

Notes on General Ashley, the Overland Trail, and South Pass

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FOREWORD

THE activities of General William H. Ashley in the fur trade during the years 1822 to 1826 played a part in the expansion of our country for he brought together and inspired a group of men who during that period and later, after his retirement, blazed the trails from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Coast and then, by leading others across the way, contributed to the acquisition of Oregon, California, and the Spanish Southwest. The details of this period of our history are meager—the men who made it were in the main illiterate—and consequently any authoritative information, however slight, respecting the travels of the early explorers in the Rocky Mountains and in the country which lies beyond has a peculiar value.

The development and conduct of the fur trade in the United States has been fully told by Captain (later General) Hiram Martin Chittenden in his book entitled *The History of the American Fur Trade of the West* which was published in 1902. This book is and will remain the standard authority for that phase of our national development. Not only was General Chittenden a scholar of ability, but in the preparation of this work he had and used the opportunity of conferring with men who had engaged in the trade and with the families and close associates of other traders who had died. His statements, therefore, must be accorded great respect.

Since the publication of General Chittenden's work, three documents of importance have been brought to light which detail the activities of parties of Ashley's men. These documents are the letters of Daniel T. Potts, the narrative of James Clyman, and the journal of Jedediah Strong Smith.

A few years ago, in looking over a file of the *National Intelligencer*, of Washington, D.C., I chanced upon a letter signed "D.T.P." which had been published first in the November 14th, 1826, issue of *The Gazette and Daily Advertiser* of Philadelphia. It gives a contemporary account of the travels of a party of men who served under General Ashley in the Rocky Mountains from 1822 to 1826. Mr. Henry R. Wagner and Dr. Charles S. Camp listed it in their revised edition of *The Plains and the Rockies* as Number 33 and have associated it with another letter or letters which were noted by Mr. Wagner in his first edition of that book. This latter group relates the travels of a detachment of "Ashley's Men" from the spring of 1826 to the spring of 1827 and were also published in *The Gazette and Daily Advertiser* in three parts, two of which appear in the issue of September 27th, 1827, and the third in the issue of October 19th of the same year. Although the initials D.T.P. appear as a signature only to the letter of 1826 and are not associated with those of 1827, there seems no reason to question the conclusion that all were written by the same person. Few mountain men were literate but these letters were written by an educated man, their style is similar, they form a continuous narrative and all were first published in the same newspaper.

Daniel T. Potts of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, was the author of these letters. The original publication of the letter of 1826 in the *Philadelphia Gazette* gave only the initials D.T.P., but the head note to an extract from this letter which was printed in the May 29th, 1827, issue of the *Philadelphia National Gazette* states that it was written by

"D. T. Potts of Montgomery County." The following account of Daniel T. Potts appears on page 495 of *The Potts Family* published in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1901.

Daniel T. Potts⁴, (Zebulon³, Nathan², David¹), son of Zebulon and Martha (Trotter) Potts, was born 7 mo. 18, 1794. Born and raised on a farm, he was a lad of excellent habits and sound principles. When he reached manhood, anxious to see life and the country, he went west. In 1822, he joined the Henry and Ashley expedition, bound for the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia River and served as a scout. Gen. Ashley wrote to his brother Robert of his integrity and courage. His letters written to friends at home were graphic and full of interest. After leaving this service he went to Texas, and from there wrote to his friends that he was buying and shipping cattle to the New Orleans market. His brother Robert placed several thousand dollars to his credit with merchants in New Orleans and wrote to him to that effect. The money was never drawn and he was never heard of again. About this time a vessel loaded with cattle encountered a storm and went down, and all on board were lost. Daniel Potts is supposed to have perished on this vessel. He is not known to have been married.

The Potts letters are reprinted as Appendix A.

James Clyman was a member of General Ashley's second expedition which left St. Louis in the spring of 1823. His narrative and diaries were edited by Dr. Charles S. Camp and were published by the California Historical Society in 1928. Unfortunately, we have no diary of his travels during the eighteen-twenties as we have for the years 1844 to 1846. He died, a resident of Napa, California, at the age of eighty-nine. During the last ten years of his life he jotted down at first on paper and later, as he became more feeble, on a slate the narrative of his travels from the spring of 1823 to the summer of 1824. The caption states that he intended to continue the narrative until the year 1829, but death intervened. Although Clyman wrote when he was seventy-nine to eighty-nine years of age of adventures which had taken place fifty years before, his statements are consistent with reliable information from other sources. He must have been possessed of an unusual memory but it is also fair to assume

that the high adventure of those days when "Ashley's Men" broke into the upper valley of the Green River and blazed the ways across our continent was engraved deeply upon the memories of the participants.

Jedediah Strong Smith was outstanding among Ashley's men. An educated man, deeply religious, endowed with an imagination which urged him to solve the mystery of the then unknown western wilds, a capable fur trapper and trader and possessed of unusual astuteness in dealing with the Indians either in peace or war, he not only contributed largely to the success of General Ashley's plans, but was a compendium of information respecting the Rocky Mountain region and the trails westward to the Pacific Coast. The so-called "Gallatin Map" which was published in Volume 2 of *The Transactions of the American Antiquarian Society* (1836) was based upon information furnished by him. At the time of its publication, this map was regarded as the most authoritative delineation of the western country. Smith's untimely death in 1831 and the subsequent loss or destruction of his records, have deprived us of invaluable sources of information. After persistent search, Mr. Maurice S. Sullivan discovered among the papers of a distant branch of his family a manuscript which appears to be a copy of the first draft of the beginning of a journal of his travels. This manuscript furnishes many details of Ashley's first expedition. It was published in 1934 by the Fine Arts Press, Santa Ana, California, under the title of *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*.

The finding of the Potts letters inspired a hope that an examination of other newspapers during the years 1822 to 1830 might disclose articles which would increase our knowledge of the travels of General Ashley and his men. Such an examination has been made under the direction of Mr. Clarence S. Brigham, Director of the American Antiquarian Society. I have deliberately used the expression "under the

direction of" Mr. Brigham, for I can make no claim to any part of the investigation. My inexperience in such matters stood out in sharp contrast to his uncanny capacity for sensing at a glance papers in which articles on the West might or might not be found. The search more than justified the hope for it brought to light many hitherto unrecognized items which add important details to our knowledge of General Ashley's expeditions. All who are interested in the history of the fur trade must share my feeling of obligation to Mr. Brigham for having exhausted the most likely newspaper sources of additional information. These articles are reprinted as Appendix B.

It was first proposed to publish the Potts letters with annotations. This plan was abandoned for it soon became evident that the annotations would greatly exceed the letters. The tail would be wagging the dog. It was then proposed to paraphrase the letters and in the light of the story which they told combined with our knowledge from other sources to comment upon the movements of General Ashley's men from 1822 to 1827. But this method of approach was found to be misleading in that it gave undue prominence to Potts who was but the inadvertent historian of an expedition which had not only been organized by, but had been conducted under the direction of General Ashley. Because of these considerations and the additional information which has come to light since the publication of General Chittenden's book, it was determined to retell the story of General Ashley's activities in the fur trade with emphasis upon his adoption and use of the valley of the Platte River as a line of communication from St. Louis across the Continental Divide.

I am under great obligations to Dr. Erwin Raisz, of the Institute of Geographical Exploration of Harvard University, for the maps which accompany this paper. The routes fol-

lowed by the early fur trappers are not known in detail and must be reconstructed from the limited information which we possess and from a knowledge of the lay of the land. The large map indicates Dr. Raisz's conclusions as to the courses most likely to have been followed. Because of his comprehensive and yet detailed knowledge of the mountains and deserts of the West, the map is probably the most authoritative delineation yet made of the travels of these men.

It has been said that all roads lead to Rome. Whether the statement be fact or metaphor, it is certain that all roads to information respecting the American fur trade lead to Mrs. Chilton Atkinson of St. Louis, Missouri, formerly Miss Stella M. Drumm of the Missouri Historical Society. I am indebted to her for information, advice and suggestions. To Mr. Edward Eberstadt of New York, I am deeply indebted for a careful review of this article and for many corrections. His suggestion that I edit the Potts letters encouraged me to enter a new and untried field.

I

SKETCH OF THE FUR TRADE AND EXPLORATIONS IN THE NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS TO 1822

Fur collecting, as a business, had been conducted in Canada for a number of years. The Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated in 1670. Because of its long experience and the success which had attended its operations, the practices of that company were accorded respect. John Jacob Astor, when forming the American Fur Company in 1808, had recruited his partners and assistants largely from men who had served in Canada. The method employed by the Hudson's Bay Company consisted in the establishment of

permanent trading posts or forts, where furs were bartered from the Indians and which could be reached by boat through the numerous lakes and rivers of the Canadian plains.

The American fur trade also had been conducted largely along water routes. Of the western tributaries of the Mississippi River, the Missouri River alone provided navigable waters to the mountain fur-bearing country. The Platte and the Arkansas Rivers and their tributaries drain southern Wyoming and the eastern faces of the high mountains of Colorado and New Mexico but in their courses across the prairie become little more than beds of sand offering for considerable distances but few inches of water.

The early French and Spanish settlers along the Mississippi River paddled their light canoes up that stream and up the Missouri River to exchange trinkets for furs with the nearby Indian tribes. From year to year they advanced further up the Missouri River for the purpose of trading with more distant tribes so that at the time of the expedition of Lewis and Clark in 1804 that river was fairly well known up to the settlement of the sedentary Mandan Indians who were established near the present bridge of the Northern Pacific Railway. The information furnished by Lewis and Clark on their return in 1806 extended to its headwaters a knowledge of the stream. This was seized upon by Manuel Lisa, Ashley's most prominent predecessor in the mountain fur trade who, in 1807, established a post on the Yellowstone River at its confluence with the Big Horn River for the purpose of trading with the neighboring Indian tribes. The post was situated in the country of the Crow Indians, who claimed the district south of the Missouri River, including the valley of the Yellowstone River. The Blackfeet Indians ranged north of the Missouri River. In Lisa's employ at this post was John Colter who had been a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition. When trapping on the upper waters of

the Missouri River, Colter was taken prisoner by the Black-foot Indians. He was stripped naked, led out on the prairie about three to four hundred yards in front of the tribe and told to save himself if he could. This he succeeded in doing. The story of his race for life is a dramatic incident and was exploited in the annals of the time.

The hostility of the Blackfoot Indians to early American fur traders was unusual. Their nearest neighbors the Crows were generally friendly. Most Indian tribes extended a warm welcome to the Lewis and Clark expedition. The Blackfeet were the notable exception. In 1806, they attacked a detachment of that expedition commanded by Captain Lewis; probably the first white men to enter their country. A contemporary explanation of Lisa's failure to establish friendly relations with them is given in a letter from Major Thomas Biddle to Colonel Henry Atkinson dated October 19, 1819, and printed in the Report of Mr. Leake to the Senate dated February 16, 1820.

He [Lisa] passed the winter of 1807-8 at the mouth of the Yellow Stone and Big Horn Rivers. It is an act of justice due to the memory of the late capt. Lewis, to state, that the Blackfeet Indians, (in whose vicinity Lisa now lives,) were so convinced of the propriety of his conduct in the rencounter which took place between him and a party of their people in which two of them were killed, that they did not consider it as cause of war, or hostility on their part: this is proved, inasmuch as the first party of Lisa's men that were met by the Blackfeet, were treated civilly. This circumstance induced Lisa to dispatch one of his men, Coulter, to the forks of the Missouri, to endeavor to find the Blackfeet nation, and bring them to his establishment to trade. This messenger unfortunately fell in with a party of the Crow nation, with whom he staid several days. While with them, they were attacked by their enemies, the Blackfeet; Coulter, in self-defence, took part with the Crows. He distinguished himself very much in the combat, and the Blackfeet were defeated—having plainly observed a white man fighting in the ranks of their enemy. Coulter returned to the trading house. In traversing the same country a short time after, in company with another man, a party of Blackfeet attempted to stop them, without, however, evincing any hostile intentions; a rencounter ensued, in which the companion of Coulter and two Indians were killed, and Coulter made his escape. The next time the whites were met by Blackfeet, the latter attacked without any parley. Thus origi-

nated the hostility which has prevented American traders penetrating the fur country of the Missouri. Lisa returned in 1808 to St. Louis, and in 1809 the Missouri Fur Company was formed.

American fur traders believed that the Blackfeet were incited against them by the British in Canada. This may have been true. Ethics were little considered in the Rocky Mountains at that time and for a number of years afterward. The British, however, had tact enough to trade guns, powder and lead for the Blackfeet furs and did not attempt to trap their country.

Another trip was made by Colter from Lisa's post probably for the purpose of opening trade with the Crow Indians. In the winter of 1807-8 he traveled to the headwaters of the Wind River and through the adjacent region. His exact route is unknown, but it probably embraced Jackson Hole, the Idaho valleys west of the Teton Mountains and Yellowstone Park. He is the first white man who is known to have entered this district and in view of the early date of his visit is probably the first to have done so. Major Andrew Henry, who later was to become General Ashley's partner, served at Lisa's post at that time and it is hardly possible that he failed to listen to Colter's account of this trip. Colter's description of hot springs and geysers caused many a jest and the expression "Colter's Hell" was used to suggest a tall tale.

The St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was organized by Lisa in 1809 and took over and carried on the business which he had conducted. Major Henry was a partner in that company and served at the post which Lisa had built in 1807 at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Big Horn Rivers. In the spring of 1810, Henry made another effort to open trade with the Blackfeet Indians and to locate a post at the forks of the Missouri River. The party were driven out by the Blackfeet. So conclusive was his defeat that he did

not return to the Yellowstone Post but crossed the Continental Divide and established his party for the summer on that fork of the Snake River in southeastern Idaho which still bears his name. Quite probably the information acquired from Colter suggested this course. No report exists of his activities or those of his men during that summer, but the most likely country to be prospected from a post situated immediately west of the Teton Mountains was Jackson Hole and the upper valleys of the Green and Wind Rivers. As Ashley's men were to enter this country in the fall of 1823 and as the Green River valley was to become the base from which he and his successors conducted their operations, it will not be irrelevant to give a description of this region and to determine, so far as possible from collateral sources, the range of country explored by Major Henry and his men during the summer of 1810.

Except in its extreme northern section, the upper valley of the Green River is a mountain-girt sage brush plain, bounded on the east by the rugged range of the Wind River Mountains through which there is no pass. The valley can be entered from the east only through South Pass which lies immediately south of the range or through Union Pass at the north. Union Pass lies between the upper reaches of the Wind River and the Green River Valley. Jackson Hole, on the watershed of the Columbia River and to the northwest of the Green River Valley can be reached from that valley by the Hoback River, and Twogottee Pass allows passage from the upper waters of the Wind River to Jackson Hole. To the west of Jackson Hole are the Teton Mountains.

South Pass and Union Pass at the extreme ends of the Wind River Range present strong contrasts. South Pass, which was to be used by overland travelers in crossing the Continental Divide, is a gently undulating plateau about fifteen miles wide, treeless and sparsely covered with

stunted desert shrubs. To the east and to the west, plain and horizon meet. To the south, the plateau ends against a low-lying green ridge, the western extension of the Antelope Hills, and is terminated on the north at a single point by the rock pinnacles of the Wind River Range which in any other setting would dominate the scene, but here sink into comparative insignificance. The vast expanse of plain and sky holds the eye and gratifies the most avid appetite for space. The scene is bleak, drear and inhospitable—a blasted heath—blasted by cold and wind. In sharp contrast, Union Pass on a summer's day offers a domestic scene set in a frame of unusual grandeur. A broad meadow stretching for about ten miles along the Continental Divide, lush with grass and dotted with herds of cattle through which the slow moving waters of Fish Creek wind in sinuous double S-curves as through an alluvial plain, is surrounded across the intervening valleys of the Green, the Snake and the Wind Rivers by the dark forbidding precipices and shining snow fields of the Wind River Mountains, the up-springing flame-shaped peaks of the Tetons which borrow the colors of the sky and the dusty cream-pink cliffs of the Absarokas. The country is a complex of high ridges and deep valleys and may truly be called "The Crest of the Continent" for at a point near Union Pass there may well lie a pebble which will divide the water of a single raindrop between the drainage systems of the Mississippi, the Colorado and the Columbia Rivers.

The subsequent transcontinental journeys of Wilson Price Hunt and Robert Stuart, partners of John Jacob Astor, and other authorities show that Major Henry and his men familiarized themselves with this country during the summer of 1810.

In 1811, Wilson Price Hunt traveled west from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River. A brief account of his

trip appeared in Volume 10 (1821) of *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages*. Translated from the French, it has been edited in conjunction with Robert Stuart's Journal by Mr. Philip Ashton Rollins in his book *The Discovery of the Oregon Trail* which was published in 1935. A more detailed account of the journey forms parts of Washington Irving's *Astoria*. No attempt will be made here to retrace the route followed by Hunt, but a consideration of the difficulty or ease with which he overcame the obstacles in his way give evidence of the knowledge which his guides possessed of the country through which he passed. It was Hunt's purpose to follow the Missouri River and cross the mountains in the trail of Lewis and Clark. Upon his arrival at the villages of the Arikara Indians on the Missouri River, he met three trappers, Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Rizner, of whom the following description appears in *Astoria*:

They had been in the service of the Missouri Company under Mr. Henry, and had crossed the Rocky mountains with him in the preceding year, when driven from his post on the Missouri by the hostilities of the Blackfeet. After crossing the mountains, Mr. Henry had established himself on one of the head branches of the Columbia river. There they had remained with him for some months, hunting and trapping, until, having satisfied their wandering propensities, they felt disposed to return to the families and comfortable homes which they had left in Kentucky.

The representations of these men as to the hostility of the Blackfeet Indians and the existence of an easier pass through the mountains to the south caused Hunt to abandon his intended course up the Missouri River and to travel overland under their guidance. Difficulties were experienced in circling the Black Hills and in crossing the Big Horn Mountains. At times the party suffered from hunger and thirst, but upon their arrival in the upper Wind River Valley it is evident that the guides knew their way. The following is taken from *Astoria*:

The hunters who served as guides to the party in this part of their route, had assured Mr. Hunt that, by following up Wind river, and

crossing a single mountain ridge, he would come upon the head waters of the Columbia. The scarcity of game, however, which already had been felt to a pinching degree, and which threatened them with famine among the sterile heights which lay before them, admonished them to change their course. It was determined, therefore, to make for a stream, which, they were informed, passed through the neighboring mountains, to the south of west, on the grassy banks of which it was probable they would meet with buffalo. Accordingly, about three o'clock on the following day, meeting with a beaten Indian road which led in the proper direction, they struck into it turning their backs upon Wind river.

No clearer statement could be made today of the topography of that country. Instead of pursuing the Wind River to its source and crossing Twogottee Pass to Jackson Hole, the party turned away to seek the buffalo on the lush grazing lands of Union Pass.

In the spring of 1811, Henry M. Brackenridge accompanied Manuel Lisa up the Missouri River and met the Astoria party of Wilson Price Hunt, as well as Hoback and his companions. A description of this trip forms part of his book *Views of Louisiana* which was published in 1814. He writes that Henry and his hunters had discovered several passes through the mountains which were practicable for loaded horses or even wagons and considerably south of the source of the Jefferson River where Lewis and Clark crossed the Continental Divide.

That the river canyon which gives passage through the Grosventres Mountains between the valleys of the Green and Snake Rivers has always borne the name of Hoback indicates that he was one of the early travelers in that region.

The anomaly of the dual name of the Wind River—Big Horn stream also tends to confirm the fact that Major Henry's party were familiar with the upper valley of that river. The Wind River has its source against the Continental Divide about Twogottee Pass in a land of evergreen trees, jade colored lakes and dusty cream-pink cliffs and flows

south of east for some one hundred and fifty miles to the modern city of Riverton, Wyoming. At first its course is through a deep, forested gorge. Later, as the mountains recede to the north and to the south, the valley widens, the trees cease, and the plains creep in until at Riverton the mountains no longer overshadow, but fringe the distant horizon. Here the river turns abruptly to the north and about fifty miles beyond breaks through a narrow, rocky, precipitous canyon in the Owl Creek Mountains which stretch at right angles to its course. Immediately upon its discharge from the canyon, it is known as the Big Horn River. From here, it continues its northern course down a broad valley between the Shoshone and Big Horn Mountains until, after passing through a second canyon, it discharges itself into the Yellowstone River about one hundred and fifty miles from where it received its second name. This double name for a single stream suggests that its source and mouth were discovered independently before the continuity of the stream was known. The confluence of the Big Horn and Yellowstone Rivers was known to Lewis and Clark. Major Henry had served at the post which Manuel Lisa and the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company had maintained at that point from 1807 to 1811. On the other hand, both John Colter and Major Henry's party had entered the Wind River Valley from the north or west and therefore may well have failed to recognize the identity of two streams, one of which flowed to the southeast and the other of which, many miles away and across many mountains, flowed to the north.

The knowledge which Hoback and his companions possessed of Jackson Hole and the upper valleys of the Green and Wind Rivers shows that Major Henry and his men had visited that section in the summer of 1810. The diary of Robert Stuart raises a strong presumption that Henry's party had also explored the South Pass region.

Robert Stuart traveled east from Astoria on the Columbia River to St. Louis in 1812 and 1813. When on his way and before reaching the Green River Valley, Stuart met Hunt's guides, Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Rizner, and was joined by Joseph Miller, a former partner in Astor's Pacific Fur Company, who had traveled west with Wilson Price Hunt in the summer of 1811, but had left Hunt and resigned his partnership to spend the winter hunting with those men. Under Miller's guidance, Stuart attempted a route south of that pursued by Hunt but the party became confused in the region of Bear River, turned north to recover the Hunt trail, and followed it to the Green River Valley. During the preceding summer, Hunt had entered that valley from the north over Union Pass. Stuart without hesitation turned south and writes in his diary that he intended to follow down the "Spanish River" (Green River) to "the point of a mountain we see in the East near which we expect to find the Missouri waters" and in the postscript to his journal he says that he was making his way for a gap discernible in the mountains to the southeast. The "point" referred to can be only the abrupt termination of the Wind River Range on the South Pass plateau and the gap was South Pass. Stuart was heading for that pass. Later he noted in his diary that he had arrived abreast of the end of the Wind River Range; yet he deliberately turned from it and chose a course along the southern slopes of the Antelope Hills. To anyone who has visited this region, it is evident that his change of route cannot be ascribed to doubt as to the location of South Pass; he was in the throat of that Pass; the way yawned wide before him. His reasons for this action had best be stated in his own words. Stuart was following an Indian trail.

We abandoned the Crow trace early in the day as it bore to the north of East, and being somewhat apprehensive of falling in with some of

their spies, for according to the information received from the Shoshonies they are on a River at no great distance to the East and we suppose ourselves now at the source of the Spanish river waters in this quarter.

Stuart was headed for the southern point of the Wind River Range which he had located and where he expected to find a stream tributary to the Missouri. He was following the fresh trail of Indians whom he believed to be hostile and therefore wished to avoid. Upon arriving at the eastern limit of the watershed of the "Spanish" or Green River, he found that the Indian trail headed in the direction which he intended to pursue and as the hostile Indians were probably encamped on the stream which he was seeking, he turned away.

So far as is known, Hoback and his companions were the only source from which Stuart or Miller could have drawn such definite information as to the South Pass region. Their knowledge of this district must have been acquired when serving under Major Henry in the summer of 1810 for the route over which they had led Hunt in the summer of 1811 lay to the north and their wanderings during the following winter of 1812 when Miller accompanied them were far to the south and east. This conclusion ignores the possibility that Stuart obtained information of any value from an Indian who joined the party in western Idaho with offers to lead them across the mountains by "a shorter trace to the South" and decamped the following night with some of their horses.

In 1811, the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company abandoned its post on the Yellowstone and confined its operations to the lower Missouri River. Major Henry returned to St. Louis. So far as is known, the mountain country was not again prospected for furs by any organized group until the Ashley expedition of 1822.

II

ASHLEY EXPEDITION OF 1822

General William H. Ashley, in the spring of 1822, decided to engage in the fur trade and chose as his associate Major Andrew Henry, whose activities in the Rocky Mountains from 1807 to 1811 have been discussed in the preceding chapter. To obtain men for his venture, he inserted in the March 20th issue of the *Missouri Republican* an advertisement offering to "enterprising young men" one or two years employment in the Rocky Mountains. The advertisement brought together a group which an article in the *St. Louis Enquirer* estimated to number about one hundred and eighty men.

The headwaters of the Missouri River and the adjacent regions were believed to be rich in beaver as this country had not been entered since Major Henry's defeat by the Blackfeet Indians in the summer of 1810. It is probable that Ashley intended to rely upon trapping as well as upon trade with the Indians, but in other respects his plans corresponded with the methods employed by the Hudson's Bay Company; that is, to establish permanent trading posts and to use water rather than overland routes as lines of communication. In so doing he was also following the established custom of the St. Louis fur traders.

General Chittenden does not fix a definite day for the departure of the expedition from St. Louis. He states that it left "about April 15th." In arriving at this conclusion he was evidently influenced by the fact that the licenses to trade with the Indians which were issued to Ashley and Henry were dated April 11th, 1822. Potts informs us that the expedition was divided into two parties, the first commanded by Major Henry and the latter by General Ashley and that the advance party of which he was a member left St. Louis on April 3d.

Contemporary newspaper accounts confirm the statements of Potts. In the Saturday, April 13th, 1822, issue of the *St. Louis Enquirer* the following notice appeared:

Enterprise. We neglected to notice last week the departure from St. Louis of the expedition for the Missouri Mountains, under the direction of Gen. Ashley and Maj. Wm. Henry. The latter gentleman commands the party, in person, and is well known for his enterprising adventures in the Oregon country. The object of this company is to trap and hunt—they are completely equipped, and number about 180 persons. They will direct their course to the three forks of the Missouri, a region it is said, which contains a wealth in *Furs*, not surpassed by the mines of Peru. The party is composed entirely of young men, many of whom have relinquished the most respectable employments and circles of society, for this arduous but truly meritorious undertaking. They will be gone three years, during which time it is contemplated to visit the heads of the different rivers under the Mountains, and perhaps to go as far on the other side as the mouth of the Columbia. *If the government of the United States, influenced by the communications derived from interested individuals, will not listen to the proposition of Mr. Floyd, the enterprise of the Missourians will, in the end, accomplish his great object.*

This item was reprinted in the *Missouri Intelligencer* which was published at Franklin, Missouri, in the issue of Tuesday, April 30th, 1822, with the following note:

The above party arrived in *Franklin* on Thursday last, and have since proceeded on their destination. We wish every success to so arduous an undertaking, & sincerely hope it may be productive of individual gain as well as of public advantage.

As April 3d, the day on which Potts stated that he left St. Louis, would fall on Wednesday of the week preceding the Saturday, April 13th, issue of the *St. Louis Enquirer*, we have reason to presume that the date given by Potts for the departure of Major Henry's party from St. Louis is correct. It also appears that the party arrived in Franklin, Missouri, on Thursday, April 25th, and, according to Potts, at Council Bluffs on May 1st.

When this advance party under Major Henry reached Cedar Fort about five hundred miles above Council Bluffs, Potts deserted because of the lack of provisions and en-

deavored to return to St. Louis; but before doing so he fell in with General Ashley at "the Post" and re-enlisted. Cedar Fort was probably a trading post established by the Missouri Fur Company in 1822 and is usually referred to as Fort Recovery. General Chittenden locates this post "at the lower end of American or Cedar Island a mile below the modern city of Chamberlain, South Dakota." Old Cedar Fort, about thirty-five miles south of Fort Pierre, had probably been abandoned by that time. The "Post" where Potts re-enlisted with Ashley is more difficult to locate, for there were many trading posts on the Missouri River. Potts states that he reached an Indian "Village" "two hundred miles from the Post" but gives no suggestion of the name of the village, its location, or the distance traveled to reach it. Such limited information does not justify the hazard of a guess as to the site of "the Post" or the Indian village. He must, however, have wandered for some weeks for the party commanded by General Ashley was far behind.

The journal of Jedediah Smith gives a detailed account of the second contingent which Potts joined. This party left St. Louis on May 8th in the boat *Enterprise* under the command of Daniel S. D. Moore. Because of the strong current in the Missouri River, the progress was "slow, laborious and dangerous" and near the mouth of Sni-a-bar Creek, the boat was wrecked and the cargo lost. The *St. Louis Enquirer* in its issue of June 3d and the *Missouri Republican* in its issue of June 5th report this accident as taking place "a few days ago" "about twenty miles below Fort Osage." Immediately after the accident, Mr. Moore returned to St. Louis where, according to Smith, he arrived "about the 4th of June." It is not improbable that the St. Louis papers learned from Moore of the loss of the boat and if so, he must have arrived before June 3d. In eighteen days, that is, about June 20th to 22d, General Ashley was

prepared to leave with a new boat and cargo and a detachment of forty-six men. He took charge of this expedition in person and proceeded up the Missouri River, picking up on the way the party whose boat had been lost. On September 8th, the combined parties arrived at the village of the Arikara Indians. Here horses were purchased and General Ashley, with a part of his men, traveled by land to the mouth of the Yellowstone where they arrived on October 1st. The boat continued up the river to the same point. Potts gives the date of his arrival as the middle of October. The two statements are not inconsistent for Potts may have remained on the slower boat going while Smith rode with General Ashley.

The advance party which was led by Major Henry had reached the Yellowstone River some time before the arrival of General Ashley and doubtless had been engaged in the erection of a post for Smith states that, immediately upon his arrival, he and the other members of the expedition were sent out in various directions for the purpose of trapping and hunting. They were not employed in building operations. Henry remained in command of the post while General Ashley returned to St. Louis in a large pirogue with such furs as had been collected.

Upon his arrival at the mouth of the Yellowstone, Smith, with Mr. Chapman and a small party of men, went up that stream for a short distance to procure "a supply of meat for the Fort and such skins as were wanted for the use of the company and in the mean time to take what Beaver we could conveniently." Two other trapping parties were dispatched from the Fort, one up the Missouri River under the command of Major Henry and another up the Yellowstone River. The Yellowstone party was instructed to ascend that river to the mouth of the Powder River and then up that stream so far as they found it practicable to

travel by boat. Upon his return from the hunting trip, Smith, Mr. Chapman and others ascended the Missouri River "traveling immediately along the bank." On their way up, they met Major Henry returning from the winter quarters which he had established at the mouth of the Musselshell River and which the Smith party reached about the first of November.

Smith's statement is confirmed by the letter of Potts, who writes that immediately upon his arrival at the Yellowstone River, he "embarked for the mouth of the Muscle Shell in company with twenty-one others and shortly after our arrival eight men returned to the former place." Cabins were built and the two parties wintered together at that point.

The Musselshell River flows into the Missouri from the south considerably above its junction with the Yellowstone and almost at the foot of the mountains. Its choice as a place for winter quarters indicates considerable knowledge of the country for it offered abundant food, as is stated by Smith and Potts, and its proximity to the mountains insured an early arrival on the trapping grounds the following spring. A location higher on the river would have been shut in by the mountains and probably would have furnished less game. A site lower on the river would have necessitated longer travel to the spring hunt. The advantageous location of the site was evidently due to Major Henry's knowledge of the country.

So far, the enterprise had been attended by success. A permanent trading post had been established at the junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and an advance party had been located at a point in the land of the Blackfeet Indians from which an early start might be made for the hunting grounds. On the Yellowstone River, not far to the south, a rival party of the Missouri Fur Company which was

led by two of their traders, Michael Immel and Robert Jones, were spending the winter. Probably Ashley's temerity had encouraged that company to try its fortune once again in the land of the Blackfeet Indians.

III

MOVEMENTS OF GENERAL ASHLEY'S PARTIES IN 1823 UNTIL HIS DEFEAT BY THE ARIKARA INDIANS

The year 1823 was to bring disaster to Ashley's ambitious project, but in his unwillingness to accept defeat, he devised a new plan which was to earn for him financial independence and, incidental to his purpose, to blaze the Overland Trail.

Ashley and Henry acted with promptness and decision. In the fall of 1822, Potts had started for the Musselshell River "immediately" upon his arrival at the Yellowstone River. An early start was also made in the spring of 1823 for Potts writes: "The river did not discharge itself until the 4th of April; on the 5th we were visited by a party of Indians, and on the 6th we embarked in canoes for the River Judith." The Judith River is the next sizable stream entering the Missouri from the south above the Musselshell River and joins it at the foot of the mountains. Potts continues, "In about one days travel we discovered where a party of Indians had wintered who were our enemies, but fortunately had not discovered us." Potts was too optimistic. He and his companions had been closely watched by the Blackfeet for not long afterwards the party was attacked by that tribe in the neighborhood of the great falls of the Missouri River and defeated with a loss of four men. The survivors returned to Yellowstone Post where they arrived some time in June. Potts was not present at the fight. On April 11th, he was wounded in both knees by the accidental discharge of a

rifle and was conducted back to the Post. We bear him no ill will, but if Fate had decreed that he was to be wounded, we cannot but wish that the wound had been received in the course of the fight so that we might have learned more of an encounter of which we know nothing but the bare fact.

The rival party of the Missouri Fur Company reached and trapped the sources of the Missouri River, but on their return were attacked by the Blackfeet on the 31st of May "below the mountains on the Yellowstone River." The leaders, Immel and Jones, and five other men were killed and all equipment and furs were lost.

General Ashley had returned to St. Louis in the fall of 1822. In the spring of 1823, he collected another group of men, among whom was James Clyman, whose narrative, referred to in the "Foreword," throws much light on the events of this year. This second expedition was commanded by General Ashley in person. Major Henry had wintered at the Yellowstone Post. The exact date of its departure from St. Louis is uncertain for Clyman gives the 8th and General Chittenden the 10th of March while an item in the *Missouri Intelligencer* issue of March 25th, 1823, states that "Two keel boats belonging to General Ashley left St. Louis on the ninth for Yellowstone" and the *Missouri Republican* announces in its issue of Wednesday, March 12th, that General Ashley's two boats left "Monday" which would fall on March 10th. As the latter paper was published in St. Louis, the date given by it, Monday, March 10th, is probably correct. Also Monday is a more likely day than Saturday or Sunday for the party to have set out. The same paper in its issue of March 19th reports the presence of the expedition at St. Charles on March 13th and the *Missouri Intelligencer* in its issue of April 1st states that General Ashley's two boats arrived at Franklin, Missouri, on March 25th and left the next day. We know nothing further

of the progress of the party until they reached the villages of the Arikara Indians on May 30th.

The details of the two encounters with the Arikara Indians are set out in the official report of General Gaines to the Secretary of War and have been so fully commented upon by various authors that a detailed analysis of the actions is unnecessary. The Arikara villages moved from year to year but were located at various sites on the Missouri River near the mouth of the Grand River and in the summer of 1823 were probably located about seven miles above that point. General Ashley arrived at these villages on May 30th and, as he had done the preceding year, entered into negotiations for the purchase of horses. The transaction was completed by the evening of June 1st. Before daybreak on June 2d, the Indians attacked the men who had been left on shore to guard the animals and in the skirmish which followed thirteen of Ashley's men were killed and ten were wounded. The party fell back down the Missouri River and by June 4th had reached a point some twenty-five miles below the Arikara Villages. Subsequently they retreated to the mouth of the Cheyenne River, then to the mouth of the Teton River and later, by July 19th, to Fort Brazeau, which was situated near the present city of Chamberlain, South Dakota. As soon as possible after his defeat, General Ashley dispatched calls for assistance to Colonel Leavenworth at Fort Atkinson and to Major Henry, at the Yellowstone Post. Major Henry promptly dropped down the Missouri River with all of his party except twenty men who were left at the post and joined General Ashley at the mouth of the Cheyenne River. In due course, Colonel Leavenworth with 220 regular troops arrived, and the combined forces of the Army, the trappers of Ashley and Henry and of the Missouri Fur Company together with a number of Sioux Indians reached the Arikara villages on August 9th. The

purposes of the three diverse elements were dissimilar. The Sioux were interested solely in pillage. The trappers desired the conclusive defeat of the Arikara, not only that a fickle and unreliable band of Indians should be destroyed but also that other tribes along the Missouri River should be impressed by the white man's power. Colonel Leavenworth, on the other hand, wished to "correct" but not to "exterminate" the Arikara Indians, and as he held the trump cards, his policy prevailed. The conciliatory tactics which he employed first disgusted the Sioux who left and then permitted the Arikara to retreat from their villages without pursuit. The result of the campaign was to close to the trappers the upper waters of the Missouri River. Contemporary newspaper articles which appear in Appendix B evidence the indignation which Colonel Leavenworth's pusillanimous conduct inspired.

After the battle and the departure of Colonel Leavenworth, General Ashley rallied his followers at Fort Kiowa, a post of the American Fur Company on the Missouri not far above the mouth of the White River. For him, the situation must have been disheartening.

IV

DISCUSSION OF GENERAL ASHLEY'S CHANGE OF PLAN

General Ashley may have intended to extend his trapping operations westward to the waters of the Columbia and southward to the Green River Valley, but he must have expected to use the Missouri River as a means of communication. Travel overland as distinguished from travel by river had been little attempted up to that time. Yet he was now faced by the fact that the conciliatory policy of Colonel Leavenworth had closed the river as an artery of travel

above its confluence with the Cheyenne River. Even the ever-friendly Mandan Indians had become hostile, for Potts writes that Major Henry's party on its return to the Yellowstone Post were fired upon by a party of Mandans and that two of its members were killed. The following interview which was published in the January 22, 1824, issue of the *Missouri Intelligencer* gives a clear picture of the unsettled conditions prevailing along the river. The informant was Moses Harris, otherwise known as "Black" Harris, a fur trapper well known in St. Louis.

IMPORTANT FROM THE UPPER MISSOURI

For nearly a year we have been receiving accounts of Indian depredations and hostilities in different parts of the country south and west of us. The Indians almost every day are assuming a more hostile attitude, and unless speedy measures are adopted to check their progress we fear the fur trade must cease, & all communication with the Indian tribes be interrupted.

On the 13th ultimo, three men belonging to Maj. Henry's trapping party arrived at the Council Bluffs from Powder river, on the Yellow Stone, who detail the following facts, which we believe are entitled to the fullest credit.

About the 20th of August, Maj. Henry's party, on their way to the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and at a considerable distance from the Missouri, were discovered and fired upon by a war party of Indians. Two men were killed, names James Anderson and Auguste Neill—two others were wounded, and two horses lost.

When the party arrived at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, they found that 22 horses had been stolen by the Blackfoot or Assinaboin Indians. Loosing seven more shortly afterwards, they determined to abandon that establishment, embarked their goods on board a boat, and ascended the Yellow Stone to the mouth of Powder river, where their farther ascent was prevented by the rapids. Meeting the Crow Indians, Maj. Henry purchased from them forty-seven horses, and sent forward a trapping party in a south western direction, towards the mountains. He intended shortly afterwards to dispatch another party when the informant, Mr. Harris, left there.

He gives a very unfavorable account of the situation and prospects of the hunting parties near the mountains—says that the Indians frequently visited Maj. Henry's establishment at the mouth of the Yellow Stone in a friendly manner, & treated those civilly whom they met abroad, but stole horses whenever an opportunity occurred. The Crows

gave information that the Blackfoot Indians were determined to hunt constantly for the trapping parties, and destroy them whenever it was possible. It was also the expectation of the whole party to be attacked whenever the Indians could do it under favorable circumstances. Maj. Henry's whole party have only collected 25 packs of fur since their being in the country, and two or three were purchased.

Mr. H. farther states, that on his way down, he called at Mr. Tilton's trading house at the Mandan village, and learnt that the Mandans had made the attack on Maj. Henry's party. He saw an Indian who was wounded in that encounter, and recognized one of the horses that was taken at that time.

The Aricaras have purchased a dirt village, one mile below the Mandans, which they inhabit. He saw four of their chiefs, who appeared friendly, and professed an anxiety to preserve peace with the Americans. Mr. Tilton, whom, & whose company they all treated well, confirmed this account, but he doubted their ability to restrain their warriors, on account of their towns having been burnt. Having learnt that the Aricaras had sent two war parties to the site of their old towns to fight the Sioux & endeavor to procure some corn, and being advised to avoid them, Mr. H. and his party descended the river in the night. They were met, however, in the day time, by one of the parties and fired upon, but without injury. Opposite the site of the old Aricara towns Mr. H. saw two bands of the Sioux Indians, who treated him well, and informed him that they had obtained a good supply of corn from the deserted fields of their enemies. He states that at the time the Mandans attacked Maj. Henry and his party, there were ignorant of the result of the late expedition against the Aricaras, and that their chiefs were much alarmed about it.

The Blackfoot Indians are a numerous and warlike nation, and appear to have been always hostile to the Americans. We recollect that when Maj. Henry passed here, nearly two years since, Mr. E. Williams, a respectable citizen of Cooper county, and who spent several years on the head waters of the Missouri, Arkansas and Columbia, said, with confidence, that those Indians would attack, rob and kill his hunting parties, whenever they had an opportunity. He spoke from experience, and his prediction appears to have been too true.

It was evident that the Missouri River was closed to the trappers. Also the hope of finding a rich fur country on its headwaters had been rudely dispelled. The letter of William Gordon of the Missouri Fur Company which reported the defeat of Immel and Jones to Joshua Pilcher, the field manager of that company, stated that although the party had reached the Three Forks of the Missouri River early in the spring, the country was found to have been "almost

entirely trapt out by the Indians" and Joshua Pilcher, in his report to Major Thomas Hempstead, the acting partner at St. Louis, stated that "by great exertions" the party had collected only "20 packs of beaver."

General Ashley was also disturbed by desertions from the ranks of his men. We do not know how many started with the expedition of 1822. Potts facetiously says that he left with "one hundred men" but this statement was evidently a play on the wording of Ashley's advertisement. The *St. Louis Enquirer* reported "180 persons." A letter of General Atkinson to General Gaines dated August 13, 1823, quotes Jedediah Smith as stating that Major Henry had left the Yellowstone to go to Ashley's assistance "with all the party under him except twenty men" who were left at the Fort. The number of men who accompanied Major Henry down the river is unknown. Potts, who was at the Fort, describes the party as "a small brigade." On the other hand, Clyman states that only about thirteen men left Fort Kiowa with Major Henry for the Yellowstone Post after the battle and that two were killed on the way by Arikara Indians. Moses Harris is reported as saying that seven members of Major Henry's party were killed by the Indians after they had reached the Yellowstone Post. As he and two others returned to St. Louis, it appears that only about twenty men of the expedition of 1822 were in Ashley's employ in the fall of 1823.

Clyman was a recruiting officer of the 1823 expedition and consequently his statement that seventy men left St. Louis is probably correct. Ashley, in his letter to Colonel Leavenworth of June 4, 1823, requesting assistance against the Arikara Indians, states that most of his men had deserted and that he was left with only thirty volunteers. The deserters were sent down the river with the wounded. This number must have been further decreased for Clyman

writes that only eleven men started with him in September from Fort Kiowa for the Wind River Valley.

From these figures it seems probable that General Ashley's force did not exceed thirty men in the fall of 1823. The loss in number, however, was more than compensated for by the caliber of the men who remained. Trial and danger had winnowed away the chaff, but had left Jedediah Smith, James Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, the Sublette brothers, Thomas Eddy, and others of worth whose names and fame do not happen to have been recorded on the pages of history, but who undoubtedly bore their part. Clyman and Potts, both of whom proved themselves men of capacity, are known to us only through their writings.

General Ashley's financial situation must also have been embarrassing. Only twenty-five packs of fur had been taken during the fall and spring. The summer was passing; the time was mid-August and no furs could be trapped until the fall.

Such was the situation which confronted General Ashley at Fort Kiowa whence he was to leave for St. Louis. As he could not communicate with his men until the following summer, it seems probable that he then and there decided upon the course of action which was carried out by them during the succeeding months. If so, his plan was to trap in and about the upper valley of the Green River and to find a practicable line of communication from that valley to St. Louis.

In selecting the Green River Valley as the field of his operations, General Ashley was not sending his men into an unknown land. Major Henry had explored that section in the summer of 1810 and the certainty with which Ashley's men moved through that country during the following year, as will be detailed later, indicated a clear knowledge of that very difficult terrain. It is possible that the exploitation of

this district was part of Ashley's and Henry's original plan. The country was well known to Henry, it was believed to be rich in beaver and not far away was the Yellowstone River, whose current with that of the Missouri would float to St. Louis the produce of their hunts. But Indian hostility had closed this artery of communication and consequently, in the absence of other navigable streams, it was necessary for General Ashley to find another route and to develop the means of overland travel between St. Louis and the Green River Valley. In respect to such a route, Ashley was not entirely without information. From the members of the expedition which Major Stephen H. Long had led to the Rocky Mountains in the years 1819-20, General Ashley could have obtained definite information as to the practicability of travel up the valley of the Platte to the forks of that river, but as that party had followed the South Fork to the Colorado Mountains, its members knew nothing of the four hundred miles which intervened along the North Fork of the Platte and Sweetwater Rivers. Some knowledge of this section might have been obtained from the men who accompanied Robert Stuart, in 1812 to 1813. In its issue of May 13, 1813, the *Missouri Gazette* of St. Louis had published a short account of this trip in which the following paragraph appears:

By information received from these gentlemen, it appears that a journey across the continent of North America, might be performed with a waggon, there being no obstruction in the wheel rout that any person would dare to call a mountain, in addition to its being much the most direct and short one to go from this place to the mouth of the Columbia river. Any future party who may undertake this journey, and are tolerably acquainted with the different places, where it would be necessary to lay up a small stock of provisions, would not be impeded, as in all probability they would not meet with an Indian to interrupt their progress; although on the other route more north, there are almost insurmountable barriers.

This statement, although subsequently proved to be true, was based on belief rather than knowledge for no wagons

could be or ever were driven over the route followed by Stuart, and he suffered greatly from Indian depredations.

Another problem also must have confronted General Ashley when he and Major Henry were forming their plans at Fort Kiowa. Should a practicable route be found, the means of traveling it must be developed. Pack animals had been used in bartering furs with the neighboring Indian tribes and sporadic efforts had been made to trade with Santa Fe, but it was not until 1821-22 that the first successful effort to establish such a trade was conducted by William Becknell. Not only was it necessary to develop and perfect methods of overland transportation but the men who were to be employed in that service had yet to be trained.

General Ashley left Fort Kiowa for St. Louis probably about the middle of August.

And all of this was taking place because London fashions had decreed that gentlemen should wear hats made of beaver fur.

V

ROUTES OF GENERAL ASHLEY'S PARTIES FROM FORT KIOWA TO THE WIND RIVER VALLEY

Clyman tells us that the remnants of Ashley's two expeditions, consisting of twenty-four men, left Fort Kiowa in two parties; that one party returned to the fort at the mouth of the Yellowstone River and that the other was captained by Jedediah Smith and traveled west to the Wind River Valley. We shall first trace the route of the Yellowstone party which was led by Major Henry and later that of the Jedediah Smith party of which Clyman was a member.

We have two statements regarding the travels of the Henry party. Clyman writes that:

Here a small company of I think (13) men were furnished a few horses onley enough to pack their baggage they going back to the mouth of the

yellow Stone on their way up they were attacked in the night by a small party of Rees killing two of thier men and they killing one Ree.

Potts, who was left at the Yellowstone post with his injured knees writes:

We were favored by the arrival of Major Henry from the Ariccarees who had departed from this place with a small brigade for the relief of Gen. Ashley On his return he was fired upon by night by a party of Mannans wherein two was killed and as many wounded. Only two of our guns were fired which dispatched an Indian and they retreated.

It is evident from Potts' statement that the party which returned from Fort Kiowa was under the command of Major Henry. They must have started not later than the middle of August for Moses Harris stated in his interview that they were attacked by the Mandan Indians on August 20th. That the party had only sufficient horses to pack their baggage is not surprising. Ashley's expedition of 1823 had traveled from St. Louis to the Arikara villages in two boats. The animals purchased from those Indians had been lost in the fight. Jedediah Smith told General Atkinson that Major Henry in coming to Ashley's relief had traveled down the Missouri River by boat and had passed the village of the Arikara Indians, ignoring a request to stop and trade. It was necessary to obtain mounts if the party under Henry were to travel overland. Wilson Price Hunt, in his trip across the continent in 1811, had left the Missouri River at the Arikara villages and had purchased horses from the Cheyenne Indians at a point east of the Black Hills of Dakota. Clyman informs us that the party of which he was a member, and which started later, purchased horses from the Sioux Indians who were encamped east or south of the Black Hills. It is probable that Henry's party traveled northwest from the Missouri until they met with a tribe of Indians from whom they purchased mounts and that after avoiding the Arikara villages they turned toward the Missouri River

and followed it to the Yellowstone. Potts does not say that Henry's party arrived from any unusual quarter and as the back country was not so well known, it is likely that they sought and followed the river as soon as they believed that it was safe to do so.

Clyman attributes to the Arikara Indians the loss of the two men who were killed during the trip, while Potts states that the party was fired upon by the Mandan Indians. Potts' statement is confirmed by Moses Harris. It is possible that the party, in ignorance of the hostility of the Mandan Indians had approached the Missouri River in the neighborhood of their village. Colonel Leavenworth's report to General Gaines states that an alliance between the Arikara and Mandan Indians was thought to exist.

Hugh Glass was a member of Henry's party and his famous encounter with the grizzly bear occurred during this trip. The undisputed facts are that Glass, seriously wounded by a grizzly bear, was deserted by his associates and subsequently found his way back to Fort Kiowa. Clyman mentions the incident and does not modify the statement. With the publication of *The Song of Hugh Glass* by John G. Neihardt, the tale has passed into literature. It is interesting to note, however, that Glass alone told his story and that Clyman, who appears to be a decent fellow and knew Glass personally, did not think well of him. He refers to Glass as one "who could not be restrand and kept under Subordination." The men whom Glass accused of inhuman behavior remained silent; they had and retained the respect of their associates and played a large part in western exploration.

Moses Harris states that Henry, upon his arrival at the Yellowstone River, decided to abandon the post at that point and to move up the river. Twenty-two of his horses had been stolen by the Indians. He ascended the Yellowstone by boat. At the mouth of the Powder River, he pur-

chased forty-seven horses from the Crow Indians and dispatched a trapping party to the southwest. With the rest of his men he proceeded up the Yellowstone River and probably wintered at the mouth of the Big Horn River. Fur traders frequently supplied traps and other implements of the trade to the Indians and trappers and received payment in furs. It may have been necessary for Henry to remain in the country to collect payments of the advances which had been made during the spring and early summer. The confluence of the Big Horn and Yellowstone Rivers was in the country of the Crow Indians who had been consistently friendly with the whites.

Potts was a member of the expedition which was sent to the southwest and gives the following account of his travels:

Shortly after his [Henry's] arrival we embarked for the brig *Horn* on the Yellow Stone in the Crow Indian county, here I made a small hunt for Beaver. From this place we crossed the first range of Rocky Mountain into a large and beautiful valley adorned with many flowers and interspersed with many useful herbs. At the upper end of this valley on the Horn is the most beautiful scene of nature I have ever seen. It is a large boiling spring at the foot of a small burnt mountain about two rods in diameter and depth not ascertained, discharging sufficient water for an overshot mill, and spreading itself to a considerable width forming a great number of basons of various shapes and sizes, of incrustation of sediment, running in this manner for the space of 200 feet, there falling over a precipice of about 30 feet perpendicular into the head of the horn or confluence of Wind River. From thence across the 2d range of mountains to Wind River Valley. In crossing this mountain I unfortunately froze my feet and was unable to travel from the loss of two toes.

General Chittenden states that this party was probably led by Etienne Provost. It is unfortunate that Potts did not mention the name of his captain. There can be little doubt as to the route which they pursued. Following up the Powder River and then along one of its tributaries which rise in the Big Horn Mountains, they crossed those mountains to the valley of the Big Horn River probably over the same pass through which Wilson Price Hunt in 1811 laboriously made

his way and which is now traversed by the motor road from Buffalo to Ten Sleep. The spring which Potts describes is the large hot spring located at the mouth of the Wind River Canyon around which the town of Thermopolis has been built. They then crossed the Owl Creek Mountains to the Wind River Valley where they spent the winter and were probably joined by the second party of which Clyman was a member. As flowers were blooming in the Big Horn Valley at the time of their arrival, the party reached that point during or before the early part of October. They must have lingered in the valley, possibly to trap beaver, for in crossing the Owl Creek Mountains, Potts' toes were frozen. These mountains are not high and consequently the crossing must have been made during the late fall or early winter.

Clyman was a member of the second party, which was captained by Jediah Smith. His narrative bristles with anecdotes of events and places and, upon first reading, it seems certain that his course from Fort Kiowa to the Wind River Valley could be accurately determined. The small stream running thick with white sediment, the waters of which caused extreme "costiveness," the slate canyon which might well have provided Moses with tablets on which to engrave the Ten Commandments and the petrified forest where petrified birds on petrified trees sang petrified songs, would seem to describe localities which could easily be located. Unfortunately, however, the details which he gives are inconsistent with one another and are at variance with the topography of the country. Clyman was interested in telling a good story, not in exact statement and, as the years passed, his stories probably improved to the detriment of geographical accuracy. "It is a matter of regret that Mr. Clyman's account is more confusing than revealing as to the route followed," is the opinion of Mr. Lawrence K. Fox, Secretary of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The general course of the party can be followed, but not the details of the route. Clyman writes that the party "eleven in number" left Fort Kiowa "about the last of September." They probably followed the White River to a point south-east of the Black Hills, and then turned northwest toward the Black Hills touching upon the western portion of the Bad Lands of the South Cheyenne River. The reasons for assuming that the party followed the White River are that Clyman states that he traveled along the White Clay River, which was the early name for the White River and the Bad Lands of Dakota lie between the upper reaches of that stream and the Black Hills. The only alternative river course which he could have pursued is that of the Teton or Bad River, but had that river been followed the party would not have encountered the Bad Lands unless they had gone well out of their way. After crossing the ridge of the Black Hills they probably followed down one of the many tributaries of the Belle Fourche which flow from the Black Hills to the northwest. They then crossed the watersheds of the Powder and Tongue Rivers and arrived in the valley of the Big Horn River by crossing the Big Horn Mountains probably over the pass at the heads of the Tongue and Shell Rivers, which is used today by the motor road from Ranchester to Lovell. Following up the Big Horn valley, they crossed the Owl Creek Mountains into the Wind River Valley and pursued the course of the Wind River until they arrived "immediately north of Fremont Peak."

Although neither Potts nor Clyman mentions the meeting of the two parties, it seems probable that they met near the present town of Dubois. They both note the presence of an Indian camp near by and an abundance of timber which Potts states is cottonwood and willow. Clyman describes the valley as narrow and uneven. A short distance above Dubois, the Wind River flows through a small canyon which

may well have been the site of the buffalo hunt of which Clyman gives a vivid account. It is known that the neighborhood was a favorite winter resort of the Crow Indians and the descriptions given by Potts and Clyman correspond with the natural features of the locality. Then too the town lies immediately under Union Pass and north of the Wind River Mountains, of which Fremont Peak is the most dominating height.

VI

TRAVELS OF GENERAL ASHLEY'S PARTIES FROM THE WIND RIVER TO THE GREEN RIVER

Fortunately, Potts and Clyman traveled to the Green River Valley in separate parties and consequently have supplied a description of the route followed by each. Clyman writes:

In February we made an effort to cross the mountains north of the wind River [range] but found the snow too deep and had to return and take a Southern course east of the wind river range which is here the main Rocky mountains and the main dividing ridge between the Atlantic and Pacific.

It is evident from this statement that the Clyman party first attempted to reach the valley of the Green River over Union Pass, through which Wilson Price Hunt had been conducted by Hoback and his companions in the fall of 1811. They probably reached the top. The grades are not steep—later the Mormons drove wagons across the Pass—and the forested slopes give protection against the cold, but at the top they were confronted with a bare plain which although lush in summer would in winter afford no sustenance for man or horse or protection against the freezing blasts which sweep that upland. Having failed in this attempt, they skirted the eastern slopes of the Wind River Mountains and

after surmounting a low ridge, reached the Sweetwater River which Clyman says was "Since ascertained to be a tributary of the Platte river." The cold winds of midwinter and the absence of game caused the party to move down stream to the protection of an aspen grove where they subsisted for two or three weeks on mountain sheep. When the game became scarce, they left the Sweetwater River and turned to the "southwest." Little reliance can be placed on Clyman's compass bearings, they are frequently inaccurate, but from his statement that they traveled over the "ridges south of Sweetwater" and from his description of the country, it seems evident that the party passed along the southern slopes of the Antelope Hills. This route was necessitated by the biting winds which in winter sweep the treeless South Pass plateau. In due time they reached the Green River and proceeded to trap for beaver.

Clyman's narrative makes no suggestion that the party had any doubt as to the location of the only two passes which give access to the Green River Valley. Without hesitation his party attempted to reach that valley, first over Union Pass and then over South Pass. In both cases they were repelled by midwinter cold. As Stuart twelve years before had deliberately turned away from the South Pass plateau because of the presence of hostile Indians and sought concealment in the wooded hills to the south, so Jedediah Smith and his party turned to the same hills for protection against cold. Probably they followed the same route in different directions. Clyman does state that it was not then known that the Sweetwater River was a tributary of the Platte River and hence it seems probable that he would have indicated some doubt as to the location of South Pass had any doubt existed in the minds of the party. They were tortured with cold. That the impassable barrier of the Wind River Range no longer barred their travel to the west must

have been a welcome relief and worthy of comment if they had not known their way.

The course of the party of which Potts was a member can be readily traced. They skirted the eastern slope of the Wind River Range and about the middle of July crossed the Continental Divide to the Green River Valley over the South Pass Plateau. In midsummer, it was not necessary to seek protection in the timbered hills to the south as the Clyman party had done. Potts gives to the Green River its early name of Seet Kadu or Prairie Hen River. As the party did not arrive in the Green River Valley until the middle of July, it is probable that they traveled slowly, trapping by the way. The country was evidently well known to them. Potts does not suggest any uncertainty as to the route or that they regarded themselves as pioneers or discoverers. He volunteers the information that the Sweetwater River is a tributary of the Platte River but this observation made in his letter dated 1826 is not in conflict with Clyman's statement that the fact was undetermined in 1824.

The Potts letter is the first authoritative statement that a party of white men passed immediately around the southern end of the Wind River Range or in other words over the South Pass plateau. The so-called "discovery" of South Pass will be discussed in a later chapter but because of the many and conflicting claims which have been made for various trappers it is irritating that Potts did not name the leader of his party. Tradition ascribes its "discovery" to Etienne Provost, and General Chittenden accepted that tradition. Provost was probably with Major Henry on the Yellowstone River and may well have been put in charge of the party which was sent to the southwest from the mouth of the Powder River and of which Potts was a member.

VII

TRAVELS OF GENERAL ASHLEY AND HIS MEN
FROM AND AFTER THE SPRING OF 1824

The journey of Ashley's men was over. They had reached the valley of the Green River which was their objective. The next two years were spent in exploring the adjacent country and in garnering the rich harvest of furs which were to be found in and about that region. The returns exceeded expectations and enabled General Ashley to retire with a fortune in 1826. Potts, in his letter of 1826, writes to his brother: "Since the autumn of 1824, you have no doubt heard, and will hear by the public prints, of the furs brought in by Gen. Ashly, which were the product of our toils."

The beaver is a shy and astute animal and is best captured by units of not more than three or four men trapping different streams. Therefore, for the purpose of trapping, the parties which had traveled together during the past year broke up into small groups and hence it is possible only to relate what little is known of the activities of each man without regard to the number or names of his associates. To this general statement there are three exceptions: the trip to St. Louis which was made by Clyman, Fitzpatrick, Stone, and Branch during the summer of 1824, the Ashley Expedition of 1824-25, and the western travels of Jedediah Smith.

As was stated in the preceding chapter, Clyman wrote that in the spring of 1824 it was not known that the Sweetwater River was a tributary of the Platte River. Jedediah Smith's party, on leaving their camp in the aspen grove on the Sweetwater River where they had remained for two or three weeks, cached the powder and lead and such other articles which would not be needed in their spring hunt and agreed that if they became separated they would meet there or at some navigable point on the stream below by June 1st.

Clyman and Fitzpatrick reached the aspen grove by June 15th and satisfied themselves that the Sweetwater was not navigable and that their "baggage" would have to be packed on horses. Fitzpatrick went back for assistance while Clyman walked down the stream to its confluence with the North Platte River to await Fitzpatrick. Here he remained for eleven days, but as the other members of the party whom he had expected to join him within two or three days had not turned up and as his powder and lead were running low and bands of Indians were about, he decided to start down the stream alone, not knowing whether he was following the Platte or the Arkansas River. In due time and after many adventures, he reached an army post in a condition bordering on physical exhaustion. Clyman errs in stating that this post was Fort Leavenworth. That fort was not established until 1827. The army was then quartered at Fort Atkinson near the present site of Omaha, Nebraska. Ten days after his arrival at Fort Atkinson, he was surprised by the arrival of Fitzpatrick, Stone, and Branch who were "in a more pitible state if possible than myself." Fitzpatrick told Clyman that he with others returned to the aspen grove, opened the cache and prepared to pack when Jedediah Smith and the balance of the party arrived. As the waters of the river had risen because of a thaw in the mountains, they decided to build a "skin boat" in which Fitzpatrick, Stone, and Branch were to take the furs to Missouri "the best way they could." Captain Smith was to remain in the mountains for the summer. Fitzpatrick had ridden to Clyman's camping place and saw where he had cut a lodge in the willows, but not finding him, as he was away at the time, had concluded that he had been killed by the Indians. The three men managed to haul the boat as far as Independence Rock, but as it was "nearly worn out" when they reached that point and as the water in the river was

falling, they cached the furs and continued their course down the stream. Later their boat was destroyed in a canyon, probably by the same rapids which brought disaster to Colonel John C. Frémont twenty years later. The latter part of their journey was made on foot.

The most reasonable explanation for this seemingly fool-hardy trip is that General Ashley desired authoritative information as to the practicability of using the Sweetwater and Platte Rivers as a means of transportation. The trip had been planned in advance, for before reaching the Green River Valley the party had cached in the aspen grove all articles which they would not need in their spring hunt and had agreed to meet there by June 1st. The meeting took place about the middle of June and although Fitzpatrick and Clyman had decided that the stream was not navigable yet because of a rise in the waters, a "skin" or "bull boat," as it is usually styled, was built in which the three men made an unsuccessful attempt to float a package of furs down the river. The package was probably not large or valuable for as the boat was made of willow branches covered with buffalo skins, it could carry little weight and a valuable cargo would not have been entrusted in such a frail craft or to so small a party traveling through an unknown country. The expedition can be justified only as a test to determine the practicability of navigating these waters and may well have been planned by General Ashley at Fort Kiowa during the preceding summer. Clyman's narrative ends with his description of this trip.

General Ashley had returned to St. Louis in the early fall of 1823, after his defeat by the Arikara Indians. He could not have received reports from his men until the arrival of Fitzpatrick and Clyman during the summer of 1824, when he was informed of the safe arrival of his parties in the Green River Valley and of the wealth of furs which the

country provided. During that summer, he was conducting a campaign for the office of governor of the new State of Missouri, but was defeated by Frederick Bates. On November 3, 1824, he set out from Fort Atkinson with a party of twenty-five men, "fifty pack horses, a wagon and teams, etc." bound for the Rocky Mountains.

To leave in the late fall for the mountains was a daring experiment. Overland travel in winter was seldom attempted. That a wagon formed part of his equipment is surprising and it would be interesting to know how far he found it practicable to continue its use. Ashley's successors took wagons to the Wind River Valley in 1830, but the use of wagons across the northern plains before that time is unknown.

This trip of General Ashley's constitutes his only exploring adventure. He followed the valley of the Platte River to the confluence of the two forks and then turned up the South Fork "as affording more wood than the North." Skirting the northern slopes of the mountains of Colorado, he arrived at Green River about the nineteenth of April, 1825, probably near its confluence with the Big Sandy River. Here he divided his men into four groups, one of which was ordered to follow the river to the north, one to travel to the northeast and another to the southwest. With six men, he embarked upon the river. All parties were to collect Ashley's other men who were in the mountains and notify them that Ashley would descend the river to a suitable point about one hundred miles below, there deposit a part of his merchandise, and make such marks as would designate it as a place of general rendezvous where all of the men in his service were directed to assemble on or before the 10th of July following. His trip through the canyons of the Green River was disastrous. In a rapid near the mouth of a stream which is now known as Ashley's River, his boat was wrecked. He

abandoned the river, turned west, explored the country about the Uinta Mountains and on the first day of July met "all of 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." The meeting took place about twenty miles from the place which he had appointed as a general rendezvous. In July of the previous year, 1824, Ashley's men had held a similar meeting at a point on the Green River not far from the present Union Pacific railroad station of Rock Springs. The rendezvous which General Ashley arranged for in the summer of 1825 was probably held in the valley of Green River in the neighborhood of its confluence with Henry's Fork.

A group of men associated with the Hudson's Bay Company were present at this rendezvous and sold their furs to Ashley. A rumor, mentioned by General Chittenden, suggested that these furs had been improperly acquired by Ashley's men. Peter Skene Ogden was the leader of the Hudson's Bay Company expedition from which those men deserted. His report to his superior, Dr. John McLoughlin, has been published by The Champlain Society in *The Letters of John McLoughlin, First Series* (Toronto 1941), and recounts in detail the desertion of these men and the sale of their furs to Ashley. From Ogden's statement, Ashley's men appear to have been guilty of sharp trading, but no fraud or theft can be imputed to them. At that time, the Oregon country was occupied jointly by England and the United States and conflicting national claims figured prominently in the incident.

Having collected his furs and settled his accounts, Ashley returned to St. Louis by way of South Pass to the Big Horn River. Here he transferred his baggage to boats which he was successful in floating to the confluence of the Missouri

and Yellowstone Rivers. By coincidence, or by agreement—for Ashley was friendly with the officers of the Army—he met Major Henry Atkinson and Major Benjamin O'Fallon, who commanded the so-called "Yellowstone Expedition" which had been dispatched by the Government to enter into treaties with the Indian tribes along the Missouri River. Under their protection, he reached St. Louis about October 8th with one of the most valuable cargoes of furs which had ever been brought to that city.

On March 8th, 1826, Ashley left St. Louis with a party of twenty-five men for his fourth and last trip to the mountains. He passed Franklin, Missouri, on the 15th of March and traveled along the valleys of the Platte, North Platte, and Sweetwater Rivers and crossed South Pass to the valley of the Green River. It is probable that the rendezvous for this year was held in Cache Valley, which is probably the same valley as that described by Potts as Willow Valley. After the rendezvous, he returned eastward over the same route and arrived in St. Louis about September 28th with one hundred and twenty-five packs of beaver valued at sixty thousand dollars.

By articles of agreement signed on the 18th of July, 1826, "near the Grand Lake west of the Rocky mountains" which was probably Cache Valley, Ashley relinquished his interest in the business to three of his lieutenants, Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette and agreed to supply the new firm with merchandise and to market their furs.

Two years earlier, in August, 1824, Major Henry had arrived in St. Louis having descended the Missouri River in boats, and brought with him a considerable quantity of valuable furs. An article giving this information was first published in the *St. Louis Enquirer* and is the last statement of Henry's connection with the fur trade. It is strange that

one who had been associated with that trade for so many years and had played so large a part in western exploration should have ended his career as a fur trader with no public notice of the fact or of the services which he had rendered. Major Andrew Henry was a man of character and probity. It is possible that his agreement with Ashley placed upon him the burden of the field work, while Ashley was to furnish the funds and to superintend the affairs of the partnership in St. Louis. Henry had been peculiarly unfortunate in his dealings with the Indians and it is not improbable that he terminated his agreement with Ashley feeling that he was not carrying his share of the load. Under such circumstances, he would not welcome public notice of his retirement.

Potts was evidently one of the four men who circumnavigated Great Salt Lake in the spring of 1826. The lake had been visited by James Bridger and by Jedediah Smith during the late fall of 1824 or the following winter, and Potts' trip was evidently undertaken for the purpose of prospecting for beaver. During the summer and fall of 1826, Potts visited the Yellowstone Park and about the middle of February, 1827, started from his winter quarters for a tour of the country lying south of Great Salt Lake. He traveled along the western foothills of the Wasatch Mountains, then crossed those mountains to the watershed of the Colorado River and returned to Sweetwater Lake (Bear Lake) from which his letter of July 8th, 1827, was written.

The wanderings of Potts were probably typical of most of Ashley's men. They were trappers in search of furs. At first, they worked the nearby streams and when these were exhausted, small parties spread out in every direction seeking new fields and in so doing gained a knowledge of the country. Ashley, in his letter to General Atkinson, dated December 1st, 1825, stated that his men had been scattered over the territory west of the mountains in small detachments from

the 38th to the 44th degree of latitude and that the only injury which they had sustained by Indians' depredations was the stealing of seventeen horses by the Crows and the loss of one man killed. It would be profitless to trace the route of each man, were it possible to do so. The important consideration is that when Ashley relinquished active participation in the fur trade in the summer of 1826, his men were familiar with the Rocky Mountain region from the point not far south of the Canadian border to the country south of the Great Salt Lake. We have no knowledge of any party which penetrated the Colorado Mountains, but it is reasonable to suppose that that section was not overlooked in the search for furs.

To this general statement of the activities of Ashley's men, Jedediah Smith was an exception. He was an ardent traveler and explorer. A member of the second detachment of Ashley's first expedition of 1822, he was probably present at the battle with the Blackfeet Indians on the upper Missouri River in the spring of 1823. It is likely that he was dispatched by Henry to inform Ashley of the losses sustained in horses and men, for it is reasonably authenticated that he was sent by Ashley to inform Henry of the defeat by the Arikara Indians. He then led one of the parties from Fort Kiowa to the Green River Valley, arriving there in the early spring of 1824. His activities during that summer are unknown except that he dispatched Clyman, Fitzpatrick and others on their disastrous trip from the Sweetwater River to St. Louis. Probably he trapped and familiarized himself with the regions adjacent to the upper Green River Valley. In the fall of that year (1824) he crossed the Continental Divide from the headwaters of the Green River to the watershed of the Columbia River, probably passing through Hoback Canyon and Jackson's Hole, and then skirted the western slopes of the northern Rocky Mountains. Some weeks

during the winter were spent at Flathead House, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. Here he doubtless learned of the northern routes to the Pacific coast. The following spring of 1825, he returned to the rendezvous in the Green River Valley, passing Great Salt Lake on the way. After the rendezvous he accompanied Ashley to St. Louis and returned with him to the mountains in the spring of 1826.

Upon Ashley's retirement, in July, 1826, Smith became the senior member of the new partnership. No longer an employee, he was able to gratify that lust for adventure and discovery which must have burned within him. On August 22d, 1826, he set out from Great Salt Lake with a party of fifteen men and reached San Diego, California. His route led by Utah Lake, probably along the valleys of the Sevier and Virgin Rivers, to the Colorado River which he crossed and followed south to the settlements of the Mojave Indians. Guides furnished by them led him across the deserts of Southern California. On reaching the California settlements, he was received with suspicion by the Mexican authorities and was compelled to appear before the Governor. He was released on condition that he leave the country and return the same way that he had come. Instead of complying with this order, he led his men up the inland valley of California to a point on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, somewhere about the headwaters of the San Joaquin River. In the spring of 1827, he attempted to cross the mountains with his party, but failed to do so because of the depth of snow. Starting on May 20th, he, with two men, seven horses and two mules, succeeded in effecting a crossing in eight days with the loss of two horses and a mule. Twenty days' travel from the east side of the mountains brought him to Great Salt Lake "over a country completely barren and destitute of game." He arrived with one horse

and one mule, the others having been eaten on the way, and reached the place of rendezvous for that year about the middle of June, 1827.

On July 13th, 1827, Smith set out again for California with a party of eighteen to bring back the men whom he had left there in the spring. The route followed was the same as that of the previous year, but his difficulties were increased because of the hostility of the Mojave Indians and the indignation of the California authorities. He was imprisoned, but eventually obtained permission to depart, and traveled north, spending the winter of 1827-28 on the American fork of the Sacramento River. On the 13th of April, 1828, he set out in a northwest direction and after reaching the coast followed it to the Umpqua River where his party of eighteen men were attacked by the Indians. He and three others alone escaped with their lives. The survivors met at the Hudson's Bay Company post of Fort Vancouver which was situated near the mouth of the Columbia River. Dr. McLoughlin, who was in charge, recovered the furs which had been taken by the Indians and bought them from Smith for about \$20,000.00. Such generous treatment confirms Ogden's statement that Ashley was not guilty of fraud in his purchase of furs from Hudson's Bay Company men in the summer of 1825. Smith remained at Vancouver until March 12th, 1829, when he followed the British fur traders' route to Flathead House. He then turned south and arrived on the 5th of August at the Tetons on Henry Fork where he met his associates.

In 1830, Smith, Jackson, and Sublette sold their business to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The three partners embarked in the Santa Fe trade, but during the first expedition Smith was slain in the Cimarron Desert by Comanche Indians. He was about twenty-eight years old.

VIII

GENERAL ASHLEY, THE OVERLAND TRAIL, AND
SOUTH PASS

General Ashley was no pathfinding, wilderness adventurer. His life indicates that he desired prominence in public affairs, and that his business activities were but a means of acquiring a competence sufficient to enable him to gratify this ambition. In 1822, when he entered the fur trade, he was serving as lieutenant governor of the State of Missouri and it may well be that he had intended to remain in St. Louis to attend to his public duties and to care for the financial demands of the business, while others collected the furs. His first expedition in 1822 was dispatched in two parties, one led by Major Henry and the other by Daniel Moore. The loss of the boat caused Moore to return to St. Louis. It was only after that disaster that Ashley took charge of the second party. He returned to St. Louis as soon as the two parties had joined forces at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. He commanded the disastrous expedition of 1823, but returned to St. Louis as soon as it was possible for him to do so. During the summer of 1824, he was conducting a campaign for the office of governor of the State of Missouri and it seems hardly probable that had he been elected he would or could have absented himself from his official duties for a period of nine months. Henry had arrived in St. Louis in August, 1824, and doubtless Ashley expected him to lead the expedition of that year. Having failed in his political campaign, he was free to travel to the mountains and the retirement of Major Henry probably made it necessary for him to do so. The late date of his departure, November 3d, indicates that his plans for that year had miscarried. Upon his return in the summer of 1825, Jedediah Smith accompanied him to St. Louis, possibly either for the purpose of

leading the expedition of the following year 1826 or of arranging for Ashley's retirement from active participation in the business. Shortly after Ashley's retirement, he became a member of Congress from the State of Missouri.

Fate plays strange pranks. Not only did Ashley have little taste for adventure, but he sought to conduct his business along water routes and made persistent efforts to locate navigable streams. The journey of Fitzpatrick, Clyman, and their associates down the valleys of the Sweetwater, North Platte, and Platte Rivers in the spring of 1824 must have been made to determine the navigability of those waters. In the spring of 1825, he went far out of his way to make use of the Big Horn, Yellowstone, and Missouri Rivers in transporting his furs from the Green River valley to St. Louis. For the first time in the spring of 1826, he made his return trip to St. Louis down the watershed of the Platte River. Evidently he was then convinced that no navigable streams were to be found and turned reluctantly to land travel. Yet he is best remembered as the originator of the Overland Trail.

Ashley and his men were not the first to explore the Rocky Mountains or to cross the continent. Alexander Mackenzie in 1793 had reached the Pacific Ocean through territory now within the Dominion of Canada. During the years 1804 and 1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, acting under orders from President Thomas Jefferson, had voyaged up the Missouri River and had found a way across the mountains to the waters of the Columbia which they had followed to the ocean. The return trip was made in 1806. Wilson Price Hunt and Robert Stuart, partners of John Jacob Astor in his Astoria enterprise, had also crossed the continent; Hunt traveling westward in 1811 and 1812 and Stuart eastward in 1812 and 1813, the latter over a route which was subsequently adopted by Ashley. Lieutenant

Zebulon Montgomery Pike and Major Stephen H. Long, both officers of the United States Army, had led exploring expeditions to the Rocky Mountains, the former during the years 1805, 1806, and 1807 and the latter during the years 1819 and 1820. But these were isolated adventures. The times were not ripe for others to follow in their footsteps for the tide of western settlement had not yet crossed the Mississippi Valley. On the other hand, the men whom General Ashley brought together while serving under him established and used, for the purposes of their trade, a route from the Missouri River across the Rocky Mountains to the Green River valley and after his retirement found routes from those mountains to the Pacific Coast. Before the fur trade had become unprofitable, his men led others over the way—first the missionaries to Oregon, then in rapid succession the Oregon emigrants, the Mormon migration to Salt Lake, and the California gold seekers of 1849. By that time, the route had become a much traveled highway and was known as the Overland Trail. Later the stage lines and the Pony Express followed or paralleled his trails and today the rails of the Union Pacific Railroad and its connecting lines from Omaha to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland follow in large part the paths of "Ashley's Men."

The Overland Trail was not a road. Its travelers started from such points on the Missouri River as convenience dictated and set off across the prairie to follow the valleys of the Platte, North Platte, and Sweetwater Rivers to South Pass where an easy day's journey of about twelve miles took them across the Continental Divide to Pacific Spring, the headwaters of a tributary of the Green River. Stops were made where the grazing was found to be best. Pasturage and water fit to drink, neither of which abound on the western plains, were supplied by the rivers and numerous herds of buffalo provided food. The valleys were treeless, broad and

flat, and the grade almost imperceptible. The wagons traveled in line or side by side—often in parallel lines so as to be brought together quickly in case of Indian attack. When the ruts became too deep, a new line of travel was broken by the side of the old. Experience soon proved that the few difficulties of the way, such as Devil's Gate, a narrow canyon on the Sweetwater River, could be circumvented. Trial and error in time determined the most convenient route, which was marked by the ruts of the wagon wheels. Many alternatives or "cut offs" were tried from time to time until the California Gold Rush in 1849 encouraged the publication of guide books which detailed those routes and stopping places which the various authors had found most convenient. No surveyor ever located the trail and the natural face of the prairie was its only surface.

South Pass does not fulfill the ordinary conception of a mountain pass. It is no mountain cleft, but a treeless, bleak plateau about fifteen miles broad. Easy grades of only twelve miles divide the upper waters of the Sweetwater River from Pacific Spring, the headwaters of a tributary of the Green River. From the Canadian border to the abrupt termination of the Wind River Range at the South Pass plateau, the Continental Divide follows a series of mountain ridges. Its course to the south for the next hundred miles is across plains. First it meanders across the South Pass plateau where its exact location can be determined only by instrumental survey, then crosses the Antelope Hills at right angles to the line of the ridge and follows a subsidiary spur down to the Great Divide Basin where it is lost; for as the waters drain from all sides into this desert bowl and sink into the sands, no true divide exists. From this descent it rises again to the high peaks of the mountains of Colorado. South Pass is therefore the northern and most elevated portion of a hundred mile break in the chain of the Rocky

Montains. No railway or through motor road crosses it today, only an unsurfaced byway across the desert floor. Why then did transcontinental travel persist in using the pass until the establishment of mechanical means of communication? The answer is water. The railroad and motor, indifferent to this requirement, employ a route to the south which is more direct and where the grades are easier. The early traveler was dependent upon draft animals and had to take Nature as he found her. As she had provided a continuous supply of water by the South Pass route, he drove his team that way. Elevations of but a few hundred feet and distances of but a few miles restrain the Sweetwater River from forming part of the watershed of the Green River, or, further on its course, from joining its waters to Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Wind River. Had the continuous line of water supplied by the Platte, North Platte, and Sweetwater Rivers been broken, South Pass would have been as impracticable for animal transportation as the Great Divide Basin which lies not far to the South.

So many and conflicting claims have been made as to the discoverer of South Pass that the words "discoverer" and "South Pass" have come to have little meaning. The pass is not an obscure mountain defile, the finding of which immediately solved the problem of crossing the Continental Divide. It is but part of a broad midcontinent plateau and the use of that particular part of the plateau for transcontinental travel was conditioned upon a continuous route along rivers tributary to the Mississippi and an easy passage from that drainage basin to waters tributary to the Green River. No one man made this discovery. Many years of investigation by many men were required to establish the fact that the route adopted by Ashley in 1826 and subsequently used by his successors was the most practicable way to cross the Continental Divide.

On his trip from Astoria to St. Louis in 1812, Robert

Stuart knew that he would find "Missouri waters" at the abrupt southern termination of the Wind River Range. The only known source of such information was Hoback and his companions whom Stuart fell in with before he reached the Green River Valley. These men had served under Henry during the summer of 1810 and had guided Hunt in 1811 through the complicated maze of the Wind River—Jackson Hole—Green River region. The intimate knowledge which they possessed of that country is clearly shown by Washington Irving's description of Hunt's western trip and it is probable that some members of Henry's party reached the southern point of the Wind River Range. The trip from Union Pass could have been made in four or five days. Mountain men were mountain lovers and no mountain lover could have faced the long line of serrated peaks of the Wind River Range and not sought its end. This presumption is confirmed by the certainty with which Ashley's men traveled from the valley of the Wind River to that of the Green River in the spring of 1824. Major Henry, although probably not present, was in command of Ashley's parties. Circumstantial evidence is never conclusive, but in the light of our present knowledge, it cannot be denied that some members of Henry's party probably reached the southern point of the Wind River Mountains and there found a stream flowing to the east. Unless and until new facts are brought to light, the "discovery" of South Pass must therefore be attributed to Henry's men in the summer of 1810.

The next important contribution to the "discovery" of the South Pass route was made by Clyman, Fitzpatrick, Stone, and Branch in the spring of 1824. They established the fact that the Sweetwater was a branch of the Platte River. Ashley, during the winter of 1825, supplied negative evidence of the advantages of the South Pass route by traveling west along the northern slopes of the Colorado Mountains skirting the waterless Great Divide Basin.

Exception may be taken to the emphasis upon General Ashley's contribution to the early development of the Overland Trail. He was but the executive of a fur trading business. That emphasis has been intentional. Since the publication of General Chittenden's work in 1902, the biographies of a number of Ashley's lieutenants have been written which have contributed much to our knowledge of the early fur trade and the activities of its participants, but in each of these works the emphasis has of necessity been laid upon the subject of the biography. Undoubtedly his men bore the burden of the day and in this age of the worship of the commonplace, we are much more mindful of the man who operates the machine than of the man who makes its operation possible. Exception may also be taken to crediting Ashley with any share in the astonishing journeys of discovery made by Jedediah Smith after Ashley's retirement in 1826. Yet it was Ashley who brought these men together, it was he who, after the disastrous battle with the Arikara Indians in 1823, devised and carried out a new method of conducting the fur trade which reaped success from disaster and in so doing found and established the best way across the Continental Divide, and it was he who inspired his lieutenants with a spirit which caused them to be proud always of being known as "Ashley's men." His object was profits, but the sardonic humor of Fate has caused his name to be remembered as one who contributed much to the first steps in the acquisition, settlement, and development of the country west of the Mississippi River. Had he failed in his endeavors, he would have been forgotten, but as the men whom he brought together, working under his direction, ascertained the most practicable route from the Mississippi Valley across the Continental Divide, which route was subsequently called by the various names of "Overland," "Oregon," "Salt Lake," and "California" trail, it is only meet that credit should be accorded to him who was their leader.

Appendix A

LETTERS OF DANIEL T. POTTS
The Gazette and Daily Advertiser
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Nov. 14, 1826

Rocky Mountains, July 16, 1826.

DEAR AND RESPECTED BROTHER,

After I left Philadelphia I was taken with a severe spell of rheumatism which continued with me for about two months. I arrived in Illinois on the 1st July in the same year, where I remained until March following, when I took my departure for Missouri, from thence immediately entered on an expedition of Henry and Ashly, bound for the Rocky Mountain and Columbia River. In this enterprize I consider it unnecessary to give you all the particulars appertaining to my travels. I left St. Louis on April 3d, 1822, under command of Andrew Henry with a boat and one hundred men and arrived at Council Bluffs on May 1st; from thence we ascended the river to Cedar Fort, about five hundred miles. Here our provisions being exhausted, and no prospect of game near at hand, I concluded to make the best of my way back in company with eight others, and unfortunately was separated from them. By being too accessary in this misfortune, I was left in the Prarie without arms or any means of making fire, and half starved to death. Now taking into consideration my situation, about three hundred and fifty miles from my frontier Post, this would make the most cruel heart sympathise for me. The same day I met with three Indians, whom I hailed, and on my advancing they prepared for action by presenting their arms, though I approached them without hesitation, and gave them my hand. They conducted me to their village, where I was treated with the greatest humanity imaginable. There I remained four days, during which time they had many religious ceremonies too tedious to [insert, after which I met with some traders who conducted me as far down as the [] Village—this being two hundred miles from the Post. I departed alone as before, with only about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb suet, and in six days reached the Post, where I met with Gen. Ashley, on a second expedition, with whom I entered for the second time, and arrived at the mouth of Yellow Stone about the middle of October. This is one of the most

beautiful situations I ever saw; from this I immediately embarked for the mouth of Muscle Shell, in company with twenty one others and shortly after our arrival, eight men returned to the former place. Here the game being very scarce, the prospect was very discouraging, though after a short time the Buffaloes flocked in in great abundance; likewise the Mountain Goats; the like I have never seen since. Twenty six of the latter were slain in the compass of 100 yards square, in the space of two hours. During the winter the Buffaloes came into our camp, one of which I was induced to charge upon by our company without fire arms, at first with a tomahawk only. After approaching very close, the Bull prepared for action with the most dismal looks, and sprang at me. When within one leap of me, I let fly the tomahawk, which caused him to retreat. After returning to our cabin, I was induced to make the second attempt, armed with tomahawk, knife and spear, accompanied by five or six others armed. After traveling a short distance, we discovered the Beast, and in a concealed manner I approached him within fifty yards, when he discovered me, and made a rapid retreat, though, there being much falling timber, I soon overtook him—finding there was no escape he made battle. On the first onset, I put out one eye with the spear; the second failed in the other eye; on the third I pierced him to the heart, and immediately despatched him. The winter set in early, and the ice on the river froze to the immense thickness of four feet, and the snow of an ordinary depth. The river did not discharge itself until the 4th of April; on the 5th we were visited by a party of Indians, and on the 6th we embarked in canoes for the river Judith.

In about one day's travel we discovered where a party of Indians had wintered who were our enemies, but fortunately had not discovered us. On the 11th, I was severely wounded through both knees by an accidental discharge of a rifle; whereby I was obliged to be conducted to our establishment at the mouth of Yellow Stone; here I remained until September. We were favored by the arrival of Major Henry from the Ariccarees who had departed from this place with a small brigade for the relief of Gen. Ashley, who was defeated by that nation, with the loss of sixteen killed and fourteen wounded, out of forty men. After Major Henry joined them and the troops from Council Bluffs, under command of Col. Levensworth, they gave them battle; the loss of our enemy was from sixty to seventy. The number of the wounded not known, as they evacuated their village in the night. On our part there was only two wounded, but on his return he was fired upon by night by a party of

Mannans wherein two was killed and as many wounded. Only two of our guns were fired which dispatched an Indian and they retreated. Shortly after his arrival we embarked for the brig Horn on the Yellow Stone in the Crow Indian county, here I made a small hunt for Beaver. From this place we crossed the first range of Rocky Mountain into a large and beautiful valley adorned with many flowers and interspersed with many useful herbs. At the upper end of this valley on the Horn is the most beautiful scene of nature I have ever seen. It is a large boiling spring at the foot of a small burnt mountain about two rods in diameter and depth not ascertained, discharging sufficient water for an overshot mill, and spreading itself to a considerable width forming a great number of basons of various shapes and sizes, of incrustation of sediment, running in this manner for the space of 200 feet, there falling over a precipice of about 30 feet perpendicular into the head of the horn or confluence of Wind River. From thence across the 2d range of mountains to Wind River Valley. In crossing this mountain I unfortunately froze my feet and was unable to travel from the loss of two toes. Here I am obliged to remark the humanity of the natives (the Indians) towards me, who conducted me to their village, into the lodge of their Chief, who regularly twice a day divested himself of all his clothing except his breech clout, and dressed my wounds until I left them. Wind River is a beautiful transparent stream, with hard gravel bottom about 70 or 80 yards wide, rising in the main range of Rocky Mountains, running E. N. E., finally north through a picturesque small mountain bearing the name of the stream: after it discharges through this mountain it loses its name. The valleys near the head of this river and its tributary streams are tolerably timbered with cotton wood, millow, &c. The grass and herbage are good and plenty, of all the varieties common to this country. In this valley the snow rarely falls more than three to four inches deep and never remains more than three or four days, although it is surrounded by stupendous mountains. Those on S. W. and N. are covered with eternal snow. The mildness of the winter in this valley may readily be imputed to the immense number of Hot Springs which rise near the head of this river. I visited but one of those which rise to the south of the river in a level plain of prairie, and occupies about two acres; this is not so hot as many others but I suppose to be boiling as the outer verge was nearly scalding hot. There is also an Oil Spring in this valley, which discharges 60 or 70 gallons of pure oil per day. The oil has very much the appearance, taste and smell of British Oil. From this valley we proceeded by S. W. direction over a tolerable

route to the heads of Sweet Water, a small stream which takes an eastern bourse and falls into the north fork of the Great Platt, '70 or 80 miles below. This stream rises and runs on the highest ground in all this country. The winters are extremely, and even the summers are disagreeably cold.

We past here about the middle of July last, the ice froze near half an inch in a kettle. Notwithstanding the intense cold this country is well covered with grass herbage and numberless Alpine plants. After crossing the above mentioned stream, we took a more westerly direction over high rolling Prairies to a small branch of a considerable river, known to us by the name of Seet Kadu, and to Spaniard, by Green River, and is supposed to discharge itself into the Bay of California. This river has a bold running current, 80 or 90 yards wide, & bears a S. E. direction. It falls from the Rocky Mountains in many small rivulets, on which were considerable beaver. This valley, like all others I have seen in this country, is surrounded by mountains, those to S. W. and N. are covered with eternal snow, near the tops. Columbia Mountain, lying N. is the highest I ever saw, and perhaps the highest in North America. It stands rather detached and majestic, beginning abruptly towards the E. and terminating toward N. W. Its tops are the repository of eternal winter. In clear weather its appearance is truly sublime and reflects the brilliancy of the diamond in its various colours. This mountain gives rise to many streams, the principal are the Yellow Stone and Wind River.

The southern branches of the Missouri are Seets Kadu and Lewis river, and others of smaller note. After passing from this valley, in a S. W. direction we had very good travelling over an inconsiderable ridge, we fell on a considerable river, called Bear River, which rises to the S. in the Utaw Mountains, bears N. 80 or 90 miles, when it turns short to the S. W. and S. and after passing two mountains, discharges itself into the Great Salt Lake. On this river and its tributary streams, and adjacent country, we have taken beaver with great success. Since the autumn of 1824, you have no doubt heard, and will hear by the public prints, of the furs brought in by Gen. Ashly, which were the product of our toils. The first valley as you approach from the head of the river, is a small sweet lake, about 120 miles in circumference, with beautiful clear water, and when the wind blows has a splendid appearance. There is also to be found in this valley a considerable sour spring near the most northerly swing of the river. The valley is scantily supplied with timber, as is the case with most of the low grounds of this country. The second, or Willow Valley, is better supplied on this point—this valley has been our chief

place of rendezvous and wintering ground. Numerous streams fall in through this valley, which, like the others, is surrounded by stupendous mountains, which are unrivalled for beauty and serenity of scenery. You here have a view of all the varieties, plenty of ripe fruit, an abundance of grass just springing up, and buds beginning to shoot, while the higher parts of the mountains are covered with snow, all within 12 or 15 miles of this valley. The river passes through a small range of mountains, and enters the valley that borders on the Great Salt Lake. The G. S. Lake lies in a circular form from N. E. to N. W. the larger circle being to S. it is about 400 miles in circumference, and has no discharge or outlet, it is generally shallow near the beach, and has several islands, which rise like pyramids from its surface. The western part of the lake is so saturated with salt, as not to dissolve any more when thrown into it. The country on S. W. and N. W. is very barren, bearing but little more than wild sage and short grass. The S. E. and E. are fertile, especially near the outlet of the Utaw Lake and Weber's river. The former is about 30 yards wide at its mouth, the latter from 50 to 60, and very deep. This river rises to the E. in the Utaw Mountains, and in its course passes through three mountains, to where it enters the lake. We expect to start in a short time to explore the country lying S. W. of the Great Lake, where we shall probably winter. This country has never yet been visited by any white person—from thence to what place I cannot say, but expect the next letter will be dated at the mouth of Columbia. My long absence has created a desire to hear from you, as well as the rest of my people, also my associates. I have been on the very eve of returning this summer, but owing to this unexplored country, which I have a great curiosity to see, I have concluded to remain one or two years. We celebrated the 4th of July, by firing three rounds of small arms, and partook of a most excellent dinner, after which a number of political toasts were drunk.

D.T.P.

Sept. 27, 1827

Sweet Lake, July 8, 1827.

Shortly after writing to you last year I took my departure for the Black Foot country much against my will, but I could not make a party for any other route. We took a Northerly direction about fifty miles, where we crossed Snake river, or the South fork of Columbia, at the forks of Henry's and Lewis's; at this place we were daily harassed by the

Blackfeet: from thence we went up Henry's or North fork which bears North of East thirty miles and crossed a large rugged mountain which separates the two forks; from thence East up the other fork to its source, which heads on the top of the great chain of Rocky Mountains which separates the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Pacific. At or near this place heads the Luchkadee or California Stinking fork, Yellow Stone South fork of Maswri and Henry's fork, all those head at one angular point: that of the Yellow Stone has a large fresh water lake near its head on the very top of the mountain, which is about one hundred by forty miles in diameter, and as clear as crystal. On the South border of this Lake is a number of hot and boiling springs, some of water and others of most beautiful fine clay, resembling a mush pot, and throwing particles to the immense height of from twenty to thirty feet. The clay is of a white, and of a pink color, and the water appears fathomless, as it appears to be entirely hollow underneath. There is also a number of places where pure sulphur is sent forth in abundance. One of our men visited one of these whilst taking his recreation—there at an instant the earth began a tremendous trembling, and he with difficulty made his escape when an explosion took place resembling that of thunder. During our stay in that quarter I heard it every day. From this place by a circuitous route to the North West we returned. Two others and myself pushed on in advance for the purpose of accumulating a few more Beaver, and in the act of passing through a narrow confine in the mountain, we were met plumb in the face by a large party of Blackfeet Indians, who not knowing our number fled into the mountain in confusion: we retired to a small grove of willows; here we made every preparation for battle—after which finding our enemy as much alarmed as ourselves we mounted our horses, which were heavily loaded, and took the back retreat. The Indians raised a tremendous yell, showered down from the mountain top, and almost cut off our retreat. We here put whip to our horses and they pursued us in close quarters until we reached the plains, when we left them behind. On this trip one man was closely fired on by a party of Black-feet; several others were closely pursued.

On this trip I lost one horse by accident and the last spring two by the Utaws, who killed three for the purpose of eating them, one of which was a favourite buffaloe horse. This loss cannot be computed at less than four hundred and fifty dollars. A few days previous to my arrival at this place, a party of about 120 Blackfeet approached the camp & killed a Snake Indian and his Squaw. The alarm was immediately given and the

Snakes, Utaws and whites sallied forth for battle—the enemy fled to the mountain to a small concavity thickly grown with small timber surrounded by open ground. In this engagement the squaws were busily engaged in throwing up batteries and dragging off the dead. There were only six whites engaged in this battle, who immediately advanced within pistol shot and you may be assured that almost every shot counted one. The loss of the Snakes was three killed and the same number wounded; that of the whites, one wounded and two narrowly made their escape; that of the Utaws was none, though they gained great applause for their bravery. The loss of the enemy is not known—six were found dead on the ground: a great number besides were carried off on horses. To-morrow I depart for the west.

SHIP NEWS FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

A letter dated "Sweet Water Lake, July 8th, 1827," received by a gentleman of this city, says,— "Mr. Smith, one of our traders, arrived a few days since, in forty days from the Gulf of California. He has explored the country south of this. He informs us that he was on board of two merchant vessels from Boston—the ship *Courier*, Capt. Cunningham, and a schooner the name of whose master is not recollected. Capt. C was taking in a cargo of hides and tallow. Mr. Smith had been given up for lost. His sufferings were extreme, owing to the vast sandy deserts lying between this place and the gulf."

The same letter gives a *price current* of various articles in the region of the Rocky Mountains. This together with other extracts we shall take advantage of an early opportunity to lay before our reader. On the first page of to-day's paper they will find a letter from the same writer, giving a faithful picture of a Western Hunter's life, in a Western Hunter's unadorned language.

Oct. 19, 1827

The following letter was communicated during "the month of politics," but knowing that no other journalist could anticipate us, we delayed the publication to a convenient season. It comes from a native of Pennsylvania, who, actuated by a spirit of romantic adventure, has left a good mill in Montgomery county, to wander in the wilds of the west.

Sweet Water Lake, July 8th 1827.

Shortly after our arrival last fall in winter quarters, we made preparations to explore the country lying south west of the Great Salt Lake. Having but little or no winter weather, six of us took our departure about the middle of February, and proceeded by forced marches into the country by way of the Utaw Lake—which lies about 80 miles south of the Sweet Water Lake, is thirty miles long and ten broad. It is plentifully supplied with fish, which form the principal subsistence of the Utaw tribe of Indians. We passed through a large swamp of bullrushes, when suddenly the lake presented itself to our view. On its banks were a number of buildings constructed of bullrushes, and resembling muskrat houses. These we soon discovered to be wigwams, in which the Indians remained during the stay of the ice. As there is not a tree within three miles, their principal fuel is bullrushes.

This is a most beautiful country. It is intersected by a number of transparent streams. The grass is at this time from six to twelve inches in height, and in full bloom. The snow that falls, seldom remains more than a week. It assists the grass in its growth, and appears adapted to the climate.

The Utaw lake lies on the west side of a large snowy mountain, which divides it from the Leichadu. From thence we proceeded due south about thirty miles to a small river heading in said mountain, and running from S. E. to S. W. To this I have given the name of Rabbit river, on account of the great number of large black tail rabbits or hares found in its vicinity. We descended this river about fifty miles to where it discharges into a salt lake, the size of which I was not able to ascertain, owing to the marshes which surround it, and which are impassable for man and beast. This lake is bounded on the south and west by low Cedar Mountains, which separate it from the plains of the Great Salt Lake. On the south and east also, it is bounded by great plains. The Indians informed us that the country lying southwest, was impassable for the horses owing to the earth being full of holes. As well as we could understand from their description, it is an ancient volcanic region. This river is inhabited by a numerous tribe of miserable Indians. Their clothing consists of a breech-cloth of goat or deer skin, and a robe of rabbit skins, cut in strips, sewed together after the manner of rag carpets, with the bark of milk weed twisted into twine for the chain. These wretched creatures go out barefoot in the coldest days of winter. Their diet consists of roots, grass seeds, and grass, so you may judge they are not gross in their

habit. They call themselves Pie-Utaws, and I suppose are derived from the same stock.

From this place we took an east course, struck the river near its head, and ascended it to its source. From thence we went east across the snowy mountain above mentioned, to a small river which discharges into the Leichadu. Here the natives paid us a visit and stole one of our horses. Two nights afterwards they stole another, and shot their arrows into four horses, two of which belonged to myself. We then started on our return. The Indians followed us, and were in the act of approaching our horses in open daylight, whilst feeding, when the horses took fright and ran to the camp. It was this that first alarmed us. We sallied forth and fired on the Indians, but they made their escape across the river.

We then paid a visit to the Utaws, who are almost as numerous as the Buffaloe on the prairie, and an exception to all human kind, for their honesty. . . .

There is a poor prospect of making much here, owing to the evil disposition of the Indians and the exorbitant price of goods. For example,

Powder	\$2 50 per lb.
Lead	1 50
Coffee	2 00
Sugar	2 00
Tobacco	2 00
Vermilion	6 00
Beads	5 00
Pepper	6 00
Blankets (three point)	15 00
Cotton Stripe, per yard	2 50
Calico	do.
Scarlet Cloth (coarse) do.	10 00
Blue Cloth (coarse) do.	8 00
Ribband, per yd.	0 75
Brass nails, per dozen	0 50

Horses cost from 150 dollars to 300, and some as high as 500.

To-morrow I start for the *west*, and shall not return under a year, when I expect to start for St. Louis.

Appendix B

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, 1822-1830

1822, Wed., March 6. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

To Enterprising Young Men

The subscriber wishes to engage ONE HUNDRED MEN, to ascend the river Missouri to its sources, there to be employed, for one, two, or three years. For particulars, enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the County of Washington, (who will ascend with, and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.

WM. H. ASHLEY

The same advertisement appeared in the *Missouri Republican* issue of March 27 and in the *Missouri Intelligencer* issue of March 16.

1822, Sat., April 13. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Enterprise. We neglected to notice last week the departure from St. Louis of the expedition for the Missouri Mountains, under the direction of Gen. Ashley and Maj. Wm. Henry. The latter gentleman commands the party, in person, and is well known for his enterprising adventures in the Origon country. The object of this company is to trap and hunt—they are completely equipped, and number about 180 persons. They will direct their course to the three forks of the Missouri, a region it is said, which contains a wealth in *Furs*, not surpassed by the mines of Peru. The party is composed entirely of young men, many of whom have relinquished the most respectable employments and circles of society, for this arduous but truly meritorious undertaking. They will be gone three years, during which time it is contemplated to visit the heads of the different rivers under the Mountains, and perhaps to go as far on the other side as the mouth of the Columbia. *If the government of the United States, influenced by the communications derived from interested individuals, will not listen to the proposition of Mr. Floyd, the enterprise of the Missourians will, in the end, accomplish his great object.*

1822, Tues., April 30. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The article which appeared in the *St. Louis Enquirer* on April 13th is reprinted with the following comment:

The above party arrived in *Franklin* on Thursday last, and have since proceeded on their destination. We wish every success to so arduous an undertaking, & sincerely hope it may be productive of individual gain as well as public advantage.

1822, Mon., June 3. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Unfortunate. We are very sorry to learn by a gentleman who has just arrived, that the boat sent up by Gen. Ashley containing the provisions, ammunition, guns, traps, &c. for the expedition to the Mountains, was sunk in the Missouri river about 20 miles below Fort Osage. The loss is severe, and at this particular time is a misfortune of no slight importance to the company—but we learn that preparations are making to repair the injury, and that every exertion will be used to prevent any delay in the progress of the company to their destination.

This article was reprinted in the *Missouri Intelligencer* issue of June 18.

1822, Wed., June 5. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

A keel boat was lost on the Missouri with property on board worth \$10,000 belonging to Gen. Ashley, a few days ago. She sunk suddenly, after striking a snag, and it was with difficulty that the hands were saved. The boat was freighted for the hunting expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

1822, Tues., Sept. 17. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

From the St. Louis Enquirer

THE FUR TRADE

Since the abolition of the United States' factories, a great activity has prevailed in the operation of this trade. Those formerly engaged in it

have increased their capital and extended their enterprise; firms have engaged in it, and others are preparing to do so. It is computed that a thousand men, chiefly from this place, are now employed in this trade on the waters of the Missouri and half that number on the Upper Mississippi. The Missouri Fur Company, which alone employs upwards of 300 men, have reached the mountains, and will soon be on the Columbia river. Others have the same destination, so that the rich furs of that region will soon cease to be the exclusive property of the Hudson Bay Company. Besides Furs, the Rocky Mountains may produce something else to reward the enterprise of those who penetrate their recesses. They are a continuation of the Andes, which stretch through South America & Mexico, and abound wherever they have been searched, with various minerals, precious stones and gold and silver. The Rocky Mountains were called the *Shining Mountains* by all the early travellers, from their glittering appearance in the sun, occasioned by the peculiar brilliancy of the many stones which are found upon them. A hunter pursuing his game found the silver mines of Potosi, and many others have been discovered by the like accidents, and there is no reason to suppose that other valuable discoveries may not be made.

1822, Tues., Oct. 29. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

First arrival of Furs from the Rocky Mountains. Capt. Perkins, of the Missouri Fur Company, arrived in town this week, with a boat load of furs & peltries worth \$14,000, from the Rocky Mountains. Another parcel belonging to the same company, worth \$10,000, is on the river, and expected to arrive in the week coming. The whole has descended the Yellow Stone River, & must have been transported 3000 miles, to arrive at this place.

In this first adventure (since the revival of the fur trade) to the Rocky Mountains, it is gratifying to learn that no hostilities of any kind have occurred with the Indians, and that present appearances promise great success to the enterprising citizens who are now extending their trade to that remote region.

1823, Thurs., Jan. 16. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

For the Rocky Mountains.

THE subscribers wish to engage One Hundred MEN, to ascend the Missouri, to the

Rocky Mountains,

There to be employed as Hunters. As a compensation to each man fit for such business,

\$200 Per Annum,

will be given for his services, as aforesaid. For particulars, apply to J. V. Garmier, or W. Ashley, at St. Louis. The expedition will set out from this place, on or before the first day of March next.

ASHLEY & HENRY

The same advertisement appeared in the *Missouri Republican* issues of January 22 and March 5 and in the *St. Louis Enquirer* issue of February 1.

1823, Wed., March 12. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Two keel boats belonging to General Ashley left this place on Monday for the Yellow Stone, having on board about 100 men. They have started to join the establishment commenced by that gentleman last year above the mouth of the Yellow Stone, for the purpose of hunting and trapping. If enterprise could command success, it would certainly await upon the exertions of the head of these expeditions. We understand a man fell over board from one of the boats on Monday morning and was drowned.

1823, Wed., March 19. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

From the *Enquirer*. *Afflicting Occurrence*. On Thursday morning last, three men belonging to general Ashley's expedition to the Yellow Stone, were conveying a quantity of powder in a cart to the boats at St. Charles, when fire was communicated to the powder by means of a pipe. The explosion was tremendous and produced a concussion similar to that of a slight earthquake. The men were blown into the air to the height of several hundred feet, and the cart shivered to pieces, and the horses much injured. One of the men survived a few minutes after his descent to the ground; the others were entirely lifeless and burnt in the most

shocking manner. The quantity of powder in the cart before the explosion took place, exceeded three hundred pounds.

1823, Tues., March 25. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

Two keel boats belonging to General Ashley left St. Louis on the ninth for Yellowstone, having on board one hundred men. They have started to join the establishment commenced by that gentleman last year above the Yellowstone for the purpose of hunting and trapping.

1823, Tues., April 1. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The Boats *Rocky Mountain* and *Yellow Stone Packet*, under the command of Gen. Wm. H. Ashley, from St. Louis, for the *mouth of the Yellow Stone River*, arrived here on Wednesday last, on their way up, and departed the next day. These boats have on board about 100 men, who are to join a party of about the same number, which has been for some time at that place, where forts have been erected, and other dispositions made for the security of the company and for prosecuting the fur trade upon an extensive scale. We have many interesting particulars on this subject, which we intend shortly to lay before our readers.

This article was reprinted in the *Missouri Republican* issue of April 20.

1823, Tues., April 8. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

Extract of a letter from the Hon. T. H. Benton, to the Editors.

"The great subject of settling the Columbia river has received a very serious discussion at this session, and has gained ground rapidly on the public sentiment. Many of the most eminent men in Congress have expressed their opinion that a direct intercourse between the Valley of the Mississippi and the East Indies, will be opened by the way of the Missouri & Columbia rivers, and I have no earthly doubt of it myself. Such an event will be a splendid era in the history of the West. Besides facilitating the direct intercourse with Asia, a settlement on the Columbia is necessary to us to save the fur trade of the Rocky Mountains, and to keep the numerous Indians in that quarter from being against us in time of war."

1823, Tues., July 1. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

INDIAN OUTRAGE!

The patrol of one of Gen. Ashley's boats passed this place, on his return to St. Louis, yesterday evening. We learn from one of our citizens, who conversed with him, that the boat, commanded by Gen. Ashley in person, was visited about a hundred and fifty miles above Council Bluffs by a large body of the *Rickaree Indians*, who demanded of Gen. Ashley some remuneration for the lives of two of their warriors who were killed in a skirmish with a party of men belonging to the Missouri Fur Company some time last winter. Gen. Ashley gave them powder and twenty five muskets, which appeared at first to content them; they became dissatisfied however in a short time, and returning to the boat demanded more presents, with a threat that if refused they would attack and kill the crew. Gen. Ashley refused to increase the presents, and told them, with his usual coolness, that they might attack him as soon as they pleased. Accordingly, next morning, as the boat was laying at shore, the Indians commenced the attack, which was sustained with great spirit and gallantry by the crew for upwards of half an hour, when, owing to the exposed situation of the boat, and the overwhelming number of the enemy, they were obliged to cut their cable and retreat. The boat reached Council Bluffs a day or two after the fight. Col. Leavenworth, we are told, immediately sent a detachment of troops against the offenders; we fear, however, that his force is too small to act offensively, as he cannot well spare from the Fort more than two hundred men.

Gen. Ashley had 13 men killed in the conflict; his force we think was about 100. From the nature of the action it was impossible to learn the loss of the Indians, but it must have been far greater. Their force was about two thousand, and their barbarity carried so far, that whenever any one of the crew fell overboard, they immediately swam in and scalped him.

We are apprehensive that this untoward circumstance will prevent Gen. Ashley from carrying his enterprising plans into effect this season, and occasion him considerable pecuniary loss. The public will sincerely sympathise with a man whose efforts in his own behalf seem invariably based on some scheme calculated to promote the general welfare.

1823, Tues., July 8. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The cause of the enmity of the Rickaree Indians towards the whites, and the late attack made by them upon the Yellow Stone expedition, under the command of Gen. Wm. H. Ashley, is said to have originated in a skirmish which took place some time last spring between that nation and a company of fur traders which had received, under its protection two or three of the Sioux, with whom they were then at war. The Rickarees requested that they should be given up—the traders refused; in consequence of which they were attacked by the Rickarees, who were repulsed with the loss of two warriors. This defeat enraged them; they swore vengeance against the Americans, and the fulfilment of the oath was the attack upon the Yellow Stone expedition.

We learn also from a gentleman just from Fort Atkinson, that runners had arrived at that post from Gen. Ashley, with information of his disaster, and that, in consequence, Col. Leavenworth at the head of 250 troops had marched to his assistance three days previous to his departure. These troops, together with those which will meet them from the Yellow Stone, and the small quota which can be furnished by Gen. Ashley (whose number by the skirmish and desertion is said to be reduced to about 30) will possibly form a force of about 350.

In addition to this, it is expected that the Sioux will furnish 500 warriors, which number alone is but 100 short of the whole number of warriors of the Rickaree nation.

Farther particulars

Extract of a letter from Gen. W. H. ASHLEY, to a gentleman in this town, dated

“On board the keel boat *Rocky Mountains*, opposite the mouth of the Shegan River, June 7, 1823.

“As I ascended the river I was informed by some gentlemen of the Missouri Fur Company, that in a recent affray which they had had with a war party of the Rickaree Indians, two of the Indians were killed, and that their conduct during the last winter, had shewn a hostile disposition towards the Americans. I therefore used all the precaution in my power for some days before I reached their towns; not one of them, however, did I see until my arrival there on the 30th of May, when my boats were anchored about the middle of the river. I took with me two men & went on shore, where I was met by some of the principal chiefs, who professed to be very friendly disposed, and requested me to land some goods for the purpose of trading with them. I had just received an express from

Maj. Henry, desiring me to purchase all the horses I could get; consequently I proposed to exchange goods for horses, intending to send a party of forty men by land to the Yellow Stone River. I requested that the principal chiefs of the two towns would first meet me on the sand beach, where there should be a perfect understanding relative to the principles of our barter. After some consultation, the chiefs made their appearance at the place proposed. I then stated to them what I had heard below relative to their conduct, and the impropriety of repeating it. They said they much regretted the affray between some of their nation and the Americans, and confessed that they had been much displeased with us, but that all those angry feelings had left them; that then they considered the Americans their friends, and intended to treat them as such. The next morning I commenced the purchase of horses, and on the evening of the 1st inst. was ready to proceed on my voyage, intending to set out early the next morning. Late in the afternoon an Indian came down with a message to me from the principal chief (the Bear) of one of the towns, requesting that I would come and see him. After some hesitation (as I did not wish to let them know that I apprehended the least danger from them) I went to the lodge of the Chief, where I was treated with every appearance of friendship. The next morning, about half past 3 o'clock, I was informed that Aaron Stephens, one of my men, had been killed by the Indians, and that in all probability the boats would be attacked in a few minutes. The boats were anchored in the stream, about 90 feet from the shore. My party consisted of ninety men, forty of whom had been selected to go by land, and were encamped on the sand beach, to whose charge the horses were entrusted. The men on the beach were placed as near as possible between the two boats. At sunrise the Indians commenced a heavy and well directed fire from a line extending along the picketing of one of their towns, and some broken land adjoining, about six hundred yards in length. Their aim was principally at the men on shore. The fire was returned by us, but, from their advantageous situation, I presume we did but little execution. Discovering the fire to be destructive to the men on shore, the steersmen of both boats were ordered to weigh their anchors and lay their boats to shore; but, notwithstanding every exertion on my part to enforce the execution of the order, I could not effect it—the principal part of the boatmen were so panic struck, that they would not expose themselves in the least. Two skiffs, one sufficient to carry twenty men, were taken ashore for the embarkation of the men, but, from a predetermination

on their part not to give way to the Indians as long as it was possible to do otherwise, the most of them refused to make use of that opportunity of embarking, the large skiff returned with four, two of them wounded, and was immediately started back, but unfortunately one of the oarsmen was shot down, and by some means the skiff set adrift. The other was taken to the opposite side of the river by two men, one mortally wounded, some swam to the boats, others were shot down in the edge of the water and immediately sunk, and others who appeared to be badly wounded sunk in attempting to swim. To describe my feelings at seeing these men destroyed, is out of my power. I feel confident that if my orders had been obeyed I should not have lost five men. From the time the firing commenced, until the surviving part of the men were embarked, was about fifteen minutes, during which the Indians had extended a line at right angles from the one before described, to the point of the sand beach, a distance of about one fourth of a mile. How many of the enemy were killed I cannot tell, but suppose not more than six or eight. Four or five were seen to fall on the beach.

The following are the names of our killed and wounded:

KILLED

John Mathews,
John Collins,
Benjamin F. Sneed,
Thully Piper,
James M^dDaniel,
Joseph S. Gardner,
George Flages,
David Howard,
Aaron Stephens,
James Penn, Jr.
John Miller,
Elliss Ogle.

WOUNDED.

John Larrison,
Joseph Manse,
Reed Gibson (since dead.)
Joseph Thompson,
Robert Tucker,

James Davis,
Aaron Ricketts,
Jacob Miller,
August Dufren,
Hugh Glass,
Daniel M'Clain,
Thilless, (black man.)

"If our government do not send troops on this river, as high as the mouth of the Yellow Stone, or above that place, the Americans must abandon the trade in this country— The Indians are becoming more formidable every year. The Rickarees are about six hundred warriors, three fourths of whom, I think, are armed with London fucils, which carry a ball with considerable accuracy and force—others have bows and arrows, war axes, &c. They are situated in two towns about three hundred yards apart.—Immediately in front of them is a large solid bar, nearly in the shape of a horse-shoe. On the opposite side of the river the ground is very high and commanding, and at the upper end of the bar they have a breastwork made of dry wood. The river there is narrow, and the channel near the south side.

"From the situation of my men and boats, when the men had embarked, I concluded to fall back to the first timber, and place them in a better state of defence, then to proceed on my voyage; but to my great mortification and surprise, I was informed, after my men had been made acquainted with my intentions, that they positively refused to make another attempt to pass the towns, without a considerable reinforcement. I had them paraded, and made known to them the manner in which I proposed fixing the boats and passing the Indian villages. After saying all that I conceived necessary to satisfy them, and having good reason to believe that I should be, with but very few exceptions, deserted in a short time by all my men, as some of them had already formed a resolution to desert, I called on those disposed to remain with me under any circumstances, until I should hear from Maj. Henry, to whom I would send an express immediately, and request that he would descend with all the aid he could spare from his fort at the mouth of the Yellow Stone.—Thirty only have volunteered, among whom are but few boatmen; consequently I am compelled to send one boat back, having secured her cargo here. I am determined to descend no lower until I pass the Rickarees, should it be in my power so to do."

1823, Wed., July 9. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

It will be seen from the following extract from a letter of Gen. Ashley that a very serious misfortune has befallen that gentleman in his enterprising expedition up the Missouri. We have learned from other sources that Col. Leavenworth with two hundred men and a party of the Missouri Fur company, together with some of the Sioux and Sac warriors have set out to avenge this bold insult to the American people.

Note. A short paragraph at bottom of page and the remainder of the page has been cut from the files.

1823, Sat., July 12. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

There was a flying report in town this morning that the balance of Gen. Ashley's unfortunate party was entirely cut off and massacred. We mention the fact merely to contradict it—it is probably a rumour growing out of what has already occurred, and may possibly have been magnified by some person who was not perfectly acquainted with the real circumstances.

FROM COUNCIL BLUFFS

Fort Atkinson, June 15.

Messrs. Ford & Orr—I have just received an express from Gen. Ashley informing me of an attack made upon him by the Rickaree Indians, and requesting immediate assistance. Col. Leavensworth is hastening to succour him with a force of about 300 soldiers and citizens. As this affair is calculated to make some noise, if you should think proper to publish Gen. Ashley's letter please to do it entire I refer you to Governor Clark for a copy.

Yours with respect,
BEN. O'FALLON.

Extract of a letter from Gen. Ashley to Major Ben O'Fallon, dated on board the Keel Boat Rocky Mountains, 25 miles below the Aurickaree Towns—June 4th, 1823:

DEAR SIR,

On the morning of the 2d inst. I was attacked by the Aurickaree Indians, which terminated with great loss on my part. On my arrival

there the 30th of May I was met very friendly by some of the Chiefs, who expressed a great wish that I would stop and trade with them; wishing to purchase horses to take a party of men to the Yellow Stone River, I agreed to comply with their request, and proposed that the Chiefs of the two towns would meet me that afternoon on the sand beach, where the price of horses should be agreed upon. After a long consultation among themselves, they made their appearance at the place proposed. I made them a small present, and proposed to purchase forty or fifty horses; they appeared much pleased, but expressed much regret that a difference had taken place between some of their nation and the Americans, alluding to the affray which recently took place with a party of their men, and some of the Missouri Fur Company, which terminated in the loss of two of the Aurickarees, one of whom was the son of the principal Chief of one of the two towns. They however said that all the angry feelings occasioned by that affray had vanished, and that they considered the Americans as friends and would treat them as such, that the number of horses I wanted would be furnished me for the price offered; the next morning we commenced trading which continued until the evening of the 1st inst. when preparations were made for my departure early the next morning. My party consisted of ninety men, forty of whom were selected to take charge of the horses and cross the country by land to the Yellow Stone; they were camped on the beach within forty yards of the boats; about half past 3 o'clock in the morning I was informed that one of my men had been killed, and in all probability the boats would be immediately attacked. The men were all under arms and so continued until sun rise, when the Indians commenced a heavy and well directed fire from a line extending along the picketing of their towns, and some broken ground adjoining about six hundred yards in length, their shot was principally directed at the men on the beach who were making use of the horses as a breast work. We returned the fire but from the advantageous situation of the Indians did but little execution. Finding their fire very destructive, I ordered the steersmen to weigh their anchors and lay to shore for the purpose of embarking the men, but notwithstanding I used every means in my power to have the order executed, I could not effect it; two skiffs which would carry thirty men were taken ashore, but in consequence of a predetermination on the part of the men on land not to give way to the Indians as long as they could possibly do otherwise, they with the exception of seven or eight would not make use of the skiff when they had an opportunity of doing so.

In about fifteen minutes from the time the firing commenced the surviving part of the men were embarked, nearly all the horses killed and wounded, one of the anchors had been weighed, the cable of the other cut, and the boats dropping down the stream; the boatmen with but few exceptions were so panic struck that it was impossible to get them to expose themselves to the least danger, indeed for some time to move from their seats. I ordered the boats landed at the first timber for the purpose of putting the men and boats in a better situation to pass the Villages in safety; when my intentions were made known, to my surprise and mortification, I was told by the men (with but few exceptions) that under no circumstances would they make a second attempt to pass without a large reinforcement; finding that no arguments that I could use would cause them to change their resolution, I commenced making arrangements for the security of my property; the men proposed that if I would descend the river to this place, and fortify the boats or make any other place for their security, that they would remain with me until I should receive aid from Major Henry, or from some other quarter—I was compelled to agree to the proposition. On my arrival here I found them as much determined to go lower—a resolution had been formed by the most of them to desert. I called for volunteers to remain with me under any circumstances until I should receive the expected aid were thirty only volunteered among them but few boatmen; consequently I am compelled to send one boat back after taking a part of her cargo on board this boat; the balance will be stored at the first fort below. My loss in killed and wounded is as follows:

KILLED,
 John Mathews,
 John Collins,
 Aaron Stephens,
 James M'Daniel,
 Westley Piper,
 George Flager,
 Benjamin F. Sneed,
 James Penn, jr.
 John Miller,
 John S. Gardner,
 Ellis Ogle,
 David Howard, 12

WOUNDED,
 Reed Gibson, since dead
 Joseph Monso,
 John Larrison,
 Abraham Ricketts,
 Robert Tucker,
 Joseph Thompson,
 Jacob Miller,
 David M'Clane,
 Hugh Glass,
 Auguste Dufrain,
 Willis (blackman) 11

Another of the wounded men has since died, making in all 14 dead.

I do not conceive but two of the wounded in danger; how many of the Indians were killed I am at a loss to say, I think not more than 7 or 8—four or five were seen to fall on the beach. I have thought proper to communicate this affair to you as early as opportunity offered, believing that you would feel disposed to make these people account to the government for the outrage committed. Should that be the case and a force sent for that purpose in a short time, you will oblige me much if you will send me an express at my expence, if one can be procured that I may meet and cooperate with you. From the situation of the Indian Towns, it will be difficult for a small force to arrest them without a six pounder, the towns are newly picketed in with timber from 6 to 8 inches thick, twelve or fifteen feet high, dirt in the inside thrown up about eighteen inches high, they front the river and immediately in front of them is a large sand bar forming nearly two thirds of a circle at the head of which (when the river is very narrow) they have a breast work made of dry wood, the ground on the opposite side of the river is high and commanding, they have about six hundred warriors. I suppose that three fourths of them are armed with London Fuzees, others with bows and arrows, war axes, &c.

I expect to hear from Major Henry, to whom I sent an express, in twelve or fifteen days, during that time I shall remain between this place and Aurickaree towns, not remaining any length of time in one place as my force is small, not more than twenty three effective men.

Your friend & ob't. serv't.

WM. H. ASHLEY.

On board the boat that descends are five wounded men; any assistance that you can afford them I will feel under obligation to you for.

W. H. A.

1823, Wed., July 16. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

A report was in town yesterday that a party of the Missouri Fur Company returning from their winter hunt near the mountains, was attacked about 10 miles from the Crow Village by a body of Black Feet Indians. They were passing a narrow defile in the mountains, a small party attacked them in front and rear, while the rest threw down stones from the mountains; the two leaders, Messrs. Robert Jones and Immell were shot down first, the men finding themselves without a commander took to flight and were cut to pieces by the Indians. The company had about

25 packs of beaver, horses, mules, traps &c. the loss of the company not mentioning Immell & Jones, two of the best traders of the Missouri is very great. Mr. Wm. Gordon who was also of the party, had been sent on before to hunt, and the Indians let him pass them, he travelled about 600 miles alone through a trackless descent & arrived in safety at Fort Mandan.

This statement depends on the assertions of a man lately arrived from Ashley & Henry's expedition; and its accuracy is doubted by those best acquainted with the subject.

1823, Wed., July 16. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

By a letter received in town from one of Gen. Ashley's expedition we are informed that a man by the name of *Mike Fink* well known in this quarter as a great marksman with the rifle, and is the same who some-time since, in this place shot off a negro's heel to enable him, as he said, to "wear a *genteel* boot," was engaged in his favorite amusement of shooting a tin cup from off the head of another man, when aiming too low, or from some other cause shot his companion in the forehead and killed him. Another man of the expedition (whose name we have not heard) remonstrated against Fink's conduct, to which he, Fink replied, that he would kill him likewise, upon which the other drew a pistol and shot Fink dead upon the spot.

1823, Tues., July 22. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

One of the boats which started with troops, cannon, &c. from Council Bluff, to the assistance of Gen. Ashley, was lost on the 3d inst.—Seven men were drowned, and two eight pounders lost in this unfortunate occurrence.

Col. Leavenworth immediately sent back to Fort Atkinson for a reinforcement.

1823, Tues., July 29. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

Another Indian Outrage.—The report in circulation in the early part of the week, respecting a defeat of a party of the Missouri Fur Company, under Messrs. Immel and Jones, by the Blackfoot Indians, turns out to

be but too true. We have been furnished with the following letter from Maj. O'Fallon to Gov. Clark, which, with other important information, gives an account of this really unfortunate occurrence.—*St. Louis Enquirer*.

FORT ATKINSON,

3d July, 1823.

DEAR SIR.—How painful for me to tell, and you to hear, of the barbarity of the Indians. They continue to deceive, and murder the most enterprising of our people, and if we continue to forbear, if we do not soon discover a greater spirit of resentment, this river will be discoloured with our blood.

The defeat of Gen. Ashley by the A'Rickarees, and departure of the troops to his relief, had scarcely gone to you, when an express arrived, announcing the defeat by the Blackfoot Indians, near the Yellow Stone river, of the Missouri Fur Company's Yellow Stone or Mountain expedition, commanded by Messrs. Jones and Immel, both of whom, with five of their men, are amongst the slain—All of their property to the amount of about \$15,000 fell into the hands of the enemy.

To add to Gen. Ashley's catalogue of misfortunes, the Blackfoot Indians have recently defeated a party of eleven and killed four of Major Henry's men, near his establishment, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone river.—The express goes on to state, "that many circumstances (of which I will be apprised in a few days,) have transpired to induce a strong belief, *that the British traders, (Hudson Bay Company) are exciting the Indians against us, either to drive us from that quarter, or reap with the Indians the fruits of our labour.*"

I was in hopes that the British traders had some bounds to their rapacity—I was in hopes that during the late Indian War, in which they were so instrumental in the indiscriminate massacre of our people, they had become completely satiated with our blood, but it appears not to have been the case.—Like the greedy wolf, not yet gorged with the flesh, they guard over the bones—they ravage our fields, and are unwilling that we should glean them—although barred by the treaty of Ghent, from participating in our Indian trade, they presume and are not satisfied to do so, but, becoming alarmed at the individual enterprise of our people, they are exciting the Indians against them. They furnish them with the instruments of Hell, and a passport to Heaven—the instruments of death, and a passport to our bosoms.

Immel had great experience of the Indian character, but poor fellow, with a British passport, they at last deceived him, and he fell a victim to

his own credulity, and his scalp, with those of his murdered comrades, is now bleeding on its way to some of the Hudson establishments.

Another of Gen. Ashley's wounded men is dead, making 15 men killed, by the A'Rickarees, and eleven by the Blackfoot—in all known to have been killed by the Indians within the last two or three months, 26 effective men, and I estimate the amount of property actually lost in the several conflicts at \$20,000, besides a great number of horses, &c.

The Ottoes, Missouris, Omahas, and Panis, have been to see me already, and as usual profess great friendship, &c. but, with the rest of the neighboring tribes are anxiously looking and listening to know how we, (the Americans) are going to get out of this scrape.

I am still in bad health, and almost despair of recovering, during my stay here.

I am at this moment interrupted by the arrival of an express from the Military expedition, with a letter from Mr. Pilcher, whom you know is at the head of the Missouri Fur Company on this river, in which he says, "I have but a moment to write. I met an express from the Mandans, bringing me very unpleasant news—the flower of my business is gone. My *Mountainers* have been defeated, and the Chiefs of the party both slain—the party attacked by three or four hundred Blackfoot Indians, in a position on the Yellow Stone river, where nothing but defeat could be expected. Jones and Immel, and five men were killed. The former it is said fought most desperately. Jones killed two Indians, and in drawing his pistol to kill a third, he received two spears in his breast. Immel was in front; he killed one Indian, and was cut to pieces. I think we lose at least \$15,000. I will write you more fully between this and the Souix."

Jones was a gentleman of cleverness. He was for several years a resident of St. Louis, where he has numerous friends to deplore his loss. Immel has been a long time on this river, first an officer in the United States Army, since an Indian trader of some distinction—in some respects, he was an extraordinary man—he was brave, uncommonly large, and of muscular strength—when timely apprised of his danger, a host within himself.—The express left the Military expedition on the 1st. when all was well.

With great respect,

Your most obt. Serv't.

BEN. O'FALLON,

U.S. Agt. for Ind. Affairs.

Gen. Wm. Clark,
Supt. Ind. Affairs, St. Louis.

1823, Wed., August 6. *Philadelphia National Gazette*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

On the 2d June, General Ashley, commanding a part of the Missouri Fur Company, and ascending the Missouri river with ninety men was attacked at the Ricaree villages by several hundred Ricaree warriors armed with London fusils. Twelve of his men were killed and eleven wounded. He had just completed a barter with the Indians, of goods for horses, and was treated with every appearance of friendship until, about sun rise, "they commenced a heavy and well directed fire" upon a band of forty of his men whom he had selected to accompany him to the Yellow Stone river by land, and who were encamped on the sand beach, in charge of the horses obtained by the barter.—He was obliged to fall back to a place where he could await in safety aid from Major Henry at the Yellow Stone river, to whom he sent an express.

The *Kentucky Gazette* of the 24th ult. says, that Colonel Leavensworth, commander at the Council Bluffs, had gone against the Ricaree towns with 200 of the United States troops, a party of the Fur Company, and about 500 friendly Indians. "This force," observes the *Gazette* "is sufficient to destroy the enemy, and no doubt they will be punished in the severest manner. . . . Last winter a difference arose between a hunting party and the same tribe, in which two Indians were killed. This nation had traded heretofore with the British North West Company, and have no doubt imbibed unfriendly feelings against the citizens of the United States." General Ashley, in his account of their attack upon him, says—

"A constant fire was kept up by us, but from the advantageous situation of the Indians but little execution by it was done. Five or six Indians were seen to fall on the sand-beach, I suppose they lost six or eight killed. The situation of their towns, numbers, arms &c. makes them a formidable enemy to traders ascending the river. Their two towns are situated immediately in front of a large sand bar around which boats are obliged to pass, forming nearly a quarter or two-thirds of a circle, with a diameter of a half mile, partly covered near the water's edge, at the upper part of the bar they have a breast work made of dry timber. The ground on the opposite side of the river about half way round the sand beach is from 12 to 20 feet above the surface of the water, the balance of the way, high broken hills and the river very narrow. They are about six hundred warriors. I think about three fourths of them are armed with London Fuzils that carry a ball with great accuracy and force, and which they use with as much experience as any men I ever saw handle arms, those that have not guns use bows and arrows, war axes," &c.

1823, Sat., August 23. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We understand, that official information has been received at the Head quarters of this department, that a Mr. *Immel* and a Mr. *Jones*, two enterprising men, placed by the Missouri Fur Company, in charge of a party of some 35 or 40 trappers and hunters, have, with five of their men, been lately killed by the *Black Feet Indians*, on the Big Horn, a branch of the Yellow Stone River; and 15000 dollars worth of Beaver and many horses, belonging to the party captured by those Indians. A party of Indians of the same tribe have also cut off 11 men, belonging to a trapping company of 100 men, stationed last summer at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, by GEN. ASHLEY, and 5 or 6000 dollars worth of Beaver taken from them.

Gen. Ashley, of whom we speak, is the same gentleman who was attacked and defeated in June last, by the Recare Indians. He is, we understand, one of the most enterprising of our citizens, & at present Lieut. Governor of the state of Missouri.

These outrages of the Missouri Indians, call for exemplary punishment by the government, which will no doubt be promptly attended to.

If the views of the Executive had not been arrested by the Congress of the winter of 1819-20, resolving that it was inexpedient to send troops higher up than the Council Bluffs, the outrages now complained of would have been obviated.

To maintain our influence over the numerous and warlike tribes of Indians, on the head waters of the Missouri, Yellow Stone and Arkansas Rivers, it is necessary that we should protect our trading companies in those districts; so that a part from the very great advantages of a pecuniary and commercial character, that the citizens of the U.S. are now enjoying, and which are susceptible of an increase to a very great extent, the security of the frontier settlements imperiously demands a force which shall not only be able to punish aggressions of this kind, but be sufficient to overawe their predatory & savage propensities. We are averse from the exercise of unnecessary rigor towards these our savage neighbors as the most rigid moralist can be; but the question is resolved into this, whether the United States shall enjoy the trade, and shall maintain the confidence and respect of these nations, or shall these advantages be transferred to the people and government of another nation, always heretofore disposed to abuse this confidence, and to cultivate the treacherous, blood-thirsty and predatory habits of savage life? Com-

mercial policy, the rights, interests and safety of our citizens, the benevolent principles of our government, as displayed towards the Indians, and the present security and future improvements of the Indians themselves, alike forbid it.—*Louisville Post*.

1823, Tues., August 26. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

From the Upper Missouri.—We learn by a later arrival that Gen. Ashley and Col. Leavenworth had formed a junction a short distance below the Aurickarees, and that their united forces amounted to upwards of four hundred men. No time was lost in pushing the expedition, and our informant tells us by the 10th of this month a decisive blow will have been struck upon 'Rees. It is supposed that few or none will escape, as they will be surrounded on every side by the forces of the expedition. A large auxilliary body of Sioux is under the orders of Col. Leavenworth. [*Enquirer*.

1823, Tues., Sept. 16. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The following interesting information from the *Upper Missouri* was received by express on our last publication day, a few hours after the issuing of the paper; for the dissemination of which an extra sheet was immediately published. We have thought proper, however, to give it a place in this day's paper, that those who have not heretofore had the opportunity of seeing it may now be gratified.

The report of the death of Gen. Ashley is probably without foundation, as we have seen and conversed with several persons, since arrived here from Fort Atkinson, who state, that although such a rumor prevailed when they left there yet it could not be traced; and no credence was given to it by the officers at that post.

It is already known to our readers that, in consequence of the defeat of General Ashley and his party, by the Aurickarees, Colonel Leavenworth, the commandant at Fort Atkinson, moved promptly with the whole disposable force under his command, to protect the General in his ascent of the river, and to chastise the Indians for their daring outrage. He embarked at Fort Atkinson on the 22d of June, with six companies of United States troops, amounting to about 250 men. At Cedar Fort, about 350 miles above Fort Atkinson, he was joined by 400 Sioux

Indians, who pretended to be friends, and about 150 miles below the Aurickarees village received a reinforcement of about sixty of the men attached to the Yellow Stone expedition.

The Sioux being mounted proceeded by land, whilst the whites continued to ascend by water, until within about a day's march of the hostile villages. Here the troops were disembarked, with the exception of a sufficient number to each boat to conduct it forward.

On the march towards the villages, the Sioux preceded our troops, and had frequent skirmishes with scouting parties of the Aurickarees, in which 15 of the latter were killed.

When within a few miles of the enemies' position, the troops halted to await the arrival of the boats, in order that they might disembark the artillery attached to the expedition (which consisted of two six-pounders and a howitzer) and also to strengthen their party by the accession of the boats' crews.

On the night of the 9th of August, our troops took up their position almost within sight of the enemies' defences. On the morning of the 10th they proceeded against the villages—two in number—one called the *upper*, the other the *lower* village. The distance between them we have not ascertained.

Two companies under the command of Capt. Bennet Riley were assigned to the attack of the upper village. The remainder of the forces, commanded by Col. Leavenworth in person, directed their operations against the lower one. The attack was commenced at a short distance, and the artillery directed against the lower village did great execution. Against the upper village, it is understood, that the operations were less effective, the situation of the ground affording no advantage of position.

The enemy, it is understood, evinced great spirit in their defence for a considerable time, but as defeat was inevitable they eventually hoisted a white flag in token of surrender.

The firing having ceased, the Chiefs of the Aurickarees, came out with presents of Buffaloe robes, and other tokens of submission and sued for peace. They were received by Col. Leavenworth and his officers. Terms were agreed on with which we have not yet become acquainted, and the Col. prepared to withdraw the American troops. Previously to his doing so, the villages of the late enemy were visited, and were found to be totally evacuated—not an individual remaining except an old squaw. By order of Col. L. provisions & water were placed within her reach, to last until her own people might return.

On the 15th our troops re-embarked and commenced their descent, to Fort Atkinson. When they had proceeded but a few miles, they discovered that both the Aurickaree villages were on fire. This event excited great pain in the breast of the Col. as it was against his orders and wishes. Little doubt is entertained that it was the act of two members of the Missouri fur company, the only persons known to have been left in the villages.

During the conflict our auxiliaries, the Sioux, behaved ill. Instead of joining in the conflict and supporting our troops, they were, during the battle, engaged in plundering the corn fields of the enemy. Having loaded themselves with this species of plunder, they stole all the horses belonging to the U.S. troops, and ten of those belonging to Gen. Ashley's company and made a precipitate movement—no one knows whither.

We have the satisfaction to state, that on our side, none were killed, and only two wounded. The enemy lost about 100.

The same express tells us, that a day or two before he left Fort Atkinson, a rumor prevailed there, brought by a French trader from the upper country, that a few days after the descent of our troops, our worthy and highly respected fellow-citizen, General Ashley, was killed by the Indians. We most sincerely wish that this report may prove altogether unfounded, and in this, almost the entire population of the state will join with us.

1823, Fri., Sept. 19. *Detroit Gazette*. Detroit, Michigan.

The *St. Louis Republican* of July 25, contains a letter from Benjamin O'Fallon, U.S. agent for Indian affairs, dated Fort Atkinson July 3, which confirms the news published last week, of the murder of Immell and Jones and their party, by the Blackfoot Indians—Property of the amount of \$15,000, fell into their hands.

Mr. O'Fallon says, "to add to General Ashley's catalogue of misfortunes, the Blackfoot Indians have recently defeated a party of eleven and killed four of Major Henry's men, near his establishment at the mouth of the Yellow Stone river." The express (furnishing the intelligence) goes on to state, "that many circumstances (of which I will be apprised) have transpired to induce a strong belief, that the British traders (Hudson Bay Company) are exciting the Indians against us, either to drive us from that quarter, or reap with the Indians the fruits of our labor."

Immell, it is said, was much experienced in the Indian character; but he was deceived at last with a British passport. He was formerly an officer in the Army, and since an Indian trader. In the engagement he cut an Indian into pieces. Jones was a resident in St. Louis, and was much esteemed. He fought desperately, and killed two Indians, and drawing his pistol to kill a third, two spears pierced his breast.

Twenty-six of General Ashley's men have been killed by the Indians, within the last two or three months; and the amount of property lost in the different conflicts is about \$20,000, besides a great number of horses.

A letter has also been received in St. Louis from Major Foster, commanding at Fort Atkinson, giving intelligence of the loss, on the 4th of July, of one of the transport boats, conveying Col. Leavenworth's party on their expedition from Fort Atkinson against the Aurickaree Indians. Lieut. Wickliffe, a sergeant, and six men were drowned. Lieut. W. had been in the army four years; he was from Lexington, Ky.

The recruits who left Philadelphia, some time since, destined for Fort Atkinson, have arrived at St. Louis. The officers accompanying them are Capt Fowle, Lieutenants M'Cabe, Mitchell, Rogers, Vinton, and Lagnell.

1823, Wed., Sept. 24. *National Intelligencer*. Washington, D.C.

North Western Indians—The following Letter gives an interesting view of the state of things in the Indian country, the more to be relied upon because from an official and respectable source. It is the more interesting at this moment, when we are in expectation of hearing of a battle between Col. LEAVENWORTH'S party and the Indians. The last accounts left the Colonel within a hundred miles of the Arickarees; and, if they should retire before our troops to the Mandans, as they had been invited to do, we hear it was the intention of Col. LEAVENWORTH, regardless of this addition to their strength, to pursue them even there.

Copy of a letter from Mr. J. Pilcher, partner of the Missouri Fur Company, to Maj. B. O'Fallon, Indian Agent at Council Bluffs.

Fort Recovery, Upper Missouri,)

July 5, 1823.)

DEAR SIR: From the following extract of a letter from Mr. Gordon, a young gentleman in the service of the Missouri Fur Company, and

attached to our Mountaineers, you will see that they have been defeated, and the chiefs of the expedition, (Mr. Inmell and Mr. Jones,) have both been slain. The extract from Mr. Keemie's letter will show the disposition and feelings of the Mandans and Gros-ventres, produced by the late success of the Ricarees against Gen. Ashley; and the whole will, I hope, tend to show the importance of Col. Leavenworth's expedition against the Ricarees. If protection to the commerce of the Missouri be the object of our government, this would seem to be the accepted time; a decisive blow is indispensable for the safety of every white man on the river above the Council Bluffs, and even to the troops stationed at that post. But I need not dwell upon this subject: you know too well the importance of the movement.

The following is an extract from Mr. Gordon's letter, dated at

Fort Vanderburg, Mandan and)
Gros-venters Villages, June 15, 1823.)

DEAR SIR: It becomes my unpleasant duty to inform you of the defeat of our party, by the Blackfoot Indians, and of the dire consequences of the same.

After penetrating to the Three Forks of the Missouri in the spring, although we found that country almost entirely trapt out by the Indians, we succeeded, by the greatest perseverance, in taking about—packs of Beaver. On the 16th of May, having reached the upper Three Forks of Jefferson river, and finding no Beaver in that quarter, we commenced a retrograde march for the Yellow Stone.

On the second day, we fell in with a party of thirty-eight Blackfoot Indians. They came up boldly and smoked and remained with us during that night, making every profession of friendship; and in the morning, after making them presents of such articles as we could spare, they parted with us apparently well satisfied; having first invited us to come and establish at the mouth of the Maria river, as they said they had been informed was our intention. They were in possession of every information in regard to the boats being at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and of their determination to ascend the Missouri to the Falls. This information must have been derived from the *British traders, who have, most probably, instigated them to commit this outrage*, and by them no doubt from some faithful correspondent at St. Louis. We did not suffer ourselves, however, to be lulled into false ideas of security by their friendly professions, but commenced a direct and precipitate retreat from the country, keeping out a strict guard every night, and using every possible vigilance at all

times. This party of thirty eight had returned to their village, which was very close, and recruited to the number of between three and four hundred men; these had intercepted us on the Yellow Stone where they arrived two days before us—they lay in ambush for us on the side of a steep hill, the base of which was washed by the river along which we had to pursue the intricate windings of a Buffaloe trace among the rocks, trees, &c. by means of which they had secreted themselves. At this place the men were of course much scattered for a considerable distance, as two horses could not pass abreast. At this unfortunate moment, and under circumstances so disadvantageous, they rushed upon us with their whole force, pouring down from every quarter. Messrs. Immell and Jones fell early in the engagement. A conflict thus unequal could not long be maintained. The result was the loss of five other men killed, four wounded, the entire loss of all our horses and equipage, traps, and beaver, and everything. The balance of the party succeeded in escaping, by making a [] crossing the Yellow Stone. This took place on the 31st of May, just below the mountains on the Yellow Stone. Not knowing to what extent the loss of the horses, traps, &c. might affect any future plan of operation, I came with all possible expedition to this place to acquaint you with the circumstance. I left Mr. Keemle and the party near the mouth of Pryor's Fork, making skin canoes to bring down the fall's hunt. Four of Mr. Henry's men have also been killed near the falls. *It appears from information derived from the Blackfeet themselves, that the British have two trading houses in their country on the American Territory, and from some Snake Indians we learned that they have served on the South Fork of the Columbia—something decisive should be done. Believe me to be your sincere friend.*

WM. GORDON

From the foregoing letter you will perceive that the commerce of the Missouri, under existing circumstances, however valuable, is truly precarious. This our second adventure to the mountains, had surpassed my most sanguine expectations; success had been complete and my views fulfilled in every respect. Mr. Immell and Mr. Jones had conducted these expeditions with the greatest skill and ability, and proved themselves worthy of my confidence. The loss of property is severely felt. Yet it is little compared to the loss of those valuable men to whom I stand indebted for the accomplishment of my views.—In consequence of their late departure last summer from Council Bluffs, it became necessary for them to confine their operations last Fall to the Yellow Stone and its

tributary waters, and winter at the mouth of the *Big Horn*. The party originally consisted of forty-three persons, including themselves and Messrs. Gordon and Keemle, two young gentlemen attached to the expedition, and to whom I am much indebted for their activity in bringing off the remainder of the party, and securing the property which had been left on the Yellow Stone. At the time the expedition moved to the three forks early in the Spring, the party had been reduced to thirty; a part of the men having deserted their wintering post at the Big Horn, with these they penetrated the country, as mentioned in Mr. Gordon's letter. I am happy to say their defeat is not to be attributed to negligence, mistaken confidence of their own ability, or of the good will of the Indians. Three hours more would have taken them to the Crow nation, where they would have been perfectly secure, this tribe being at war with the Blackfoot and much attached to the whites. But the Blackfeet had marked their route, they knew the country and advantages of the position selected by them for the attack; there they intercepted them and awaited their arrival—nothing but defeat could be expected under such circumstances, and it is wonderful how any should escape from such an overwhelming force when attacked in such an unfavorable position—many circumstances justify the opinions expressed in Mr. Gordon's letter, which I will hereafter relate, time will not allow me to do so at present.

Mr. Keemle arrived at the Mandans in a short time after Mr. Gordon left him on the Yellow Stone, and in a letter to me under date of 10th of the present month, he expressed himself as follows: "Permit me, sir, here to remark, that the present affair with the Ricarees is the subject of daily conversation with the Gros ventres and Mandans; and I am of opinion, from many remarks made by the principal men of both nations, that much of the future welfare and interest of persons engaged in the business of the Missouri depends upon the course of conduct pursued towards that band of savage villains." In another letter from him of the 11th instant, he gives me the following information: "A council was held by the Mandans on the 10th inst. in which they have determined to send for the Ricarees to enter their village, in order to protect them (as they say) from the whites. A similar proposition was made to the Gros-ventres by the former nation, but they shut their ears against it."

The Aricarees opened a fire upon the men who came express with those letters, and continued it till they had got beyond their reach, though they did not succeed in hurting either of them. From these circumstances you may suppose that the future conduct and disposition of all

those upper tribes, even the Sioux, depends much on the steps taken in relation to the Arickarees.

There are many opinions respecting the course the Aricarees will take; my own impressions are, that they will not abandon their villages, but will await the arrival of the expedition and give us battle: many things induce a belief that they will not attempt to go to the Mandans for protection: about twelve days will decide it. The expedition left this place early this morning.

I am, dear sir, &c.

JOSHUA PILCHER

Major B. O'Fallon,
U. S. Indian Agent.

This article was reprinted in the *St. Louis Enquirer* issue of October 25.

1823, Tues., Sept. 30. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

"THE MOUNTAIN FIGHT"

The following interesting particulars respecting the late attack of the Black Foot Indians on a party of the Missouri Fur Company, under Immel and Jones, have been communicated to us for publication.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Joshua Pilcher, acting partner, Missouri Fur Company on the Missouri—Received by Major Thomas Hempstead, acting partner at St. Louis.

It is painful to me, to inform you of the defeat of the "*Mountaineers*." At the time they were defeated (on their return from the Three Forks of the Missouri,) they had in all 52 packs of beaver, their spring hunt not being over. You see our most sanguine hopes would have been realized—The party after penetrating to the three forks, found some disappointment, as that country, which once abounded in beaver beyond any thing ever seen, has been trapped by the Black Feet—Yet, by great exertions there, they had made about 20 packs of beaver—they had made good their retreat from that country after meeting the first party of Black Feet, crossed the last range of mountains, and were within 10 miles of the Crow Village; four miles would have secured them, but fortune

frowned, and they were defeated—A party of Black Feet Indians, consisting of between three and four hundred, had concealed themselves in the side of some cliffs adjoining the Yellow Stone which commanded a narrow and difficult pass—The party were necessarily scattered in disorder, as only a single man could pass thro' at the same time. There were only 29 whites (of our party) thus situated against this overwhelming force—The Indians did not show themselves until the rear of our party had entered this pass, when they rushed furiously upon them from every rock and brush—knowing Immel and Jones, their chief aim was first to kill them—an Indian supposed to be one of their principals then rushed boldly upon Immel, covering himself with his shield; Immel by a well discharged shot, brought him down; his gun was hardly empty, when he was literally cut to pieces; about 33 Indians fired and rushed upon him at the same instant—but immediately after the Indians gave way. Jones seized the moment, and although he had received two severe wounds rallied and assembled his men, and collected the scattered horses, and was pressing forward with some prospect of success to pass the defile, and gain the river plain, but the Indians rushed upon them again with great fury, they mangled the whites with lances, battle axes—scalping knives—and every weapon used by Indians. Jones, lanced on every side, fell.—Mr. Gordon being cut off from the main party, none remained but Mr. Keemle and the surviving men.—Nothing but defeat under such circumstances could be looked for, and how so many of them escaped, is indeed wonderful. There were five men killed besides Immel and Jones, four wounded, every thing lost, say at least \$12,000: The surviving party reached the Crows the same day, Mr. Gordon & one man came by land to the Mandans. Mr. Keemle made skin canoes, raised the CACHE, (the hidden beaver) which was their fall hunt, about 32 packs—and has arrived at the GROSVENTS, (Indians.)

At last advices Mr Keemle and party had arrived safely at the Mandans from whence no fear is entertained of their getting to St. Louis, with their fur.

1823, Tues., Sept. 30. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The following is a copy of a summary order of Col. Leavenworth to the troops under his command, upon his arrival at Fort Atkinson, from the expedition against the Aurickaree Indians.

[*Copy.*]

Head Qrs. 6th Inf.)

FORT ATKINSON

August 29, 1823.)

No. 145. *Orders.*

The Col. Com'g. is happy to announce to his command that the objects of the late expedition against the Aurickaree Indians, have been effected. The blood of our countrymen has been honorably avenged, the Aurickarees humbled, and in such a manner as will teach them and the Indian tribes to respect the American name and character. In effecting these objects the duties which have been performed by every part of the Regt' as well by those left at this post, as those who ascended the river, have been arduous in the extreme, but those duties have been performed with a zeal, cheerfulness, and efficiency which is highly honorable to them, and which entitles them to the approbation of their country.—When all have done well, and all have been zealous to contribute their whole and entire power to promote the public service, it is as delicate as it is difficult to mention individual instances, but that the combination of circumstances has enabled some to perform more than others cannot be doubted.

The Col. Com'g. has been highly gratified with the promptness & alacrity manifested by Major Wooley and Brevet Maj. Ketchum, in joining the expedition, and equally so with their conduct subsequently.

The efficiency of Capt. Armstrong's company, and the energies of his men, have been preserved in an eminent degree. The Captain has manifested his usual skill in the management of his company, and has given every reason to place the greatest confidence in the physical strength and force of his company—In this respect he has satisfied his Com'g. officer.

With Capt. Riley the Colonel Com'g. has been highly pleased.—He has been skilfull, discreet and successful in the management of his men, and the boat and public property committed to his charge.—His efficiency and promptness in the execution of orders has been conspicuous and honorable to him.

Doctor Gale has not only performed his duty to the entire satisfaction of the commandant but he has done more. He has frequently volunteered his services to perform important duties, and particularly in saving the property in the large boat, when she was sunk by a severe storm at night, he effected much, and that in a manner highly gratifying to all who knew the circumstances.

Although Lt. Wickliffe had the misfortune to loose the boat which was committed to his charge, it has been evident that his zeal for the good of the public service, has been equal to that of any other gentleman with the expedition.

In every situation in which Lt. Bradley has been placed he has given entire satisfaction, and would no doubt had he been put to a more severe trial.

To the gentlemen of the Staff generally the Commandant returns his thanks.

Lieut. Cruger has performed the duties of Qr. Master, and Ass't Com's'y in the most correct and acceptable manner, and in addition rendered important service by volunteering his services as an extra adjutant to the Missouri Legion during our operations.

Lieut. Noel in discharging the duty of adjutant has given the most entire satisfaction, and the fullest evidence of his ability to perform still more important services.

It has fallen to the lot of Lt. Morris to perform the most important duties, and he has done so in a manner which cannot be too highly commended.

When our boats were lost, and much of our ammunition either lost or damaged in a great decree, we found it replaced and well prepared by the activity and attention of Lt. Morris and that too without delaying the expedition a single hour.

The Lieutenant's management and direction of the artillery would have done honor to a "Master of the trade." The men who were attached to the artillery have deserved notice, and the approbation of their country.—They have that of the Col Com'g. in a high degree particularly Sergeants Lathrop and Perkins, the former of whom with one of the six pounders made very superior shots.

The Colonel Com'g. cannot dismiss this subject without again mentioning his very great satisfaction with the gallant and honorable conduct of General Ashley, and hardy little corps of Mountainers. Although for several days entirely destitute of subsistence, they persevered in noble daring without a murmur.

The Col. Com'g. only regrets that he can offer them nothing more substantial than his thanks.

[Signed]

H. LEAVENWORTH,
Col. U. S. Army Com'g.

1823, Mon., October 6. *National Intelligencer*. Washington, D. C.

OFFICIAL.

Head Quarters, Western Department,
Louisville, Ken. Sept. 21, 1823

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, herewith, for the information of the General-in-Chief, a copy of a letter from Col. H. Leavenworth, reporting the handsome and honorable result of the late expedition against the Ricaras Indians, numbered 1, with a copy of a treaty of peace with that nation, No. 2.

I have directed Gen. Atkinson to take measures to ascertain the temper and disposition of the Sioux, and their motives for abandoning our troops at a time when their presence and aid were most wanted. I have also directed him to keep an eye upon Ricaras, as well as the Mandans; and to make his arrangements with a view to the chastisement of the Black-foot Indians, early in the next spring or summer. As this measure appears to be indispensably necessary, to secure our citizens in that quarter, I trust that the 1st regiment will be permitted to take post at Council Bluffs, in November next.

Respectfully, I have the honor to be,
E. P. GAINES, Maj. Gen.

To the Adjutant General,
Head Quarters, 6th Regt. }
Fort Atkinson, Aug. 30, 1823. }

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that the troops who lately visited the Ricara Towns returned to this post on the 27th last.

We arrived before the Ricara Towns on the 9th of the present month. The Sioux Indians, who were with us, were met by the Ricaras a short distance from their towns, and a skirmish took place between them. The Ricaras maintained their ground, or rather, drove the Sioux back, until the regular troops and General Ashley's men arrived and formed their line. The Ricaras were then immediately driven into their towns. The Sioux were so much sentered in front of the troops that the latter were unable to deliver their fire, without killing some of the Sioux, and therefore did not fire.

Our boats arrived subsequently during the evening of the 9th, and our artillery was disembarked.

On the morning of the 10th, Captain Riley with a company of Riflemen, and Lieut. Headley, with a company of Infantry, were ordered to take possession of a hill above the upper village. They immediately took a position there within one hundred steps from the town and in a situation that screened them from the fire of the enemy from the towns. At the same moment Lt. Morris, with one six pounder, and a five & half inch howitzer, commenced an attack on the lower town. Sergeant Perkins with one six pounder, was ordered to report to Mr. Vanderburg of the Missouri Fur Company. This six pounder was placed above the upper village. A brisk fire was continued on the towns until three o'clock in the afternoon. The Sioux were, in the mean time, busily engaged in gathering and carrying off the corn of the Ricaras.

At 8 o'clock Maj. Ketchum was also ordered to the upper village with his company.

Between 3 and 4 o'clock the six pounder and the troops opposed to the upper village, were withdrawn, and our whole force concentrated below the lower village, and the troops ordered to form for the purpose of collecting corn for their own use, as Gen. Ashley's men had been destitute of provisions for two days. At this time, a party of Sioux, and a party of Ricaras, both on horseback were discovered holding a parley on the hill beyond the upper town. It was discovered that the Sioux were going off, though they had given no intimation of their intention to do so. The Ricaras sent out and begged for peace. They said that the first shot from our cannon had killed the celebrated chief, called "Grey Eyes," who caused all the mischief, and we had killed a great many of their people and of their horses. They were evidently very much terrified, and completely humbled. Being convinced of this, and supposing that the government would be better pleased to have those Indians *corrected* than *exterminated*, and as the Sioux, amounting to about 7 or 800 warriors, had left us in a very strange and unaccountable manner, it was thought best, under all the circumstances of the case, to listen to the solicitations of the Ricaras for peace, especially as it was understood that our round shot were nearly all expended, consequently a treaty was [] them, a copy of which is inclosed.

In restoring to Gen. Ashley the property taken, it was thought that the Indians did not perform their engagements on that subject as well they were able to do; and they were threatened with an attack—Their principal chief, the Little Soldier, came to us and begged permission to withdraw his family from the village before we attacked it; and he gave

us the most conclusive evidence of his friendly disposition towards us. It was now late in the afternoon of the 12th, the 10th and 11th having been spent in action and negotiation, and interchanging visits, our men frequenting the town for the purpose of trading for mocasins, &c. and the Indians manifesting every symptom of having been thoroughly brought to a sense of their interest and duty. It was concluded to postpone the attack until morning, and the troops were dismissed from parade.

It has been ascertained by me that the Indians were so much alarmed by our threatening again to attack them, that they would probably run away and leave their villages. This, it was thought, would have an unfavorable effect upon the Indians, and make them more inclined to commit depredations upon the traders; and, as the Little Soldier soon after sent out, for Gen. Ashley, a few more buffalo robes, with a message that he could not possibly do more, and begging that we would have pity on them, I sent him word that I would not attack them; that it was not their property that we wanted—to make his people feel safe, and conduct themselves well and they should not be hurt.

Early on the morning of the 18th, we found the Ricaras had left their towns during the night.

Major Ketchum, with his company, and company E. commanded by Lieut. Bradley, and Lieut. Morris, with one six pounder, were ordered to take possession of the town, and to suffer not the least article to be taken away, or the towns to be injured.

A messenger was sent to call back the Indians, if possible, and to induce them to take possession of their villages, but they could not be found. It was now evident that our artillery had been served with very great effect. The towns had been completely riddled. We found 13[?] new graves, and we found that several old ones had been opened, and the surface set thick with prickly pears to conceal the new dirt. We know that 10 men, who were killed by the Sioux in the skirmish on the 9th, were buried in five graves, and we know, also, that more than one was buried in several of the other graves. From the best evidence which we could collect, it is supposed that more than fifty of their people were killed, and a great number wounded. Our messengers returned on the evening of the 14th, without having been able to find the Ricaras.

On the morning of the 14th, we placed the mother of the late chief, Grey-Eyes, (an aged and infirm woman, whom they left in their flight,) in one of the principal lodges of the lower villages, gave her plenty of provisions and water, and left her in the quiet possession of the towns, and

the property left by the Indians, except some corn which had been taken for the subsistence of the men. At about 10 o'clock, on the evening of the 15th, the troops were embarked to descend the river, and our guard withdrawn, and every soul removed from the villages, except the woman before mentioned. All the boats were got under way nearly at the same time. Before we were out of sight of the towns, we had the mortification to discover them to be on fire. There is no doubt but they have been consumed to ashes, nor is there any doubt, but that they were set on fire by one M'Donald, a partner, and one Gordon, a clerk of the Missouri Fur Company. Had not this been done, there is no doubt, there is no room to doubt, but that the Ricara Indians would in future have behaved as well towards our countrymen as any other Indians on the river. It is now my deliberate opinion, that those Indians will be excited to further hostilities.

It is understood that this Company (the Missouri) have withdrawn their men from above the Sioux country. Not so with Messrs. Ashley and Henry; they have a small number of men and a large amount of property at the mouth of the Yellow Stone river and they were deeply interested in the correction and pacification of the Ricaras. Their zeal and efficiency in aiding to chastise those Indians were conspicuous and highly honorable.

We found the Ricara Indians in two villages, the lower one containing 71 dirt lodges, and the upper village 70 dirt lodges. Each village was enclosed with palisadoes, or pickets, and a ditch, and a greater part of the lodges had a ditch around the bottom on the inside. These works, however, had been represented to be much stronger than what we found them to be.

During our operations, we sustained no loss in men, and had two wounded, Hugh Johnson, of Gen. Ashley's command, and Smith, a private of Major Ketchum's company.

Our officers and men have returned in fine health and spirits, and it is well, for those who left here are nearly all sick. Capt Fowle arrived here with 85 men, (recruits,) on the 28th inst.

Our spring wheat has done well, and all our crops are very good. No material losses will be sustained by our absence. In ascending the river, we lost one boat, and seven men drowned, and had another boat sunk by a storm. We lost one swivel and some ammunition, and some provisions; a particular account of all of which shall be soon forwarded, together with a statement of every item of expense.

I have been highly gratified with the officers and men of the regiment, and also with Gen. Ashley and his command of 80 men, and intend to do myself the honor to make a more detailed and circumstantial account of all our proceedings, and of what was done by each, and hope that what has been done will meet the approbation of our superior officers, and of the government.

I have the honor to be, respectfully your obedient servant.

H. LEAVENWORTH.

Col. commanding 6th regt.

Brig. Gen H. Atkinson.

1823, Fri., October 17. *Detroit Gazette*. Detroit, Michigan.

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”

It is generally known that our citizens for some years past have been trapping and hunting on the Indian lands upon the Missouri: Those who did not know this, must have seen that when 100 armed men ascended the river in the spring, it was not for the purposes of trade. Such bodies of armed traders never enter the Indian country. All accounts concur in stating that these parties were organized with a view to hunting beavers. The *St. Louis Enquirer* of August 30, says—It is pretty generally known that the governor and lieut. governor of Missouri are both absent from the state, and that consequently their offices have become vacated according to the constitution. Gov. M’Nair has gone to Prairie du Chien, in Michigan, and Lieut. Gov. Ashley is upon the Missouri with his hunters (not traders).

In a letter published lately in the *National Intelligencer*, and said to be from an officer and a responsible source, written to the Indian Agent, Maj. O’Fallon, it is said, “After penetrating to the three forks of the Missouri early in the spring, although we found that country almost entirely trapped out by the Indians, we succeeded by the greatest perseverance in taking about—packs of beaver. On the 15th of May, having reached the three upper forks of Jefferson river, and finding no beaver in that quarter, we commenced a retrograde march for the Yellow Stone.” This writer speaks of the success of the expedition previously.

Before proceeding to make any remarks upon the transactions above alluded to, we would direct the attention of the public to the Act of Congress of March 30, 1802, “to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, and to preserve peace on the frontiers,” the 2d section of which is as follows:

"Sect. 2. And be it further enacted, That if any citizen of, or other person residing in, the United States, or either of the territorial districts of the United States, shall cross over or go within the said boundary line, to hunt, or in any wise destroy the game; or shalt drive, or shall otherwise convey, any stock of horses or cattle, to range on any lands allotted or secured by treaty with the United States, to any Indian tribes, he shall forfeit a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars, and be imprisoned not exceeding six months."

Now, by what authorities do these hunters, in defiance of the law, enter the Indian country, put to hazard the peace of the frontiers, and involve the United States in a distant and expensive war? Much is said in the papers about the instigation of British traders—no doubt they are bad enough, and are restrained by no considerations but those resulting from their business. But we need to resort to no other motive but the feelings and wants of the Indians, to account for their opposition, when they see armed parties of 100 men enter their country, destroying more game in a year than they would make in any age—for in these expeditions the old and young of all kinds of game are destroyed.

How does it happen that the Indians in the Peninsula of Michigan, and upon the head waters of the Mississippi are restrained from attacking our traders and killing and plundering them? Why do we not hear complaints from our traders of Indian insolence, occasioned by the instigation of foreigners? Because, forsooth, that the authorities of Michigan do not permit armed hunters to encroach upon their grounds—because every trader is regularly licensed and receives proper instructions as to his demeanor when among the Indians—because, in fine, that the rights of the Indians as well as the traders are properly attended to—and if the authorities of Missouri feel any desire to prevent strife and bloodshed in the Indian country beyond the frontier of their growing state, we would recommend to them the policy pursued by the worthy Chief Magistrate of Michigan.

Aurickaree War,

We have been politely furnished with the following extract of a letter from St. Louis, dated Sept. 19. It contains the latest intelligence respecting the Indian war on the Missouri.

"Col. Leavensworth reached the Aurickaree towns on the 10th ult. cannonaded them and made a peace. The stipulations of the treaty were not, however, complied with by the Indians as he thought, and he prepared to attack them the next morning, but it was found in the morning that they had all decamped."

1823, Sat., October 18. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Letters relating to the Auricaree war.

Fort Recovery, Aug. 26, 1823.

SIR.

It was my intention to have written you this communication on the 16th or 17th inst. while descending the River from the Riccaras towns; but fearing that some remarks which might escape me, would give rise to the conclusion, that I had written it under the influence of passion, growing out of the General orders which you were pleased to issue on the 15th, after our departure from the Towns, I determined to wait until the first impressions subsided, and address you in moments of cool deliberation. But, Sir, in addressing myself to *you* it is impossible for me to hold such language as a man of honor, consistency and courage would have a right to expect, and which I should feel bound to use, could I for a moment suppose that either of those principles had ever found a place in your bosom. Your conduct, on the expedition against the Riccaras, but more particularly while before the villages, has been so pusillanimous, so ridiculous and contemptible in many ways, that really Sir, I am at a loss to decide, where I should properly begin, or at what point I shall end; and but for the wanton attack upon me and the company for which I act, in your order of the 15th, after our departure from the Riccaras towns, I can assure you, that I should be the last man in your expedition, to touch the subject; it belongs to others more interested than myself; but as you have descended to vent your spleen and personal dislike for *me*, under pretence of discharging an official duty, you shall not escape me: the whole company is denounced, and an attempt is made to brand it with infamy, because you entertained a deep rooted and deadly animosity against *me*—and for what? because I had the independence to speak publicly of your shameful conduct before the villages, and because I refused to associate myself with you in a treaty which I then thought, and now think, both impolitic & disgraceful.

Head Quarters, 6th Regiment, on board the Keel Boat Nol 1, below the Riccaras towns, 15th August, 1823.

Orders.

The Col. commanding, will not further co-operate or receive the services of any of the Missouri Fur Company; they were pledged by their Agent & acting partner to obey orders. The Colonel commanding, is extremely mortified to say, that he has too much reason to believe,

that the Riccaras towns, have been set on fire by that company, contrary to the most positive orders, and in violation of their word of honor to obey orders; with such men he will have no further intercourse.

The balance of this order, consists principally in acknowledgments to, and praises upon, General Ashley & his command. The justice of that part of the order cannot be denied. It contains also, your acknowledgments to Major Henry as special sub-agent. I was not surprised at this; you were acting in full character when you wrote it; but I must confess, I was a little amused;—for, after my having declined any participation in your proposed treaty with the Riccaras, you seemed determined on support from some one, and called on Major Henry, in my presence, who most positively refused even his opinion or advice upon the subject, and I have no reason to believe, that he changed his determination, your order concludes, by exempting Mr. Carson and Mr. Vanderburgh, of our company, from the general censure, and an expression of your high satisfaction at their good conduct, but more particularly in relation to Mr. Vanderburgh, for his conduct in the management of one of your six pounders during *the action*. The following note, addressed to me, from these gentlemen, the day after this paper made its appearance, will show you the estimation in which it is held by them.

SIR.

In Colonel Leavenworth's order issued yesterday, after our departure from the Riccaras towns, in which he has slandered and calumniated our company, he has been pleased to exempt us from any censure, and expresses the highest satisfaction at our conduct; we feel extremely mortified at having been selected as the object of his approbation and praise; we should have felt honored, exactly in proportion to the degree of censure he might have thought fit to cast upon us, sincerely believing as we do, that shame and dishonor should ever rest upon him, for his conduct before the Riccaras towns, which we verily believe, could not have originated in any thing, but the total absence of every thing like courage, which we have always thought, should be the leading characteristic of a soldier.

W. H. VANDERBURGH.

MOSES B. CARSON.

Mr. Joshua Pilcher,
Acting P.M.F. Co.

We had halted a little above the Grand river, six miles below the towns, by your orders; a few minutes after our halt, the order above

quoted was handed to me, I had been laying down in my cabin from the time we left the villages, until we landed. Your order gave the first intimation of those abominable sinks of iniquity having been set on fire. I knew in an instant the feelings which produced this calumny; they were deposited in your bosom on the day you commenced your ridiculous negotiations with the Riccaras; I knew it was levelled at me. The public and bold manner in which I spoke of you, (which you had neither the independence to punish in a military way or the spirit to resent,) had created feelings to which you sought an opportunity to give vent from the moment the declaration escaped me, with a degree of skill and vigilance which could have been equalled by no other man; but even with your thousand tongues, and your face for every tongue, you were foiled; disobedience of orders was what you anxiously looked for; my word of honor was the only obligation you had upon us, and I was determined to use as much vigilance in the execution of your orders, however, useless and inconsistent as you manifested in seeking an opportunity to censure, and I defy you to point to the written orders of the expedition, & say in truth, wherein I have disobeyed them. I defy every verbal order delivered me by your Adjutant; even, Sir, at the moment of departure from the villages, your adjutant called on and informed me, that you ordered or requested, that our company of voyagers, under the command of Mr. Vanderburgh, should be marched up to the villages, and take the position which had been occupied by some of your troops for the purpose of guarding those abominable smokey huts from pillage or outrage. Mr. Vanderburgh remarked to me, "it cannot be Col. Leavenworth's intention or wish that I execute that order, all hands are now preparing to start." "Go sir, & report for duty to the *Chief* of the *Legion*," said I, his eyes are fixed upon us; he seeks an opportunity to censure us." Mr. V. did so, the order was dispensed with, as I had anticipated, and in a few minutes the boats were ordered to move. I was requested to halt near the Grand river, where Gen. Ashly's boat was then lying; the object was, to discharge all persons who had attached themselves to your expedition, if I rightly understood it. The salutation I met with in this order was not very pleasant, though it did not excite much astonishment. Your refusal further, to co-operate with us, after co-operation ceased to be necessary, as will be seen by your order of the 14th, from which you seemed to think, that the objects of the expedition had been accomplished, "in the most ample and efficient manner," appeared, I think, a little ridiculous, and manifested a degree of whim and

ill-nature with which you are abundantly supplied—but in the exercise of those feelings, you rarely do much harm. Chagrined at the circumstance of having failed in all your efforts to acquire some grounds on which to censure me, you eagerly seized upon the circumstance of a smoke having been seen at the villages, and made this the ground of hostilities against the company. Four days previous, you had declared “war against the Missouri Fur Company,” in presence of one of its members.—I knew the declaration originated in your feelings towards me, I vigilantly guarded against hostilities, and was at a loss to know when and how they could commence. I remarked immediately after the receipt of your order, “the Chief of the legion declared war against us three or four days ago, and this is the commencement of hostilities.” I might despise you something less, had you not had the unblushing insolence to send a verbal message by your Adjutant, a few minutes after the order came out, to say to me, that you believed you had been mistaken in regard to me; that you had become satisfied that I had no knowledge of the thing, and that the order was improperly applied so far as related to myself, but that you had conclusive evidence, that Mr Gordon, a young gentleman in the service of our company, had fired the villages, and requested that I would deliver him up to you. How shallow are all your intrigues;—you little knew, that I had so minutely and so closely examined and studied your character and your disposition. Did you suppose that I was so weak as to consider my feelings repaired by such a message, and by that means induce me to give strength and consistency to your foul slander, by delivering Mr. G. to you, which would have been a tacit acknowledgment that you had grounds for your charge, and that too, when you must have known that I could have seen in an instant, that I was the accepted object, & that it originated solely in your antipathy for *me*? If not so, why not take the trouble to call to me from your boat, to call on me at mine, or send for me or make the simple enquiry “has this business been done by your knowledge, or with your consent?” but no, you well knew that such an inquiry would deprive you of the opportunity of giving *vent* to the feelings which you had long and diligently sought. Your *war* was determined on, but your attack is equalled by nothing in point of weakness, but your operations against the Riccaras. Your suspicions so far as they apply to me or the Missouri Fur Company, are wholly groundless; I had not then, nor have I now, any knowledge of the affair; nor do I believe, or will I believe that you thought I had, at the time this masterpiece escaped your pen.

The guarding of a few miserable smoky cells of iniquity, inhabited by one old squaw, one chicken cock, about 40 or 50 Indian dogs, and containing a few willow baskets and some corn *caches*, are objects well worthy of your genius & admirably adapted to your ambition; but be assured sir, that my ambition soars far above any thing like the destruction of such trash. I have never condescended to question Mr. Gordon upon the subject, nor shall I do so. I showed him the order, mentioned the demand your adjutant had made, and directed him to make it his business to visit your Boats. He did so; why did you not take him, if you had evidence to justify your suspicions? I turn from that part of the subject, with all the disgust and contempt it merits.

A few minutes after this paper made its appearance, 6 miles below the villages, I received from you the following note.

Arricca Towns, Aug. 15, 1823

SIR,

The Sioux Indians, for whom you are sub-agent, have taken six mules belonging to the United States. I have to request that you will be pleased to take measures to have them returned.

Respectfully,

your obedient servant,

H. LEAVENSWORTH.

I believe, sir, that this note was written after the delivery of your order, six miles below the villages—whether or not, I understand the object well; persons a thousand miles off, will of course suppose, that the Indians were within my reach, though in truth, no one knew where they were, nor had they been seen for five days. I will remark *first*, that I am not sub-agent for the Siouxs, and that all duties enjoined upon me, ceased so soon as the objects of your expedition were fulfilled—these duties were only conferred by a verbal request of the United States Agent Maj. O'Fallon. If I am not able to satisfy him, that they have been fulfilled even beyond his expectations, I shall be willing to acknowledge the justice of his censure to any extent. *Second*. Amongst all Indians, an attempt to take property from another, is considered a declaration of war. *Third*. The taking is considered a commencement of hostilities. *Fourth*. your arms were in your hands, and if the enemy had made war upon you, and were in my reach, they were likewise in yours; why did you not enforce the restoration of the property? as you more than once declared, that while in a state of war, the Indians were subject solely

to your superintendence, management and control; & that all the powers and duties of the agency, ceased until peace was restored. I will drop this note, until I hear from it again, assuring you at the same time, that as an individual, I will do all in my power to obtain the mules. I will now pass over a period of considerable length, that is, the whole of your conduct from the time the expedition left this place ascending the river, until our arrival at or near the Riccaras. I am here passing without notice, a sufficient number of events, to fill a small volume, many of which would tend to show the littleness of your soul, & your disposition to interfere with matters, which policy at least, should have induced you to let alone, and of the little contemptible jealousies which sway that bosom, wherein a noble and generous feeling, has never yet found a place.

When we reached the hills below Grand river, about seven miles from the Ricaras villages, on the day we made the attack, it seemed to me, that wild derangement had seized upon all your faculties. "I will throw myself at the head of these Indians" said you, "and be around that village in a few minutes, and I wish to have you go along Major Pilcher." No one understood your plan, indeed you had none, madman like, away you flew with my interpreter, I followed you until the Grand river was passed, overtook my command, and without the aid of an interpreter, halted the main body of the Sioux Indians. Casting my eyes to the hills from whence this wild career was commenced, I saw your troops occupying the position in which you had left them. A half an hour brought up your Adjutant; where is the Colonel, said he?—I cannot inform you, was my reply of course. A short time after, brought me an express from Maj. Ketchum, inquiring for the Colonel—no intelligence yet. I addressed the Maj. a note, requesting him to advance, unless his orders forbid it; I believe he was on the march when my note reached him. At length, your Adjutant returned from a search of at least half an hour, and reported that he had found you. The whites came up; the *Legion* advanced until you were found with my interpreter & a few Indians. I verily believe, you were ashamed of this wild movement; the object of which, no man ever understood. The *Legion* halted; here something like a plan, appeared accidently to strike you; it was ordered, that the Indians should attack the villages, and maintain the ground, if possible, until the troops could get up, they rushed forward in all the wild confusion and impetuosity of their nature. The Ricaras met them half mile from the villages. The action was sharp; the Sioux fought under all the

disadvantages of fatigue, but nobly maintained the ground for at least an hour, when the approach of your troops induced the Ricaras to retreat to their villages. To have attacked the towns without your artillery, would have been impolitic; it was necessary to wait until morning, owing to the late arrival of the boats. The next morning was looked for with the greatest anxiety, by every individual attached to your *Legion*. The time arrived, your artillery was opened on each village; a short time convinced every man that it would not have the anticipated effect, that of driving the Indians from their lodges or rather from their *fortified towns*, such fortifications as school boys make and call them *play houses*. It was clear that the villages must be carried by storm; you selected your point; a company of infantry was ordered up, with which Captain Riley's company and the voyagers under Capt. Vanderburgh were to act. I was directed to apprise the Indians of your intention and endeavour to get them to co-operate; they were then scattered from the Ricaras corn fields to their own encampment, a distance of 3 or 4 miles; I warned you against depending on the Indians in the charge, it never was, nor never should have been expected of them; on the contrary, it was always promised, that the whites would storm the villages, drive the inhabitants out; and then their operations would commence, so many as were in reach, were apprised of the intended movement; all things were ready; but in a few minutes afterwards, I was informed that the charge was abandoned; why, I never have been able to learn. It has been suggested to me, that it arose from what I said respecting the Indians; never, I beg you, sir, for the credit of those gallant officers, those choice spirits, who had the misfortune to be commanded by you, let such a thing go before the public. Your operations thus continued, until towards mid-day. I will pass over all your school boy rambles during the day; I feel but little interest in exposing them.

It became your pleasure, to withdraw your troops from their different positions, as you said for refreshment; but previous to so doing, pity seized upon your tender heart, you got a treaty into your head, & in the most degrading and humiliating manner, spoke to the Ricaras and asked them for peace; declaring, that you came for peace, and did not wish to fight them and this too, without knowing that even so much as a dog or a horse of the village had been injured by your operations. This, sir, is true as *holy writ*, and should it be denied, I have the proof in my hands. some time after this transaction, you retired to your cabin; previously, as I suppose, having given orders, that the troops should retire from their

positions and rendezvous at the boats. The position which had been occupied by Capt. Riley, was about a half a mile distant from your boats, while standing on the bank of the river, I saw a number of Indians on the hill, which he had occupied; but which, it seems he had abandoned, when some person remarked to me, Riley is attacked. I saw no officer present, and stepped quickly to your cabin, where, sir, I found you asleep, or at least you so appeared to be. Yes sir,! you slept, or pretended to sleep, in the hour of battle and of danger, while the brightest gems of your *Legion* were exposed to the enemy! I was ordered to assemble the Indians and go to his relief, and while in the performance of this duty, met Riley whose approach had been concealed by the hill. The Sioux saw the troops withdrawn, without doing any thing, they knew not what effect your artillery had, nor did they hear your proposed treaty: the withdrawing of the troops destroyed all confidence on the part of the Indians, particularly after having seen them lying on their arms for four or five hours, completely out of reach of danger and without doing anything which was perceptible to them, your proposition to treat, convinced them, that the objects for which they went, and the promises which had been made them, would not be fulfilled; they gradually retired from the plain, displeased and disappointed; and to these causes, & these alone, must be attributed their precipitate departure that night. Towards the evening you informed me, that there was a parley between a Riccaras & a Sioux, and ordered me to attend to it. I proceeded to the place; you followed me, so soon as you approached, the same language was held forth to this Indian, that you had previously used to the village. I returned displeased I confess. This interview drew from the villages a short time afterwards, some three or four others; you again requested me to accompany you and meet them; here for the first time, you met the *Little Soldier*, the affectionate manner in which you embraced him, done credit to the goodness of your heart; but did not in my humble opinion, comport with the dignity of the *Legion's Chief*. This interview, brought out six or seven others with this Little Soldier, who spread down some robes at a proper distance in front of your *Legion*, when you again invited me to attend the council; I listened to you with pain, and if your language did not amount to a solicitation for peace, it amounted, I think to something very much like it. Here commenced your deadly hatred for *me*. After your requiring, that some of them should go and remain at your camp, I retired from the spot with all the gentlemen who had accompanied you, leaving you in conversation with these children of iniquity.

After walking about one hundred paces, one of your officers observed to me, "those fellows will not come;" "No," said I, "I should not be astonished if they attempt to drag the colonel off;" he replied, "dam them, let's fire on them," and discharged a pistol at them. At the same instant, the Indians from the villages discharged a number of guns; Mr. Vanderburgh was in the act of firing also, when I ordered my interpreter to fire on them, which he done; and for which, you took special care to confine him, notwithstanding he had the example from one of your officers, one of his employers, and acted under my positive order. Why not strike at the root if there was any evil:—the true cause of his confinement originated in your suspicious and jealous disposition; because, a Sioux told a Ricaras, & a Ricaras told old Simoneau, and Simoneau told you, that Campbell told the Sioux that, "I was the *Big Chief*, and my heart was very mad;" the same jealousy and suspicion arose in your bosom, in my council with the Siouins; you detected the best Sioux interpreter on the continent, of telling the Sioux, "that I was the *Big Chief* of the expedition; and this too by your own knowledge of the Sioux language, *you*, who do not speak or understand one word more than myself; and I, do not know how to ask for a drink of water.

To persons unacquainted with me, there may appear some mystery in all this nonsense, but, to persons knowing our relative situations and objects in the expedition, these things cannot fail to render you a subject of ridicule. But to return to the negotiations; they of course, were broken off that evening. My feelings carried me to lengths at that moment, which rendered me an obnoxious member of the council. The negotiations were opened again the next morning; they were diligently persevered in for two days—they appeared to be carried on principally, through a celebrated outlaw, who left this country in chains some ten years since, by the name of *Rose*, & the *Little Soldier*. At an early stage of your negotiations, however, you called on me for my advice & co-operation, notwithstanding you asserted at the time, "that it was your duty and your right to direct and control the whole of this affair in your own way, independent of agent, sub-agent or special sub-agent;" and declared your determination to do so. I had no interest in contesting the point and less disposition to do so; yet, you feel it the weakness of your cause; and you most vigilently sought the sanction of the agency to give it strength. You solicited me to draw up the treaty; I declined any participation. I hope I shall be able to render a satisfactory account of my conduct on this occasion, to my God, my country and my superior,

when required so to do. After two days labor, a treaty was signed and a copy immediately transmitted to me by your adjutant—I lost no time, but immediately informed you that neither of the principal chiefs of the nation had it. It was said, and I believe, correctly that one of them had been killed; you did not condescend to notice the information I gave you, I was not mortified at the neglect. The leading article of the treaty, was as it should be, the restoration of General Ashley's property. It was, I think, about 2 o'clock the following day, that the *Legion* was ordered to parade for the purpose of storming the Riccaras towns, the terms of the treaty not having been complied with. All things were in readiness, and the *Legion* on *tiptoe*, when to my astonishment, you called me to a council; *me*, whom you surely hatred from the bottom of your heart. Maj. Woolley and Gen. Ashley were also called upon; we met, and you suggested the propriety of postponing the charge until morning for the purpose of giving the *Little Soldier* an opportunity of getting his family out of the village; and also the probability of having many wounded in the charge; and if so, that it would be difficulty to dress their wounds after night. It was my object, and my aim, to make my decision equivolent and evasive; this I acknowledge with candor; I always shape my conduct to suit the character with whom I deal; it was my aim to leave it to your discretion, without deciding positively either way; I think I done so; Maj. Woolley informed me that night, that he understood me to be in favor of postponing the charge until morning; perhaps, that construction may be laid upon it; but I think not; I penned my decision from memory that night, from that memory which never yet failed to lead to truth; and at the powers of which, *you* have had occasion to express your astonishment; but be it as it may, admit that a postponement was the decision in this council, the charge was not abandoned. Now I close the subject; who were your counsellors when you determined to abandon the charge altogether, and to dispense with the very essence of the treaty? About sun set, you called your officers together, and commenced a minute detail of the various incidents of the siege; every ear was open, anxiously listening for the point, expecting to hear an eloquent address upon the awful but necessary consequences which were to flow from a non-compliance with the treaty, on the part of the Indians, when to the inexpressible astonishment of all, you abruptly concluded, as well as I can recollect, with these remarks; "the *Little Soldier* has used every effort to induce his people to comply with the treaty, but all he has done, will avail nothing; he says he is unable to make good the property him-

self and I have therefore determined to abandoned the charge, & dispense with that article of the treat," these Colonel, are truths, who were your councellors? At the moment you concluded, I turned my eyes to the villages, and saw your faithful minister *Rose*, I think, approaching the towns with a white flag. The Indians left their villages that night; whether by soliciation, or not, will ever remain doubtful with me.

I had intended offering some remarks, relative to the movements against the villages, after the inhabitants had left them; but have already spent too much time upon a subject which I sincerely wish, could be obliterated from my recollections.

In this letter, sir, I have borne hard upon you; you have drawn it upon yourself by striking most unjustly, a deadly blow at my feelings and honor. I have confined myself to truth, and more than half remains yet to be told, should it become necessary. What ambition had I to gratify in your expedition; but to aid in revenging the death of my slaughtered countrymen, in restoring peace to this troubled land, and heal the bleeding wounds of a commerce, which bids destruction to the most enterprising men of the west, for want of an example which would strike terror to the hearts of those remorseless monsters of the wilds, who know no law and will preserve no peace, to this and a desire to promote the glory of our arms, our company have scarificed many thousands; and rest assured sir, that you have left things in a state ten times worse than you found them. I am well aware, that humanity and philanthropy are mighty shields for you, against those who are entirely ignorant of the disposition and character of Indians, but with those who have experienced the fatal and ruinous consequences of their treachery and barbarity, those considerations will avail nothing. You came to restore peace and tranquility to the country, & leave an impression which would insure its continuance, your operations have been such as to produce the contrary effect, and to impress the different Indian tribes, with the greatest possible contempt for the American character. You came (to use your own language) to "open and make good this great road; instead of which, you have by the imbecility of your conduct and operations, created and left impassable barriers.

I am sir, not as I once was, and ever wished to be your friend and humble servant, but quite the reverse

JOSHUA PILCHER.
Act. Pr. Mo. Fur Co.

Col. Henry Leavensworth.

This article was reprinted in the *Missouri Republican* issue of October 26.

The reader will find on the opposite page the accompanying documents to Mr. Pilcher's report to Maj. O'Fallon, which we promised in our last paper. The eagerness manifested by the public for these papers, will operate we hope as a sufficient excuse in our favor, for devoting so many of our columns to their publication. These letters & the report of Mr. Pilcher were evidently written under a state of peculiar feeling, produced from some causes growing out of the Aurickaree War; which, however, the public are not in possession of. A development of these causes should be made, to enable the public to judge correctly of the matter—in the mean time we must await either for a statement from Col. Leavensworth or an investigation in Congress to produce it.

1823, Sat., November 8. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We are requested by several respectable citizens of St. Louis "to ask the Editors of the *National Intelligencer* to publish the letters of Maj. Pilcher to Maj. O'Fallon and Col. Leavensworth, on the subject of the Arickara Expedition—in order that all the circumstances may be known relating to said affair."

1823, Tues., November 11. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

Aurickaree expedition.—It is to be regretted that any unpleasant reflections, or circumstances, should have arisen out of the late expedition against the Aurickaree Indians. The object of that expedition included considerations of great value to the nation, and which were unspeakably important to that portion of the union which participates in the fur trade of the west and north west. The fur trade is one of great concern to the general interest, and demands, as loudly as any other branch of trade, the national protection. The attack of the Aurickarees upon the liberal enterprize of Gen. Ashley, aimed a blow at this branch of our commerce which threatened its destruction. Nothing could have saved it from utter annihilation, save a prompt movement of the troops of the general government against the offenders; and even this force, reduced as it was at the time, would have been probably inefficient for

maintaining the national rights, and inflicting the chastisement which such audacity required, but for the auxiliary aid of the remainder of General Ashley's force, and of the disposable members of the Missouri Fur Company. The Aurickarees, as far as we can judge from official accounts, appear to have been chastised until they became sensible of the temerity of their attack, and the upper Missouri to have been left free to the navigation of the adventurers who seek wealth in that remote region.

It appears, however, from various publications in the St. Louis papers, that Mr. Pilcher, the principal agent of the Missouri fur company, is excessively dissatisfied with the conduct of Col. Leavenworth, who commanded in chief on that occasion. The Colonel is accused of great want of sound judgment, and also of want of personal firmness. Now of the capacity of Col. L. for conducting such an expedition, requiring a species of knowledge locked up to many even of the most intelligent, we know nothing; but his bravery we should think, at this day, could hardly be questioned. He whose personal courage enabled him daringly and gallantly to lead successive charges of his countrymen against the embattled hosts of some of the best troops that ever England sent against this nation, ought, it is believed, now to be thought above the suspicion of cowardice. Whether he did all that a chief exercising for the moment the whole executive authority of the United States is another matter. To judge ill, and to feel timid are two things of a very different nature. The Colonel may have judged ill; we can hardly believe he felt timid.

Of Mr. Pilcher, the main accuser of Col. Leavenworth, we have always been taught to think with the highest respect. It has ever been understood by us that he is a man of unquestioned and unquestionable veracity. But his letters are evidently written under a high state of excitement. The whole language indicates that his feelings were strongly aroused on the occasion. Honorable minds are always ardent, and in the warmth of his feelings, Mr. Pilcher may have been betrayed into a severity & harshness of expression which he would not, in the moments of coolness, resort to. On the other hand, the efforts, of Col. L. may have fallen short of the expectations of those immediately interested in the trade, and whose interests were so violently assailed.

On the whole, until the facts are better known, we have determined to abstain from any publication of the various charges in the St. Louis papers. Whenever the whole of the facts shall have been developed, either by a Congressional, or other enquiry, we shall lose no time in laying the result before our readers.

1823, Mon., November 17. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

To the Editors of the Enquirer.

GENTLEMEN—The late outrages committed by the Aricara and Blackfoot Indians have caused much public excitement, and some expression of opinion relative to the steps best to be taken to prevent repetitions of the like unhappy events—I am pleased to find public feeling in favour of our government's adopting the most prompt and decisive measures to effect that object, to ensure peace & safety to our citizens engaged in the fur trade, and to destroy British influence and illicit trade in our Western Territory—The course to be pursued to effect these objects must be obvious to every man, who bestows a single thought upon the subject.

Our citizens have long been exposed to the hostile disposition of the Indians inhabiting that country—Those hostilities are increasing and (without measures are taken for their prevention) will continue to increase—No time should be lost—what now requires but few troops a few months to accomplish, (and perhaps without the loss of a single man) may in two or three years (under existing circumstances) require as many years; five times as many troops and means of every description—Five or six hundred troops should ascend the Missouri next spring, as high as the falls, or mouth of Maria's river—There they will have it in their power to cut off all communication between the British traders, and the Indians, residing within the limits of the United States, in that region—Those traders have but little or no direct communication with the Indians on the Missouri, below that point—The Blackfeet, the most formidable, and hostile tribe that we have to contend against, have no fixed place of residence; they rove over the country from the heads of Maria's river to the three forks of the Missouri, a section of country supposed to contain the greatest abundance and most valuable furs. The location of that number of troops at one of the places proposed would prevent those Indians so long as they continue unfriendly towards the United States from the benefits they now enjoy from that country—That circumstance, together with seeing a force of United States soldiers sufficient to contend against any number of Indian warriors that could be brought against them would in all probability bring them to immediate terms of peace and friendship with us—This number of troops there located, would also be sufficient to make all other Indians residing on the head waters of the Missouri, observe a respectful and friendly course of

conduct towards our citizens—Should the services of these troops be necessary at any place below the one mentioned for their establishment, they could descend the river with great facility, when to the contrary should they be located at the mouth of the Yellow Stone river, (one of the places proposed in 1819,) and their services should be necessary, two, three or five hundred miles above that place, it would require much time and labour to reach their place of destination, which in all probability would render it impossible to effect the desired object of such a movement. The Indians of the West, travel (when necessary) with great rapidity, and are as much at home at one place as another, where they consider themselves in safety, and find sufficient game for their subsistence—therefore two or three hundred of the troops to perform this service should be mounted and armed as cavalry, so, that in the event of depredations being committed by the Indians, followed by a precipitate retreat, our troops would have it in their power to overtake and punish them—I am of opinion that two hundred and fifty cavalry would render more service and be more feared by the natives of that country, than one thousand infantry. I cannot with any certainty form an opinion relative to the effect produced on the minds of the Indians generally, by the late expedition under the command of Colonel Leavenworth against the Aricaras. The Blackfoot Indians will in all probability continue to do us all the injury in their power; the Aricaras, the Chians, and a part of the Souix, may unite in hostilities against us, or they may pause a while to ascertain what further steps will be taken by our government, for the protection of our citizens. The Mandans, Minitaras, Crows and a part of the Souix, will probably continue to meet us as friends and treat us accordingly.

When subjects of importance are taken up by Editors of public newspapers, we expect from that source, correct and useful information. It is therefore necessary that they should possess that information, before they venture to advance their opinions, in as much as they are well calculated, (if erroneous) to lead astray the public mind. The Editors of the *New York American* in their paper of the 9th October, speaking of the Arickara War, makes the following statement which they are pleased to call facts:

“General Ashley, with a party armed and equipped for war and not in the guise of mere traders, invades, (that is the true expression) the territories of independent Indian nations, for so by making from time to time treaties with them we acknowledge them to be, for the purpose of

trapping beaver and taking generally other wild animals.—No permission is asked of the Indians; on the contrary they are known to be opposed to and alarmed at these forcible intrusions of the whites upon their hunting grounds, and it was because they were known to be thus hostile that all the precautions of war were taken by gen. Ashley and his party against surprise or open hostility. The Indians were therefore authorized to repel the approaches of such a party.”

More errors I have never seen comprised in as few words. The arms, equipments, &c, of the party above alluded to, were the same in all respects, and no more, than those used by all other Indian traders in that country, who having to subsist entirely on wild game, must of course be armed with guns, an exhibition of which is no new thing to the Indians. I visited the Aricara towns in the summer of 1822, when I was invited by the chiefs of that nation to return the next spring, and to take with me certain articles of merchandize of which they said they were much in want. I promised them to do so, and did comply. On my return there on the 30th of May last, I was met by those chiefs with pretensions of friendship. I thought them sincere, and did everything in my power to cultivate that disposition. In passing thro' the hunting grounds of any of the western tribes of Indians, it is customary to ask and obtain permission of them to do so. This request I made of the Aricaras, which they appeared to consent to cheerfully, and for which they received considerable presents. These Indians well knew, that it was not my intention to trap beaver within five hundred miles of their hunting grounds, or to take more game of any description, than would be sufficient for the subsistence of my party, while passing hastily through their country. This is a real statement of facts, and how do they correspond with those offered to the public by the *New York American*?

Attempts are made to impress the public mind with the belief, that the Indians object to white hunters, hunting on their lands. The idea is erroneous; the Indians make no such objections, but rather invite the whites to hunt with them. In waging war upon us, they are not instigated from considerations of that nature; they delight in war, because their other pursuits afford not sufficient employment for their vigorous minds, and because they are (like all other men) fond of fame, and war is the only means by which they can acquire it. If we properly exercise the supreme authority which we justly claim over that country and the Indians who inhabit it, the horrors of war would in a great degree disappear; the condition of the Indians be much better, they will respect us, and our citizens

whose lawful pursuits call them to that country, will meet with that protection which they have a right to expect from their government. The difference of opinion relative to the state of things in the Indian country of which I have some knowledge, has caused me thus to address you. I regret that it is not in my power to take, at this time, a more extensive view of the subject and do it more justice.

Respectfully, your ob't. serv't,

WM. H. ASHLEY.

1823, Tues., December 2. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

COMMUNICATION.

Messrs. Editors,

I have observed in the *St. Louis Enquirer*, of Oct. 11, a communication from Mr. PILCHER, to Major B. O'FALLON, in which it is affirmed that Colonel LEAVENWORTH, during the late engagement with the Aricara Indians, approached them within speaking distance, and asked them to make peace.

My knowledge of the circumstances alluded to, induces me, in justice to Col. Leavenworth, to correct Mr. Pilcher's statement. It appears that the Colonel, during the action, directed his interpreter to ask the Aricara's why they did not come out and speak to the Americans, and to say to them that white men were merciful. The interpreter hailed them twice, and informed Col. Leavenworth that the wind blew so strong that he was unable to make them hear. The troops at this moment were closely investing the enemy, and kept up a spirited fire; two field pieces and a howitzer were also constantly playing upon the towns. If Col. Leavenworth had desired to ask the Aricara's to make peace, he certainly would have caused a cessation of arms until he had spoken to them.

Shortly after this occurrence, the troops were withdrawn from the villages for refreshment; immediately two naked Aricara's approached, and in the most supplicating manner implored us to have compassion on their women and children; they stated that their villages were covered with the dead & dying, and that if we commenced again to fire on them, we should effectually destroy them. We learned also from them that one of their principal men, in attempting to supplicate the whites, during the action, was shot dead from the top of his lodge, and that two more shared the same fate, from the north gate, while endeavoring to speak to us.

From this it appears, that had Col. Leavenworth thought it policy to

have asked these people to have made peace with him, they certainly would have gratified him, and the action would have ceased early in the day. I am prepared, however, to say, positively, that no such proposition was made to them.

ONE OF THE EXPEDITION.

Fort Atkinson, Nov. 13, 1823.

1823, Tues., Dec. 2d and 9th. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The report of Colonel Leavenworth to General Atkinson giving an account of his expedition against the Aricara Indians is printed in full. The report can be found in Senate Executive Document 1, 18th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 55-108.

1823, Tues., December 9. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

From the Louisville Public Advertiser.

THE YELLOW STONE, &c.

This country is a vast and fertile one, which has been acquired by the United States by purchase and treaty, lying *south* of the 48th parallel of north latitude, and between the Mississippi river and the Rocky Mountains. It abounds with furs and skins of great value, and is inhabited by various and numerous tribes of Indians, who have been and now are, generally, under the *influence*, and *control* of the *British traders* and *government*. To prevent this power over those Indians, and to secure to *our own citizens*, their just rights and due protection, military posts were projected on the Mississippi, and at the Council Bluffs, Mandan Villages and at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, on the Missouri. The wisdom and policy of this plan, will be acknowledged by every citizen of candor—yet the measure was defeated, and the post at the Council Bluffs only, was established.

No part of the Union was, or is, more vitally interested than the present infant and rising state of Missouri, in the establishment of military posts at the Mandan Villages and the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and a *road* from that post to a point on the Missouri, near the Council Bluffs. Missouri wants population and cultivation, so that from her

product of agriculture, she can derive resources. At present, however, she is not in a condition to avail herself of this source of comfort and independence. Time is necessary, and population and improvement required to attain that end.—The furs and skins capable of immediate conversion into money, which can be taken east of the Rocky Mountains, and her just share of the national expenditure, for public and private safety, are the right of Missouri, and on which her present prosperity and growth depend.

Missouri is peculiarly situated. The Mississippi and Missouri rivers and their tributary streams are long and rapid, and those two grand streams unite near the commercial depot of the state. All those streams are inhabited by roving and hostile savages, who can by those facilities suddenly descend upon her infant and frontier settlements and murder and plunder, and escape without being overtaken. Hence the real necessity of military posts in the country *east* of the Rocky Mountains, which will,

1st Secure to the citizens of Missouri the furs and skins of that region of country.

2d The protection of the frontier settlements and limits of Missouri, and,

3d Her *share* of the *national expenditures applied and directed* to such *legitimate* objects.

1823, Sat., December 20. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

TO COL. H. LEAVENWORTH.

St. Louis, 8 o'clock P.M.)

Dec 14, 1823)

Sir—I have this moment perused a part of your “circumstantial account” of the expedition against the Ricaras. Intending to leave this place in the morning, it is not my present purpose to enter into a lengthy notice of it; nor are there more than one or two points (so far as I have seen it) upon which I shall say any thing. Your manner of introducing and managing some circumstances, induces me to remind you, that you have been a little unfaithful in the general detail. The circumstance of leaving your command at Fort Recovery, or Fort Kiowa, with my interpreter and one or two soldiers, and remaining absent two or three days and nights, amusing yourself with a band of Indians and their lodges, properly belongs to this “circumstantial account.” Your

movement at Grand River is handled with your wonted ingenuity. My letter of the 26th August, with all its bitterness, has been useful to you in making this long report; but I think I have come nearer to a correct representation of that movement. From a remark made to you (as I understood) by Mr —, when you were found in those hills after half an hour's search, that "your command could not find you," and that you "had lost it," or something amounting to that, and from expressions used by several others before your troops reached you, I then thought, and still think, the object was not generally understood. The circumstance of my taking an Indian prisoner, supposing him to be a Ricara, but who turned out to be a Sioux, is used by you as I might have expected; even facts used in a particular way serve to ridicule. The bitterness of my letter justifies you in omitting nothing which will have that tendency. Your orders to me previous to our arrival at Grand river, to be vigilant in saving and protecting any Ricaras that should come to meet the Indians, guided me in this affair. A Ricara, or half Sioux, who lived with the Ricaras, came out with his family, was taken, and delivered to you—this thing occurred during the absence of my interpreter, but when he arrived, his explanations put a different face on the affair, and were then very satisfactory to you. But it is proper for you to withhold any thing which may explain occurrences of this nature.

The grand object of this minute detail is perfectly comprehended by me, altho I have not seen the whole of it—I did not go to the Ricaras for the purpose of acquiring fame; therefore the impressions produced by your manner of using some trifling occurrences, is a matter of little consequence to me. A communication published in the same paper which contains a part of your report, signed "One of the Expedition," affords me an opportunity of offering some proof respecting your proposition to make peace with the Ricaras, and is the immediate cause of my saying any thing upon the subject at this time. I allude to the following publication:

From the *Boon's Lick Intelligencer*

Messrs. Editors,

I have observed in the *St. Louis Enquirer*, of October 11, a communication from Mr. PILCHER, to Maj. B. O'FALLON, in which it is affirmed that Col. LEAVENWORTH, during the late engagement with the Aricara Indians, approached them within speaking distance, and asked them to make peace.

My knowledge of the circumstances alluded to, induces me, in justice

to Col. Leavenworth, to correct Mr. Pilcher's statement. It appears that the Colonel, during the action, directed his interpreter to ask the Aricara's why they did not come out and speak to the Americans, and to say to them that white men were merciful. The interpreter hailed them twice, and informed Col. Leavenworth that the wind blew so strong that he was unable to make them hear. The troops at this moment were closely investing the enemy, and kept up a spirited fire; two field pieces and a howitzer were also constantly playing upon the towns. If Col. Leavenworth had desired to ask the Aricara's to make peace, he certainly would have caused a cessation of arms until he had spoken to them.

Shortly after this occurrence, the troops were withdrawn from the villages for refreshment; immediately two naked Aricara's approached, and in the most supplicating manner implored us to have compassion on their women and children; they stated that their villages were covered with the dead and dying, and that if we commenced again to fire on them, we should effectually destroy them. We learned also from them that one of their principal men, in attempting to supplicate the whites, during the action, was shot dead from the top of his lodge, and that two more shared the same fate, from the north gate, while endeavoring to speak to us.

From this it appears, that had Colonel Leavenworth thought it policy to have asked these people to have made peace with him, they certainly would have gratified him, and the action would have ceased early in the day. I am prepared, however, to say, positively, that no such proposition was made to them.

ONE OF THE EXPEDITION

Fort Atkinson, Nov. 13, 1823.

When reading this very mild communication, I thought I saw in it the language of an old and intimate acquaintance at the Council Bluffs—until I reached that part where he speaks of the *north gate*, which convinced me of my error. A gate to the Riccara Village!!! I confess I am at a loss to know who has been so bold as to represent a gate about these huts, fortified with pieces of drift wood, poles of different sizes, willows, brush, &c &c. The writer is prepared to say positively that no proposition for peace was made to the Riccaras—I have charged you with making this proposal, both before and after you withdrew your troops. The following statement, I think, will satisfy some portion of the world that such application was made by you:

MR. CARSON'S STATEMENT.

Fort Recovery, 24th Aug. 1823.

At the request of Mr. J. Pilcher, the following statement is made, for the correctness of which I pledge my word of honor.

On the day the Ricara Towns were besieged by the Missouri Legion, under the command of Col. Leavenworth, the immediate command of the company of Voyageurs and Hunters furnished by Mr. Pilcher, on the part of the Missouri Fur Company, devolved upon me, in consequence of Mr. Vanderburgh (to whom the command of this company was originally assigned,) having taken charge of one of the six pounders, by request of Col. Leavenworth. The position which I occupied, was one from which little could be effected—about 12 or 1 o'clock, Mr. Pilcher came up and asked me if I had received orders to remain where I then was, with our company; I informed him that I did not so understand them; then said he "as your men can do nothing here, I will take it upon myself to change your position; we will march them down to the ravine, now occupied by General Ashley and his men, and endeavor to get a position there, from which your men will probably be able to effect something." My men were necessarily a good deal scattered; I assembled them and was sitting down a little over the hill which concealed the men from the view of the Indians, as Mr. Pilcher observed he would wait a few minutes until the Col. passed, as it might not meet his approbation. The Col. very soon came up, when Mr. P. informed him what he was about to do—the Col. observed "the position is a very good one, you could not get a better, and I wish Mr. Carson and his men to continue in the occupation of it." Mr. Pilcher then said to me, "you must continue where you were; let your men take their station again." Some conversation took place between Mr. P. and the Col. the whole of which I do not recollect, finally, the Col. said, "I wish to speak to these Ricaras," and asked Mr. P. if he had any man who could speak both French and English, saying that he wished to give some instructions to Simoneau, the Ricara interpreter (who did not understand the English language) and the Col. could not speak French. Mr. P. pointed out one of our men who spoke both French and English well & directed him to interpret for the Col. and the following, I am satisfied, were his exact words,—tell Simoneau to go with me [] and we will get as near the village [?] as we can, and I wish to have him speak to the Ricaras, and tell them they are fools; ask them why they do not come out with a white flag and make peace with me; tell them we do not come here to fight them; we came to make peace; white

men's hearts are good; they wish to make peace, and have come for that purpose." The Col. made several other remarks which I do not distinctly recollect; but finally observed, as he was about leaving the place, "I should like to have you go along, Mr. Pilcher;" I do not recollect that Mr. P. made any reply; tho he did not accompany the Col. but left the place, at the same time apparently displeased. A few minutes after, the Col. returned to where I was, accompanied by the interpreter who went with him; I asked him if the interpreter had made the Indians understand what he wished to tell them; he replied that he had spoken to them, but he was a little fearful the Indians did not rightly understand, in consequence of in the wind. The interpreters spoke French to one of my men at the same time, and said he had delivered the Col.'s message, and the Indians answered with their fuses.

(Signed,) M. B. CARSON.

That these were your instructions to the Interpreter, is certain—that the message was delivered, is proved by your own acknowledgments. This paper serves also to explain other things in relation to our company, which I am correctly informed you have made good use of in the subsequent part of your detail. The first Indian that I saw (others might have appeared previously) came out of the villages after you withdrew your troops for *refreshment*. You directed me to go and see him; you went with me yourself, & you delivered to him the same speech—for it appeared to have been studied for the occasion, & well suited the subject. He then returned to the villages with that message; surely no one will contradict this. Simoneau is your only dependance; therefore this must rest between you and myself—unless you should venture to bring out Simoneau in your support. If I would use such proof as his, I might easily counteract any thing he would say, but should you risque him before the public, I shall prefer shewing the world *who he is*. Your message to the village brought out *your Little Soldier* & here commenced your negotiations. The propositions to make peace unquestionably came from you.

JOSHUA PILCHER.

1824, Tues., January 13. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

A letter from Col. Leavenworth, at Council Bluffs, dated 13th Dec. to Gen. Atkinson, who commands this frontier, states, that three men, lately arrived at that place from Cedar Fort, bring information that six or seven men of Maj Henry's party had been attacked, near the Mandan

Villages, by either the Mandans or Aurickarees, and that three of the whites were killed. They also state that the Aurickarees were building two Towns, one on each side of the Missouri, near the mouth of the Cannon Ball River.

1824, Tues., January 20. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

For publication in the *St. Louis Enquirer*:

Fort Atkinson, Dec. 13, 1823

We the undersigned, officers of the late expedition against the Aurickaree Indians, having seen a publication signed by Mr. Pilcher, in the St. Louis papers, charging Col. Leavenworth with cowardice, feel it our duty in justice to him, ourselves, and the army to contradict the assertion. Nothing appeared in his conduct during the engagement, to authorize so base a calumny.

A. R. WOOLEY, Major 6th Inf.
 JOHN GALE, Surgeon U. S. Army
 W. N. WICKLIFF, Lt. U. S. Army
 N. I. CRUGER, Lt. U. S. 6th Inf.
 W. V. MORRIS, Lt. 6th Inf.
 D. KETCHUM, Brig-Maj., U. S. Army
 B. RILEY, Capt. 6th Inf.

1824, Thurs., January 22. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

IMPORTANT FROM THE UPPER MISSOURI

For nearly a year we have been receiving accounts of Indian depredations and hostilities in different parts of the country south and west of us. The Indians almost every day are assuming a more hostile attitude, and unless speedy measures are adopted to check their progress we fear the fur trade must cease, & all communication with the Indian tribes be interrupted.

On the 13th ultimo, three men belonging to Maj. Henry's trapping party arrived at the Council Bluffs from Powder river, on the Yellow Stone, who detail the following facts, which we believe are entitled to the fullest credit.

About the 20th of August, Maj. Henry's party, on their way to the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and at a considerable distance from the

Missouri, were discovered and fired upon by a war party of Indians. Two men were killed, named James Anderson and Auguste Neill—two others were wounded, and two horses lost.

When the party arrived at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, they found that 22 horses had been stolen by the Blackfoot or Assiniboin Indians. Loosing seven more shortly afterwards, they determined to abandon that establishment, embarked their goods on board of a boat, and ascended the Yellow Stone to the mouth of Powder river, where their farther ascent was prevented by the rapids. Meeting the Crow Indians, Maj. Henry purchased from them forty-seven horses, and sent forward a trapping party in a south western direction, towards the mountains. He intended shortly afterwards to dispatch another party when the informant, Mr. Harris, left there.

He gives a very unfavorable account of the situation and prospects of the hunting parties near the mountains—says that the Indians frequently visited Maj. Henry's establishment at the mouth of the Yellow Stone in a friendly manner, & treated those civilly whom they met abroad, but stole horses whenever an opportunity occurred. The Crows gave information that the Blackfoot Indians were determined to hunt constantly for the trapping parties, and destroy them whenever it was possible. It was also the expectation of the whole party to be attacked whenever the Indians could do it under favorable circumstances. Maj. Henry's whole party have only collected 25 packs of fur since their being in the country, and two or three were purchased.

Mr. H. farther states, that on his way down, he called at Mr. Tilton's trading house at the Mandan village, and learnt that the Mandans had made the attack on Maj. Henry's party. He saw an Indian who was wounded in that encounter, and recognized one of the horses that was taken at that time.

The Aricaras have purchased a dirt village, one mile below the Mandans, which they inhabit. He saw four of their chiefs, who appeared friendly, and professed an anxiety to preserve peace with the Americans. Mr. Tilton, whom, & whose company they all treated well, confirmed this account, but he doubted their ability to restrain their warriors, on account of their towns having been burnt. Having learnt that the Aricaras had sent two war parties to the site of their old towns to fight the Sioux & endeavor to procure some corn, and being advised to avoid them, Mr. H. and his party descended the river in the night. They were met, however, in the day time, by one of the parties and fired upon, but with-

out injury. Opposite the site of the old Aricara towns Mr. H. saw two bands of the Sioux Indians, who treated him well, and informed him that they had obtained a good supply of corn from the deserted fields of their enemies. He states that at the time the Mandans attacked Maj. Henry and his party, they were ignorant of the result of the late expedition against the Aricaras, and that their chiefs were much alarmed about it.

The Blackfoot Indians are a numerous and warlike nation, and appear to have been always hostile to the Americans. We recollect that when Maj. Henry passed here, nearly two years since, Mr. E. Williams, a respectable citizen of Cooper county, and who spent several years on the head waters of the Missouri, Arkansas and Columbia, said, with confidence, that those Indians would attack, rob and kill his hunting parties, whenever they had an opportunity. He spoke from experience, and his prediction appears to have been too true.

1824, Tues., January 27. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

A communication from B. Riley, Capt. 6th Inf., who wishes it to be distinctly understood that there is no impugnation of Mr. Pilcher's character or conduct in the communication published Jan. 20. It was only to certify that Col. Leavenworth is not a coward.

1824, Mon., February 9. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We are authorised to announce Gen. WILLIAM H. ASHLEY, Lieutenant Governor of this state, as a candidate for GOVERNOR.

It is understood that Mr. FREDERICK BATES is also a candidate.

1824, Mon., February 16. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

After announcing Gen Ashley as a candidate for Governor, the *Missouri Gazette* says—"We have no hesitation in saying that there is combined in Gen. Ashley all that talent and experience which eminently qualify him to advise us in peace and command us in war."

The General, in consequence of the absence of Governor M'Nair, is now discharging the executive functions at St. Charles. It may be

deemed a necessary noviciate to the honors and duties of a higher and more positive character which awaits him.

1824, Sat., March 27. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

More Indian News—With pleasure we render our grateful acknowledgments to the gentlemen of the army at Fort Atkinson, for their polite attentions and promptitude in transmitting information to events which transpire in that quarter. The following adds another instance to the list of obligations which their favours have created.

Five or six men belonging to Mr. Brazeau's trading establishment, were lately killed near the Aricara Village while ascending the Missouri river. They were finally conveyed in a batteau, and were going up for the purpose of trading with the Mandans and Aricaras,—Within one day's voyage of the Aricara village, the patroon, apprehensive of danger, left his company and proceeded by land. He promised to rejoin them at the Mandans, whose town, one mile above the Aricara's, he entered under cover of the night. The day after his arrival, he received news that his men were all murdered, his cargo captured, and his boat sunk. The amount of goods taken, was at cost, \$15,000.

Mr. Tilton, a trader at the Mandans, sent one of his men to the river for water, who was also met and killed by an Aricara Indian.

We are no advocates of the trapping and hunting on Indian lands. We doubt the right, and deny the expediency of exercising it. The effect of it is to deprive the Indians of the necessities of life—cut off their scanty means of commerce, and create irreconcilable quarrels between them and ourselves. We have driven the aborigines from their forests and fisheries on the seaboard; taken possessions of their homes and lands, and forced the wretched remnant of their tribes, which the havoc of war, the incongenial habits of civilization, have spared, to retire beyond the mountains, and seek out another home, far from their ancestral inheritance. The fertile valley of the Ohio and the Mississippi received them bountifully, supplied their wants and blunted the sting of their former misfortunes; but the extending wave of civilized emigration still rolling westward, occupied their country, and forced them to flee to the mountains and deserts for safety. The places which they now inhabit are destitute of those advantages which render them desirable for the residence of the white man. He cannot live there; and necessity, and not

his humanity, protects the Indians from extermination or farther flight to the shores of the Pacific. Under such circumstances, we do not justify that spirit of cupidity, which, for a little private gain would take away from a numerous race of human beings their precarious means of subsistence. Their intercourse with civilized nations have caused them to discontinue the use of bows and arrows to procure food, and no longer to depend on skins to guard them from cold and storms. Guns, blankets, lead, powder and tobacco, have become artificial wants, and are classed among the necessaries of life, by this intercourse.

If, therefore, we traverse their country, kill their deer for skins, and their buffalo for robes, their means of living will shortly be exhausted—their animals will be scattered—and how can they exist?—if we follow their streams, and ascend their mountains to supply ourselves with furs, what articles of commerce do we leave them to exchange for our goods, and for things above enumerated, without which they could not well live? Is it not illiberal and uncharitable thus to reduce them to want; to starve and distress them to add to the wealth of a few individuals? We negotiate with the British for the right of taking and curing fish on the banks of Newfoundland. We pay the South Americans for their hides—the East Indians for their aromatic productions, and several nations for their salt, without arrogating to ourselves the privilege of procuring those things by our own labour. We acknowledge that they belong to the inhabitants in whose country they grow. But the Indians have no jurisdiction over their territory; no rights, no privileges, and like Cain, they are marked out to be persecuted by the rest of the human family, with impunity.

This article was reprinted in the *Philadelphia National Gazette* issue of May 3, 1824.

1824, Mon., March 29. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Lieut Morris, who arrived on Saturday evening last, from the Council Bluffs, brings news of the murder of 5 men (belonging to the trading establishment of Messrs. B. Pratte & Co.) by the Yanktons, and one of the Columbian Fur Company, by the Auricaree Indians. We have not learned the particulars but shall endeavor to obtain them for publication in our next.

1824, Sat., May 8. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

These articles contain extracts from Mr. Pilcher's answers to questions put to him by the Committee of the United States Senate on Indian Affairs which are fully reported in Senate Document 56, First Session, 18th Congress.

1824, Mon., June 7. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

MORE INDIAN NEWS

Mr. Vasques, just from the Upper Missouri, states that five men of Major Henry's party in descending the Platte, were attacked by a party of Aurickaree Indians—and that three, More, Chapman and Glass, were killed; that the others, Dutton and Marsh, made their escape, and arrived at the Council Bluffs.

They state that Major Henry, has built a Fort at the mouth of the Big Horn—that a Mr. Wheeler was killed by a white bear. Captain Smith, with some of the party, had crossed the Mountains.

This article was reprinted in the *Missouri Intelligencer* issue of June 19.

1824, Mon., June 14. *St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

THE AURICKAREES & OSAGES

Late accounts from the Upper Missouri, confirm the reports heretofore received of the Indian murders in that quarter.

It now appears, that after they fled from their Villages, the Aurickarees sought the protection of the Mandans and obtained it on condition of future friendly deportment towards the whites—that this was promised by all, except a small band who breathe nothing but vengeance, and separated themselves from the main body; that the latter built a Village in the timber just below Tilton's Fort, and induced him to trade with them. They have robbed three men of Henry's, and killed one of Tilton's, and four of the French Company. They at length manifested such hostility as to make it prudent for Tilton to abandon his Fort, and remove within the Mandan Villages, the Chiefs of which withdrew their

protection from the Aurickarees; who then formed a treaty with the Gros Ventres, who stipulated that in case our troops should ascend the river to punish their outrages, their allies should be left to meet their own fate. It is said that the Aurickarees are now much alarmed, expecting such a result, and have sent a deputation to Colonel Leavenworth, with a tale of repentance and sorrow, and promises of future good conduct, upon condition of forgiveness for the past. And to make it more palatable to the Colonel, their outrages are charged upon our traders who burnt their Villages.

That the Colonel's vindication against the charges of Mr. Pilcher has reached their head men, or *their ambassadors*, is not to be doubted, & under circumstances it requires but little knowledge of human nature, and much less of the Indian character to know the reasons why this *charge* was introduced into their *correspondence*. We do not approve of the attack on Col. Leavenworth, much less the acrimony in which it was made, and foresaw no effort on his part to attack in turn, not anticipating however that he would ever feel bound to array himself on the side of the Indians against the traders, to protect whom he was sent into that country.

1824, Mon., August 17. *National Intelligencer*. Washington, D. C.

St. Louis, July 19—We have seen Messrs. Gordon and Keemly, just from the Upper Missouri, who confirm most that we have heard from that quarter, and in addition state that a part of the Aurickarees have descended the river near to their old villages, and that a party of several hundred warriors came upon Fort Recovery and carried off several horses belonging to General Ashley and the United States, which had been stolen last fall by the Sioux, and reclaimed by the Missouri Fur Company. These gentlemen also state, that about thirty lodges of the Aurickarees had gone across to the river Platte, and associated themselves with the Arapahoes & Chyans, who frequently range across the country in the route taken by our traders to Santa Fe, and have heretofore been friendly—that the Chief of the Arapahoes advised Mr. Keemly of the approach of the Aurickarees, and called them dogs, saying that he would not be answerable for their conduct.—*Enquirer*.

1824, Tues., September 21. *The Arkansas Gazette*.
Arkansas Post, Arkansas Territory.

St. Louis, August 30.

An arrival from the Mountains.—After an absence of nearly three years, we are happy to announce the safe return of Maj. Henry, (of the firm of Ashley and Henry,) with a part of his company, from the Rocky Mountains. He descended the Missouri in boats to St. Louis, with a considerable quantity of valuable furs, &c. In passing the old Arickara Village, the Ress (who it appears have returned, and are now in peaceable possession,) invited them to stop, with many professions of friendship, which however were disregarded. No reliance can yet be placed in their promises, as it is believed they are far from being friendly. . . . [*Enquirer*]

This article was reprinted in the *National Intelligencer* issue of September 25, 1824.

1824, Tues., November 16. *The Arkansas Gazette*. Arkansas Post, Arkansas Territory.

By the arrival of Major Henry from the Rocky Mountains, we learn that his party have discovered a passage by which loaded waggons can at this time reach the navigable waters of the Columbia River. This route lies South of the one explored by Lewis and Clarke, and is inhabited by Indians friendly to us.—Doctor Floyd, a persevering and intelligent member of Congress from Virginia, has urged with much effect the propriety of forming a colony at the mouth of the Columbia; and in this age of experiment and improvement, we may expect to see the prejudices of our Eastern Brethren giving place to more enlightened views of general policy; and may look forward to the accomplishment, in a short time, of a project, which a few years past was ridiculed, as visionary.

[*St. Louis Enquirer*.]

1825, Tues., April 5. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

Gen. ATKINSON and Maj. O'FALLON are now in this town, on their way to the Council Bluffs. They are agents on the part of our government to conclude treaties of peace with the Indian nations residing on the Upper Missouri. The horses and all the other preparations for the expedition, have passed this place, except the *Antelope*, a boat built for the accommodation of the Commissioners, which is expected in a few days. We understand that a respectable military force will accompany

the expedition, which will impress upon the minds of the Indians an idea of our power and ability to punish them. The treaties of peace will place them in a new relation to us, the extent and obligations of which will no doubt be fully explained to them, and they will also be admonished of the consequences which a violation of the treaty will bring upon them. Our fur trade is of importance, and these arrangements are designed to protect it from the general spirit of hostility which the Indians in that quarter have manifested towards it for more than two years past.

1825, Fri., May 27. *Missouri Advocate, and St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

MISSOURI EXPEDITION.

We are highly gratified to learn, that the Commissioners, Gen. Atkinson and Maj. B. O'Fallon, appointed to treat with the Indians on the Upper Missouri, with the military escort selected for that purpose, departed on the 14th May, under the command of Gen. Atkinson.

This expedition is intended to enforce what we hold to be the true policy of our Government on the Western frontier, and being associated with our immediate interests, we feel the greatest solicitude for their safety and success. We entertain no fears, however, for either, knowing the gentlemen entrusted with a mission so important, to be eminently qualified in every respect for the duties assigned them.

The expedition, comprising two battalions of infantry, & one mounted company, 475 strong, (with the exception of the mounted company) embarked on board of the keel boats *Buffalo, Elk, White Bear, Beaver, Otter, Muskrat, Racoon, & Mink*.

We learn that the Indians are apprized of the approach and object of the expedition; and the Chiefs of each nation will probably repair to some designated point to meet the Commissioners, which will very much facilitate the movements of the expedition, and enable it to return in good season for winter quarters.

1825, Tues., August 16. *Alexandria Gazette*. Alexandria, Virginia.

MISSOURI EXPEDITION

St. Louis, July 15.—By a letter received at this office, we learn that the Military Expedition, accompanying the Commissioners appointed to treat with the Indians on the Upper Missouri, had arrived on the 9th of

June, all well, at the Poncas Village, a distance of about 400 miles from the Point of departure. The facility and great security with which the expedition appears to be moving on, is the strongest evidence of the most favorable result.—The Commissioners, it is expected, will reach the mouth of the Yellow Stone about the 15th of August; a point beyond which, we apprehend, they will not be able to go far enough the present season to collect the Black Feet Indians, who live upwards of 700 miles beyond this point, on the waters of Miara's River, and about 50 miles north of the great falls of the Missouri.—This circumstance, connected with the limited time of the Commissioners, and the fears those Indians entertain of punishment for the late murder of part of the Missouri Fur Company, will probably defeat one object of the expedition. If this should be the case, we are confident it will be owing to circumstances beyond the control of the Commissioners; as, in our opinion, they are eminently qualified to accomplish every object of the mission, which could be reached by officers devoted to their duty, and the happiness and prosperity of their country.

The following letter, received on the 8th inst. will be highly gratifying to those of our readers who feel an interest in the expedition:

Extract of a letter from Gen. H. Atkinson, dated Fort Kiawa, (at the foot of the Great Bend,) June 23d, 1825.

Dear Sir: We reached this place on the morning of the 17th inst. after a quick voyage from the Poncas village. We have been detained here some time, in consequence of the trouble we have had in collecting the Indians, who are compelled to keep the prairies to obtain a subsistence. Yesterday we concluded treaties with the Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonas tribes of the Sioux Nation—they all appear to be well disposed. At 10 o'clock this morning, we shall move forward, with a view, in some five days, to meet the Saone and Ogalallas tribes of Sioux, at the mouth of the Little Missouri river, 100 miles above this place.—Thence, we shall proceed to the Aricaras Village, where, together with the Aricaras, we calculate on meeting the Chyennes, whom we have sent an express to, with an invitation to that effect. The Mandans will be the next point of halting.

I think we shall be able to accomplish all the objects of our mission, except that of meeting the Blackfeet Indians, which I consider rather doubtful. With great respect, sir, &c.

H. ATKINSON.

Col. Foreman, St. Louis.

We lay before our readers the late intelligence from the Missouri expedition.

[*St. Louis Enquirer.*

By a letter from Gen. Atkinson to the editor, dated Fork of the Great Bend, Fort Kiawa, June 29, we learn that the expedition arrived at that place on the 19th, having made a quick voyage from Council Bluffs, stopping two days on the way to treat with the Poncas. The Commissioners were detained several days at Fort Kiawa, on account of the absence of the Indians, who are in the prairies to obtain Buffalo to subsist on.

They have concluded treaties with the Teton, Yancton Yanctonas, and proceeded on the 23d to the Little Missouri, (100 miles farther) expecting to meet at that place the Sionese and Orillalas.

The expedition had progressed thus far without the loss of a man and without any accident of consequence.

1825, Wed., September 21. *Philadelphia National Gazette.*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Fur Trade and Frontier Posts.—By the following correspondence, which we copy from the *St. Louis Enquirer*, it will be seen that the government contemplates extending the military posts higher up the Missouri. The highest post on that river at present, is at the Council Bluffs, about 600 miles above its mouth. If the new post be placed at the point suggested by General Brown, it will be above the Mandan villages, somewhere near the mouth of White Earth River, and if so, about 800 miles above the Council Bluffs. The *Missouri Republican* states that General Atkinson and Major O'Fallon are now on an expedition to the upper Missouri, treating with the Indian tribes in that quarter; and that Gen. Brown's letter to Gen. A. was sent after him by a special messenger.

St. Louis, April 30th, 1825.

Dear Sir: The expedition for the Upper Missouri is expected to leave Council Bluffs about this time. The treaties which will be formed with the Indians, and the imposing appearance of 500 well appointed men, will doubtless have a good effect upon the state of our fur trade; but nothing short of the complete execution of the plan of the late administration can give to that important interest the protection which it demands. A permanent post at, or beyond the Mandan villages, to serve as a *pointe d'appui* to our traders, can alone enable our citizens to expel the British from the Upper Missouri, to recover the rich fur trade of the Rocky

Mountains, and to maintain their own position in that remote region. It is my intention to renew my exertions, at the next session of Congress, to obtain the establishment of this post, and, I flatter myself, with better success than heretofore, inasmuch as that stumbling block, yclept "expense," which was got out of the old Yellow Stone expedition, can no longer be thrown into my path. The present expedition has removed it forever. The cost of the whole movement, including the purchase of ten or a dozen boats, which can be sold hereafter and reimburse a part of the expense, will not exceed the extra appropriation of 10,000 dollars, being 3000 dollars less than the estimate of the Quarter Master General Jesup, which itself was so low that several gentlemen thought it was a take in.

Even if the expenditure of that sum has to be repeated, the amount will be too inconsiderable to furnish a reasonable objection to national enterprise: still, it would be of some avail in the argument to say, "We want no money—the troops are there;" and to be able to say this, a part of General Atkinson's command must be left above during the ensuing winter. I have to propose to you, therefore, to obtain the President's consent to this arrangement (for your wishes are well known to me,) dependent of course upon the General's opinion of his own capability to provide for the subsistence and the safety of his men; points upon which I have no doubt, but of which the officer commanding on the spot can be the only proper judge. Even if Congress should refuse to make the post permanent, we should still derive some advantage from the stay of the troops during the winter, as the longer the visit, the more imposing and durable will be its effects upon the minds of the savages.

The able and cordial support which you have given in the Senate to all our measures for the protection of the fur trade, assures me of your ready co-operation, in your new situation, in any feasible plan for its further security. It has a fair claim upon the national protection both as an object of commerce, and as a means of governing the Indians. The British avail themselves of it, for both purposes. Their commerce in furs has been worth about a million and a quarter of dollars per annum for forty years; ours has been nearly extinct, but is reviving, and will yield 300,000 dollars this spring at this place. Last year we imported 320,000 dollars worth, and the year before 270,000 dollars worth; nearly one half in each year from Canada, that is to say, from our own territory on the upper Missouri, by the way of Canada. This state of things I have endeavored to alter, but Sisyphean is the labour of effecting any change in the policy of a great nation.

With great respect, your obedient and faithful ser't.

THOS. H. BENTON.

Hon Mr. Barbour, Secretary of War.

1825, Fri., September 23. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

The Yellow Stone expedition was at the Mandan Villages on the 29th July—remained there eight days—proceeded on the 7th of August for the Yellow Stone. The Arickarees and all the Indians of the Missouri were peaceably disposed, except the Black Feet, who will not come in. The Sioux of the Mississippi has killed two of Gen. Ashley's men on the Missouri, before the expedition passed up. The officers and men were in good health—no loss had been sustained except in provisions. A few barrels of pork had been condemned, and some of the pilot bread baked at Fort Atkinson, had moulded. This information is received by letter from Maj. Ketchum, and from a discharged soldier who has reached here from the Mandan Villages.

1825, Mon., October 3. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We are informed by a letter received in town from a gentleman at Franklin, that our enterprising citizen Gen. Wm. H. Ashley, passed that place on his way down, with a very valuable cargo of Beaver. It is stated, that he has from 80 to 100 packs, worth from 40 to \$50,000. He may be daily expected. From the same source we learn that the Missouri Expedition had returned to the Bluffs, and that the commissioners will be here in a few days.

1825, Fri., October 7. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

We learn, by the arrival here of an officer attached to the Yellow Stone Expedition, that the Commissioners, General Atkinson and Maj. O'Fallon, accompanied by the troops, ascended the Missouri as far as *Two Thousand Mile Creek*. After making treaties with various tribes of Missouri Indians, the expedition returned to Fort Atkinson, (Council Bluffs) on the 19th Ult. without the loss of a single man. The extraordinary value of the wheel boats was confirmed in descending the river, at a low stage of water.

As no previous arrangements had been made, the General did not deem it practicable to subsist any portion of the troops at the Mandan Villages during the winter, without hazarding lives in the enterprize. Vegetable food is deemed indispensable to the health of the troops, & this could not be had at the Mandans.

Our enterprizing fellow-citizen, Gen. Ashley, met the expedition at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, with a rich cargo of beaver, and profited by the convoy of the flotilla downward.

Gen. Ashley confirms the accounts we have had of the wealth of the fur regions beyond the Mountains, and we understand he intends to continue the trade. The freight with which he passed this place a few days since, is supposed to be worth \$50,000.

We learn that the General had one or two skirmishes with the Blackfeet and Crow Indians; and that he met with one or two British *trapping* parties. The particulars in regard to his engagement with the Indians, or his intercourse with the British, we are not informed of, owing to the very short stay he made with us. We hope, however, to have it in our power to lay before our readers, very shortly, full, and we have no doubt very interesting information on the subject.

1825, Sat., October 8. *Missouri Advocate, and St. Louis Enquirer.* St. Louis, Missouri.

FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Our fellow-citizen, Genl. Ashley, has just returned from his adventurous enterprize to the Rocky Mountains, bringing with him one of the richest cargoes of furs that ever arrived at St. Louis. He spent the past winter in the bosom of the mountains, and made excursions in the spring down several of the rivers which go to the Pacific ocean. The furs obtained by him were brought on horses to the waters of the Big Horn, where they were embarked about the middle of Aug. and after a voyage of three thousand miles arrived at St. Louis on the 4th inst. It is thus, by heroic enterprize, Genl. Ashley has indemnified himself for all the losses occasioned by the murderous attack of the Arikara's in the summer of the year 1823.

In the course of his expedition, Genl. Ashley fell in with a party in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, who are believed to have 1000 men in their employment west of the Rocky Mountains. The riches which this company are carrying out of the United States are immense, and beyond all calculation. The single party met with, had taken beaver to the amount of \$200,000.

1825, Mon., October 10. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

It gives us pleasure to state, that the reported success of Gen. Ashley, noticed in our last, is not exaggerated. The quantity of beaver, brought down by the General, exceeds, in fact, the amount stated, and is a just reward to his enterprize.

1825, Sat., October 22. *Missouri Advocate, and St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

RETURN OF THE MISSOURI EXPEDITION.—Genl. Atkinson and Major O'Fallon, Commissioners, accompanied by Lieutenant M'Ree, Aid to the General, Capt. B. Riley and Lieut. Rogers, arrived at this place in the Barge *Antelope*, on the evening of the 20th inst. all in fine health.

The expedition left Fort Atkinson on the 16th May, and after the necessary delay in treating with the intermediate tribes of Indians, arrived at the Mandan villages, where the Commissioners waited for the arrival of the Crow Indians, who came in on the 3rd August; and on the 4th, having concluded a treaty with the Commissioners, the expedition embarked on the 6th for the Yellow-stone, and arrived there on the 17th of August. At this point, Genl. Ashley, who had spent the previous winter in the Mountains, with a detachment of his party arrived in two large skin canoes, with one hundred packs of beaver. Genl. Ashley's party remaining at the mouth of the river, and Capt. Riley, with two of the largest transports & 150 men, being left in command, the Commissioners proceeded up the Missouri on the 20th, and reached the mouth of 2000 mile creek, 120 miles above the Yellow-stone, on the 24th, and passing that point 8 miles, on the morning of the 25th of August, the expedition commenced its descent of the river, having accomplished everything that was practicable or of consequence, & arrived at the mouth of the Yellow-stone, again, on the 26th.

Here, Gen. Atkinson, to afford that protection to our Fur trade, which he has always manifested the strongest disposition to do, and to relieve Gen. Ashley at once, from all further apprehensions, received our enterprizing and worthy fellow-citizen, his party and rich cargo of furs on board of the transports, and on the 27th continued descending the river. The Commissioners, as they were descending, halted at the villages of the Mandans on the 31st; on the 4th of Sept. at the Arricaras; at Fort Kiawa, Great Bend, on the 9th; at the Poncar village on the 12th, and

arrived at the Council Bluffs on the 19th of Sept.—Here, the Commissioners remained until the 7th of October, for the purpose of having an interview with the three bands of Pawnees, the O Mahas and the Otoes, who all came in and concluded treaties; making in all, the number of nations treated with, seventeen, to wit: Otoes, Mahas, three bands of Pawnees, Poncars, Yanktons, Tetons, Yanktonas, Siones, Hunkpapas, Ogalallas, Cheyennes, Arricaras, Mandans, Groventres, and Crows.

When we take into consideration, the great distance which the expedition moved up the river, in perfect good order; the short time in which it reached the point of its destination, after the numerous delays to treat with the Indians, we cannot withhold from all, instrumental in the execution of this duty, the praise which is justly due. The duty of the Commissioners, Genl. Atkinson and Major O'Fallon, must have been arduous indeed; and never was an important public trust, more promptly and satisfactorily discharged. Such a discharge of public duty is highly creditable to the Commissioners, and must be duly appreciated by the general government. To Genl. Atkinson, who acted in the two-fold capacity of Commander of the expedition, and Commissioner of the government, we are under particular obligations, and the people of Missouri will not be unmindful of his service and devotion to their best interests.

1825, Mon., October 24. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Commissioners of the Missouri Expedition (Gen. Atkinson and Maj. O'Fallon) returned to St. Louis on the 20th inst. having proceeded up the Missouri as far as 2000 Mile Creek, about 120 miles above the Yellow Stone. They have formed treaties with seventeen different tribes of Indians.

1825, Sat., October 29. *Missouri Advocate, and St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

THE FUR TRADE.—Our readers will remember, that on the 4th inst. Genl. Ashley returned from the mountains with the most valuable collection of Furs, ever before brought to this place; and unlike many others, led from their object by prosperity, his whole time has been indefatigably devoted to the outfit of another expedition. In the short space of twenty-five days from the time of his return, he has collected together, and organized a most extensive party, consisting of 70

men, 160 mules and horses, with an outfit of merchandize, estimated in all, at \$20,000, which is now ready to depart, and will leave this place to-day or tomorrow, destined West of the Rocky Mountains, for two years.

The amount of capital vested in this single party, will give some idea of the great importance of the Fur Trade to this State. The money circulated by Genl. Ashley, for men, mules, horses, traps &c among our fellow-citizens, will be of the most essential service to them, and their best wishes must follow him for his success and prosperity in this hazardous enterprize.

The Fur Trade is of a great local as well as general importance; and it is surely a serious reflection on the policy of our government, that our own citizens are not permitted to trap upon their own territory, while British subjects are permitted to do so, and carry away immense wealth, which would, under proper regulations, fall into our own hands. The ensuing Congress, we hope, will take up this subject, and adopt such measures as will effectually secure the advantage of this interesting trade to our own people.

1825, Mon., October 31. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We understand that a party of men in the employ of Gen. Ashley, started from this place for the Rocky Mountains on yesterday. The party consists of about 70 men. They go by land, and are furnished with mules and horses to transport the goods and articles necessary for the expedition.

1825, Fri., November 11. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Franklin, Missouri.

MARRIED—At St. Louis, on the 26th ult. Gen WILLIAM H. ASHLEY, to Miss ELIZA, daughter of Maj. William Christy.

1825, Mon., December 5. *Philadelphia National Gazette*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

General Ashley, who returned on the 4th Oct, from his trading expedition, departed from St. Louis on the 30th of the same month on a new expedition, having collected 70 persons, 160 mules and horses, with an outfit of merchandize estimated, altogether, at the value of 20,000. The party will go west of the Rocky Mountains, and be absent two years.

1826, Sat., March 11. *Missouri Advocate, and St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

NEW ROUTE to the Pacific Ocean, discovered by GENL. WILLIAM H. ASHLEY, during his late Expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

The General Government having under consideration, the propriety of establishing a military post at some point within our Territorial limits, on the coast of the Pacific, the present is, perhaps, the most appropriate time to communicate any information, which may in the least, tend to facilitate the consummation of a measure, in our opinion, of so much national importance.

Heretofore, those great barriers of nature, the Rocky Mountains, have been called up in judgment against the practicability of establishing a communication between this point and the Pacific Ocean. But the Great Author of nature in His wisdom has prepared, and individual enterprize discovered, that so "broad and easy is the way" that thousands may travel it in safety, without meeting with any obstruction deserving the name of a MOUNTAIN.

The route proposed, after leaving St. Louis and passing generally on the north side of the Missouri river, strikes the river Platte a short distance above its junction with the Missouri; then pursues the waters of the Platte to their sources, and in continuation, crosses the head waters, of what Genl. Ashley believes to be, the Rio Colorado of the West, and strikes for the first time, a ridge, or single connecting chain of mountains running from north to south. This, however, presents no difficulty, as a wide gap is found, apparently prepared for the purpose of a passage. After passing this gap, the route proposed, falls directly on a river, called by Genl. Ashley, the Buenaventura, and runs with that river to the Pacific Ocean.

The face of the country, in the general, is a continuation of high, rugged, and barren mountains; the summits of which, are either timbered with pine, quaking-asp, or cedar; or, in fact, almost entirely destitute of vegetation. Other parts are hilly and undulating; and the valleys and table lands, (except on the borders of water courses, which are more or less timbered with cotton wood and willows,) are destitute of wood; but this indispensable article is substituted by an herb, called by the hunters, wild sage: which grows from one to five feet high, and is found in great abundance, in most parts of the country.

Soil. The sterility of the country, generally, is almost incredible. That part of it, however, bounded by the three principle ranges of mountains,

and watered by the supposed Buenaventura is less sterile; yet the proportion of arable land even within those limits, is comparatively small; and no district of the country visited by Genl. Ashley, or of which he obtained satisfactory information, offers inducements to civilized people, sufficient to justify an expectation of permanent settlements.

Rivers. The river visited by Genl. Ashley, and which he believes to be the Rio Colorado of the West, is, at about fifty miles from its most northern source, eighty yards wide. At this point, Genl. A. embarked and descended the river, which gradually increased in width to one hundred and eighty yards. In passing through the mountains, the channel is contracted to 50 or 60 yards, and so much obstructed by rocks, as to make its descent extremely dangerous, and its ascent impracticable. After descending this river about 400 miles, Genl. A. shaped his course northwardly, and fell upon what he supposed to be, the sources of the Buenaventura; and represents those branches, as bold streams, from twenty to fifty yards wide, forming a junction a few miles below where he crossed them, and then empties into a large lake, (called Grand Lake,) represented by the Indians as being 40 or 50 miles wide, and sixty or seventy miles long. This information is strengthened by that of the white hunters, who have explored parts of the Lake. The Indians represent, that at the extreme west end of this Lake, a large river flows out, and runs in a westwardly direction. Genl. A. when on those waters, at first thought it probable they were the source of the Multnomah; but the account given by the Indians, supported by the opinion of some men belonging to the Hudson Bay Company, confirms him in the belief, that they are the head waters of the river represented as the Buenaventura. To the north and north-west from Grand Lake, the country is represented as abounding in SALT.

The Indians, west of the mountains, are remarkably well disposed towards the citizens of the United States; the Eutaws and Flat-heads are particularly so, and express a great wish that the Americans should visit them frequently.

THE FUR TRADE.—Genl. Ashley, with a party of twenty five men, left this place on Wednesday last [March 8, 1826], intending to fall in with the different companies beyond the Rocky Mountains.—Such enterprize richly merits, and we hope will meet with, ample success.

1826, Fri., March 24. *Missouri Intelligencer.* Franklin, Missouri.

General Ashley with a company of about twenty five men arrived here on Wednesday evening the 15th on their way to the Rocky Mountains on a trading and hunting expedition.

1826, Mon., April 10. *Philadelphia National Gazette*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Fur Trade—Gen. Ashley, with a party of twenty-five men, left St. Louis on the 8th ult. intending to fall in with the different companies beyond the Rocky Mountains. This enterprise merits, and we hope will meet with, ample success. A late *Missouri Advocate* contains a notice of a new route to the Pacific Ocean, discovered by General Ashley. By this route it appears that a journey across can be accomplished with comparative ease, and without encountering any serious obstacle, by the way of the Platte, and another river, believed by Gen. Ashley to be the Buenaventura.

1826, Thurs., September 21. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

GRATIFYING INTELLIGENCE.—Fears were entertained, not long since, for the safety of General Ashley and his party, but by a letter, which we have seen, direct from the General himself, it appears, that he is on his way home, and may be daily expected, having arrived within the settlements on the 9th inst. We are happy to learn, that his enterprise has again been crowned with success; he will bring with him, we are told, one hundred and twenty-three packs of Beaver. Gen. Ashley left here on the 8th of March last, and has crossed the Rocky Mountains, where he fell in with his men. He travelled the whole way by land, with pack-horses, going and coming, and has performed the trip in a shorter time, (including several weeks spent there) than was ever known before.

1826, Thurs., September 28. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Fayette, Missouri.

General Ashley and his party have arrived at St. Louis from the Rocky Mountains with 125 packs of beaver valued at \$60,000. We sincerely rejoice that the efforts of this worthy and enterprising individual have been crowned with success.

1826, Thurs., October 12. *Missouri Advocate and St. Louis Enquirer*. St. Louis, Missouri.

THE FUR TRADE

This valuable trade is still prosperous to a degree heretofore unknown. Genl. Ashley's party, it will be remembered, left here last spring; and the Genl. himself, sometime subsequently to their departure, left here also for the Rocky Mountains. The General and part of his men have returned with 125 packs of beaver; performing the whole route, we think, in something less than six months.

1826, Thurs., December 28. *Alexandria Gazette*. Alexandria, Virginia.

GENERAL ASHLEY'S EXPEDITION

The recent expedition of General Ashley to the country west of the Rocky Mountains has been productive of information on subjects of no small interest to the people of the union.—It has proved that the overland expeditions, in large bodies, may be made to that remote region, without the necessity of transporting provisions for men or beast. Gen. Ashley left St. Louis in March last and returned in September. His return caravan consisted of upwards of one hundred horses and mules, and more than half that number of men. He went to the station of the party he had left beyond the mountains, when he came in a year ago, and thence descended a river, believed to be the Buenaventura, about one hundred and fifty miles to the Great Lake.

His return march to St. Louis occupied about 70 days, each mule and horse carrying nearly two hundred pounds of beaver fur—the animals keeping their strength and flesh on the grass which they found, and without losing any time on this long journey. The men also found an abundance of food: they say there was no day in which they could not have subsisted a thousand men, and often ten thousand. Buffaloe furnished the principal food—water of the best quality was met with every day. The whole route lay through a level and open country, better for carriages than any turnpike road in the United States. Wagons and carriages could go with ease as far as General Ashley went, crossing the Rocky Mountains at the source of the north fork of the Platte, and descending the valley of the Buenaventura towards the Pacific ocean. The lake which terminated the expedition westward, is a most remarkable body of

water, and heretofore unknown, unless from vague accounts. It is estimated to be one hundred miles long and sixty or eighty wide. It was crossed last spring by a party of Gen. Ashley's men in canoes, who were occupied four and twenty days in making its circuit. They did not exactly ascertain its outlet, but passed a place where they supposed it must have been. The water of this lake is much saltier than that of the sea. Some of the salt obtained from this water by boiling, has been brought in by Gen. Ashley—he has also brought some specimens of rock salt, found in a strata several feet thick at the surface of the ground, with streams of water running through it in numerous little channels.—The people in the mountains plentifully supply themselves with salt at this spot, and carry it home in bags.

In the whole expedition, Gen. Ashley did not lose a man, nor had any one of those died whom he left behind last year, many of whom have been out four or five years, and are too happy in the freedom of those wild regions to think of returning to the comparative thralldom of civilized life. It would seem that no attempt has been made to ascertain the precise latitude and longitude of the point at which Gen. Ashley crossed the mountains. It is to be hoped that this will not be neglected on the next expedition. From all that we can learn, the elevation is exceedingly small where the passage of the mountain was effected—so small as hardly to affect the rate of going of the caravan, and forming at the most, an angle of three degrees, being two degrees less than the steepest ascent on the Cumberland road.

[*Missouri Herald.*

Also published in the *National Intelligencer*, Washington, D. C., which copied the article from a Zanesville paper.

1827, Thurs., March 15. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

FOR THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. W. H. ASHLEY'S expedition for the Rocky Mountains, will leave St. Louis in a few days. FIFTY competent men may meet with employ in that service, if application be immediately made. March 6, 1827. Advertisement.

1827, Thurs., May 31. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Boston, May 1. INTERESTING ARRIVAL—Three men, Gregory, Nichols and another, whose name we have not learned, former residents of this city, arrived in town last week, after a fifteen years' captivity among the Indians. Early in the late war William Gregory, then at the age of only eleven years, enlisted in the U.S. service, under Capt. Watson, of this city; and the others entering the army about the same time, they were all ordered to the western or Canada lines together. . . . After changing masters several times [having been captured by Indians] they at last found themselves in the power of the tribe called Flat Heads, by whom they were taken to the Rocky Mountains, and taught the Red Man's art of hunting and fishing. . . .

1827, Thurs., June 7. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

Letter written by Wm. H. Ashley, questioning the truth of above, and defending the character of Flat Head Indians. Among other things he said:

Since the spring of 1824, I have constantly had a number of men employed in the Fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains, and since that time have been twice in that country myself. We have had a constant, free and friendly intercourse with the Flat Head Indians, who have used every opportunity offered to prove the sincerity of their professions of friendship for us. Mr. Smith, with eight men, (employed by me) passed the winter of 1824 and 1825 in the Flat Head country. The party were treated with every mark of respect and friendship by those people, who expressed a great desire that the Americans would go more among them, There are now with my hunting party in that region several intelligent men, who were formerly attached to the British trading companies, and who have resided many years with the Flat Heads. . . .

1827, Thurs., October 11. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

We have been politely favored by Gen. Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, with the persual of a letter, written by JEDEDIAH S. SMITH, who has been for several years engaged in hunting and trapping in the Upper Missouri, and who has visited that extensive barren country on the West, not heretofore explored. From this letter, written in a

plain style, we extract the following, which, we trust, will be found interesting:

This letter is printed in full on pages 186 to 194 of *The Ashley-Smith Explorations*, by Harrison Clifford Dale.

1827, Thurs., October 25. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

AMERICAN ENTERPRIZE.

Extract of a letter from Capt. Cunningham, dated St. Diego, Dec. 1826.

"There has arrived at this place, Capt. Jedediah S. Smith, with a company of Hunters, from St. Louis, on the Missouri. These hardy adventurers have been 13 months travelling their route, and have suffered numerous hardships. They have often had death staring them in the face—sometimes, owing to want of sustenance; at others, to the numerous Savages which they have been obliged to contend with. Out of 50 horses which they started with, they brought only 18 in with them; the others having died on the road for want of food and water.

Does it not seem incredible that a party of fourteen men, depending entirely upon their rifles and traps for subsistence, will explore this vast continent, and call themselves happy when they can obtain the tail of a Beaver to dine upon? Capt. Smith is now on board the *Courier*, and is going with me to St. Pedro to meet his men; from thence he intends to proceed northward in quest of Beaver, and return afterwards to his deposit in the Rocky Mountains."

[St. Diego and St. Pedro, are ports in California, W. Coast of America, near 3000 miles from Boston.]—*Boston Palladium*.

1829, Wednesday, April 29. *Philadelphia Gazette*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

THE FUR TRADE

Captain Ashley expresses a confident opinion that there are no other white hunters than his own employed west of the Rocky Mountains, excepting only the British. His men have never passed the 49th degree of north latitude, the supposed boundary of the British possessions, on account of the hostile character of several hostile Indian tribes, and the British themselves do not pass it. The latter have a very good reason for confining themselves within the country south of it—the treaty of 1818 allows them to hunt and trap on the lands claimed by the United States.

They have gone as far south as the Mexican territory, and appearances make it probable that they have been in those extensive regions for ten or fifteen years. About 100 Americans had been employed for three years previously to November, 1827, west of the Rocky Mountains; and their profits averaged about \$600 annually a piece—that is, \$180,000 for the whole period; although most of the streams had been visited by the British, who must at first have derived twice as many furs from them in a given time. Mr. Ogden, who commanded a British post at the mouth of Flat head River, (a branch of the Columbia,) said that he had got about \$600,000 worth of skins, with only 60 men, in the Snake Indian Territory.—*N. Y. Daily Adv.*

“A considerable portion of our Territory West of the Rocky Mountains, being as yet unexplored; the extent of our fur region is uncertain; it, however, would not be an extravagant estimate, to include an half of our Territory of the 30th degree of longitude, (counting from Washington City,) under that denomination; and such is the peculiar situation of the country, that, under suitable regulations, it would probably afford a great quantity of furs for centuries to come. I have been brought to this conclusion from the opinions of the most experienced hunters, and, in some degree, from my own observation, that after trapping beaver, where they were considered plenty, until they became so deminished in numbers, as not to justify the hunter’s continuing his operations at the same place, leaving the streams undisturbed for five or six years, they will, at the expiration of that time, be found as numerous as when first trapped. The beaver is a shy, sagacious animal, they come, after being pursued for sometime, to understand their enemies, and avoid the traps set for them; consequently a sufficient number is left to produce their original number in the course of five or six years.”

The latest attempts made by Capt. Ashley, (which was in a letter written about three months ago,) he mentions, that he has withdrawn from the fur trade, having sold out to Messrs. Smith, Jackson & Subletts, who had last year about 100 men west of the Rocky Mountains, where the British Hudson’s Bay Company then employed about 600. Difficulties occurred between the Blackfoot Indians and our country men, which appeared to have been produced by the exertions of the English. Eight men were killed of our parties during the season, and four missing. Although the Blackfoot territory is two or three hundred miles from the hunting ground of our men, their warriors often interfere with their operations, while they allow the British to pass freely through their country.

The Blackfoot Indians, who, it appears, are our inveterate enemies, are the most numerous and formidable nation in the region of the Rocky Mountains. It is supposed that different bands, which, like the Sioux of the Missouri, are known by different names, can muster altogether from four to six thousand warriors: they inhabit the richest fur region within our limits. Their trade (which for the last 15 or 20 years has been confined exclusively to British traders) is supposed to be more valuable than half of that of all the other tribes in that country.

1830, Tues., April 13. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

WESTERN ENTERPRIZE. An expedition has been, for some time past, fitting out in this city, which furnishes a very favorable illustration of the enterprize of our Western people. The expedition is under the immediate control of Messrs. Smith, Jackson and Sublette, and is destined for the Rocky Mountains. Seventy men are engaged in the service, and *ten heavy wagons* are employed in the transportation of the merchandize and baggage of the company. It is the present design to proceed the whole of the distance with the wagons—a means of transportation never before used in expeditions to that country. The principal men concerned in the enterprize, are sanguine of the success of the experiment—and in the event of an attack from the savages in the open plain, the wagons may be formed into a breastwork against which all their assaults will be unavailing. We wish the gentlemen every success in their adventure.

1830, Sat., October 9. *Missouri Intelligencer*. Columbia, Missouri.

COLUMBIA OCTOBER 9, 1830.

Arrival of Fur Traders and Trappers from the Rocky Mountains.

On Tuesday last a large company of trappers and traders from the Rocky Mountains, passed through this place, with Furs and Mules valued at *one hundred and fifty thousand dollars*. The cavalcade extended a considerable distance. The gentlemen who fitted out this expedition are Messrs. Smith, Jackson and Sublette, and we are much gratified that they are likely to be so well rewarded for their hazardous enterprize. A considerable number of large and substantial waggons, laden with the fruits of their toils, accompanied them, exclusive of the pack horses and mules, of which there were a great number. We should judge there were

about fifty individuals. These hardy and sun-burnt *Mountaineers*, who had been so long excluded from the pleasures of civilized society, exhibited great demonstrations of satisfaction, at their near approach to their families and homes.

1830, Tues., October 19. *Missouri Republican*. St. Louis, Missouri.

A TRADING EXPEDITION, commanded by Messrs. *Smith, Jackson & Sublette*, (successors to General Ashley) consisting of 31 men, with ten loaded wagons, each drawn by five mules, left St. Louis for the Rocky Mountains, on the 10th of April, last, and arrived at their place of destination—within 50 miles of the waters of the Pacific—on the 16th of July. Returning, they left the place of rendezvous on the 4th of August, and arrived at St. Louis, on the 11th of October, with the same wagons and teams, and all in good order. We have not been furnished with any further particulars of the expedition, but understand that they have been successful.

1830, Thurs., November 4. *Alexandria Gazette*. Alexandria, Virginia.

St. Louis, October 7.

Arrival from the Rocky Mountains.—Messrs. Smith and Jackson have just arrived from the Rocky Mountains, which place they left early in August. They had two four wheel wagons in company which left St. Louis early in the spring, went to the Mountains and have returned. We understand that those gentlemen have done well; that they bring in a large quantity of furs and are richly rewarded for their perils and enterprise. They have no men killed by Indians, nor, we believe any deaths. Mr. Smith had been out five years, and has explored the country from the Gulf of California to the mouth of the Columbia. We hope to be able to give a more particular account of the extraordinary enterprise of these gentlemen, and of the country which they explored.

—*Beacon*.

1830, Fri., November 26. *Philadelphia National Gazette*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Rocky Mountains.—The *Cincinnati Commercial Advertiser*, in copying the following article from the *St. Louis Beacon*, remarks:—It is

but a few years since such a place as the Rocky Mountains was known to exist, except as a place inaccessible to man. They are already a source of great wealth to the enterprising citizens of the West; and where it was represented man could scarcely make his way, wagons go and come with perfect ease and facility—bringing loads of furs of immense value. In a few years, a trip to the Pacific, by way of the Rocky Mountains, will be no more of an undertaking than was a journey from the Atlantic cities to Missouri twenty years ago. Well and truly may it be said that “Westward the Star of Empire takes its way.” We noticed, two weeks ago, the return of Messrs. Smith, Sublette, and Jackson, from the Rocky Mountains, and stated that they had taken two wagons out and back again. We now learn from them there was an error in the number two; the actual number was ten. They left St. Louis the 10th of April last with these ten wagons, each drawn by five mules, arrived at the Southern Pass, which is the place of rendezvous for the traders, on the 16th of July; loaded with furs previously collected; set out on the return on the 4th of August, and arrived at St. Louis on the 11th of October. The wagons did not cross the Mountains; but there was nothing to prevent their crossing and going to the mouth of the Columbia. The furs were at the place of rendezvous, and that was as far as the wagons needed to go. They could have crossed the Mountains at the Southern Pass, which is the head of the Wind river, without difficulty. Messrs. Smith, Sublette and Jackson are the first that ever took wagons to the Rocky Mountains. The ease with which they did it and could have gone on to the mouth of the Columbia, shows the folly and nonsense of those “scientific” characters who talk of the Rocky Mountains as the barrier which is to stop the westward march of the American people. These gentlemen, who have made this extraordinary expedition, were initiated into the rich fur region of the Rocky Mountains by Gen. Ashley, and are his successors in that business, he having retired from it. The success in the collection of furs is about equal to their annual returns for two or three years preceding.

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