

American Hunters and Trappers in Arizona

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By FRANK C. LOCKWOOD

When the territory west of the Mississippi River came into the possession of the United States in 1804 the extent and resources of the region were almost wholly unknown. The expedition of Lewis and Clark in 1804-6 revealed the savage character and vast extent of this new empire, but as yet scarcely any conception of its potential wealth and its fitness for future homes dawned upon the minds of the American people. One source of wealth, and one alone, was taken into consideration during the first third of the century, namely, the fur trade. Furtraders and trappers had gone far up the Missouri River and its tributaries even before the explorations of Lewis and Clark; and now for a generation—from about 1806 to 1843—a chapter of American life was unfolded as romantic and stirring as anything in modern history.

During the first third of the century bands of hardy young trappers and traders invaded these remote fastnesses in quest of fame, fortune, and adventure. Some of these men were outlaws and did not dare to return to the settlements; some were mere adventurers; but not a few were men of character, ambition, and intelligence; all were men of iron—men of invincible courage and resolution. These men were the first and real pathfinders of the west—mountain men, men of the uncharted plains and savage deserts. They knew every river from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean and from the northern boundary of the United States to the Southern Gulf. They had traced them and trapped along them from the mountains to the sea. Long before scientific and detailed exploration was undertaken or any settlement attempted they had located every lake, discovered every available pass, and scaled every mountain barrier.

The toils, perils, sufferings, and fatalities endured by these men beggars description and taxes belief to the limit. No American war was one half as costly in its list of casualties—taking into account the number of men involved. Deeds more daring than romance can invent were almost the commonplaces of these primitive men. Interpid, resolute, inured to toil, hunger, thirst,

and the sight of sudden and violent death, nothing daunted them. One out of a hundred grew suddenly rich from the fur trade; ten out of a hundred made a living, survived, and continued to hunt and trap and trade until middle life—possibly to old age; but more met disappointment and failure, and a vast majority sudden or tragic death.

So far as Arizona is concerned these hardy pathfinders are like "ships that pass in the night". It so happens, however, that some of the most knightly and picturesque members of this immortal band of trappers and pathfinders touched upon Arizona soil, and in passing left more or less enduring records in geography, literature, and patriotic achievement. First and last, between 1824 and 1832, there were hundreds of trappers who came and went along the streams of Arizona. The records of these trapping expeditions are scant, and hard to come at; and do doubt a good many expeditions into the Colorado and Gila river region have gone entirely unrecorded.

Most of these trappers were obscure; few had any dealings with pen and paper; there were no newspapers in the Southwest to report their doings; and, most important of all, these trips into Sonora were secret and illegal. Only Mexicans could secure a license to trap on these Mexican streams. But the Mexicans had neither the enterprise nor the desire to pursue this industry; so if any trapping was to be done in this region it must be engaged in by aliens. The Americans were usually carrying on their trapping illegally, or by means of some subterfuge, so they were naturally reticent concerning their doings. Indeed, it is only recently and by dint of much research that any considerable light has been thrown upon the fur trade here in the Southwest; yet undoubtedly many beaver skins were taken on the Gila, the Verde, the Salt, and the Colorado rivers. Among the men famous in the fur trade who trapped the streams, or traversed the soil of Arizona are Miguel Robidoux, Sylvester and James Pattie, Ewing Young, Jedediah Smith, "Peg-leg" Smith, "Old Bill" Williams, David E. Jackson, Milton Sublette, Kit Carson, and Pauline Weaver.

The Fortunes of Sylvester and James O. Pattie

July 30, 1824, Sylvester Pattie, forty-two years of age, and his son James, a youth of twenty, set out with a party of one hundred and fourteen other men from Council Bluffs to trap and hunt, and to trade with the inhabitants of New Mexico.

Taking a southwesterly course as far as the Platte River they ascended this stream for a short time, and then continuing constantly in a southwesterly direction crossed the state of Kansas, encountering hostile Indians, grisley bears, and countless buffalo. They crossed the Arkansas River and still traveling steadily to the southwest reached Taos on October 26, and Sante Fe on November 5. After exciting experiences in this region, they secured a license to trap throughout the Southwest. Upon leaving Sante Fe the expedition broke up into small parties, there being only seven men in the company to which the Patties were attached. On November 22 this little party set out for the headwaters of the Gila. They trapped up and down its various branches with great success, but suffered almost unendurable hunger and cold much of the time. They caught many beaver on the San Pedro, but here the Indians attacked them and stole their horses. The trappers were obliged to cache their furs, and turn back in search of the Santa Rita Copper Mines, in southwestern New Mexico, where they had made a brief stop on their way to the Gila. After sufferings more terrible, even, than any they had hitherto experienced, they reached the mines, April 29, 1825. Young Pattie traveled to Santa Fe for a new supply of horses and goods; and upon his return went in search of their buried furs. But the Indians had discovered the hiding place and had stolen them.

Both father and son remained for some months now in the employ of the Copper Mines. Young Pattie had a strong desire to resume his trapping, and, joining a company of French trappers who had come that way he left his father, now so successful that he was in charge of the mines, and went down the Gila with the Frenchmen. The party was betrayed and attacked by the Papago Indians and all killed but Pattie and two others. These three very soon fell in with another strong band of trappers under an American leader—probably the veteran trapper Ewing Young. Joining forces, they all returned to the Indian Village, killed one hundred of the Indians in a surprise attack, routed the rest, and recovered the horses stolen from the Frenchmen. Young Pattie now trapped with his new party, down the Gila, and up the Salt River and the Verde, and, then, going down to the Colorado, up that stream. They skirted the Grand Canyon; worked the San Juan and Grand rivers; and there crossing the mountains, they struck the Platte. From the Platte they went southward and crossed the Arkansas River; reached the headwaters of the Rio Grande, and followed this river down to Sante Fe. They arrived in this town August 11, 1826, with a fine supply of furs.

But now, as usual, Pattie was met by disaster. The Governor, asserting that they had trapped without a license, took all their furs. Daunted, but still thirsting for travel and adventure, after visiting his father, who had continued to prosper at the mines, James set out on a trading trip to Sonora late in August. He took a southwesterly course, visiting various cities in Sonora, and going as far as the Gulf of California. He returned by Chihuahua, reaching the Copper Mines again, November 11, 1826. Meantime, the elder Pattie had made a mint of money by his steady and skillful operation of the mines. Young Pattie made two or three short but eventful trips during the next few months, returning always to the mines. In April, 1827, Mr. Pattie wanted his son to go to the United States to purchase goods for the mines; but James could not tear himself away from the fascination of his roving and adventurous life. So a Spanish clerk, who had long served faithfully under Mr. Pattie, was sent East, with \$30,000 in gold to secure the desired supplies. He ran away with this money; and, though James Pattie hurried, first to Santa Fe, and then to El Paso, and, finally, to Chihuahua in search of him, the money was never recovered.

It became necessary for Mr. Pattie either to purchase the mines or give them up. He could not buy them outright after his loss; and, not being willing to return to the United States poorer than when he left, he decided that his only hope lay in another trapping expedition. Putting their all into equipment for the venture, the Patties went to Santa Fe to join the first company of trappers that should set out from there. In September, 1827, they started with thirty other men to trap on the Colorado River. By October 6 they were on the Gila. From the first they had hard luck. They caught a good many beaver but at times they were on the verge of starvation. All but eight withdrew from Mr. Pattie's company. These eight reached the Colorado, but here the Indians stole all of their horses. Believing that they would find a Spanish settlement down the river, they made dugouts, and floated toward the Gulf of California, taking many beaver as they went. They had repeated encounters with the Indians during the next five or six weeks, but they were successful with their trapping.

By the middle of February, the season being now about over, they left their canoes near the head of the Gulf, buried their furs, and struck westward for the coast, hoping to find a Spanish settlement at no great distance. The extremity of their suffering on the waterless, parching desert between the Colorado River and San Diego cannot adequately be described. At last, about the mid-

dle of March, 1928, they reached the mission of Catalina. They were treated with suspicion and hostility; taken to the commanding officer at San Diego, and thrown into prison; and here the elder Pattie died in solitary confinement, denied, even in his dying hours, the presence and consolation of his son. After long imprisonment, much bitterness of spirit, and many strange experiences, James was at last released and permitted to go on board an American brig that chanced to put in at Monterey. He disembarked at San Blas, went overland to the City of Mexico, and after laying his complaint before the President of Mexico, went by coach to Vera Cruz. At Vera Cruz he took ship to New Orleans; and, finally, ascending the Mississippi and the Ohio, by steamboat, arrived at Cincinnati, August 30, 1830. Here he landed and returned to the Kentucky home of his grandparents, broken in health, spirit, and fortune.

The above sketch gives a very pale conception of what these men went through. Searching the narrative from beginning to end, I find that James Pattie reports eighteen distant engagements with hostile Indians in which he mentions the death of a score of his companions and of more than two hundred Indians. These engagements are sprinkled through the story as freely and casually as a hunter might allude to the experience of a day's duck-hunting; and there was little more hesitation or compunction on the part of the trappers at taking the life of a redman than an Arizona boy would feel at shooting into a flock of quail. It was not a question of live and let live, but rather of kill or be killed. We get in this narrative fresh, rough pictures of the buffalo, the bear, and the Indian in their grim, primeval habitat and setting. Myriads of buffalo!

"We endeavored to prevent their running among our pack mules, but it was in vain. They scattered them in every direction over the plain; and though we rode in among the herd, firing on them, we were obliged to follow them an hour before we could separate them sufficiently to regain our mules. After much labor we collected all, with the exception of one packed with dry-goods, which the crowd drove before them. The remainder of the day, half our company were employed as a guard, to prevent a similar occurrence. When we encamped for the night, some time was spent in driving the buffaloes a considerable distance from our camp".

And grizzly bears! I should not have believed that the whole world contained so many as this band of pathfinders ran into, and they were fierce and cruel. In a day's travel Pattie counted two hundred and twenty of these grizzly bears.

The civilized mind almost refuses to believe that men could meet and endure deprivation and suffering such as was the common experience of these early American trappers and pathfinders. With them it was either a feast or famine. One day loaded with savory viands and rich in beaver skins, with sunny skies above them, the next, freezing in snow and ice at lofty altitudes, compelled to kill and devour their gaunt horses or dogs to save their own lives, and, again, staggering with bleeding feet, protruding tongue, and crazed brain in search of water. Pattie graphically relates the fearful experience of his party as they returned from their first trapping expedition on the Gila. Their horses had been stolen by the Indians, so leaving a rich cache of furs at the junction of the Gila and the San Pedro, they ascended the last named river three days, and on March 29, with no food except two beaver and no drink except some water, they carried the skins of these beaver. Then they struck off northeast through the mountains to reach the Gila, high up. Their moccasins were worn out and their feet were sore and tender. By March 31, their beaver meat was all gone, and there was no game of any description to be had. It took them two days to descend from the snow-covered mountains to the warm plain. During this time they had neither food nor drink. But in the plain they killed an antelope and eagerly drank its warm blood. Within a few hours they found water. From this time antelope were abundant. But from the 8th to the 12th of April they were again destitute of food. On the 13th (lucky day!) they killed a raven upon which seven men feasted. They were now barefooted and emaciated. Late on the evening of the 13th, young Pattie killed a buzzard. This was cooked and eaten for supper. An otter caught in one of the traps provided breakfast and supper on the fourteenth. Then they killed one of their dogs and for four days lived on that. After this came water and deer and wild turkeys in abundance, and on April 29th they reached the Copper Mines.

By January 1, 1827, there were alive only sixteen of the one hundred and sixteen men who originally set out from Council Bluffs.

Pattie's Personal Narrative is a classic of early American adventure in the Southwest. For the most part, the events recorded, unbelievable as much as the story seems, are trustworthy. The author did not keep a daily journal, so a good many inaccuracies occur. He made no pretense, of course, to scientific knowledge or geographic skill. He was very young, was only fairly well educated, was absorbed in the hand-to-hand, life-

and-death events of each day, and what he wrote he had to recall from memory, but the very nature of the scenes and events that enter into the account precludes the possibility of deception with respect to the main features of the narrative. The experiences of many other trappers of his day bear corroborative testimony, too. Aside from the vivid interest of the narrative, bringing to us, as it does, with a sort of rude, primitive power these startling pictures of life at the dawn of civilization in places now so highly civilized, there is much valuable description and comment in this book. It is curious that Pattie gives the names of almost none of the companions who shared in his trapping expeditions. No doubt several of them are men famous in pioneer annals. This deficiency may be due partly to extreme youth and inexperience in the art of writing, but, no doubt, it is partly the result of a sort of bumptious and egotistical personality, for, notwithstanding the extraordinary courage, hardihood, and filial devotion of the writer, the personality revealed is not an attractive one. The querulous and self-assertive spirit displayed so often in the story gives the reader the impression that this young American was vain and unduly self-centered. The story was written out at the request of Rev. Timothy Flint, a literary man of some distinction in that day, soon after Pattie returned to his native Kentucky at the close of his strange and terrible exploits, and was published the following year, 1831. We have no certain knowledge of the future experiences of this far-wandering and storm-tossed adventurer in the great Southwest.

Jedediah S. Smith—"A Knight Errant in Buckskin"

Early in September, 1826, Jedediah S. Smith, only twenty-eight years of age, but already one of the most famous and successful trappers and traders, came down the Virgin River to its junction with the Colorado crossed over into Arizona, and followed the east bank of the river southward for four days. He was then in the neighborhood of modern Needles. He was, then, the second leader of an American trapping expedition to set foot on Arizona soil, the Patties having been the first. His party of fifteen had been short of food, and had suffered great hardships, so, as the Indians were friendly and had abundance of food, he remained here on the Colorado fifteen days waiting for his men to rest and recover their strength. He also secured more horses

from the Indians. He crossed the river and pushed over the desert to mission San Gabriel, which he reached November 27, 1826. His party was arrested, and he was taken before the Governor of California.

During the next five months he traveled three hundred miles to the northward through California where he struck the Stanislaus River (Possibly, the Merced or the Sacramento). In the spring he attempted to lead his men over the lofty mountains back to Salt Lake. But the snow was too deep; five of the horses starved to death and the company all but perished. Returning to the valley, and leaving all of his party but two men, with these two, and seven horses and two mules, he crossed the Sierras in eight days, over snow from four to eight feet deep. Twenty days more across the Nevada deserts brought him to Great Salt Lake. Only one horse and one mule were left—the rest having furnished food for the men as one after the other the animals gave out. Smith was the first man to cross the continent by the central route, as Lewis and Clark had been the first to find the northwest route, and the Patties the first to cross the southern route.

Smith arrived at the Summer Rocky Mountain rendezvous in June, met his partners, left what few furs he had been able to bring across the mountains, and on July 13th, 1827, set out with nineteen men to return by the same course he had taken the previous year, with the purpose of rejoining his men in California. The Indians in Arizona, with whom he had stayed fifteen days the previous year, seemed as friendly as before; but after three day's stop, as Smith's party was crossing the Colorado on a raft, the Indians treacherously attacked them when they were at the greatest disadvantage and killed ten men. Smith made all haste across the desert with the surviving members of the expedition suffering terrible hardship and privation before they reached San Gabriel. Here he secured some provisions, and leaving two of his band, either unable or unwilling to go on, with the seven who remained, proceeded to find his men on the Stanislaus. When he reached them, they were as destitute as he was. They had, moreover, been treated badly by the Mexican authorities. Smith was now taken before the governor of the Upper Province. After delays and indignities, which he overcame in a very different spirit from that displayed by James Pattie under similar circumstances, he was allowed to get the necessary supplies for his expedition, and was permitted to leave California.

It was now winter, and to cross the mountains and return to the Salt Lake region was impossible. There were twenty-one men in the combined party. Moving slowly up to the northwest during the winter and spring, they crossed the Oregon border, and by July 13, were on the Umpqua River, only about fifteen miles from the Willamette. Here fearful disaster fell upon them. Monday morning, July 16, Smith had set out from camp early, as he often did, to look for a good road for the day's advance. Up to this time, the Umpquas had been friendly, but Smith had been away from camp only a short time when the entire band of Indians with whom they had been dealing for some days fell suddenly upon the trappers and slaughtered all but two—Turner and Black—and carried off all the horses and furs. Smith and his two men escaped northward, reaching Fort Vancouver in August, 1828. Vigorous measures were taken by Dr. McLaughlin, of the Hudson Bay Company, to recover Smith's horses, furs and effects, and the effort was successful. This just and generous man bought the recovered furs for \$20,000, paying with a draft on London. So, notwithstanding this grim massacre, and in spite of the fact that from August, 1826, to August, 1828, indescribable misfortunes and sufferings had dogged their footsteps—for those who survived the expedition was profitable.

I cannot follow in detail the fortunes of this noble and resourceful young pathfinder. I have recounted with some particularity this typical fragment from his crowded and perilous life because it has to do with his deeds in Arizona. But Jedediah Smith is so completely a hero, so adequately the type of man that America delights to honor, is so truly a figure of national importance, that I may be pardoned if I attempt to sketch his portrait. As his name indicates, he came of New England and Puritan Stock. The boy had secured a fairly good education, and, being one of a family of fourteen children, had early learned to look to himself for support. At about the time he came of age, he was seized with a strong desire to try his fortunes in the new and adventurous regions beyond the Mississippi. Just how early he began his life as a trader and trapper is left in some obscurity. But we have very definite accounts of his career after the spring of 1822, when he was twenty-four years of age.

In June, 1822, William Ashley, one of the greatest and most successful of the American fur-traders, was taking a company of one hundred trappers up to the sources of the Missouri River, there to engage in trapping for a period of three years. Young

Smith was a member of this party, and he won immediate distinction. Ashley's forces were suddenly attacked by a band of Arikara Warriors. In this battle Ashley lost thirteen men killed, and ten wounded. It became necessary for the leader to get word of the disaster to his partner, Henry, who was awaiting him at the mouth of the Yellowstone. Ashley called for volunteers to carry the message through the hundreds of miles of Indian-infested country, and Smith was the first to present himself. With one companion, an experienced French Canadian, he made the long, perilous trip in good time, and brought the needed re-enforcements down the river past the hostile Indians who had halted Ashley's advance. Young as he was, the commander made him captain of one of the companies that was now organized to carry on the war with the Arikaras. From this time Smith's bravery, energy, intelligence, and superior character marked him as one of the great leaders in the fur industry. In the extreme northwest early in his career as a trapper, he was attacked and so terribly injured by a grizzly bear that he had to be left behind alone; but he recovered rapidly and was able to rejoin his party. Meantime, he had become one of General Ashley's most able and trusted associates; and Ashley, having made a fortune in three years, sold out to Smith and two of his partners, Sublette and Jackson.

Smith was, truly, a "Knight in buckskin". All of his associates unite in praise of his extraordinary character, a character in which courtesy and courage, honesty and energy, justice and generosity were commingled. His leadership was everywhere acknowledged and accepted. He was unique among his associates in that he was an outspoken Christian. And he was a Christian in deed as well as in word. He had joined the Methodist Church in boyhood. In all the dangers and hardships of his mountain life his Bible was as dear to him, and as near to his hand as his rifle. He was as constant and faithful in the use of the one as he was instant and deadly in the use of the other. He had the complete respect and goodwill of his profane and vice-ridden associates. When in civilized communities he attended church regularly; and he was liberal in his gifts to Christian benevolence. He was eager to avoid giving offence to the Indians; and was diligent in cultivating a spirit reciprocal goodwill between the Indians and the whites wherever possible. He never shirked responsibility or spared himself. He was always in advance, and bore the brunt of every hardship and danger. Nothing could daunt or discourage him. He had confidence in himself, and his cool, intrepid energy, and indefatigable spirit brought success out of every disaster.

Not only was Jedediah Smith a great explorer—covering a wider range of Western America than any other traveler of his time, but he was an accurate observer. He made valuable notes, which he transmitted to proper authorities in the East; and was preparing to publish an atlas of the regions that he knew at first hand, and that he had mapped. His notes and journals were replete with valuable information gathered from the regions that he had traversed. It was his intention to collate and publish this material. His death made this impossible, and, unfortunately, though the material was arranged and prepared for publication after his death, it was burned in a St. Louis fire.

This great trapper, traveler, and Christian gentleman was not permitted long to enjoy the rewards of the little fortune that he had acquired through such toil and tribulation. At thirty-three years of age, he was killed by Comanche Indians on the Cimarron River. He was conducting a great caravan across the plains to Sante Fe to take advantage of the fine opportunity then open for trade. In was Summer; the weather was very hot, and there was a terrible drouth. For days his company could find no water-hole or stream. The animals were perishing; and the men were becoming delirious. When hope was almost at an end, Smith detached himself from his party and rode off in a last desperate search for water. He came to the Cimarron and saw that water could be had by scooping out the sand; but just as he was kneeling to drink, the Indians who had been waiting their chance attacked. He mounted his horse and rode toward them. The Indians succeeded in frightening Smith's horse so that it turned, and, having him now at a disadvantage, they shot him in the shoulder. He turned and shot, killing the chief, but the Indians closed in on him and killed him with their spears. The rest of the caravan survived.

At Sante Fe, they learned how their leader had met his end. "As it happened, a company of Mexican traders came in just at the same time, having in their possession a rifle and a brace of silver-mounted pistols, which Peter Smith at once recognized as the property of his brother. The traders had purchased them of a war party of Comanches, who related how they had seen a solitary horseman approach the Cimarron, how he had first watered his horse and then slaked his own thirst, how they had watched closely for a time and then rushed upon him and killed him."

“Old Bill” Williams

Notwithstanding that “Old Bill” Williams’ name will flow on forever down the Bill Williams Fork and that it is planted for eternity in Bill Williams Mountain, and that it will be kept warm on the lips of old men and children for many generations in the attractive mountain village of Williams, William Williams, the trapper, is a being half myth, half mystery. Like Melchisedek, he seems to be “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.” It is commonly held that he was born in Missouri, and that he was killed by the Indians while alone and afar in the mountains. He had been adopted into the Ute tribe, and was no doubt married to a squaw of this tribe. But once in a drunken spree he had betrayed his people to the whites. As a result of this, he expected death at their hands, and admitted that this retaliation would be just.

He was a Methodist, it is believed—a Methodist preacher in Missouri in his youth. If the report that he was a Methodist is true, he was a perfect example of the Methodist doctrine of falling from grace; for his career in the wild West, unlike Jedediah Smith’s was far from a saintly one. He seems to have come to his death in the spring of 1849, somewhere in the mountains between Taos and Pueblo, Colorado. In George Frederrick Ruxton’s *Life in the Far West*, there is a graphic description of the finding, by a band of hunters, of the old trapper’s dead body, high up in a dismal canyon of the Rocky Mountains. They “came upon an old camp, before which lay, protruding from the snow, the blackened remains of pine logs. Before these, which had been the fire, and leaning with his back against a pine trunk, and his legs crossed under him, half covered with snow, reclined the figure of the old mountaineer, his snow-capped head bent over his breast. His well-known hunting-coat of fringed elk-skin hung stiff and weather-stained about him; and his rifle, packs, and traps, were strewed around.”

“Awe-struck, the trappers approached the body, and found it frozen hard as stone, in which state it had probably lain there for many days or weeks. A jagged rent in the breast of his leather coat, and dark stains about it, showed he had received a wound before his death; but it was impossible to say, whether to his hurt, or to sickness, or to the natural decay of age, was to be attributed the wretched and solitary end of poor Bill Williams.”

Securely as he has implanted his name in Arizona, it seems impossible to trace his footsteps, or identify his activities so far as they had to do with this state. I find no particular account of any of his trapping experiences in Arizona, though he undoubtedly trapped its streams and roamed its mountains many times. Bill Williams was an eccentric figure—a "lone wolf." Bands of trappers would meet him everywhere from British America to the Colorado and the Gila, and he rarely remained long in the company of other trappers. His success as a trapper was phenomenal, and his skill in either evading or fighting the Indians the marvel of the West. For months at a time he would hide himself away in mountain fastnesses from white men, but periodically would return to Taos, or some mountain rendezvous with a fortune in furs. His packs being disposed of, and the fortune lost in gambling, reckless sprees, and openhanded, spectacular generosity, he would borrow enough money to secure new pack animals, and with knife, rifle, and traps, would again take his solitary way to his unknown haunts. He was sure to reappear again, and always loaded with peltry.

Almost every hunter or trapper of that time who kept a journal or left a record of any kind had something to say about "Old" Bill Williams. These snap-shots are about all that has come down to us. One of the most frightful and disastrous experiences in all the terrible history of the West was that of Fremont's Fourth Expedition in 1848. Bill Williams was Fremont's guide on this occasion, and well would it have been for all concerned if Fremont had heeded the old mountaineer, instead of persisting in his own course and ignoring the wishes of his guide. One of the surviving members of that expedition left a diary in which is this etching of his companion:

"Bill Williams was the most successful trapper in the mountains, and the best acquainted with the ways and habits of the wild tribes among and near whom he spent his adventurous life. He first came to the West as a sort of missionary to the Osages. But "Old Bill" laid aside his christianity and took up his rifle and came to the mountains. He had ingratiated himself into the favor of several tribes; he had two or three squaws among the Utahs, and spoke their language and also that of several other tribes."

"He was a dead shot with a rifle, though he always shot with a 'double wabble'; he never could hold his gun still, yet his ball went always to the spot on a single shot. Though a most indefatigable walker, he never could walk on a straight line, but went staggering along, first on one side and then on the

other. He was an expert horseman; scarce a horse or mule could unseat him. He rode leaning forward upon the pommel, with his rifle before him, his stirrups ridiculously short, and his breeches rubbed up to his knees, leaving his legs bare even in freezing cold weather. He wore a loose monkey-jacket or a buckskin hunting-shirt, and for his head-covering a blanket-cap, the two corners drawn up into two wolfish, satyr-like ears, giving him somewhat the appearance of the representations we generally meet with of his Satanic Majesty, at the same time rendering his *tout ensemble* exceedingly ludicrous."

Kit Carson First Wins His Spurs in Arizona

Kit Carson was the beau ideal of the hunters and trappers of the West. His name stands highest and his fame shines farthest among all the men of the mountains and plains. He was born in Kentucky, December 24, 1809. It was the ambition of his life to be a trapper and hunter. At seventeen years of age he ran away from the saddler to whom he was apprenticed and joined a trading caravan to Santa Fe. For the next three years the boy was employed in various menial occupations in the great Southwest. He served as cook, teamster at the Santa Rita Copper Mines, and interpreter to a trader who was bound for Chihuahua; for Kit early learned to speak Spanish. There was little cash reward for these employments; and he still earnestly yearned for the career of a hunter and trapper. By this time he had become an expert rifleman, but he was undersized and far from impressive in appearance. Indeed, neither then nor afterward, either in feature or physique, did Kit Carson possess any of the outward qualities of the hero or the beau.

But when he was twenty, his time came; and, once having found his true element, he rose rapidly to fame and honor. Within a few years he became the most feared, the most respected, and most admired trapper, Indian fighter, and scout in America. He was fearless, resourceful, indomitable. His skill with fire-arms, his cool daring, his dash, and endurance, his kindness of heart and trustworthiness of character, made him a national figure before he reached middle life. In the spring of 1829 Carson had the good fortune to be admitted to the famous party of forty trappers that the veteran leader Ewing Young organized to go to the beaver streams of Arizona; first, to take vengeance on a band of Apache Indians who had a short time

before attacked a party of young men on their way to the Colorado River, and, second, to conduct a profitable trapping expedition on the Arizona streams.

As it would not do to let the Mexican authorities know his destination, Young led his party northward, as if he were bound for the United States; but, as soon as he dared, he turned to the Southwest, passed through Zuni, and coming to the headwaters of the Salt River, came upon the Apaches and led them into a trap, killing fifteen, wounding many, and routing the rest. The party now proceeded to trap down the Salt River, then up the Verde when they came to that stream. The Apaches hung upon their flanks, sneaking into their camp now and then, and making away with horses, mules, and traps whenever they could. When the head of the Verde was reached, the company divided, about half of them returning to Taos or Sante Fe to sell the accumulated furs and secure new traps to replace those the Indians had stolen, and the other half setting out for the Sacramento Valley in California. Kit Carson was a member of the party headed for California, as was Ewing Young, the leader of the entire expedition.

Game was scarce, and water still more scarce. Having killed three deer and made water-bags of their skins, for four days they marched to the northwest without other food or water than what they carried with them. At the end of four days they came to water and here rested two days. Four days more of hunger and thirst brought them to the Grand Canyon and the Mohave Indians. They bought an old mare from the Mohaves, killed and ate her; and a little later secured a small supply of corn and beans from another band of Mohaves. They now made their way over much the same route that Smith had previously followed to San Gabriel, and finally to the Sacramento River. In Indian fights, and in hunting and trapping adventures, Kit Carson gave ample evidence of his valor, energy, and intelligence.

After a successful season, the party started on the return trip to New Mexico, going southward by the little pueblo of Los Angeles. At this place they had serious trouble with the Mexican authorities, and the entire company narrowly escaped destruction at the hands of their treacherous enemies. Making their escape through the prompt action of Mr. Young and the sobriety and steadiness of Kit Carson, they marched straight for the Colorado River. They trapped down to the Gulf; and then, retracing their course as far as the Gila, they trapped all the way up that stream to the San Pedro. Here, as usual, on

these Arizona expeditions, they encountered hostile Apaches, and this time it was to the great discomfiture of the savages, for the trappers intercepted them as they were dashing northward with a herd of two hundred stampeded horses that they had stolen in Sonora. The Indians were put to flight, and Young appropriated as many of the horses as he needed to replace his own jaded animals, killed two of them for food, and turned the rest loose to roam the country. They continued their trapping to the neighborhood of the Copper Mines. As they had been at work all this time without a license from the Mexican governor—an illegal procedure—Mr. Young left his furs hidden at the copper mines and went to Santa Fe to get a license to trade among the Indians about the Copper Mines. Having secured the desired license, he returned to the mines, got his furs, worth twenty-four thousand dollars, and proceeded to Taos, reaching that place in April, 1830, almost exactly one year from the time the expedition had left there.

So far as I know, Kit Carson never trapped in Arizona again after this, though during the next seven years he did hunt, and trap, and fight Indians all through the Rocky Mountains. By 1840 he was a national figure, and his deeds belong to the Nation rather than to any particular region.

Later Famous, Infamous, and Tragic Expeditions

In August, 1831, David E. Jackson left Santa Fe with eleven men, and eighteen mules—five of the seven pack-mules being loaded with Mexican silver dollars—to purchase mules in California for the eastern market. He went by the Copper Mines, the presidio of Tucson, the Pima villages on the Gila, and down the Gila to the Colorado. He did not get as large a number of animals as he had planned to buy, but he secured six hundred mules and one hundred horses and arrived with them at the Colorado River without serious mishap in June, 1832. But, as the river was running bank high, he lost a number of the animals in crossing. The party returned to New Mexico by the same route that was taken on the trip West.