULLETTE  
PAPERS  
MISSOURI  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
SAINT LOUIS



To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting

**DESCRIPTION**

Age 32 Years  
Stature 6 Feet 2 Inches & up  
Forehead Straight & open  
Eyes Blue Light  
Nose Roman  
Mouth Common  
Chin Common  
Hair Light or Sandy  
Complexion fair  
Face Slightly rufous with  
a scar on the right cheek  
Signature of the Bearer

Wm S. Sullette  
GRATIS

No 2332

I, the Undersigned, Secretary of State of the United States of America, hereby request all whom it may concern, to permit safely and freely to pass William S. Sullette, a Citizen of the United States, and in case of need to give him all lawful Aid and Protection



Given under my hand and the impression of the Seal of the DEPARTMENT OF STATE, at the City of Washington the ninth day of April, 1861, in the 37th Year of the Independence of these United States.

Wm S. Sullette



~~Shurtue~~

6 Shurtue Lane  
St. Louis, Mo. (63141)  
3/2/75

Dear Floyd:

Hope you got lot 94 in Siegel's last sale (59 Mo. stampless covers). I sent for it on inspection and spotted an 1834 Wyeth letter from the west (carried to St. Louis by Sublette and posted here). Then right after the sale Bob Siegel wrote that they had not received the lots back that I sent for so I figured that nobody else had had much chance to look at them (the lots showed up right after that). Anyway the estimated value was 40-50 bucks which was a little low even without the Wyeth letter, so I



bid \$135<sup>00</sup> which I thought  
would surely get it. Well, it  
brought \$140<sup>00</sup> so when I  
talked to Sandy last nite,  
he thought you may have  
been there for the sale. So  
I hope you got this cover  
in that lot - if you did I  
would like to trade for  
some of the other mo.



though as you really should  
get this extra letter if you  
can. I copied the contents in  
case you don't have it.  
Hasbily, Ward



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## NATHANIEL J. WYETH'S FIRST EXPEDITION TO OREGON COUNTRY 1832

Wyeth left Boston March 10, 1832 and arrived at St. Louis, Missouri with a party of twenty four men on April 18th, after having stopped off to see his brother, who operated a mercantile business in Baltimore. Kenneth McKenzie gave Wyeth's party transportation to Independence, Missouri on an American Fur CO. steamboat, where they joined Wm. L. Sublette's annual supply caravan to the summer Rocky Mountain Rendezvous at Pierre's Hole, now called Teton Valley, on the west side of the Grand Tetons, in Idaho. After a long journey of fifty two days Wyeth arrived with twenty one men, three having deserted. This letter was written the day Wyeth arrived in St. Louis, April 18, 1832.



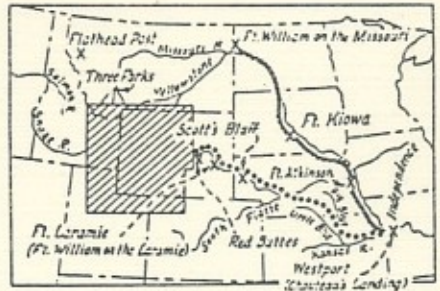
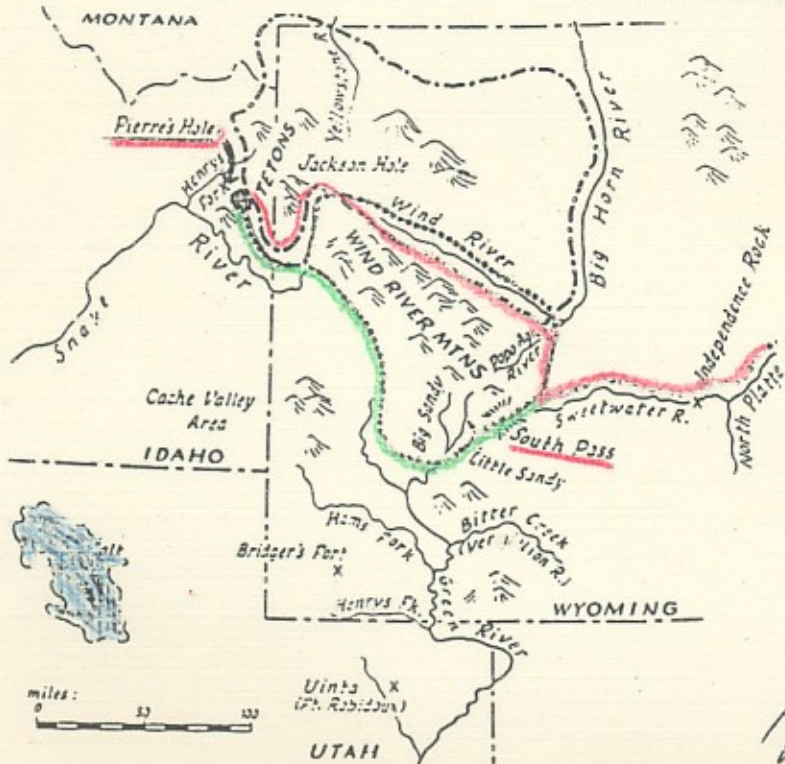
"St. Louis April 18th 1832"

Dear Wife Here I am on the outskirts of Civil Society having advanced so far without accident and without the desertion of a single man. I leave this in company with a party of traders of 40 persons who journey with me as far as the west side of the Rocky Mountains. In the first vessel that comes out to the Columbia [River] I wish seeds of all vegetables, grains and trees sent me for which purpose be collecting them this fall. I wish only a small quantity of each. I am disappointed in not receiving a letter in this place from you, it would have been some satisfaction but it is now too late. I cannot receive on this side of the Mountains, if you wish to write me your next opportunity will be through Mess. Tucker & Williams. Good by and God bless you - I have no more time to write more. yr aff. Husband Nath J Wyeth"

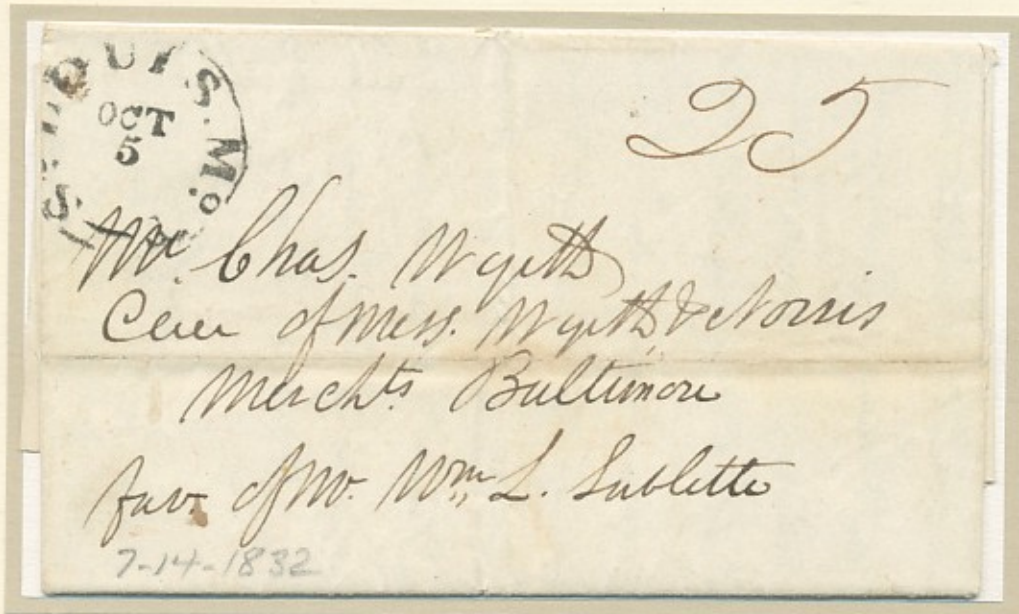
Postmarked at St LOUIS APR 18 MO.  
Rated "25"cents postage.



# THE WESTERN MAILS



*Fare of Mr. Wm. L. Sublette*

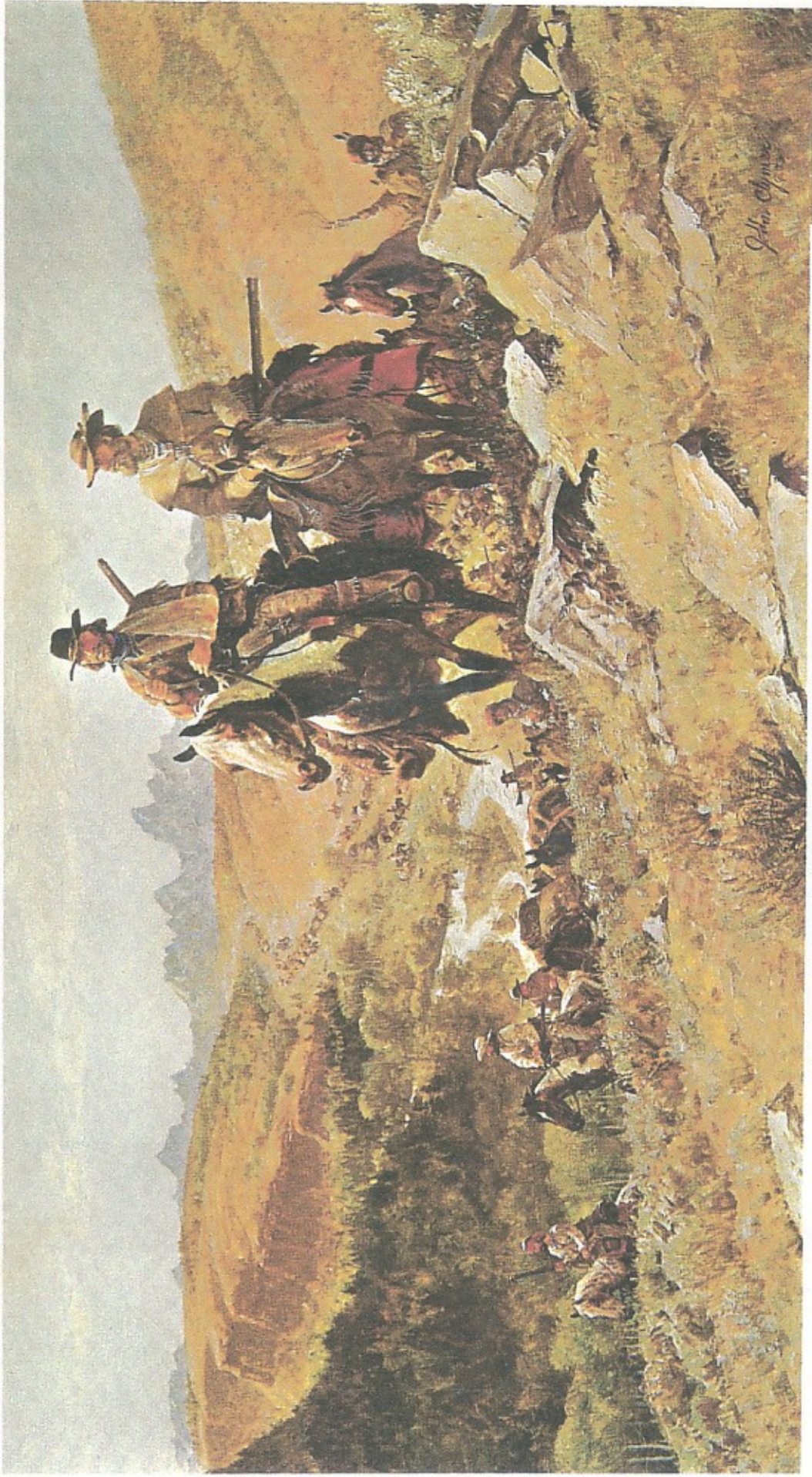


## FUR TRADE RENDEZVOUS 1832

**RENDEZVOUS 1832** Historic letter written by Nathaniel J. Wyeth from the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous in Pierre's Hole just three days before the fight with the trappers and the Blackfoot Indians which is known to history as the Battle of Pierre's Hole (located in Idaho, see map above).

Wm. L. Sublette, the well-known Mountain Man, fur trader and explorer, left the Rendezvous on July 30th, or shortly thereafter, with this letter and 169 packs of Beaver. He arrived in St. Louis on October 3 and placed this letter in the Post Office as per postmark "Oct 5". The map above indicates his route to and from the Rendezvous. The portion in GREEN is the last leg of the route to the Rendezvous and that portion in RED is the route back to St. Louis.





SUBLETTE AND CAMPBELL 1832 oil, 24 x 40 inches 1973

In this picture William Sublette and Robert Campbell, after leaving the Pierre's Hole Rendezvous, are leading their party out of Jackson's Hole on their return journey to Saint Louis in 1832. Their long cavalcade with the pack train and furs stretched out for half a mile. Sublette is wearing his arm in a sling following a battle with the Gros Ventre Indians which had occurred as various parties were leaving the rendezvous site. Sublette was shot in the shoulder, and his left arm was still in a sling when he arrived in Saint Louis.



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## FUR TRADE RENDEZVOUS PIERRE'S HOLE 1832

NATHANIEL JARVIS WYETH was a Boston merchant who spent five memorable years in the fur trade of the far west. Before going west, Wyeth was in the business of harvesting pond ice and shipping it to such far away places as the West Indies, South America, India and California. During the gold rush of 1849 the best bars in San Francisco advertised that they served New England Pond Ice with all their drinks. In 1831 Wyeth became interested in the far west through the agitations by Hall J. Kelley for American occupation of the Oregon country in the late 1820's. The same year he organized the Pacific Trading Co. and by April 1832 he was back in St. Louis with a party of 23 men including his brother Dr. Jacob Wyeth, a cousin, John B. Wyeth, John Ball and 19 others. From St. Louis they traveled up the the Missouri on the steamboat OTTER TO Independence, where they joined the annual supply caravan to the Rendezvous at Pierre's Hole under the guidance of Wm. L. Sublette.

The folded letter on the opposite page and transcribed below was written by Wyeth from Pierre's Hole on July 14th, just three days before the fight with the trappers and the Blackfeet which is known to history as the Battle of Pierre's Hole.

"Two Thirds the way across July 14th 1832  
Brother Charley I write in haste to let you know where I am, being on the head waters of South Branch Lewis River with 12 men, the rest all deserted from time to time, and then more under circumstances of peculiar vilany, the party by whom I write are moving, and I can write but little, in coming out I have lost half of my goods, and horses, and half of the residue, of my goods have gone to get more horses, we have had a most ludicras fight with the Blackfeet, no blood drawn, but I lost 4 horses. I am now through all the dangerous country, and I think I can make money here, after learning the business. I am yet in good heart and will do something. I must ask you to excuse my overdrawing. I was obliged to do it and trust to the lenity of my friends to overlook it - please give my respects to Mr Jarvis and my love to your good wife and all friends - tell Charley that uncle Nat is among the wild horses.

yr aftc Bro Nathe. J. Wyeth

Write me to the care of Mr Willm. L. Sublette St. Louis - It may reach me"

\*\*\*\*\*

NOTES: The skirmish referred to in the letter took place on July 8th and it was on July 17th that the big fight with the Indians and the trappers took place in which several of Sublette's men were killed and wounded. It is not known how many Indians were killed or wounded. Wyeth's men had become discouraged and deserted from time to time including his brother Jacob and his cousin John, who later wrote on his western adventure; OREGON: A Short History of a Long Journey, Cambridge, Mass. 1833. A rare collectors item today. A few days after the fight, Wyeth with 11 men continued west to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in the Oregon country. The following year he returned to Boston after visiting the Green River Rendezvous of 1833. Here he entered into a contract with the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. to supply the rendezvous of 1834. SEE Samuel letter in this collection for Wyeth's second expedition into the west.





PIERRE'S HOLE RENDEZVOU 1832

"Other Side of the Rocky Mountains  
July 14th 1832"

Dear Wife In good health and spirits I have arrived here Two thirds to my journes end. Livermore and two others deserted me and stole two horses. if he cals please great him with the contempt he desreves - 7 more have deserted me since leaving me 12 men which is all I want having got through all the dangerous country - I had a bloodless skirmish with the Black feet Inds. by whom I lost 4 Horses - I have got so far with as little difficulty as I expected. You will not hear from me again for some time and this letter must be short as the party by whom it is sent must move on.

I am yr afte. Husband Nathe J. Wyeth"

\*\*\*\*\*



Carried "fav of Mr. Wm. L. Sublette to St. LOUIS MO OCT 5 1832, as per post-marked. See also letter to Charles Wyeth of same date, carried by Sublette in this collection.



Supply caravan enroute to the fur trade Rendezvou.



## THE WESTERN MAILS

"Fort Vancouver July 16 1833"

**Friend Brown.**

I am about commencing my return home, and if I am not very unfortunate I shall arrive in Oct. next, I have now but two men, and therefore can only travel when I can get company of whites or friendly Indians. I return by a different route from that by which this will reach you in order to raise some deposits of valuables which I have near the mountains. [most likely beaver pelts] my men proved worse than none, they would starve amid the greatest plenty of game, and their leaving was rather a benefit than otherwise. I will not here give you the particulars of my journey out, as I promised, the incidents are uninteresting as you can possibly imagine, there is much less of the adventure expected than you would think possible, eating sometimes plenty of good meat, sometimes none, and occasionally a peice of poor horse meat, is the whole story, danger there is a little, when you have plenty of company, and without that no one traveled here, the plan of my route is to leave this in company with a party of the Hudsons Bay cos. people, with whom I get to the Flatheads or Ponderays, with them until I fall in with some Am. [erican] Trapping party, with these to their rendesvus, take their return convoy home. In this there is so much disappointment that it need occasion no suprise if I do not reach home for a year after the time above stated. Having traveled almost constantly since I last saw you, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, and sometimes by boats, you will imagine I am tired of a way [of] passing life, nevertheless like all kinds of life it has some charms, it has been a great relief to me the Blue devils do not trouble me quite so much as formerly, on the other hand I have some more real troubles, but these better all always borne. I shall make a great loss this first part of the undertaking, and like Jobs messengers I shall expect with the skin of my teeth. You will expect to hear a little of the face of the country and to fill up the paper I will gratify you, From the rocky mountains to within 200 miles of the sea the country is open, Barren, and in its summit level far from mountainous, but in this space there are ranges of mountains, and the rivers seem to follow in enormous cracks, their banks perpindicilar mostly without bottom lands, and their beds filled with great stones, rapids and falls, the days are intensely hot, and the nights equally cold, in August I have observed the ther[mometer] at '18 at night and the following day at 85 this circumstance alone without the barrenness of the soil, or want of communications and impossibility of making them, would forever render this section of the country what it is now a den of

. The country within 200 miles of the coast is more mountainous covered with perhaps as heavy timber as the world produces chiefly of the pine, there is one kind of good oak, similar to the white oak of N. E. [New England] but not the same, this section unlike the first named is a moist region. at least in winter when it rains at least half the time in summer - I am told it is dry, the soil is Black, but not as rich as the color would indicate, this color is the result of the decomposition of the rocks which are all black and volcanic, nine tenths of the country is too precipitous for ploughing - there are almost no bottom lands on the Columbia that are not annually flooded, the only good country that I have seen is on the Multnomah or Wallamet [rivers], there the country consith of moderate soiled praries surrounded with wood among which there is much oak and maple, the soil is deep and nearly level, and lies on the best navigation of the country, there being but one fall between this and the sea, in this country there are plenty of deer, I am told there is good land on the River and at Pugetts Sound, but these places I have not seen and I have learned to take thr reports of others with great caution. I can not by this conveyance speak of business therefore you must be satisfied with what you have now got [untilyou see] me. Will you have the goodness to tel [your nephew and] Mrs. B. and remind James if his uncle [torn out] will not recollect me. I am anxious to know if Capt. Lee used my decoy place to good advantage last fall. "

Yr, Afte, Friend





Fort Vancouver July 16<sup>th</sup> 1833

Friend Brown

I am about commencing my return home,

and if I am not very unfortunate I shall arrive in Oct. next,

I have now but two men, and therefore can only travel when I

I can get the company of whites or friendly Indians. I re-

turn by a different route from that by which I came to <sup>you in</sup> ~~you~~

order to raise some deposits of valuable which I have near the

mountains. my men proved worse than none, they would stove

amid the greatest plenty of game, and their leaving was rather

a benefit

iculars of

unintended

of the ad

sometimes p

a piece of

is little, w

no one b

in Compun

whom I g

I fall in

rendevous,

so much to

suprise if I do not reach home for a year after the time

above stated. Having traveled almost constantly since I

Red wax seal on a folded letter. The letter is addressed to Mr. Jas. Brown, Cambridge Mass. The date 1833 is written in red ink. The letter is partially obscured by the wax seal and the handwriting is mostly illegible.

Mr. Jas. Brown

Cambridge Mass<sup>ts</sup>

Hon<sup>ble</sup> of the Hon. <sup>3</sup>  
Hudsons Bay Co. <sup>3</sup>

1833



Fort Vancouver July 16<sup>th</sup> 1833

Friend Brown

I am about commencing my return home, and if I am not very unfortunate I shall arrive in oct next, I have now but two men, and therefore can only travel when I can get the company of whites or friendly Indians. I return by a different route from that by which I came to you in order to raise some deposits of furs which I have near the

"Fort Vancouver July 16th 1833"

Dear Wife I am here and comfortable, and shall start from this place on my route homwards as soon as the river breaks up, My route will be the same as that by which I came, and the time of my arrival at home very uncertain - on this account I write you by this opportunity as this opportunity is unsuitable for the conveyance of many sentiments and matters which would otherwise pass between us, my letter will be short. If no accident occurs to me I will be with you in October, but if I am a year later you need not be alarmed, in this country there is little danger, but much delay, more especially as I have now but two men, and I can only travel when & where I can get the company of friendly Indians or American parties, for this reason I may be a whole year later home than the time specified. My business has been very bad but in this country I can always be comfortable. I wish you to keep the trees which I set around the house growing and if any die replace them. I have not suffered for food since leaving you, for some time I have lived at one of the Hudsons Bay Cos. posts - they here have all the essentials of life except pretty wives. If I should prolong this it would be on subjects that would not interest you much, and hoping to see you soon close it.

Nath. J. Wyeth"

Yr. Afte. Husband

whom I get to the Flatheads or Ponderosa, with them until I fall in with some com. trapping party, with them to their rendezvous, take their return canoe home. in this there is some room for disappointment that it need occasion no surprise if I do not reach home for a year after the time above stated. Having traveled almost constantly since I was



FORT VANCOUVER, OREGON COUNTRY.

On July 24, 1832, following the battle of Pierre's Hole, Milton Sublette and party, along with Wyeth and company headed west, Milton to the Snake River country and Wyeth to Fort Vancouver, where he arrived on the 29th of October, 1832. Here he was royally treated by Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company, while he explored the surrounding country with the view of establishing a trading company on the west coast. On February 3rd he started back home with a H. B. Company fur brigade, stopping off at the annual summer rendezvous, held on the Green River in 1833. Here he made a contract to supply Wm. Sublette with trade goods the following year of 1834. Wyeth arrived back in Cambridge the first week in November. In the course of the winter Milton joined him in Boston to buy goods for the contract that he had made at the 1833 rendezvous.

The two letters, both written from Fort Vancouver Jany. 16, 1833, to his wife and James Brown, relate to how he travels and the probable date that he will get back home, as well as a description of the country.

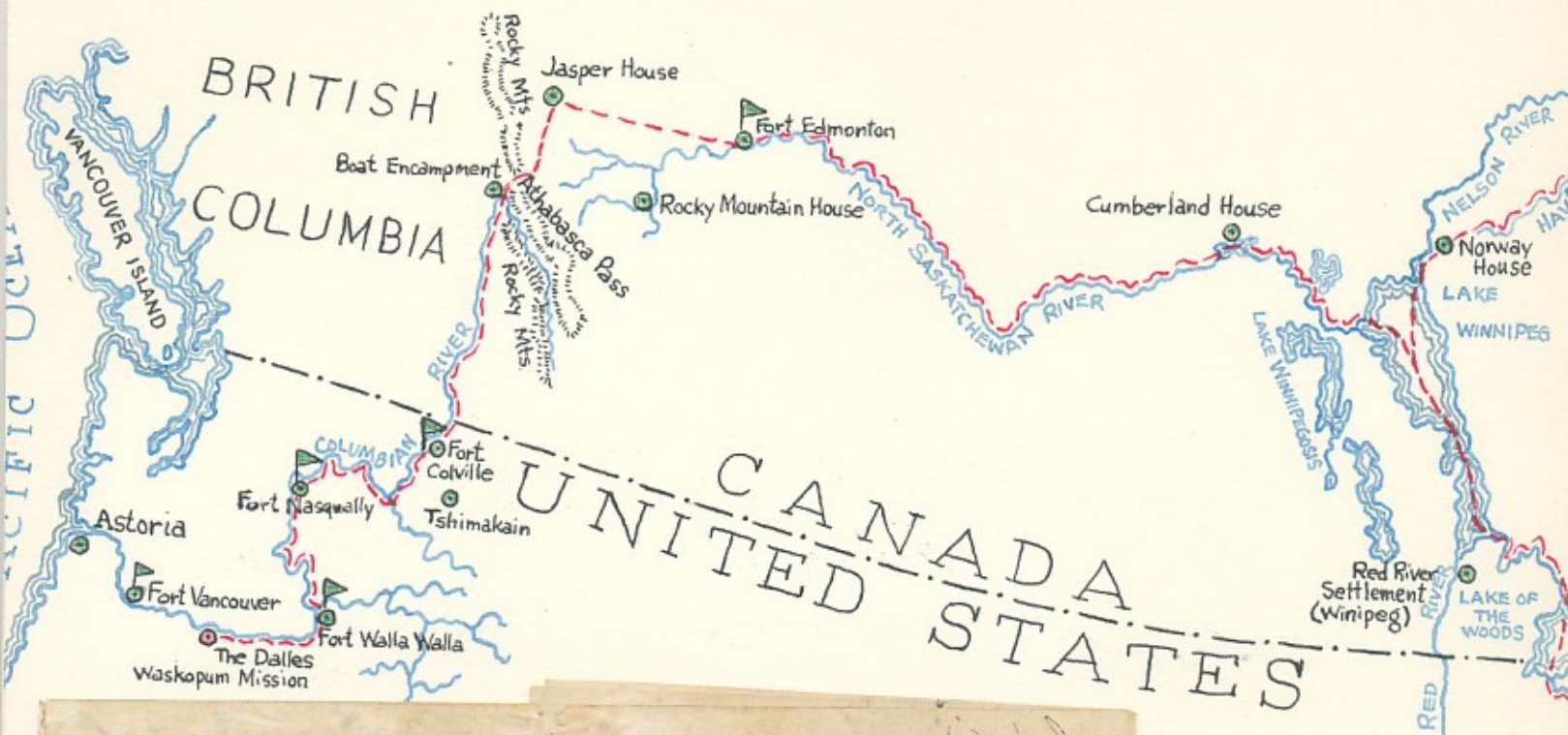
*Fort Vancouver Jany 16 1833*



*Fav. of the Hon. }  
Hudsons Bay Co. }*

Both letters were carried, as per directive "Fav of the Hon. /Hudsons Bay Co.", up the Columbia to the "Boat Encampment on the great bend of the river. Thence by pack horses across the Rocky Mountains via Athabasca Pass to the North Saskatchewan River to Lake Winnepeg and the Great Lakes to Montreal, where it entered the Canadian mails as per the red "PAID" handstamp and the red "6d" rate. Thence across the line via Lake Champlain, where it entered the U.S. MAILS, as per red "B" (steamboat) and "18 3/4" rate to Boston. See map of this route across North America in this collection.





James Brewster  
 Portland, B. Brewer  
 Federal B. Brewer  
 By Express Boats  
 Oct 29, 1844  
 1844  
 13th

PAID 25

Care of James Keith & Co. Bridgman Brewer  
 Lachine L.C.  
 H. Bay Company, Columbia River  
 Express to Columbia River Dallas Station

LACHINE  
 13th  
 April  
 1844  
 L.C.

WILBRAHAM  
 APR  
 8  
 Mass.

By Express Boats  
 Oct 29 1844

Fig. 1



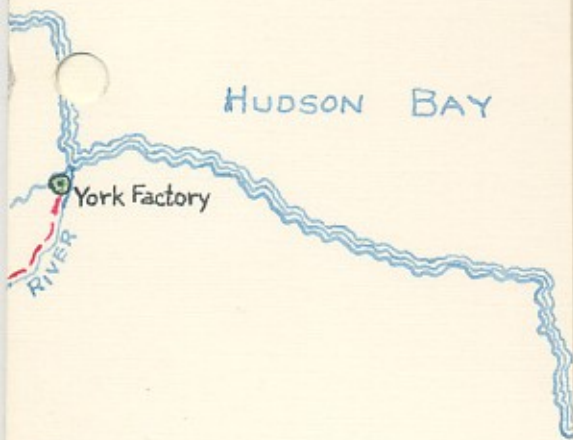
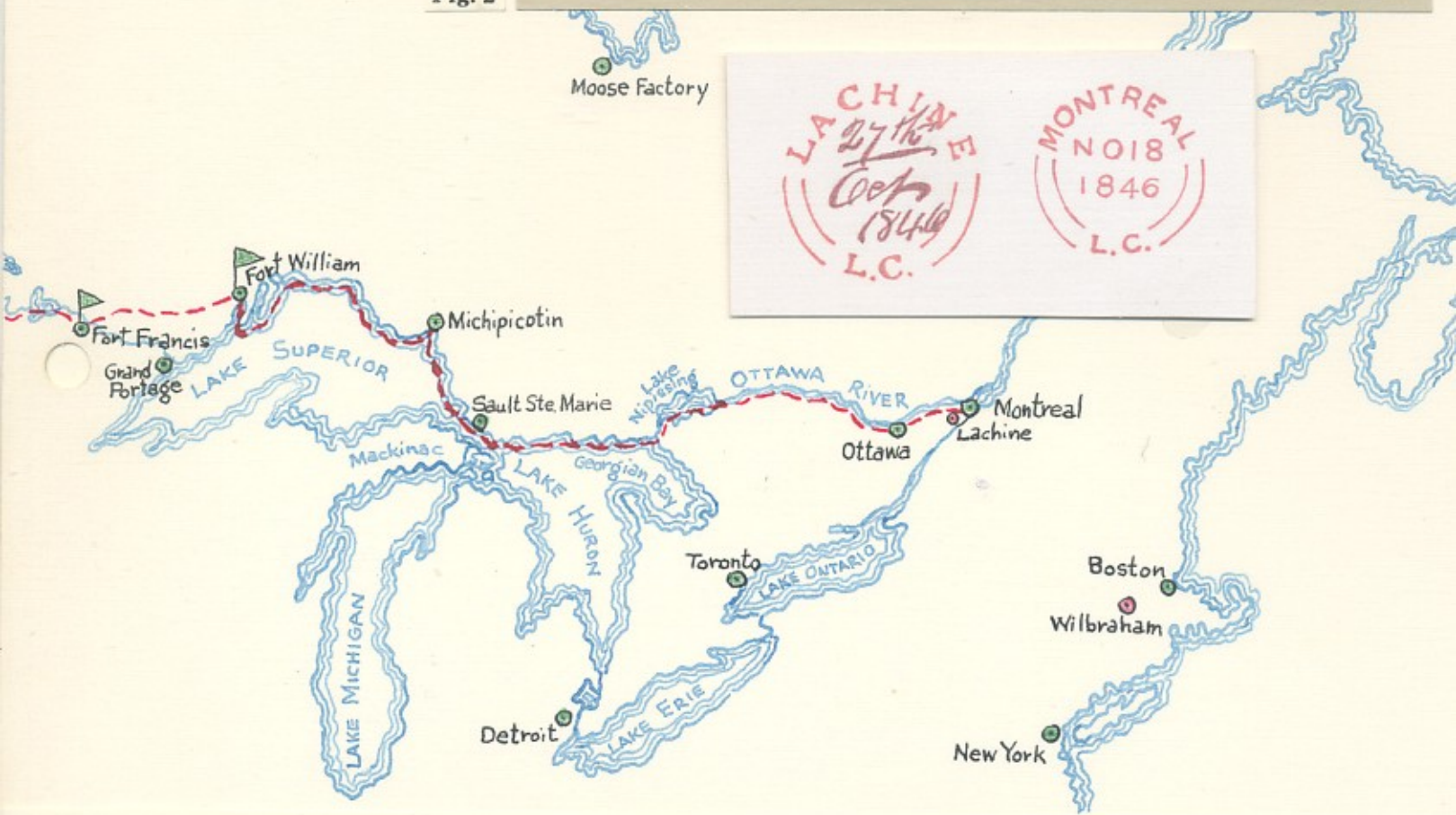


Fig. 2



### HUDSON'S BAY EXPRESS TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Fig. 1 This cover is a unique example of transcontinental mail carried by the expresses of the Hudson's Bay Company over its fur trade routes following the great watercourses of North America.

The letter originated, as per postmark, at WILBRAHAM MASS APR 8, and was routed through the regular postal channels to LACHINE, L.C. April 13, 1844. From here it traveled west via the express boats, following the rivers and lakes, to Fort Edmonton. From here by pack horses across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River, and thence by express boats to its destination at Wascopam Mission where its arrival was noted on reverse of letter "By Express Boats/Oct. 29, 1844" by Henry Bridgeman Brewer.

Fig. 2 This cover traveled the same route eastward from Fort Colville. Letter is datelined "Tshimakain Near Fort Colville/Oregon Mission 9th Feb. 1846."



## 50 Years Ago in Stamps:

# Oregon Mission Mail

## The Hudson's Bay Company Trade Routes

by D.W. Garber (From Stamps Magazine, December 25, 1954)

"Good news from a far country is like water to a thirsty soul."

Thus wrote Henry Bridgeman Brewer in acknowledging receipt of a Norwich Courier, of dinner bell for use on the farm, and most important of all, a package of letters from family and friends in New England. Writing from Wascopam Mission at the Dalles of the Columbia River on May 28, 1842, he was expressing the pleasure of his wife Laura, and himself, at receiving the letters from home. Brewer was the mission farmer.

These sentiments were echoed on October 29, 1844, when a multiple letter was received by Mr. Brewer, jointly written by his mother, Jemima Brewer, his sister Cordelia B. Brewer, and his brother Edwin B. Brewer. This letter was mailed at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, on April 8, 1844, and was directed to the care of the Hudson's Bay Company agent at Lachine, Lower Canada. It carried 25¢ PAID postage from Wilbraham, with an additional 4-1/2¢, the Canadian rate from the line to Lachine. Postmarked at Montreal April 12, and at Lachine on April 13, 1844, the letter was carried over the trade routes of the fur company to the far west, and was received by Brewer at Wascopam Mission on October 29, 1844.

With the founding of the Oregon Mission of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1834, an immediate need was created for a means of communication with family, friends, and parent organization in the east. The first mail, dispatched by individuals of the group, was by ship from the Columbia River by way of the Sandwich Islands, around Cape Horn to New England. Dr. John McLaughlin, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver, generously made available the facilities of the express service to the Oregon Mission, and the closely scheduled and efficiently handled express boats aided in reducing the isolation of the Indian missions.

The Hudson's Bay Company, maintaining trade routes through Canada and the northwest for their fur brigades, and with express boat service for their trading posts and other diversified activities, afforded a means of communication to their trappers and traders, and to the missionaries who had ventured into the remote backwoods areas.

The inference must not be gained that the facilities of the



Letter from the Brewer correspondence, mailed at Wilbraham, Mass., April 8, 1844. Photograph by Stanley B. Ashbrook, who also retouched the two postmarks for greater clarity in illustration.

Hudson's Bay Company, enjoyed by those connected with this initial mission to the northwest was unique, nor must the importance of this small group be under-emphasized in its relation to the story of early western communications. Of primary interest is the history of the fur company in the exploration and development of the west, and of the remarkable services which they maintained on their trade routes. However, the story of the Oregon Mission is not without significance and interest, and the following dates (milestones in the development of the west) highlight the relationship of the Hudson's Bay Company and the mail from the Oregon Mission in the history of the trans-continental mail service prior to 1848:

Fort Hall (Idaho) established by Nathaniel Wyeth, 1834.  
War declared by Mexico,

June 4, 1845.

United States and Great Britain sign treaty settling the 54-40 boundary dispute, June 15, 1846.

Mormon migration to Utah, 1847.

Gold discovered in California, January 24, 1848.

Upper California ceded to the United States by Mexico, 1848.

With the exception of the establishment of Fort Hall in 1834

these events occurred subsequent to the time the express services over the trade routes of the fur company were made available to Jason Lee and those associated with him. Lee had played a minor, although a dramatic part in the establishment of Fort Hall.

The trickle of migration to Oregon was so insignificant that Jason Lee, in 1839, estimated the American population as slightly more than one hundred. The population in 1843 was estimated at about fifteen hundred.

Letters in extremely small numbers occasionally found their way from east to west over the mid-continent route—the Oregon Trail, and the dearth of mail carried over this route is understandable, for there was no clearly defined or organized means of dispatch from Independence, Missouri, the eastern jumping point, on the long trail to Oregon. Due to the uncertainty, mail over this route was almost accidental—a point appreciated if consideration is given to the limited number who ventured over the hazardous two thousand mile Oregon Trail prior to 1843. Mail from the east was entrusted to persons making the long migration







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WYETH'S  
O R E G O N  
EXPEDITION.

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O R E G O N ;

OR

A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG JOURNEY

FROM THE

ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE REGION OF THE PACIFIC,

BY LAND;

DRAWN UP FROM THE NOTES AND ORAL INFORMATION

OF

JOHN B. WYETH,

ONE OF THE PARTY WHO LEFT MR. NATHANIEL J. WYETH,

JULY 23TH, 1832, FOUR DAYS' MARCH BEYOND THE RIDGE OF THE

**ROCKY MOUNTAINS,**

AND THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS RETURNED TO NEW ENGLAND.

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CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR JOHN B. WYETH.

1833.

41. WYETH, JOHN B. *Oregon: or a Short History of a Long Journey from the Atlantic Ocean to the Region of the Pacific by land; drawn up from the Notes and Oral Information of John B. Wyeth, one of the party who left Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, July 28, 1832, four days march beyond the ride of the Rocky Mountains, and the only one who has returned to New England.* First Ed. 8vo. pamphlet. 87pp. Wagner Camp 47; Howes 717; Sabin 105649; Graff 4763. Cambridge: John B. Wyeth, 1833.

The first printed account of the first emigrant party to cross the plains; starting from Cambridge, Mass. these hardy Yankees failed to get rich quick in the fur trade, as was their intention, but succeeded in crossing the country to within 400 miles of the Pacific; original front wrapper preserved, appearing to have been skillfully retouched with pen; back wrapper lacking; uncut and perfect condition otherwise; in a full maroon morocco solander slip case; extremely scarce.



THE WESTERN MAILS



MISSOURI BELLE was a sidewheel steamboat of 165 tons, built at Pittsburgh, Pa. in 1834. Had a very short life, being lost in 1834. Cover carried by the MISSOURI BELLE to St LOUIS where it entered the U.S. mails on July 4, 1834 as per postmark. It was rated "25" cents to Baltimore.

Jacob Wyeth

Jacob and Charles were brothers of Nathaniel J. Wyeth. Jacob and his cousin John B. Wyeth had gone west with Nat on his expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1832. On reaching the rendezvous site in Pierre's Hole (now called Teton Valley, Idaho), about July 7th, Jacob and John and several others decided to go back home with Sublette when he returned to St. Louis. Later, on his return John B. Wyeth published an account of the trip - OREGON, or a Short History of a Long Journey, 1833. Nathaniel called it a book "of little lies told for gain". SEE Nat's letter and a copy of John's OREGON in this collection.

The folded letter above relates to the strained relations between Nat and Jacob because Jacob and John had deserted him at Pierre's Hole. The following quotes are from the letter: "Galena June 27th 1834." Jacob states that he has commenced married life on the 11th ult and that he will soon open an apothecaries store to supplement his practice as a physician - he was a doctor. He wants his brother to write a "congratulatory" letter to show his wife Mary. I do "not wish you to contradict any thing Nat has said, not even alluded to it, I never doubted Nat spoke the truth about me, or at least intended to but felt fears that it might have an influence on Mary's feelings that were unpleasant, she might suppose for instance, the misunderstanding which he [Nat] alluded to my having with my family, amounted to an alienation for me on their part, which I do not believe is the case, at least with some members of it, a letter of a friendly cast with no allusions of the past, but giving me all the felicitations usual on such occasions." He continues in the same vein and wants Charles to intercede in the matter and bring him and Nat together with the family.





THE SUMMER RENDEZVOUS.

\*\*\*\*\*

Edward Samuel was born in Kentucky Oct. 11, 1807. He moved with his father to the Missouri Territory in 1815 and settled at Liberty in Clay county in 1829, where he engaged in the mercantile business. In 1865 he moved to St. Louis and was the president of the Commercial Bank until his death in 1869.

The letter shown is in reference to Wyeth's second expedition to the far west. SEE Wyeth's letter from the Rendezvous of 1832 in this collection. Although his first venture was a failure it did not deter him from mounting a second expedition after his return to Boston in the fall of 1833. He had made an agreement in the form of a contract with Milton Sublette and Thomas Fitzpatrick to supply the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. at the Rendezvous of 1834, at Hams Fork of the Green River. By April 1834 Weyeth was back in St. Louis under the name of The Columbia River Fishing & Trading Co. Here his party, which consisted of seventy men, 250 horses, two distinguished scientists, John Kirk Townsend and Thomas Nuttall, as well as, five missionaries, including Jason Lee, Daniel Lee and Cyrus Shepherd, joined the annual fur trade caravan under the leadership of Milton Sublette. Because of an infected foot Milton Sublette turned back to St. Louis where his leg was amputated which led to his eventual death at Fort Laramie in 1837. On arrival at the Rendezvous Wyeth found that Wm. Sublette had supplied the R.M.F. Company and they refused to honor the contract. However they did pay a forfeit of \$500 which was part of the contract. It is interesting to note that Samuel states in the letter that Sublette "afterwards bought his goods at a profit of 300 per cent"! Be that as it may, Wyeth continued west and established a trading post on the Snake River about 40 miles N.E. of its forks with the Portneuf River in present day Idaho. Leaving Robert Evens in charge of the post which is known to history as Fort Hall, he continued west to the mouth of the Columbia where he met the brig **MAY DACRE**. SEE deposition of Robert Evens in this collection. Wyeth had intended to establish a salmon fishing plant in Oregon and ship the dried salmon back east to New England. However it, as well as his fur trading plans, never worked out and he returned to Boston and the pond ice business where he was successful and where he died on August 31, 1856, having lived to see Oregon become a territory of the U.S.



Liberty Missouri Sept 24<sup>th</sup> '34

Gentlemen - One of our citizens who went out for his health with Capt Wyeth has to day reached home, and gives me the following information, which I presume you would be pleased to learn, and I therefore write you.

"he states that Capt Wyeth reached the waters of the Columbia River (which lie beyond the mountains) in safety on the 2<sup>d</sup> July last, that himself & company

FUR TRADE RENDEZVOUS - GREEN RIVER 1834

" Liberty Missouri Sept 24, '34

Gentlemen - One of our Citizens who went out for his health with Capt Wyeth [Nathaniel Jarvis] has to day reached home, and gives me the following information, which I presume you would be pleased to learn, and I therefore write you.

He states that Capt Wyeth reached the waters of the Columbia River (which lie beyond the mountains) in safety on the 2d July last, that himself & company were all well, that but four of his hands left him which he again supplied from another company - that his Horses stood the trip well, but 12 of the 125 having failed, that Wm. L. Sublette got ahead of him and supplied a contract which Capt W. had with Milton Sublette or some person else, but that W. L. Sublette paid him a profit of \$500 and afterwards bought his goods at a profit of 300 per cent, and he thinks Capt W. done as well or better than if he had filled the contract himself - he states that the vessel (the **May Dacre** had landed at the mouth of the Columbia River and sent an express to meet Capt W. which did meet him, and the Capt expected to meet her by the 22 July - he states that about 300 of the Ne Persha [Nez Percè] Indians were to accompany Capt Wyeth the balance of his journey to protect them from the Blackfeet Indians - the Missionaries Messrs Lee [Jason] & Shepherd [Cyrus] were in company also Capt Thing [Joseph] - Mr Nuttall [Thomas] and Townsend [John Kirk] of Phila. all well - he gives great credit to Capt Wyeth for his Perseverance and bravery - he states that it was in consequence of Capt Ws losing his way that Sublette got ahead of him - I wrote before that we had recd. after Capt W left us a package for Abel Baker on board **May Dacre** which we could see no opportunity of sending to him, and requested to know what to do with it. whether to send it to you or keep it - what shall I do -

Edward M. Samuel / of firm of Samuel & Moore"  
Edward M. Samuel / of firm of Samuel & Moore"

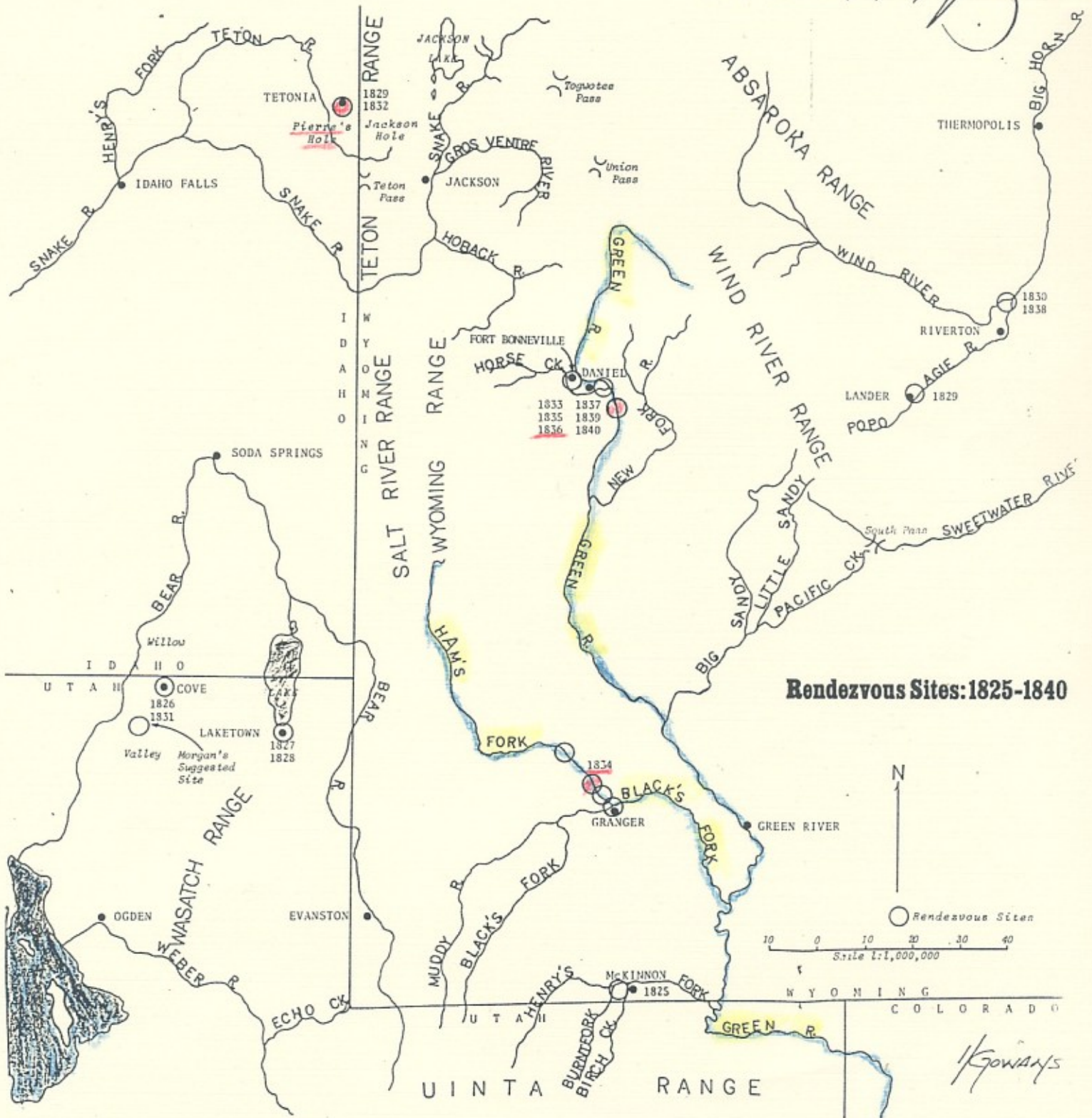


"Hams Fork of the Colorado of the West Latt. 41, 45` Long. 112 , 35` W. June 21 1834"

Dear Wife I have but little to say to you in a letter, but much business with you if I were at home, I got here safe, and well, but whether I shall do well is yet uncertain, but I will try. Miltons [Sublette] leg got so bad that he did not come with me. Mr Nuttall [Thomas] is well and curseing little battle of Cambridge in high stile. It would do you good to look into our tent and see how fat I am, be of good cheer and make yourself as happy as you can unril I come or send. Give my respects to your mother, and Aunt Rebecca, and love to Caroline, Baptiste sends compliments

I am Yr. Afte. Husband"

*Nathaniel Wyeth*





Home Text of the Columns of the West - Lat. 41° 45' Long. 112° 25' W. June 21<sup>st</sup> 1834

### FUR TRADE RENDEZVOUS 1834.

Back in Boston Wyeth got financial backing and organized the Columbia River Fishing & Trading Company. After buying supplies and trade goods, he chartered the brig MAY DACRE to carry it around Cape Horn to the Columbia River. By April 17, 1834 he was back in Independence, the final starting point for his second expedition to the Oregon country. This time he was better organized. He started out on April 28th, with Milton Sublette and 75 men and 250 horses. Accompanying him was Joseph Thing, a Boston sea captain, Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary and his four companions and naturalists, Thomas Nuttall and John Kirk Townsend. SEE Townsend's letter in this collection. On May 8th, Milton Sublette was forced to turn back, because of a diseased leg, which after amputation led to his death at Fort Laramie on April 5, 1837. On arrival at the rendezvous site, Wyeth was astonished to learn that Sublette would not accept the trade goods he had contracted for. However Wyeth was paid a \$500 forfeite as called for in the contract. By the first of July the rendezvous was breaking up and shortly thereafter Wyeth and party headed west. On his way he stopped off and built Fort Hall on the Snake River near the junction of the Portneuf River. Here he stored his trade goods and left the post in charge of Robert Evans. He then continued west, arriving at Fort Vancouver on Sept. 14th, the day before the MAY DACRE anchored in the Columbia with his supplies.



Forwarded from St. Louis Mo by Von Phul & M Gill

Before leaving the rendezvous Wyeth met Joseph Reddeford Walker and Michel S. Cerrè, enroute to St. Louis with Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville's furs. It can be certainly assumed that Wyeth turned this letter over to Walker as per the directive on the lower left of the address sheet - "J.W." for JOSEPH WALKER. On arrival in St. Louis it was turned over, as per note on reverse, to be "Forwarded from St. Louis Mo by Von Phul & M Gill", who placed it in the post office as per postmark St LOUIS MO SEP 1 and rated "25" cents to Cambridge, where it was crossed out and forwarded "6" cents to Saxonville, where it again was forwarded back to Cambridge with an additional "6" cents, for a total of "12" cents collect. It had also been to the "Care of Jas. Brown", which was crossed out for "Mr. David Stone" (Mrs. Wyeth's father?) at Saxonville which is also crossed out when forwarded back to Cambridge.



FORT WILLIAM OREGON COUNTRY 1835.

After arriving at Fort Vancouver in September of 1834, Wyeth selected a site on Wappatoo Island, near the mouth of the Willamette River, on the Columbia. It was here that he built Fort William and set up his business of shipping furs and Salmon, via Cape Horn, to Boston and the eastern market. In November he sent Captain Joseph Thing to relieve Robert Evans in charge of Fort Hall. From the beginning things were becoming unprofitable. The Salmon catch had been poor and he was only able to ship half a cargo in the MAY DACRE on its return to Boston. He spent the winter of 1835/36 at Fort Hall, returning to the Columbia in February 1836, where he sold Fort William to the Hudson Bay Company and went back to Fort Hall. He left Fort Hall June 25th, stopping off at the rendezvous of 1836, on the upper Green River near Daniel, Wyoming, on his way back to Cambridge where he arrived in the fall. Captain Thing, as agent for Wyeth, sold Fort Hall the following year to the Hudson Bay Company.



Folded letter from the Columbia River, via Hawaii and Cape Horn to Boston, where it entered the mails as per postmark - BOSTON JUN 10", 1836. From the date of the letter, it was over 8 months in transit. At Boston it was rated "18 3/4" cents and forwarded to Baltimore "Care of Charles Wyeth Esq", Nathaniel's brother.

"Fort William Sept. 22d 1835"

"Dear Wife I have been sick, but have got well, and shall be on my way to the mountains, to winter at Fort Hall, in about six days, I expect to be at home about the 1st. Nov. 1836. Mr. Nuttall is here and well. I have sent you half a bbl [barrel] of Salmon which I hope will be in good order. I can not attend to putting them up myself, therefore they may not be so good. The season has been sickly, we have lost by drowning, decease and warfare 7 persons to this date, and 14 now sick. Keep up good spirits my dear wife, for I expect when I come home to stop there, and altho I shall be poor, yet we can always live, I hope to find my trees growing when I come, and all things comfortable, I think this will be the last until I see you, give my respects to your mother and Aunt Rebecca, my love to Sister May and Brother Pery, if you see them.

and believe me yr. afte. Husband"



"Fort Vancouver 18 January 1838"

"Madam As I hear that there is a canoe going off with letters to the ship, in which Capt Thing [Joseph] left this, I think it my duty to write you by him, and thank you for the care you took of me while I was in Boston . You told me to continue to improve myself when Mr. Wyeth took me from you, Since he left me, I have been at Mr. McLoughlen's [John McLoughlin, was a chief factor and Governor of the Columbia Department of the Hudson Bay Company - Sir George Simpson's "ramrod" in the far northwest] School under Mr. Robinson and am glad , to be able to write to you and thank you, for having been so kind to me - I hear that my father [Francios Payette a trader with the Hudson Bay Co.] will go out of the Columbia in spring and I hope he will take me with him and I hope I shall see you again -

I am / Madam/ your humble servant/ John B. Payette"

Mrs. N. Wyeth/Boston"

*John B. Payette*



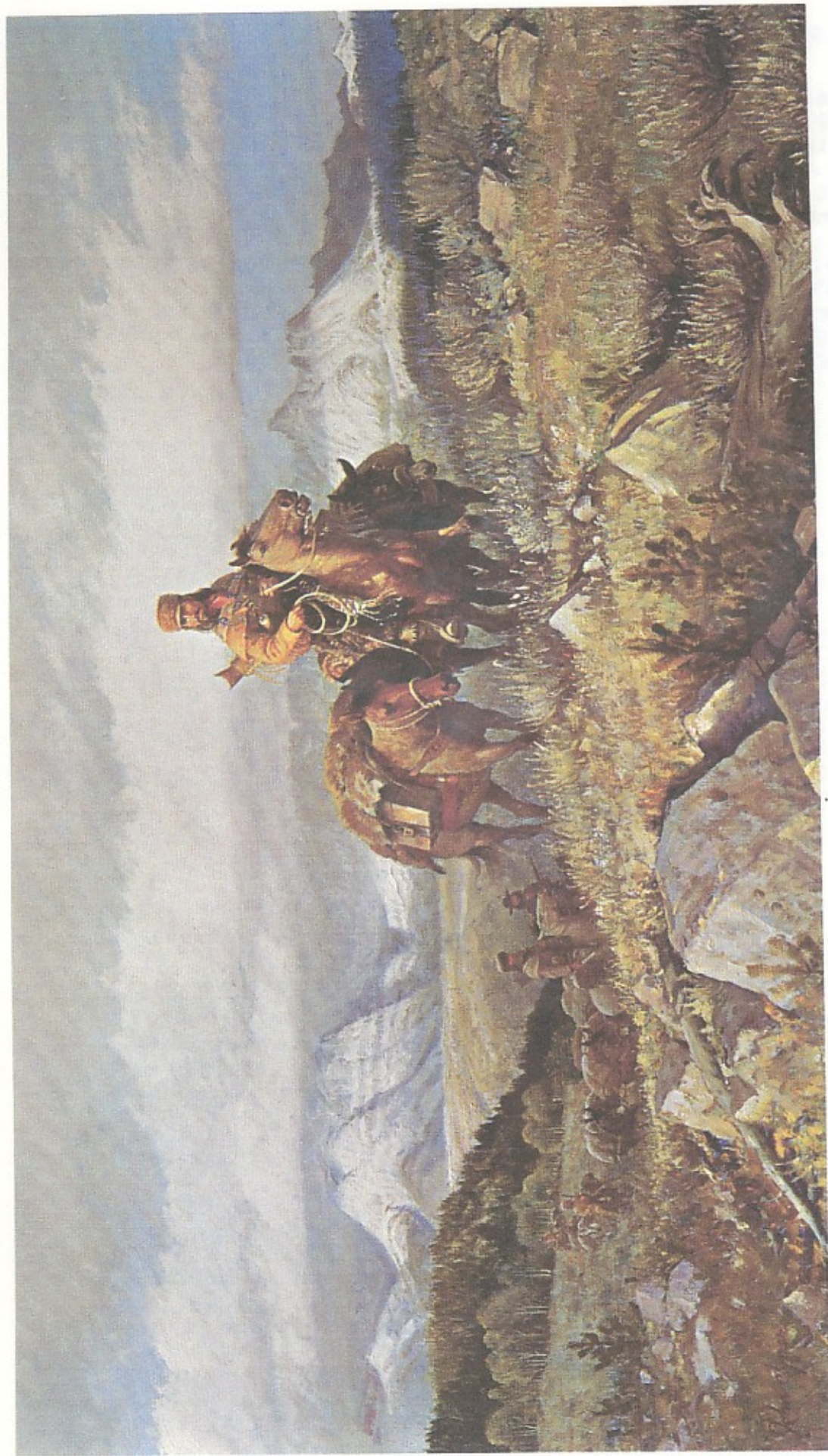
Many fur traders and trappers married Indian girls like this lovely young Flathead of 1837.



Folded letter dated January 18, 1838 (overwritten from 1837), was carried by ship to Boston, via Hawaii and Cape Horn, was 15 months in transit, arriving at Boston April 17, 1839, where it was post-marked and rated "6" cents in red.

**BAPTISTE PAYETTE** was a half-breed son of Francois Payette, a trader with the Hunson Bay Company, and a Flathead Indian girl. Francois was a friend of Wyeth and when Wyeth went back to Cambridge in 1833, he took Baptiste, who was 13 year old, and an Nez Perce boy, with him. Baptiste could not speak English and read or write , but by the time he got back to Oregon he had accomplished this as testified to by this letter he wrote to Mrs. Wyeth. Although he is refrred to by most historians as Baptiste, he apparently preffered the name John as per his signature.





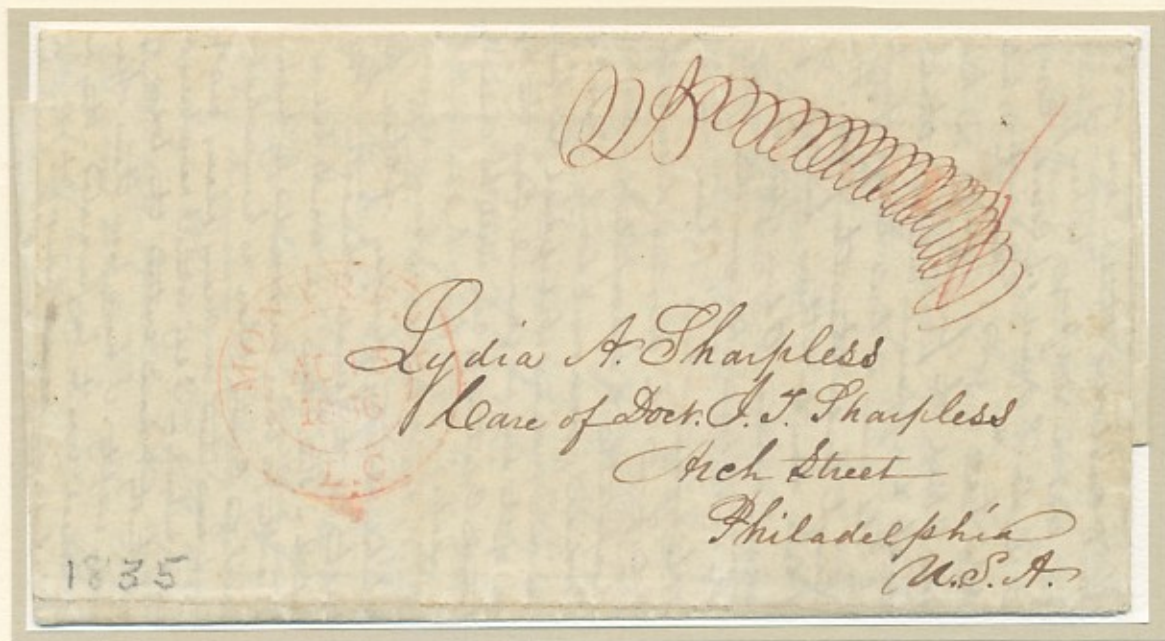
THE BOOSHWAY oil, 24 x 40 inches 1973



THE WESTERN MAILS



*PAID*



**FORT VANCOUVER, Oregon Territory, Dec. 18th, 1836** (transparently for 1835). The letter was carried overland, following the great watercourses of Canada, via the expresses of the Hudson's Bay Company. On arrival in Montreal, August 13, 1836, it was rated 6d, stamped PAID, and forwarded to the United States. The U.S. Post Office rated the letter 25¢ collect, scrolled out the Canadian charges, and the letter was delivered in Philadelphia after a long journey of almost eight months.

John Kirk Townsend, the writer of the letter, with his fellow Philadelphian, naturalist Thomas Nuttall, joined Nathaniel J. Wyeth's expedition and the annual caravan, to the Fur Trade Rendezvous of 1834 at Ham's Fork in what is now S.W. Wyoming. After the Rendezvous he continued west with Wyeth, arriving at Fort Vancouver on September 16, 1834.

Townsend was an Ornithologist, second only to James J. Audobon in the study of the birds of America. He wrote the story of his overland trip to Oregon, *NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS*, Philadelphia 1839. Part of this letter is quoted in the book including a visit from an old Indian Chief whose "sunken eyes sparkle like diamonds set in bronze". He also mentions that his Indian name is **Kalakla tiee** meaning Bird Chief.



Fort Vancouver, Oregon territory  
Dec. 18th, 1836\_

My dear Cousin L.

Was it in jest or earnest my dear Cousin that thee once gave me permission to write to thee? I have never been able to discover; to be sure I have had no opportunity except by reasoning with my own thoughts upon the Subject, & this I have done often, very often, but I could never before summon Sufficient courage to begin the task. I have been anxious to write, not because I supposed myself capable of interesting thee particularly, (For I shall assuredly not go into a long discourse about the imminent danger I have passed - the hair breath 'scapes & such things - these I detail in full to our family only, to others they must be dull & stupid enough,) but is there any harm in desiring that those we esteem & love shd. be aware that we think of them with every returning morning, & Sincerely & fervently desire their prosperity & happiness. I am anxious thee should know that I have thought thus of thee my cousin, that among my dear absent friends there is not one, no not one, of whom I have thought more frequently & whose esteem & friendship I prize more highly.

I am sojourning in a distant land, far removed from all upon whom my affections have dwelt from infancy to manhood - I am surrounded, - by what? by savages who have not one feeling in common with me or any other civilized being, who eat, sleep & die & mingle with the dust, but who never feel, who never think, who never have a conception save that which will tend to the gratification of sensual desires, or minister to the vilest & most corrupt passions of a naturally corrupt nature. Oh! not for the wealth of worlds would I adopt this for my Country as many have done & are doing, & I only endure it now in the expectation of soon leaving it to be again united to those for whom my heart so anxiously & increasingly yearns. Still I have met with kindness here, very great kindness. Nothing could be more cordial & generous than the hospitality of the gentlemen attached to this establishment. The Stranger is always recd. by them with open arms - his very wishes are



anticipated, & nothing in their power is omitted to make him comfortable & happy-

But will thee not say I am an incorrigible egotist Cousin L. It is one of my many foibles I suppose. Now I really slip into it as naturally as tho' it should be a thing of course & as tho' I supposed every one ought to be as much interested in my small matters as my fond sisters profess to be. But thou hast had much to forgive in me & will not refuse thy pardon now.

To change the tiresome subject then to a very, very lovely one: our Sweet cousin Hannah. Said I - it was a lovely subject? - I can see her now, with her quiet, gentle eyes speaking the pure sweet music of the soul - I do not wish to take a flight - but there is something so placid, so immaterial & so heaven-like in the pure serenity of those eyes of hers, & her every action, word & gesture so perfectly accord with their expression that to me she seems a being of a higher order than the rude mortals who daily beset our path. Oh! I could have loved this Child - but who could know her & not love her? - I could have loved her, not as I should love another woman. She is too good for that, & I should have fancied that I was purified & rendered more worthy of that heaven to which we all aspire from the very circumstance of loving one so holy. And that this blessed Child - this little less than Saint, Should have been, almost from infancy, the subject of disease & suffering! - Does it not almost make us doubt the justice of that power who rules us! - What had this dear child done to merit such infliction. And why, if as some visionaries would have us think, - a certain amt. of pain is as a curse bestowed upon the world, - could not this have alighted upon one whose deeds had made him worthy of the curse, & whom it would perhaps chasten & purify. But these matters are not within the compass of our reason, we should not doubt but suffer all things.

I have spoken of our cousins illness as a thing of by-gone days - I will not believe that she is sick now: when I last saw her she was improving & with a fair prospect of a speedy restoration. This has been effected, & my



1844

New York 4 Janv. 1844

Monsieur Cuvier.

J'ai reçu ta lettre du 8 décembre, & depuis  
Lors, j'ai eu le plaisir de voir Quincy, qui est parti hier pour Boston.

L'ignorer d'apprendre que tu sois aussi Contrarié par le  
Manque d'eau au Moulin. C'est une Grande perte. Mais en  
adoptant le plan d'y mettre une Machine à Vapeur, tu dois  
chercher de la mettre aussi simple que possible, afin de Pouvoir  
Profiter de l'eau que tu en auras Sans trop d'Inconvénient,  
Le dis Sans trop d'Inconvénient, parceque plus au Moins tu en  
auras & peut être Beaucoup. Car tu ne prendras pas un Ingénieur  
à l'accusé. & Chaque fois que tu en auras Besoin il t'en faudra  
de Nouveaux & bien Peut être ce qu'ils Seront.

Henry me dit que tu devais m'écrire pour ~~quelques~~ quelques  
Mises Partes que tu désirais avoir pour Batis, tes Lots de la  
Rue de l'Eglise, si tu as écrit. Je n'ai pas reçu ta lettre &  
dit moi ce que tu avais écrit & Combien de la quelle Époque.

L'attaque d'Stephen dont tu te plains, n'est Sans doute que  
le Résultat de ton Inaction, le papa doit y avoir aussi une  
Grande part, tu dois le Secourir toujours Rapide pour te faire oublier  
le Capot de ta Mente. Peux-tu beaucoup d'exercice, fume moins  
de Tabac & tu trouveras bien. Encore mieux si tu sub d'aurait un  
Coursier qui percuterait la Mente au, Ces malades, te ferait oublier  
le Mal, pour t'occuper à leur domier du Pain.

Monsieur Cuvier, si tu veux, je t'aurais un journal à l'usage.

Le Cadeau de ton dévoué Cousin

J. C. Cuvier



*QJ*

*Gabriel S. Chouteau Esq-*

*St. Louis*  
*Missouri*



1841

