



August, 2016

Mountain Man Monthly

The Authorized Publication of the
Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders Inc.

The Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders, Inc. was chartered in 1969 by a group of men and women interested in their heritage and dedicated to preserving and promoting the sport of muzzle loading and buckskinning. CSML is a family oriented club that holds a broad range of functions such as camp outs, potluck dinners, and black powder shoots. CSML is affiliated with the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association and the National Rifle Association.

Views and opinions contained within articles submitted to the Mountain Man Monthly are not necessarily those of the editor or CSML. The editor reserves the right not to publish any article submitted but encourages articles on any subject regarding shooting sports and subjects related to the fur trade era.

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Mountain Man Monthly Editor

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**No meeting in September; no
club shoots in September
Happy Hunting!!!**

**State Shoot - Ft. Lupton
Sept. 2-5**

Paper Shoot - October 2

**Regular Club Meeting
October 6; 7:00 p.m.**

“Gunsmiths of Williamsburg”

Bird & Buffalo - Oct. 15-16

UPCOMING EVENTS: CSML & Statewide

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	INFORMATION
NO Club Meeting		September 1	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
State Shoot	Ft. Lupton	Sept. 2-5	bracketed matches/csmla.net
NO CLUB SHOOTS	IN SEPTEMBER	DUE TO LABOR	DAY & CONFLICTS!
Muzzle Loading Hunting Season	State-wide by draw only	Sept. 10-17	good luck to our hunters; remember to tell us your success
Hunter's Widows' Rendezvous	Ft. Lupton	Sept. 16-18	women & children; more info: Gina LaFoe (303) 960-6850
Women on Target	Cactus Flats Range	Sept. 18	contact Doug for details
Colorado Colonial Encampment	Ft. Lupton	Sept. 30 through Oct. 2	All colonials, traders, and others. Info: Mike 303-704-8509
Paper Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	Oct. 2	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	Oct. 6	Discuss bird & buffalo; video
Bird & Buffalo Shoot	Ft. Melchert	Oct. 15-16	dry camping after noon on Oct. 14; long distance shoot; potluck
Regular Monthly Meeting & Craft Fair	American Legion Colo. Springs	November 3	free tables to display your wares; bring money to buy stuff!!!
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS	TIME ENDS	NOVEMBER 6	CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR!!!!
Paper Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	November 6	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Primitive Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	November 20	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	December 1	ornament exchange; finger foods
Paper Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 4	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Primitive Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 18	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
NO PAPER SHOOT	IN JANUARY, 2017	NEW YEAR'S DAY	HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion Colo. Springs	January 5, 2017	wild game potluck, annual game awards, tall tales told
Yearly Board Meeting	Joy's House	January 10, 2017	Plan events & set calendar
Primitive Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	January 15	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Yearly Dues are Due	by January 31, 2017	Please see Ted	Beaupre & pay up!!!

For CSML scheduled shoots; **CALL SHOOT HOT LINE (719) 632-7690** after 9:00 a.m. on shoot day to be sure shoot is on!!!
Schedule is subject to change at any time and is based on information available at time of publication. On-line check csmlinc.org

PAST THINGS

The August meeting was a good one. We had several familiar faces and some new ones as well. Good to see Terry & Janey Clark here!!!

This meeting also saw Bob Peloso, Joe O'Brien, Mary Edmondson, and Michael Clark join us. So good to see these folks and share a bit of time with them.

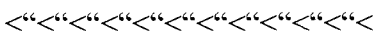
The business portion of the meeting was rather quick. Good news from Ted is that the membership is now at 69 currently paid member families, which includes 4 renewals this evening.

Doug talked about the success of the Primitive Grainger Camp Out. He noted several folks in the room that were present at this one. He also noted that the naming ceremony revealed Ken "Cisco Kid" West, Susan "Suzy 6-Ball" Weed, Randy "Lightening" Ruyle, and Jacob "Wrong Shot" Rathman.

The chili cook-off brought the hottest to Doug, the mildest to Judy Sterner, and the tastiest to Ted Beaupre. This sparked a discussion on how long Ted has been making the tastiest chili, to which he just grinned.

The potluck on Saturday night, despite the chili, was a good one and breakfast on Sunday brought out the rest of the good food for all to share. If you didn't make this one, you missed a really good time.

Lots of things coming up and everyone was reminded that there are no shoots and no monthly club meeting in September. State Shoot is September 2-5 and everyone is encouraged to attend that shoot.

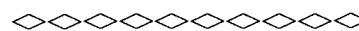


AGAIN, please pass the word to all that there are no CSML club shoots in September and no monthly meeting in September.

September is a busy month with the State Shoot, Labor Day, kids returning to school and the muzzle loading hunting season. There are plenty of things to participate in so plan now to attend one of the events and support them.

If you have drawn hunting licenses and will be

taking game with a muzzle loader, you need to keep statistics on the animal that you harvest and report them to Joy. In January at the Wild Game Potluck and George Bennett Memorial Tall Tale Trophy event, there will be awards made. The taker of the largest elk, deer, and antelope will be given an award that they get to keep and proudly display somewhere in their home for one year. The teller of the best tall tale will also get to take home the much coveted George Bennett Memorial Tall Tale trophy and even more proudly display this amazing one-of-a-kind trophy in a prominent place in their home. We encourage all of you hunters out there to keep your stats and report them. You just never know who and what sizes will win. You also need to plan to be at the January 5, 2017 meeting to partake in the wild game potluck and hear those great stories that will be told!!!



BIRD & BUFFALO 2016

OCT. 15 & 16

Start now to make your plans to attend the Bird & Buffalo event at Ft. Melchert. Dry-camping is allowed at the Fort beginning at noon on Friday, Oct. 14.

The shooting will consist of long range targets, some fun targets, and some primitive gongs. Bring plenty of ammo and powder to participate.

While it has not yet been confirmed, it is almost 100% positive that there will be the witches chili lunch at noon (all-you-can-eat) for \$5.00 each. Potluck supper on Saturday night at 6:00 p.m. followed by the world famous auction of goods.

Speaking of auction, you need to clean out your closets, garages, attics, and shooting dens and bring the stuff you no longer use or

want so that it can be bought. As the saying goes, "one man's junk is another man's treasure" and that certainly goes for this club. The only hard-fast-rule is that if you bring it and it doesn't sell, you must take it back. No leaving the stuff behind at Ft. Melchert!!!

Don't forget that things like home-made bread, cookies, jams, pickles, and the like always seem to go well. This is a chance for our club to make some money to put into the treasury and keep us going for a while. Bring lots of cash and checks and make those all important purchases!!!

If tradition holds true (which is most always does) there will be a potluck breakfast on Sunday morning. Everyone brings things to share and we have one final time together before we break camp and head home.

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REPORTS ON OUR FRIENDS.....

Seems as though several of our group have been fighting off injuries, illness, and the like. We need to remember our friends in our thoughts and prayers and ask that the Great Spirit help them through these tough times.

Marilyn Stites has had some foot issues. She is home and recuperating.

Terry Clark is home and doing better. He has had a long rough journey back but we sure were glad to see him at this meeting.

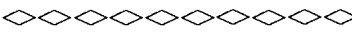
Sharon Udovich is at home and doing well. Her nursing staff helps her and John pitches in as well. She misses her friends here and we surely miss her cheery smile and infectious laugh.

John Gloyd is now at home after his double by-pass with complications. He is recuperating and progressing on a daily basis.

Ron Melchert has had a broken blood vessel in his eye. The eye specialist says it is progressing well and Ron reports that it has not been painful. Looks bad but not so much.

Mark Taylor continues with his

chemotherapy and is doing okay (according to him). You can send a card to Mark at 19210 Loop Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80928.



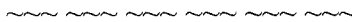
SAYING GOODBYE

Word was received that our dear friend and Boy Scout supporter **Liz Taylor** passed away on August 19. Liz had been battling cancer for some time but still never gave up on her Boy Scouts and involvement in their lives clear to the end.

A memorial service for Liz will be held on September 4 at 2:00 p.m. at the Hanover High School.

Ron Melchert's life-time friend **John Fish** passed away this month. Ron and John had been friends for 62 years after meeting in the military. They had been stationed together several times and both ended up in Colorado Springs. They share many memories and times together during that lifetime of being friends and supporters of each other. Ron tells me that they spoke at least weekly on the phone and everyone was shocked at his passing.

We as a group extend our condolences to these folks and their families. We trust that their memories of all the good times shared will carry them through the loss.



AUGUST GRAINGER CAMP OUT

At the July meeting, Ted made threats to have diabolical targets at 25 and 50 yards for the Paper Grainger Camp Out. He also told us that there would be a Schutzen target at 75 yards that was a bug on a branch. Reports state that Ted was true to his word and brought some diabolical targets.

There were 15 shooters at the Paper Grainger shoot: 11 guys, 3 girls, and 1-1/2 juniors. Isabelle Morris was the Junior and her sister Ashlynn (who is only 4 years old) was the half. Ashlynn shot two times and hit in the black!!!! (Watch out guys as she will be

a force to be reckoned with.) Isabel and Ashlynn are the grand-daughters of Singe and Marilyn Stites.

Steve Sterner won the "most average" trophy and Randy Ruyl won the Schutzen target.

While there were not a lot of campers, the Saturday evening potluck was very good and there was lots of variety in the food presented to share. The company was great and all had a good time.

Off in the distance the election train could be heard chugging up the mountain. As it got closer it just picked up steam and ran right through the Grainger camp out and didn't even stop. All the current board is still in the same seats as when the day began. Susan Weed has offered to fill in for anyone if they need her to. Otherwise, the train just ran off into the night.

Breakfast on Sunday morning brought forth custom eggs by Isabelle and Ted. Isabelle took orders, cooked, turned, and served the eggs as ordered by the attendees. Other delicious fare on the table included pancakes, french toast, and fried potatoes.

Camp was struck and the attendees slowly left down the mountain and returned to the city; only to wait for the next time to be in God's country.

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BICYCLE RIDE FOR DIABETES

Ron Deurmyer advised the group that he is riding his bicycle for the diabetes foundation and is looking for sponsors to help. He will accept cash or check donations and would greatly appreciate any and all contributions.

At the club meeting, Jake Rathman again brought another great old gun to show us and tell us about. It started life as a .25 caliber rifle and was freshened out to .32 around 1925. The barrel was a Bill Large barrel which is considered to be a top end barrel manufacturer. .32 caliber was considered pretty typical in Indiana and Ohio.

The gun was built by J. R. Broomfiel in Indiana and he was known for his target guns. The stock of the gun has a slight upcurve that was only found in this area. It weights 11 pounds and is 39 inches from breech to tip of the barrel. The gun has a

Gulcher lock made by the English Gulcher family who immigrated to Philadelphia.

Thanks to Jake for sharing these guns with us and allowing us to see these small pictures of history.

FOR SALE

.40 caliber rifle with a Green Mountain barrel and Siler lock. From all accounts this is a really good shooter. It has a 42" barrel and is a full stock.

\$600.00

More information at csmlinc.org.

The following is from a book called A Book of Country Things, told by Walter Needham. In this book, Walter talks about his grandfather who had black and white honesty and simplicity about the country things and ways he knew and followed. The original book was published in 1896.

Chapter 8

What He Had to Buy

If you've read what went before, you know this is going to be a short chapter. When Gramp first went to farming, the blacksmith was about the only man that ever saw any of his money. As he got older he begun to buy more things, until by the time I come along he was practically as bad as a city fellow - - or anyway he thought so.

Quite a few little industries did grow up for a while in the local villages. John Gale told me there has always been a mill or some sort of shop on the site where the Algiers general store is, ever since the town started. There was a blacksmith and wheelwright shop. There was a baby-carriage shop. There was always a gristmill until just a couple of years ago.

A few gristmills still keep running in Vermont; there was one just closed down up to Putney. Nowadays they mostly grind cornmeal for city people

who get it by the pound; naturally there isn't much grain raised around here any more. The mills grind a little feed too, but nothing to what they did.

There was a horn-comb factory in Algiers. Even when I was a boy, all combs was made of horn. They boiled the horn to soften it, flattened it out, and then cut combs from it. They also made horn buttons at that shop.

Linseed oil, to shine things up with, was another thing Gramp had to buy. There used to be considerable flax raised around these parts, and I said before that people made their own linen. But the oil had to come from an oil mill, and there was one here in Guilford. One of the stones is up in a dooryard just off the main road.

Down on Broad Brook at the falls, a few hundred yards below the general store, there was one of the old vertical sawmills. John Gale used to have the old up-and-down saw from that mill in his shop. If Gramp wanted timbers for framing, of course he hewed them out himself; but plans and floorboards and such as that had to be either got out in a saw pit, with one man on top and another in the pit, or sawed out at a mill. The up-and-down mill was just one step beyond the saw pit; the water would turn a wheel that worked along, thin saw (like a huge bucksaw blade) up and down. The log rested on a bed that run along by a ratchet. Every time the saw went up or down, the ratchet kicked the log along. They must have changed the spool of the ratchet according to the thickness of the log. The up-and-down mills sawed so slow that the lumbermen used to say if they wanted to saw a big log they would put it on and start the mill, and go home to dinner. Pretty soon after they came back from dinner they could start the next cut on the same log.

The Guilford statistics tell how many sawmills there was in town, and there wasn't any that had a capacity of more than 1500 board feet a day, except one that could saw 2000. The average little portable mill now, with a power driven circular saw, will run about 6000 to 8000 board feet a day, up to 10,000 if they're pushed.

If you look in most books about the New England pioneers, you will read where the first settlers cut down all the trees and burned them for ashes. The Needham side of my family - my father, his father, his

father, and his father - - all burned wood to make potash for soap; that was their business, selling potash and had been ever since the State of Vermont started. They begun in 1794, and kept it up for three generations. But actually the fellows that wrote the histories got all excited for nothing.

Good timer was just as valuable then as it is now, and he old-timers had better sense than to destroy it. What the first settlers burned was of no value. It was old growth, either hollow or rotten or shaky or poor stuff; it had gone by, the same as an apple that has hung on the tree too long. When I was a boy my own father told me that there was more good timber then than in his young days when they was cutting trees and burning them for ashes. The old-growth hemlocks would be four or five feet through, all right, but they was hollow, with just a little shell on the outside. Sometimes they had hollow big enough for a man to get into.

Of course, there was an occasional big tree that was sound; you've heard real estate agents talk about wide board flooring. And there's a door in John Gale's shop made out of one board.

John Gale's mother and grandfather had their cider-brandy distillery about two hundred yards west of his shop - - The Guilford Mineral Springs Distillery. Cider brandy was quite an industry around here a hundred, a hundred thirty years ago.

John Gale told me how his folks used to make it then. First the cider fermented, and become hard cider. Then his mother and her men would put the hard cider in a forty-gallon iron kettle, which was fitted with a copper dome that had a pipe leading off to the worm. The worm was a spiral tube that could be cooled with water. They started a fire under the kettle, and watched it very closely. The moment it started to boil they would draw the fire just as quickly as they could, and let it cool. Then they would start a slow fire, and simmer off the run of brandy, as they called it. They ran it through once, and throwed the rest away. If they didn't draw the fire, the still would blow up: the cider would froth up like boiling sugar and blow the top off the kettle.

The first run that come out of the still was what they called stouts, and it was a different quality than the regular run. The last that run out would e weak, so they used to blend it with the stouts. The

liquor was colorless by nature, so they would burn sugar in an iron skillet, and keep stirring it until it was a burned molasses. That was caramel color, and a few drops would color the brandy.

The brandy was run into barrels. The barrels was rolled on one side in the upper part of the distillery until the revenue officer came. They rolled in what they wanted to pay revenue on. The revenue man was supposed to know what the capacity of the distillery was, and about how much brandy would come off of that amount of cider. He checked the barrels, and they paid the revenue, and the barrels was stamped. Then they could be sold.

They sold, all right. By the barrel. One time the revenue man didn't believe the Gales was showing as much of the product as they should; he thought the capacity of the still was a good deal more than the results they was getting. So they told him to run out the batch that was in the still, and see for himself how much they got.

He wasn't an expert, because he didn't draw the fire. The thing blew up, and they had a timber propped up on top of the dome, and the timber pushed right through the roof. They lost the whole forty gallons of cider.

The next time the revenue man came it was the same fellow, and he just didn't see three or four finished barrels that was right staring him in the face.

One odd thing about cider, more people make it at home now than they ever did then, because almost all the mills is gone. Every fall you find one or two more of the old ones has shut down. So if you want cider, you've almost got to make it for yourself.

Rag carpets was another small industry in Vernon at one time. Hooked rugs are quite common; they was something women made at home in their spare time; but the old-fashioned rag carpet was another thing. It was beat up on a loom, and not everybody had one. The rags were cut into narrow strips, sewed end-to-end, and put on a shuttle. The loom worked by hand, but it throwed the shuttle for you. When you pulled the beater back, it would cuff the shuttle through between the threads; then you brought the beater down again, to pound up what you had just run through; draw the beater back, and it would kick the shuttle to the opposite side again. The beater had a sort of bracket with an arm on it that slid the shuttle. If the shuttle didn't go clear across, you

sometimes had to finish poking it through for yourself.

Salt and one or two staples like that Gramp might have to buy at the general store. I doubt if general stores has changed much since Gramp's time, except maybe they take more pride now in the variety of junk they carry. A fellow up the West River near Williamsville had a story about him in some big magazine; it told how he always had everything anybody could think of, and one day on a bet a man asked him if he had a pulpit for sale. He poked around in the shed until he found one. In Gramp's day people was too busy to spend very much time making that kind of bets.

Naturally Gramp could get things even at the store without paying cash. He might work it out - - lots of people did that for Mr. Basor down to Algiers clear up to and after the second world war. Or he might bring him produce or timber or anything else the storekeeper figured he could use. Maybe that's why we generally talk about going downstreet to do our trading, stead of our shopping.

You hear talk nowadays about inflation. It couldn't have made very much headway under the old system where a man would pay for the use of his neighbor's hayrake with a gallon of syrup. One neighbor of mine bought all his potatoes from the same farmer, and he always allowed him two dollars a bushel, whether the going price was fifty cents or six dollars. I don't know but what I'd like to see him in as Secretary of the Treasury.

Of course the one shop that meant more to Gramp than all the rest put together was the blacksmith's. Even in his old age he could never get out of the habit of picking up every bent nail or scrap of iron, and throwing it into an old keg. I asked him one time why he save them. He said, "I might want them some time, but I don't think so."

When he was a young fellow he used to take those scraps to the blacksmith. The blacksmith would take one of the larger pieces, and hammer it out kind of flat. Then he would take the scraps, little small pieces, lay them on top, and put them all in the forge. He would pound them all together, with some welding compound, a special sand, for a flux. He would keep on hammering it all together until he got quite a sizeable piece of iron from the bent nails Gramp had

saved up. After that he could shape it any way he wanted to.

It was quite a tedious job; most of the forges had nothing but charcoal fires, and of course hand bellowses. The smith mostly had some boy that he was teaching, and the boy worked the bellows and was also the striker. The apprentice was always the striker; while he was learning to show oxen, he had to prepare everything, and the big boss done the nailing on. The striker got his name from the job he had on large pieces of iron like a cart axle. When the iron come out of the forge, it would cool before the blacksmith could hit it. So the striker had a heavy hammer, and stood on the opposite side of the anvil. He struck the iron with a hard blow, and the blacksmith struck it with a soft low that smoothed it up as they went along. If they wanted to draw out a piece of iron, the striker would hit it the heavy blow, and the blacksmith would beat the striker's hammer-marks out.

Shoeing oxen was a big part of the blacksmith's business; oxen wasn't shod just for the summer, but if they worked in the winter they was shod. It's harder work to shoe oxen than horses. In the first place the ox's hoof is divided, so there is two shoes go on each foot. Besides, oxen won't hold still. You have to put them into a stanchion, a special frame with belly bands to go under the ox, and a windlass to hoist him up. His feet have to be strapped down to a framework so he can't yank. There was one of those racks in Oscar Howe's shop up to Brattleboro until maybe thirty years ago.

Of course the old-time blacksmith always turned his own shoes out of bar iron; I've heard that when somebody in York State invented a horseshoe machine, it was one of the big things in winning the Civil War, and the Confederates sent some men up to Canada to sneak down and steal the plans. Maybe they was the same fellows that organized the St. Albans raid up at the other end of Vermont.

Besides turning his own shoes, the blacksmith could put in his spare time making nails and chain. Welding chain one link at a time is quite a job. They generally made the links separately, and then they would take two links, and put in an extra one to connect them, and so on. To shape a link they would make a blank, and turn it on a small anvil that was

used for the purpose. This was a small anvil horn that fit in the main part; it tapered out smaller, so that they could work the links down just as small as they liked.

Making nails was originally done more by eye; they just hammered them out with a blob on top for a head, and a point on the other end. At that, you can see why so many old houses and pieces of furniture are pegged and not nailed. Later on they had a nail machine, which really amounted to a mold. They would buy nail bars commercially; they heated the bar, put it in the form and pounded it to a point; then they would cut the nail off, and shape the head. That was the last of the handmade nails; in Gramp's time they still just took any piece of wrought iron that someone brought in.

Saving iron went so far that they would even get the blacksmith to put a new bit into an axe,. The axe head was iron, and the bit was a piece of steel set in for a cutting edge. When the steel was worn down, the blacksmith would split the head from the eye out, and put in a new piece of steel. Then the owner would take it home again and hang it-put in his own special helve.

The steel square was invented at a blacksmith shop right here in Vermont. You may not think it's an invention worth talking about, because what else would yo make a carpenter's square out of? Well, the old squares was wood. The blacksmith upcountry used a wooden square to mark off hot iron, and the wood used to burn; so he conceived the idea of taking a broken saw blade, and welding on the short piece that was broken off to make a right angle. This was the first steel square that was ever made, and it got to be quite an industry in Vermont before other people started manufacturing them too.

Naturally the blacksmith was a real standby of the whole community. The men used to hang out there, the same as they would in the general store. One day when Gramp was sitting around the blacksmith shop in Vernon, he offered to bet that he could drive a t4enpenny nail into a board farther with one blow of his hand than what the blacksmith could with one blow of his hammer. Gramp was pretty well along in years, and it seemed like a foolish kind of bet anyway; in the end the whole village of Vernon got so excited that they had to try it out instead of just talking about it.

Naturally the blacksmith knew he could win, but still he was kind of afraid he might hit his fingers with the big sledgehammer. He took it careful, like, and all the loafers begun to wonder a little if he would win after all.

Gramp wound a bandanna around his hand, grabbed the nail in his fist with the head against his palm, and slammed it right through the board with all his might.

When they come to measure the nails, they decided Gamp wasn't quite such a foolish old man as they supposed.



BOOK REVIEWS

Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary Mountain Man by Barton H. Barbour. University of Oklahoma Press, 2009, hardcover, 288 pages.

There is no individual who ranks ahead of Jed Smith in the story of the mountain men, and only a few -- Kit Carson and Jim Bridger come to mind -- who stand with him in the sweep of the early history of the West. Yet reconstructing his life and travels has been a slow and arduous journey, beginning more than a century ago. From Chittenden to John Neihardt, Harrison Dale, Dale Morgan, and George Brooks, the monument to Smith has been built gradually and from diverse sources. Documents and letters still keep surfacing that cast new light on some important aspect of his career; for examples, the legal records found in a Mexican archive detailing his stay in California, and his 1830 letter to the secretary of war, offering to lead survey and mapping parties in the West. Perhaps someday an original copy of his map of the West will be found, calling for a new appraisal of this man among men.

In the meantime, Arton Barbour's excellent biography of Smith will have to remain the best researched and written of those available. Published by the University of Oklahoma Press, it serves as thoroughly documented, well written and academically accurate telling of the story. Concise and fast paced, the usual footnotes are absent, but the general reader of American history will not feel that the book lacks documentation.

History abounds with myths, most of which begin as undocumented assumptions and proceed quickly to become foregone conclusions. Because he didn't consort with native women, and apparently didn't smoke or drink, he was transformed into a bible-toting missionary. Barbour refuses to accept this interpretation, and points out that there is no evidence of Smith being either religious or carrying a bible. (By today's vidw, Smith

could have just as easily been divined by certain historians as to have been a homosexual; after all, he didn't chase girls and he was known to have spent time sleeping with men). In fact, Barbour's interpretation of the events of Smith's life show the author to be balanced and impartial, both rare commodities these days. For the person wanting to read on mountain man biography, or even one book about Smith, no better volume is available.

Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, University of Nebraska Press, 2009, paper, 618 pages.

There is a new tide coming in fur trade scholarship, and it is exciting. The fur trade has become a significant business worth studying instead of an anecdote of frontier history whereby shady characters cheated the poor, childlike Indian out of his valuable furs for beads, baubles, and guns that didn't work. The fur trade was likened to the drug trade by professional historians, and I'm not sure if the reason was simply the negative attitude on the part of many academicians towards commerce, or the failure to really examine the records that were left to us. The past generation of anthropologists was of little help, for they lamented native cultures that had the temerity to evolve in the presence of imported superior technology.

Now, a new generation of scholars is discovering that native people were instrumental in directing the trade, from how it was conducted including prices, to the types and quality of the proffered merchandise. The customers have also been rediscovered as traders themselves with vast and far-reaching trade and transport networks. *Rethinking the Fur Trade* is an excellent synopsis of these new and frankly better interpretations of the role of the fur trade in native culture and North American history.

The book is comprised in the main of previously published articles from a wide variety of sources. Each re-examines or presents a new perspective on a significant aspect of the trade. The editor herself provides an introductory essay on the fur trade as a facet of the trade and commerce of the North Atlantic region. This is followed by some 26 selections that detail the importance of the fur trade in the development of agriculture, changes in native costuming to accommodate new and better materials such as textiles, and native participation in the fur trade by different ages and genders. The result is that the significance of the fur trade in our continent's history looms larger and more significant than ever before.

For those of you who want to keep abreast of the fur trade's evolving historiography, but don't have the time to read hundreds of new publications, this book is essential reading. It is a must-read.