
Reader's Guide
to the Mountain Men
of the American West



Antoine Clement, by Alfred Jacob Miller

Compiled by Stuart Wier

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This is a guide to the best books about the mountain men of the American west which I know about. Anyone can find a book here to suit them: casual readers, students, enthusiasts, reenactors, and historians. I include a few less distinguished books, too, when they are the only thing about a topic.

For some fifteen years -- roughly speaking, 1823 to 1838 and beyond -- the western U.S. was the domain of the mountain men, fur trappers who spent years traveling and living in the wilderness. Long before wagon trains, settlers, gold rushes, cavalry, Indian wars, cowboys, wild west towns, or railroads, mountain men were the first from the U.S. to see the Rocky Mountains and the lands from the plains to the Pacific. Their life was highly free and adventuresome, and often dangerous and short, lived in a shining wilderness.

Where to begin? Many books, many choices. For a readable and short introduction try *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* by Winfred Blevins. For detailed histories try *A Life Wild and Perilous* by Robert M. Utley or the classic history *Across the Wide Missouri* by Bernard DeVoto. Or try some of the best biographies, such as *Westering Man The Life of Joseph Walker* by Bil Gilbert and *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* by Dale L. Morgan. For adventures or "camp fire tales" try the personal journals and narratives written by some of the mountain men themselves.

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Histories of The Mountain Men

Across the Wide Missouri. Bernard DeVoto. Houghton Mifflin, 1947. A classic. The classic. With truly deep knowledge and understanding, and writing unlikely to be equaled. Inspirational. Homeric.

A Life Wild and Perilous: Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific. Robert M. Utley. Henry Holt 1997. A really excellent recent history of the entire era, based on extensive research which only a few have equaled. The emphasis is on key mountain men, the fur trade, and geographical discoveries. This is the big view; don't expect campfire stories. Also published as After Lewis and Clark Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific.

Give Your Heart to the Hawks. Winfred Blevins. Los Angeles: Nash, 1973; and other editions. A short, enjoyable, and very readable history.

Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West. Dale L. Morgan. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953; 1964. A biography of Smith, and in effect a history of the mountain men up to 1831 when Smith died. A standard of fur trade history. "the ultimate authority;" "impeccable scholarship."

The Beaver Men: Spearheads of Empire. Mari Sandoz. Norman: University of Nebraska Press, 1978. 342 pages.

A Majority of Scoundrels: An Informal of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Don Berry. New York: Harper & Co., 1961; Sausalito: Comstock Editions.

The Taos Trappers The Fur Trade In the Southwest 1540-1846. David J Weber. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

This Reckless Breed of Men: The Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest. Robert Glass Cleland. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

Across the Great Divide : Robert Stuart and the Discovery of the Oregon Trail. Laton McCartney. New York: Free Press, 2003. a popular history.

Heroes to Me. Mike Moore. Macon Georgia: Historical Enterprises, 2003. Topics about the life of mountain men illustrated by selections from their writing and stories.

Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society 1670 - 1870. Sylvia Van Kirk. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. Marriages of trappers to Indian women; womens' roles; & resulting culture

Daughters of the Country: Women of the Fur Traders and Mountain Men. Walter O'Meara. New York: Harcourt, 1968.

Journals and Personal Narratives by Mountain Men and Travelers in the Mountains

Journal of a Trapper. Osborne Russell. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965. "...perhaps the best account of the life of a fur trapper in the Rocky Mountains when the trade there was at its peak."

Life in the Rocky Mountains ... on the Sources of the Rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado from February, 1830 to November, 1835. Warren A. Ferris. Paul C. Phillips, ed. Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1983. Another detailed account, one of the best by a mountain man. Includes one of very few maps of the Rockies made by a mountain man which survives in its original form, probably the best one.

Journal of a Mountain Man. James Clyman. Linda M. Hasselstrom, ed. Missoula: Mountain Press, 1984.

Adventures of a Mountain Man: The Narrative of Zenas Leonard. Zenas Leonard. Milo M. Quaife, ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978; also printed as Adventures of Zenas Leonard, John Ewers, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959).

The River of the West: Life and Adventure in the Rocky Mountains and Oregon.... Frances Fuller Victor. vol. 1: The Mountain Years, Winfred Blevins, ed.; vol. 2: Oregon. Missoula Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1983, 1987. Joe Meek's account.

Wah-To-Yah and the Taos Trail. Lewis H. Garrard. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974.

"Dear Old Kit": The Historical Christopher Carson With a New Edition of the Carson Memoirs. Harvey Lewis Carter. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1968; 1990. Carson's own memoir or autobiography, corrected where obvious errors appear. "... Carter's [edition of the Carson autobiography is] the only one that overcomes Carson's faulty memory for dates and places in his life, in an accurate chronological framework. In addition the work is heavily annotated with data and insights from Carter's lifelong study of Carson." - Utley.

Rocky Mountain Life, Or, Startling Scenes and Perilous Adventures in the Far West During an Expedition of Three Years. Rufus B. Sage. Boston: Wentworth & Company, 1857; facsimile: Lincoln: Univ of Nebraska Press, 1982. Another very detailed personal account.

The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827. Jedediah Smith. George Brooks, ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989. "superbly edited."

The West of Alfred Jacob Miller. Alfred Jacob Miller. Marvin Ross, ed. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma, 1968. Black and white reproductions of Miller's paintings and sketches made in the west, plus Miller's own descriptions of each scene.

'The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S. A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West.. Washington Irving. edited by Edgeley W. Todd. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961 & 1986. (original 1837). Bonneville's account of the key years 1832-1835.

Astoria ... An Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains. Washington Irving. edited and introduced by Edgeley W. Todd. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964. "Irving's work still is indispensable."

The Journal Of Jacob Fowler ... From Arkansas Through The Indian Territory, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, And New Mexico . . . 1821--1822. Jacob Fowler.. Elliott Coues, ed. Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1965.

Across the Rockies to the Columbia. James Kirk Townsend. Intro. by Donald Jackson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978. This is the account by a naturalist who traveled with Wyeth's train to rendezvous and the Pacific in 1834.

The Rocky Mountain Journals of William Marshall Anderson: The West in 1834. Dale L. Morgan and Eleanor Towles Harris, eds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains: Major Stephen Long's Expedition, 1819-1820. Stephen Long; Maxine Benson, ed. (Niwot, 1988). A one-volume abridgement of Long's account, with a bibliography. Long met a party of "French trappers" at Pikes Peak in 1820, and did not remark that this was unusual -- who were they?

The Discovery of the Oregon Trail: Robert Stuart's Narrative of His Overland Trip in 1812-1813. Philip Ashton Rollins. New York, 1935; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

A Narrative of Colonel Robert Campbell's Experiences in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade from

1825 to 1835. Drew Allen Holloway, ed. Fairfield Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1991.

Travels to the Rocky Mountains Between 1833 and 1872. Charles Larpenteur, Michael M. Casler editor. Fur Press, 2007. (an improvement over the older edition of Larpenteur's journal titled "Forty Years a Fur Trapper on the Upper Missouri.")

Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839. Francis Chardon. Annie Heloise Abel, ed. Lincoln: Bison Books, 1997.

Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie of Kentucky. James O. Pattie. 1833. The original tale is highly suspect or clearly invented in parts: "an extraordinary mix of fact and fancy." To sort it out see the edition by Richard Batman, Missoula: Mountain Press, 1988.

Life, Letters and Travels of Pierre Jean de Smet. Hiram M. Chittenden and Alfred T. Richardson, eds. New York: Lathrop C. Harper, 1905.

The Autobiography of John Ball. John Ball Grand Rapids Michigan, 1925.

Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans. Thomas James. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

George C. Yount and His Chronicles of the West. Charles L Camp, ed. Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1966.

The Blazed Trail of Antoine Leroux, Forbes Parkhill. Westernlore Press, Los Angeles, 1965.

"The D. T. P. Letters." Charles L. Camp, in Essays for Henry R. Wagner, San Francisco, 1947. The Daniel Potts letters.

The West of William H. Ashley. Dale L. Morgan, ed. Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964. A monumental compilation of period documents and letters with extensive annotation.

A Trappers Life in the Rocky Mountains and Oregon from 1829 to 1839. George W. Ebberts. Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

"The Journals of Jules De Mun." Thomas M. Marshall. *Miss. Hist. Soc. Collections* Feb - June 1928. De Mun a very early Colorado trapper.

Rocky Mountain Album A Fur Trade Sampler. Mike Moore. Macon Georgia: Historical Enterprises, 2004. A day by day account of a year in the mountain man's west, with journal entries for most days of the year from early writers on that day. (order from amm1616@comcast.net; 303 - 238 - 4656).

Life in the Early West. Mike Moore. Macon Georgia: Historical Enterprises, 2003. (order from amm1616@comcast.net; 303 - 238 - 4656).

"First Journey to North America in the Years 1822 to 1824." Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Wurttemberg. Wm. G. Bek, ed. So. Dakota Hist. Colls., vol. 19, 1938.

Travels in the Interior of North America. Maximilian Prince of Wied-Neuwied. [visited the upper Missouri in 1832 to 1834, as far as Ft. Union] Reuben Thwaites, ed. Cleveland: 1905. 2 vols.

A Tour on the Prairies. Washington Irving. John McDermott, ed. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma, 1956.

Journal of An Exploring Tour beyond the Rocky Mountains... in the years 1835, 1836, and 1837. Samuel Parker. Ithaca: 1842. Parker was a missionary who traveled across the west of the mountain men.

A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1839 (or, Memoir of a Tour to Northern New Mexico). Frederick A. Wislizenus. Glorieta New Mexico: Rio Grande Press, 1969.; Fairfield CT: Ye Galleon Press, 1989. Translated from German; Wislizenus was a physician and naturalist.

Prairie and Mountain Sketches. Matthew Field. Kate L. Gregg and John Frances McDermott, eds.

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957. Field was one of a party of excursionists in William Drummond Stewart's last trip to the mountains in 1843.

Persimmon Hill: A Narrative of Old St. Louis and the Far West. William Clark Kennerly. Norman: Univ. Oklahoma 1948. Kennerly was another member of Stewart's 1843 excursion.

The Oregon Trail, Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life. Francis Parkman. 1849. Many editions. Account of Parkman's visit to Wyoming in 1845. Parkman was a top nineteenth-century historian, and thought highly of his mountain man guide Henry Chatillon.

A Rendezvous Reader. Maguire. J. H. et al. eds. Univ. Utah. Selections from histories and personal accounts

Journal of a Fur Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813. John C. Luttig. Stella M Drumm, ed. New York: 1964. Luttig's journal contains the only witness to the death of Sacagawea ('Sacajewea').

Views of Louisiana Together with a Journal of a Voyage Up the Missouri River in 1811. Henry M. Brackenridge. Pittsburgh: - , 1814. also in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, Cleveland, 1904.

Travels in the Interior of North America in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811. John Bradbury. Liverpool: Smith and Galway, 1817; reprinted Thwaites, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels (next).

Early Western Travels. Reuben Gold Thwaites. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904-1905. Collected original accounts in thirty volumes.

Biographies

Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary Mountain Man. Barton H. Barbour. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. 290 p.

Westering Man: The Life of Joseph Walker. Bil Gilbert. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. Gilbert has distilled a very impressive range of knowledge into one of the top books of the western frontier. You are guaranteed to be impressed by new and important insights in frontier history. Along the way you meet one of the best mountain men "An excellent biography, perhaps the best biography of any mountain man"- Robert Utley

Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West. Dale L. Morgan. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964. An excellent biography of Smith, and in effect a history of the mountain men up to 1831 when Smith died. A standard work in fur trade history. "the ultimate authority;" "impeccable scholarship."

Broken Hand: The Life of Thomas Fitzpatrick, Mountain Man, Guide and Indian Agent. Leroy R. Hafen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.

Ewing Young, Master Trapper. Kenneth L. Holmes. Portland Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1967. (about Young, see also the article in Hafen's Mountain Men, below).

Kit Carson a Pattern for Heroes. Thelma S. Guild and Harvey L. Carter. Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska, 1984. A good biography based on Carter's work published in "Dear Old Kit."

James Pattie's West: The Dream and the Reality, Richard Batman. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

John Colter: His Years in the Rockies. Burton Harris. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1993. Introduction by David Lavender. "heavily speculative in his reconstructions. " For more details, see the chapter "John Colter" in Hafen's Mountain Men (below): vol. 8, pp 73-85.

Kit Carson and the Indians. Tom Dunlay. Univ. of Nebraska, 2000. much longer than the biography listed above by Thelma S. Guild and Harvey L. Carter, and less on fur trade period.

Bill Sublette Mountain Man. John E. Sunder. Norman: Univ. Oklahoma, 1959. Very thoroughly researched and documented.

David E Jackson Field Captain of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade. Vivian Linford. Jackson: Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum, 1996.

James Clyman, American Frontiersman, 1792-1881; the adventures of a trapper and covered-wagon emigrant as told in his own reminiscences and diaries. Charles L. Camp. Portland: Champoeg Press, 1960. This edition is rare. Clyman's writing was reprinted without Camp's notes by Tamarack Books, in 1998.

Halfbreed: The Remarkable True Story Of George Bent - Caught Between The Worlds Of The Indian And The White Man. David Fridtjof Halaas and Andrew E. Masich. Da Capo Press 2004. 496 pages.

Life of George Bent: Written from His Letters. George E. Hyde. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1980. 280 pages.

George Drouillard: Hunter and Interpreter for Lewis and Clark and Fur Trader. M. O. Skarsten. Arthur H. Clark Co. 1964; Bison Books, 2005. 336 pages.

Bon Appetit! Shawnee Hunter Georges Drouillard's List of Fine Dining Establishments Along the Lewis and Clark Trail, 1806 and The Life and Times of Georges P. Drouillard. Richard Gaffney. 2006.

Life and Adventures of George Nidever 1802 - 1883. Wm. Henry Ellison, editor. Nidever traveled through Texas and New Mexico in 1830. In 1832, he was at the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole and took part in the famous battle with the Blackfeet. The following year, he joined a section of Bonneville's company under command of Joseph Walker and crossed the upper Sierra Nevada into California. Several editions, all out of print now.

The Saga of Hugh Glass. John Myers Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976.

Shadow on the Tetons: David E. Jackson and the Claiming of the American West. John C. Jackson. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1993.

The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, written from his own dictation by Thomas D. Bonner[in 1856]. Bernard De Voto, editor and introduction. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1972.

Jim Beckwourth: Black Mountain Man and War Chief of the Crows. Elinor Wilson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972.

Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade. Richard E. Oglesby. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

Scotsman in Buckskin: Sir William Drummond Stewart and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade. Mae Reed Porter and Odessa Davenport. New York: Hastings House, 1963.

Ruxton of the Rockies. Collected By Clyde and Mae Reed Porter. Leroy R. Hafen, ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979.

Old Bill Williams, Mountain Man. Alpheus H. Favour. 1936. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.

Antoine Robidoux 1794-1860. William S. Wallace. Los Angeles: 1953.

For more Robideaux books see <http://www.clyderabideau.com/2robidoubooks.html>

Jim Bridger Mountain Man a Biography. Stanley Vestal. Univ. of Nebraska, 1970. See also Cecil Alter's biography of Bridger; neither is entirely correct but there is no other Bridger biography. Vestal's book does make good reading.

Mike Fink King of Mississippi Keelboatmen. Walter Blaire and Franklin J. Meine, New York: 1933.

Hafen's "Mountain Men"

The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West. Leroy R. Hafen, editor. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1965-1972. 10 volumes. A fundamental reference for the lives of 292 mountain men. Individual biographies were written by Hafen and the leading historians of the time.

The names of all 292 persons in the ten volumes are indexed online in the [Guide to the Hafen Biographies](#); which also lists which biographies are selected in the six books below.

Selections from Hafen's "The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West" are published in these books:

Mountain Men and Fur Traders of the Far West. Harvey L. Carter(introduction) and Leroy Hafen(editor). -, 1982. 401 pages. 18 selections from Leroy Hafen's The Mountain Men.

Fur Traders Trappers and Mountain Men of the Upper Missouri. Leroy R Hafen; Scott Eckbert intro. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Selected from Hafen's Mountain Men

French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West: Twenty-five Biographical Sketches. selections from Hafen's Mountain Men. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Fur Trappers and Traders of the Far Southwest, USU Press, 1997.

Trappers of the Far West, Bison Books, 1983

Mountain Men Exploring

Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West. Dale L. Morgan. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964. A biography of Smith and in effect a history of the mountain men up to 1831 when Smith died.

Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition [1797]. W. Raymond Wood. University of Oklahoma Press; March 2003.

Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains: Canadian Traders among the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, 1738-1818. W. Raymond Wood. University of Oklahoma Press.

The Explorations of William H. Ashley and Jedediah Smith. Harrison C. Dale. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991 (original printing: Cleveland, 1918).

The Travels of Jedediah Smith. Maurice S. Sullivan. Santa Fe, 1934; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

Mapping the Trans-Mississippi West, 1540-1861. 6 vols. Carl I. Wheat. San Francisco: Inst. of Historical Geography, 1957 - 1963. A classic reference about maps and mapping the west.

Jedediah Smith and His Maps of the American West. Carl I. Wheat. San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1954.

Notes on General Ashley, The Overland Trail, and South Pass. Donald McKay Frost. Worcester: 1945.

The Old Spanish Trail. Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen. Glendale: 1954. Despite the name, the

"Old Spanish Trail" was neither old nor Spanish; it was largely opened by American mountain men in the 19th century.

Colter's Hell and Jackson's Hole The Fur Trappers Exploration of the Yellowstone and Grand Teton Park Region. Merrill J. Mattes. Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1962. 1976. 87 pages.

The Discovery of Yellowstone Park. N. P. Langford. St. Paul: 1923.

Histories of the Fur Trade

Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America. Eric Jay Dolin. New York: W. W. Norton & Company; July 2010. 464 pages.

When Skins were Money A History of the Fur Trade. James A. Hanson. Chadron Nebraska: Museum of the Fur Trade, 2005. Covers the entire period from the 16th to 20th centuries; not a great deal on the Rocky Mountain period. Many period illustrations.

The Fur Trade of the America West 1807-1840. David J. Wishart. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. "an excellent overview of the Rocky Mountain trapping system."

The Fist in the Wilderness. David Lavender. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964. A big history of the Astor fur trade empire, known to mountain men as "American Fur."

The West of William H. Ashley. Dale L. Morgan, ed. Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964. A monumental compilation of period documents and letters with extensive annotation.

History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West. 2 vols. Hiram Martin Chittenden. Stanford: 1936; 1954; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986. A standard reference, more than 900 pages.

Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1840-1865. J. E. Sunder. University of Oklahoma Press, 1993, 295 pages.

"The Myth of the Silk Hat and the end of the Rendezvous." James A. Hanson. *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 36, Spring 2000. 2-11.

The Whiskey Trade of the Northwestern Plains: A Multidisciplinary Study. Margaret Kennedy. published by Peter Lang, 1997.

Jackson Hole, Crossroads of the Western Fur Trade, 1807-1840 M. J. Mattes. Jackson Hole Historical Society, 1994.

Montana's Fur Trade Era. F. L. Graves. *American World Geographic*, 1994, 63 pages.

Fur Trade and Empire. Frederick Merk. Cambridge: 1931. "one of the most significant contributions to the literature" - Dale Morgan.

Astoria and Empire. James P. Ronda. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1991. "a deft and intriguing examination of Astor's formative experience in the fur trade of the Far West."

Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade. W. Swagerty et al. University Publications, 1991.

Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade. C. Martin and N. Lurie. University of California, 1985.

For more, including historians' and archaeologists' reports, see Fur Trade Reference Books (<http://www.digitalpresence.com/histarch/ref/furtrade.html>; Megan Springate 1998-2009), The Fur Trade and Historical Archaeology (<http://www.digitalpresence.com/histarch/furtrade.html>; Michael Pfeiffer 1998), and the very extensive and complete Fur Trade Bibliography by Gerhard J. Ens. (online at <http://www.members.shaw.ca/CanoeBC/heritage/biblio.htm>).

Forts and Rendezvous

Most of the "forts" of the earliest west were private commercial trading posts, not military fortifications. The owners wanted to have good relations with the natives and peace between the tribes, since those were the customers. These posts looked like forts: they were walled with wooden stockades or high adobe walls, to discourage raids by Indians.

Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade. Barton H. Barbour. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press; 2nd ed. 2002.

Bent's Fort. David Lavender. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954, 1972, 2003.

Bent's Fort: Crossroads of Cultures on the Santa Fe Trail. Melvin Bacon. Filter Press 2002. Ages 9-12.

Competitive Struggle: America's Fur Trading Posts 1764 - 1865. R. G. Robertson. Tamarack Books, Boise, Idaho, 1999. 329 pages. Historical figures as well as places are depicted.

Antoine Robidoux and Fort Uncompahgre. Ken Reyher. Ouray, Colorado: Western Reflections Inc., 1998. First American outpost in Colorado.

Forts of the West. Robert W. Frazer. Norman: Univ. of Ok., 1977.

Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness. Fred R. Gowans. and E. Campbell. Provo: Brigham Young University, 1975.

Forts of the Upper Missouri. Robert G. Athern. University of Nebraska Press, 1972.

Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West. LeRoy R. Hafen. Glendale: 1938.

"Forts Robidoux and Kit Carson. Albert B. Reagan. *New Mexico Hist. Review*, vol. X, April 1935. pp. 121-132.

"Fort Davy Crockett, Its Fur Men and Visitors." LeRoy Hafen. *Colorado magazine*, vol. XXIX, January 1952. pp. 17-33.

"Early Fur Trade Forts on the South Platte." LeRoy R Hafen. *Mississippi Valley Historical review*, vol. XII, December 1923. pp. 335-341.

Old Fort Saint Vrain. Diane Brotemarkl. Boulder: Johnson Books, 2001.

Historic Forts of Colorado. Dick and Wendy Spurr. Grand Junction Colorado: Centennial Pubs. 1994.

Rivalry at the River. Seletha Brown. Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1972. Trading forts on the South Platte.

Bent's Old Fort. State Historical Society of Colorado. Colorado Springs: Williams Printings, 1979.

"Gantt's Fort and Bent's Picket Post." Janet S. LeCompte. *Colorado Magazine*, XLI, Spring 1964, pp 111-125.

Rocky Mountain Rendezvous: A History of the Fur Trade Rendezvous 1824-1840. Fred R. Gowans. Layton Utah: Gibbs Smith Books, 2005. Maps and photos of all annual rendezvous sites as seen today. For first-person descriptions of rendezvous, see the personal accounts and narratives listed above. For the 1836 rendezvous see also William Gray, History of Oregon, 1870, pp. 121-129.

Library of Western Fur Trade Historical Source Documents

A remarkable online collection of original documents; accounts of the Rocky Mountain fur trade during the first half of the 19th century, assembled and provided by the American Mountain Men.

[Library of Western Fur Trade Historical Source Documents](http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/mmarch.html)

(<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/mmarch.html>)

"These documents have been transcribed from printed or manuscript form. The resulting text files have been manually checked and edited to conform to the original source. In most cases, any spelling or grammatical errors from the original have been retained."

If the links don't work, copy the book title with a mouse drag, and insert it into Google, to see the book.

Documents include:

Ashley, William H. 1825 Rocky Mountain Papers. Ball, John. Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832. Beall, Thomas J. Recollections of Wm. Craig. Becknell, William. Selected letters. Beckwourth, James P. The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, written from his own dictation by T. D. Bonner Brackenridge, Henry Marie, Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River, in 1811. Bradbury, John. Travels in the Interior of America. Campbell, Robert. Rocky Mountain Letters. Catlin, George. Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians. Clyman, James. A Short Detail of Life and Incidents of my trip in & through the Rocky Mountains. Dudgeon, Anthony. Ramsey Crooks' letter regarding Who Discovered South Pass? Fayel, William. A Narrative of Colonel Robert Campbell's Experiences in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade from 1825 to 1835. Ferris, Warren Angus. Life in the Rocky Mountains. Franchère, Gabriel. Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America. Hunt, Wilson Price. Account of the Journey of the Overland Party. Irving, Washington. Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains. Irving, Washington. The Adventures of Captain Bonneville. James, Thomas. Three Years Among the Indians and the Mexicans. Larpenteur, Charles. Forty Years a Fur Trader. Leonard, Zenas. Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard, fur trader and trapper, 1831-1835. Luttig, John C. Journal of a fur-trading expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812-1813. Meek, Stephen Hall. The Autobiography of Stephen Hall Meek. Menard, Pierre. Reports of Missouri Fur Co. activities at Three Forks of the Missouri, 1810. Newell, Robert. Travels in the Territory of Missouri. Ogden, Peter Skene. Snake Country Journals. Pattie, James O. The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie, of Kentucky. Potts, Daniel T. Rocky Mountain Letters. Rogers, Harrison G. Journals of Harrison G. Rogers, member of the company of J. S. Smith. Ross, Alexander. Journal of Snake Country Expedition, 1824. Ross, Alexander. Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River. Russell, Osborne. Journal of a Trapper. Ruxton, George Frederick. Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains. Sage, Rufus. Rocky Mountain Life. Spalding, Eliza. Diary, June 15 - July 6, 1836 Spalding, Henry H. Letter From The Rocky Mountains, 1836. Smith, Jedediah S. Journals of California Expeditions Stuart, Robert. Voyage from the mouth of the Columbia to Saint Louis, on the Mississippi Thomas, William H. Journal of a Voyage from St. Louis, LA. to the Mandan Village Townsend, John Kirk. Across the Rockies to the Columbia. Victor, Frances Fuller. The River of the West: Joe Meek's Years in the Rocky Mountains. Whitman, Narcissa Prentiss. 1836 Letters and Journal. Wislizenus, F. A., A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1839 Work, John. Journals while in the service of Hudson's Bay Co. Workman, W. Letter dated Feb. 13, 1826 Wyeth, John B. Oregon, or a Short History of a Long Journey. Wyeth, Nathaniel. The Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth's Expeditions to the Oregon Country and Selected Letters.

with additional links to:

Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. Lewis and Clark Journals Marcy, Randolph Barnes. The Prairie Traveler: A Hand-book for Overland Expeditions Parkman, Francis Jr. The Oregon Trail

Mountain Men in Colorado

Based on The Fur Trade in Colorado: A Selected Bibliography, compiled by Ben Fogelberg (online at www.coloradohistory.org/publications/Fur_Trade_Bib.pdf), with additions.

Books

- Beckwourth, James P. The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth as Told to Thomas D. Bonner. Reprint. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972.
- Carson, Christopher. Kit Carson's Autobiography. Edited by Milo Milton Quaife. Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1935.
- Carter, Harvey L. Dear Old Kit: The Historical Christopher Carson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968.
- Chittenden, Hiram M. The American Fur Trade of the Far West. Vol 1. 1902. Reprint. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press Bison Books, 1986.
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Excellent detailed drawings.

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Accouterments. 3 volumes. James R. Johnson. Golden Age Arms, no date. [ca. 2000]. Excellent photos of all kinds of equipment of the fur trade era but oddly lacking any provenance: any indication of date or place of origin of the artifacts, which greatly reduces the usefulness of these books for answering any particular question.

The Kentucky Rifle Hunting Pouch: Its Contents and Accouterments as used by the Frontiersman, Hunter, and Indian. Madison Grant. 207 pages. published by the author, 1977

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The Visual Record - Artists in the Early West

No photographs were made in the west of the mountain men. The first camera, for the Daguerreotype process, was taken west in 1842 by John Charles Fremont, and no photographs survive from that occasion. But by good fortune several excellent artists traveled to the west before 1840. Three greats were George Catlin, Karl Bodmer and Alfred Jacob Miller. Their sketches and paintings are historically valuable and personally satisfying.

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Edward Warren. William Drummond Stewart. Missoula: Mountain Press, 1986. Introduction By Winfred Blevins. Stewart, the famous British captain, attended six rendezvous, from 1833 to 1838, and returned for another visit in 1843. Written by a man who lived the life and saw the times.

Life in the Far West. George Frederick Ruxton. ed. Leroy Hafen. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951. Reads like a first-person narrative, but it is fiction (several events did not occur as described). Based on life in the mountains. Not history, but many authentic details of life. "no work excels in color, charm, or authenticity."

Modern Paintings and Photographs

The Western Paintings of John Clymer. John Clymer. New York: Peacock Press/Bantam, 1988. Clymer is one of the first of the modern painters of mountain men. 40-some paintings

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Movies

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The Big Sky. 1952. Kirk Douglas.

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Fremds Land. Switzerland, 2003. An independent film about a Swiss conscript soldier in Napoleon's army who ends up as a mountain man. A DVD may be only available in Europe, if there, and only in German.

Good recent editions are listed, where more than one edition occurs, not the original or other old editions. Finding a copy of many these titles is not always easy. Your local book store may not have what you want on hand, but they can order some books in print for you. Some titles are out of print. For hard-to-find books I recommend the online book services

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Stuart Wier

Boulder County, Colorado.

October 25, 2010

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