

Shinnin' Times

EARLY ARKANSAW REENACTORS ASSOCIATION

Excerpts from <http://thefurtrapper.com/home/rendezvous-sites/?sfns=mo>

The thirteen of the sixteen Rocky Mountain Rendezvous were held west of the Continental Divide. The 1829, 1830, and 1838 rendezvous were held east of the Continental Divide. Six of the sixteen rendezvous were held in territory belonging to Mexico. Except the 1826-27-28 rendezvous in Utah and the 1832 in Idaho, all of the rendezvous were held in Wyoming. Six of the sixteen rendezvous were held on Horse Creek in the Green River Valley near present-day Daniel, Wyoming...there was no general rendezvous in 1831. All of the rendezvous were held in the territory of the Shoshone, or Snake, Indians.

After the 1825 rendezvous, the next year's rendezvous site was selected during the rendezvous. The selected sites were in a lush valley big enough for up to five hundred mountain men, several thousand Indians, and grazing and water for thousands of horses. Members of the Shoshone, Crow, Nez Perce, and Flathead nations attended most of the rendezvous. Another consideration was the site be readily accessible to the supply trains from St. Louis.

The rendezvous campsites were grouped around the various suppliers. Depending on the number of suppliers, the rendezvous sites could be spread out for several miles; no one point can be called the "site". When my brother Bert Eddins and I took the pictures of the rendezvous sites, we took these factors into account. The longitudes and latitudes given represent the probable center of the rendezvous.

James Beckwourth left this general description of the mountain man's summer rendezvous.

It may well be supposed that the arrival of such a vast amount of luxuries from the East did not pass off without a general celebration. Mirth, song, dancing, shooting, trading, running, jumping, singing, racing, target-shooting, yarns, frolic, with all sort of extravagances that white men or Indians could invent were freely indulged in. The unpacking of the medicine water contributed not a little to the heightening of our festivities.

July 1, 1825, on Henry's Fork of the Green River, Ashley wrote:

On the 1st day of July, all the men in my employ or with whom I had any concern in the country, together with twenty-nine, who had recently withdrawn from the Hudson Bay company, making in all 120 men, were assembled in two camps near each other about 20 miles distant from the place appointed by me as a general rendezvous, when it appeared that we had been scattered over the territory west of the mountains

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EARA 2020 Event Schedule

Jan 11 12th Night Christmas Party 10 am until Idlewild House Teresa Lafferty 501-247-6466

Jan 25-26 Defense of Cadron Colonial Event at Cadron State Park, Conway Ed Williams 501-944-0736

Feb 14-16 Five Trail's Voo Historic Washington St. Park Lori Bennett 903-306-7781

March 6-7 White Oak Voo White Oak State Park Ed Williams 502-944-0736

(**March 14-22** ** SWRR Henderson, TX at Two Ball's Farm Jan Kitlinger 940-867-7432)

April 3-5 Saline Crossing Voo Benton, AR Doyle Richey 501-860-2544/Marsh Kimmerly 501-8603686

April 3 Keelboat Event at Lyon's College Scottish Festival Ed Williams 501-944-0736

Cancelled!! April 18-19 Colbert's Raid at Arkansas Post Ed Williams 501-944-0736

Cancelled!! Apr 17-19* Woolly Hollow Voo Woolly Hollow State Park Tom Reedy 501-679-1636 Tinker 501-351-0561

Cancelled!! May 15-17 Annual Pioneer Days Event: May 15th & 16th. (Friday and Saturday)

Venue: Educational Programming for Public NOTE: Setup on Thursday, May 14th and Break-Down on Sunday, May 17th. Norfolk, AR Call Tom Reedy 501-679-1636

June 5-7 Bennett's Wildcat Voo Billy's at Jordan, AR Billy/Cathey Bennett 8702972269/2547187410

July 4th Celebration at HAM Scott & 6th St Downtown LR Ed Williams 501-944-0736

(**July 16-18**** MOJAM Marshall, MO City Park James 'Nonose' Thompson 501-860-2547)

Aug 8 Ice Cream Social Carol's Porch Call Carol Fritts at 501-3501706

Aug 22* Annual EARA Picnic and meeting

Sept 25-27 Soggy Bottoms Hist. Wash. State Park —Lori Bennett 903-306-7781

(**Oct 3**** Sorghum Cook off/Fall Festival Scott Ed Williams 501-944-0736

Oct 9-11 Leslie Voo Derk/Sherry Hettrick

(Ft. Critter's Voo Oct 16-18** Call Dianne Estrata 903-665-1672 David Pilgrin 903-276-8169/903-227-8302)

November 6-7 Wolf House Rendezvous November 6th & 7th (Friday and Saturday)

Venue: Educational Programming for Public NOTE: Setup on Thursday, November 5th and Break-Down on Sunday, November 8th. Norfolk, AR Call Tom Reedy 501-679-1636

Nov 26-29* Petite Jean Voo Petite Jean State Park Call April Goff 501-590-2583

Dec 6 HAM Christmas Folic Scott & 6th HAM Museum Call Ed Williams 501-944-0736

* 3 required meetings per EARA bylaws per year for club

** Not EARA events

EARA Book Sale!!! The EARA book sale announced in a previous issue will be happening at the EARA picnic this August. More info to follow.

Advertisements

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in small detachments from the 38th to the 44th degree of latitude, and the only injury we had sustained by Indian depredations was the stealing of 17 horses by the Crows on the night of the 2nd april, as before mentioned, and the loss of one man killed on the headwaters of the Rio Colorado, by a party of Indians unknown.

Part of Ashley's one hundred and twenty men were at least twelve men with Etienne Provost from Taos and possibly other Indians besides those defecting from Peter Skene Ogden of the Hudson's Bay Company with seven hundred pelts.

Accompanied by Jedediah Smith, Ashley left the day after the gathering and took his furs over South Pass and down the Bighorn Canyon to near present-day Thermopolis, Wyoming.

The furs were loaded into bull boats and floated down the Bighorn and Yellowstone rivers to the Missouri River where Ashley met the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition. General Henry Atkinson and Indian agent Benjamin O'Fallon had come up the Missouri in a paddle wheeler to negotiate treaties with the Missouri River Indian tribes. Ashley's furs were loaded on the Atkinson-O'Fallon paddle-wheeler and taken to St. Louis.

Jedediah Smith and Robert Campbell left St. Louis in late October with sixty men, one hundred and sixty mules, and twenty thousand dollars worth of trade goods. Snowed in on the Republican Fork of the Kansas River, Smith sent a message for Ashley to bring more mules; a third of Smith's mules had died. Ashley responded with twenty-three more men and mules. When the combined party reached Green River, Dr. Gowns states sixty to seventy trappers joined the caravan. From the Green River Valley several routes have been proposed for the route to Cache Valley, but most accounts have the caravan following Bear River into the north end of Cache Valley.

The site of the 1826 rendezvous in Cache Valley (Willow Valley) is disputed between Cove and Hyrum, Utah. The renowned historian Dr. Dale Morgan believes it was near the mouth of Blacksmith Fork Canyon near Hyrum. Dr. Morgan based this assumption on the July entries of Jedediah Smith's 1827 Journals:

July 1st 25 Miles North along the shore of the Lake. Nothing material occurred.

[July] 2nd 20 Miles North East Made our way to the Cache. But Just before arriving there I saw some indians on the opposite side of a creek. It was hardly worth while as I thought, to be any wise careful, so I went directly to them and found as near as I could judge by what I knew of the language to be a band of the Snakes. I learned from them that the Whites, as they term our parties, were all assembled at the little Lake, a distance of about 25 Miles. There was in [the] this camp about 200 Lodges of indians and as the[y] were on their way to the rendezvous I encamped with them.

[July] 3d I hired a horse and a guide and at three O Clock arrived at the rendezvous. My arrival caused a considerable bustle in camp, for myself and party had been given up as lost. A small Cannon brought up from St. Louis was loaded and fired for a salute.

Dr. Morgan took the term cache to mean where goods from the 1826 rendezvous were cached. Dr. Morgan further speculated Smith's direction of travel was up Box Elder Canyon and over Sardine into the south end of Cache Valley.

Based on these assumptions, he located the 1826 rendezvous in the area of Hyrum, Utah. There are several fallacies to these assumptions. I will state six, and if anyone is interested, email me and we can discuss several others.

Arguments against 1826 Rendezvous being at Blacksmith Fork Canyon:

- 1) Dr. Morgan wrote that on Jedediah Smith return from California in 1827, he had gone to a cache with blacksmith tools in the mouth of Blacksmith Fork Canyon, hence this is where the 1826 rendezvous must have been held.
- 2) Dr. Morgan has Jedediah Smith going up Boxelder Canyon and over Sardine into the south end of Cache Valley near Hyrum. Utah...at the time Dr. Morgan wrote the definitive book on Jedediah Smith, he states in the preface the Smith Gibbs Map had not come to light. A few years later the Smith Gibbs map was found and shows Smith following the Bear River into Cache Valley a little Southwest of Cove, Utah.

3) From Dr. Morgan's Blacksmith Fork location, it is steep rugged country and there is absolutely no way Smith, or anyone else, can ride a horse up Blacksmith Fork Canyon and arrive at the south end of Bear Lake (Sweet Lake) by three o'clock in the afternoon...present-day dirt road is approximately forty-five miles. Smith's own words of the third would indicate the 1826 rendezvous was somewhere else. The most likely place is John H. Weber's 1825 winter camp near Cove, Utah.

4) If Indians were traveling with their families, the trail had to be wide enough to pull at least a five-to-six foot wide travois, and this would be impossible up Blacksmith Fork Canon.

5) There was an Indian trail from Cache Valley up Indian Canyon to present-day Tony's Grove in the upper end of Logan Canyon, and it would be relatively easy from there to Bear Lake. Indian Canyon is just southeast of Weber's camp site. From Weber's camp at Cove, it is roughly twenty-six miles to Bear Lake. I have rode a horse from Cove to Tony's Grove in about six hours.

6)The 1826 rendezvous trade goods caravan followed the Bear River into the north end of Cache Valley. It is logical to assume the pack train would have stop at or close by John Weber's winter camp at Cove, Utah. The trip from St. Louis had been a long hard journey; up to thirty men had deserted. Why would the men re-pack over one hundred mules and leave a well-known establish camp and travel another twenty-five miles south to Blacksmith Fork Canyon, especially when blacksmith tools were far more likely at Cove where Bridger, an apprentice blacksmith, had spent the winter with Weber?

There has been considerable discussion on the location of the 1826 rendezvous. Despite all the speculation, including mine, there is only one known fact and that is from Jedediah Smith's journal:

... I hired a horse and a guide and at three O Clock arrived at the rendezvous.

No one can ride a horse from the mouth of Blacksmith Fork Canyon and arrive on the south end of Bear Lake by three o'clock in the afternoon. As soon as someone does this please let me know and I will gladly make the appropriate changes.

At the conclusion of the 1826 Willow Valley rendezvous, Ashley met with Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette on Bear River between present-day Georgetown and Soda Springs, Idaho. Ashley sold his interest in the Ashley Smith Fur Trade Company to the new company of Smith Jackson and Sublette. The previous year, he had taken Jedediah Smith as his new partner; Andrew Henry left the Ashley-Henry partnership in 1824. Ashley had made enough money from the Rocky Mountain fur trade to quit the mountains and pursue his interests in beaver pelts, trade goods, and politics.

Ashley's hired Hyrum Scott and forty-six men to take the 1827 supply caravan to the Sweet Lake (Bear Lake) rendezvous near present-day Laketown, Utah. The trade goods sent out this year by Ashley is the first listing of alcohol (Rum) being sent, but there are reports of it at the two previous rendezvous. With the caravan was a small cannon mounted on two wheels. This two-wheeled cart made the first wheeled tracks over South Pass. On the way back with the furs, Hiram Scott become ill, and was later abandoned. His body was found three years later near Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

The 1827 rendezvous was the only rendezvous supplied by Ashley. Supplies and furs were marketed through Ashley, but Smith Jackson and Sublette were not obligated to buy all of the trade goods from Ashley. The agreement signed by them in 1826 was only binding if they contacted Ashley before March 1 of the year preceding the rendezvous.

There were few trade goods for the 1828 rendezvous on Sweet Lake. Sublette had brought out the trade goods the previous fall, and they were pretty much gone. Joshua Pilcher arrived with a few goods from a cache of the previous year...the Pilcher, Lucien Fontenelle, Andrew Drips, Charles Bent, and H. H. Vanderburgh Company had brought trade goods out to the previous year's rendezvous, but, Crow. Indians stole their horses near South Pass, and they had to cache the trade goods. In both the 1827 and 1828 rendezvous, there were fights with the Blackfeet near the rendezvous sites. There were no trappers killed in the first battle, but Lewis Boldue was killed in the 1828 fight.

The 1829 rendezvous on the Popo Agie (Popoasia, Little Wind River) north of Lander, Wyoming was the first rendezvous to be held east of the Continental Divide. There was a small gathering of mountain men on the Popo Agie, and as soon as the trading was concluded, Sublette left with the remaining trade goods to find his partners, Jedediah Smith and David Jackson. Sublette traveled over Togwotee Pass into Jackson Hole and then over Teton Pass into Pierre's Hole.

Sublette found Jedediah Smith, who had been in the Oregon Country for two years, and David Jackson. Robert Newell recorded there was one hundred and seventy-five mountain men at this second rendezvous. The 1829 Rendezvous is sometimes referred to as a split rendezvous.

The 1830 supply caravan, led by William Sublette, consisted of eighty-one men on mules, ten wagons drawn by five mules each, two Deerborn carriages, twelve head of cattle, and a milk cow. Sublette left St. Louis on April 10th and arrived in the Wind River Basin on July 16th. The supply caravan averaged fifteen- to twenty-five miles a day. Sublette stopped for a rest on July 4th, 1830 at a large rock outcropping on the Sweetwater River. Sublette named the rock Independence Rock.

The Smith Jackson and Sublette firm collected one hundred and seventy packs of furs with a value of eighty-four thousand four hundred and ninety-nine dollars. This was the firm's most profitable year, but the partners had concerns over the future viability of the fur trade. At the Riverton rendezvous of 1830, Smith Jackson and Sublette sold out to a partnership of Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, Milton Sublette, Henry Fraeb, and Jean Gervais. William Sublette remained the St. Louis supplier for the new Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Sublette, Fraeb, and Gervais named the new company the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Although the term Rocky Mountain Fur Company is widely used in fur trade history, the period from 1830 to 1833 is the only time there was an actual company named the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

Word of Caution: If you are looking for the 1830 and 1838 rendezvous site, it is just south of Monroe Street in the southeast corner of Riverton, Wyoming. The map in Dr. Gowans' book, Rocky Mountain Rendezvous, shows the site on the Wind River several miles northeast of Riverton.

1831 – No General Rendezvous

Thomas Fitzpatrick had gone to St. Louis after supplies, but Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette had left for Santa Fe...Comanche killed Jedediah Smith on the Cimarron River. After outfitting Fitzpatrick in Santa Fe, Sublette and Jackson dissolved their partnership. Jackson went to California, and Sublette returned to St. Louis.

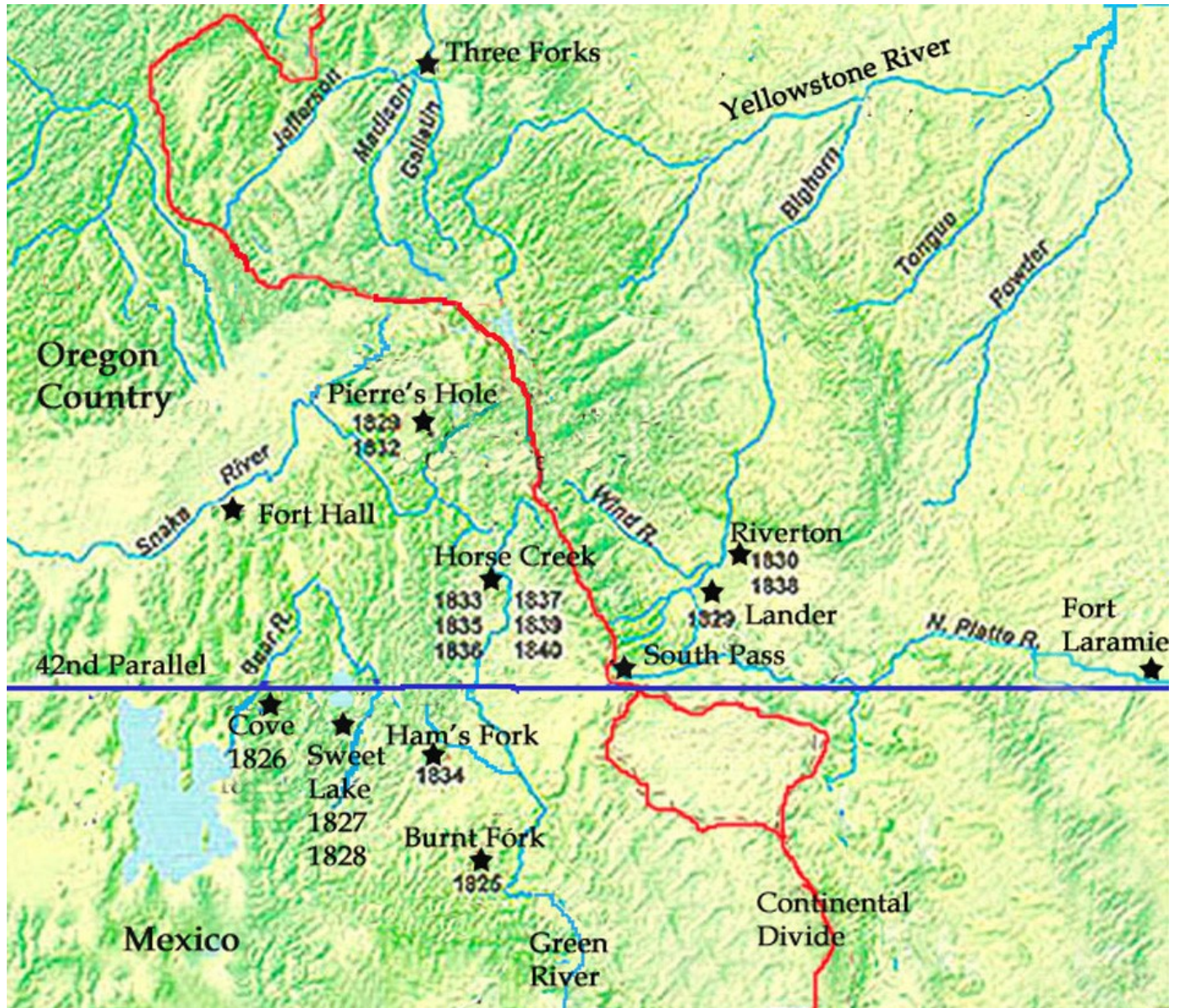
Sublette and Campbell were the main suppliers to the 1832 rendezvous, which was held in Pierre's Hole a valley below and west of the Tetons. When William Sublette renewed his fur trade license, he was allowed four hundred and fifty gallons of whiskey for his boatmen, but was compelled to post a bond not to sell whiskey to the Indians. The route Sublette used to the Pierre's Hole rendezvous did not require the use of a single boatman.

Mountain men from several different companies attended the rendezvous in Pierre's Hole: Rocky Mountain Fur Company, American Fur Company, plus independent companies such as Bean and Sinclair, Gant and Blackwell, and Nathaniel Wyeth...Dr. Gowans places the main encampment of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company a little ways upstream from where Highway 33 crosses over Teton Creek on the south end of Driggs, Idaho.

The Pierre's Hole rendezvous was one of the largest rendezvous held in the Rocky Mountains. Mountain Man and Indian camps extended north from Darby Creek along the west side of the Teton Mountains to Tetonia, Idaho...an area of seven square miles, or more. It is estimated there were four hundred mountain men, one hundred and eight lodges of Nez Perce, eighty lodges of Flatheads, and over three thousand horses. Camps had to be spread out to keep the various mountain man and Indian horse herds separated.

Joe Meek left this description:

All the parties were now safely in. The lovely mountain valley was populous with the different camps. The Rocky Mountain and American companies had their separate camps; Wyeth had his; a company of free trappers, fifteen, led by a man named Sinclair from Arkansas had the fourth; the Nez Perce and Flatheads, the allies of the Rocky Mountain company and the friends of the whites, had their lodges along all the streams; so that all together there could not have been less than one thousand souls, and two or three thousand horses and mules gathered in the place.



More excerpts in next months newsletter!!!!

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To submit information for the events, recipes, tips and resources and any other items for the newsletter contact Editor April Goff at april.goff@arkansas.gov or call 501-590-2583

SHINNIN' TIMES

JUNE 2020

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LITTLE ROCK, AR 72206