



November, 2010

# 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.

## Regular Monthly Meeting

### December 2, 2010

## Christmas Ornament Exchange & finger foods

## Paper Shoot - December 5

## Primitive Shoot - December 19

## MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

&

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

## Paper Shoot - January 2, 2011

**President**

Joy Hicks

**Vice President**

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**Treasurer**

Gwen Blanchard

**Secretary**

Lois Schainost

**Membership Secretary**

Ted Beaupre

**Range Officer**

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**Assistant Range Officers**

Ted Beaupre

Marlin Johnson

**Primitive Exec.**

Doug Davis

**Assistant Primitive Exec.**

Tony Hecker

**Womens' Primitive Exec.**

Judy Sterner

**Cannon Master**

Richard Stites

**Legislative Liaison**

Doug Davis

**Mountain Man Monthly Editors**

The Webb's

### UPCOMING EVENTS: CSML & Statewide

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	INFORMATION
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	December 2	ornament exch. & finger foods
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 5	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 19	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Newsletter Articles Due	to the Editor	December 23rd	Don't be late with your info!!!!
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	January 2, 2011	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	January 6, 2011	wild game potluck & awards
Board Meeting	Joy's House	January 11	plan annual shoot & event
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	January 16	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Newsletter Articles Due	to the Editor	January 20th	Don't be late with your info!!!!
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	February 3	white elephant gift exchange fun!
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	February 6	check shoot hot line first!!
CSMLA Annual Trade Show & Convention	DoubleTree North Westminster	Feb. 5 & 6	Annual meeting of the State Association; classes; auction, etc
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	February 20	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Newsletter Articles Due	to the Editor	February 24 <sup>th</sup>	Don't be late with your info!!!!
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	March 3	come & see what there is.....
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	March 6	check shoot hot line first!!!
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	March 20	check shoot hot line first!!!
Newsletter Articles Due	to the Editor	March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Don't be late with your info!!!!
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	April 3	pistol at 12, rifle at 1:00 p.m.
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	April 7	meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	April 17	pistol at 12; rifle at 1:00 p.m.
<b>NO CLUB SHOOTS</b>	<b>IN MAY.....</b>	<b>GEAR UP FOR</b>	<b>36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SHOOT!!!!</b>
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	May 5	last meeting before the shoot
36 <sup>th</sup> annual Memorial Day Shoot & Rendez.	Florence Mountain Park	May 28-30	lots of shooting, work, fun, and potluck on Saturday night
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion	June 2	wrap up of the shoot

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.*

# PAST THINGS

November's meeting began with a "glad-to-see-ya" for Jerry and Barb Walker. For those of you who missed this meeting, you missed a fantastic display of Jerry's scrimshaw work as well as some very beautiful arrowheads and rifles that were custom built.

The craft show was a pleasure to peruse. Barb Johnson brought some home-made pickles and peppers for sale, with free tastes first. Carol Gloyd brought lots of handcrafted items that her mother had made which included some beautiful baby dolls. Dee Beaupre had her display of curling iron holders, book marks, towels, and such for the kitchen. You Bronco fans missed out on a couple of really great and reasonably priced Bronco quilt throws that Lois had created.

Thank you to all who brought crafts for us. No time like the present for the rest of us to begin getting our stuff together for next year's craft fair. With all the events and such, the more we start now the less we'll have to do at the last minute.

Big and the last gun show at the Phil Long Expo Center on the day and weekend after Thanksgiving. Hopefully there was a good group of folks not too full of turkey to help Don Stoner with this one.

If you haven't done it yet, please get your address and e-mail information off to Joy so that we can have the new club phone books ready by the next meeting. This book is only for club members and allows us to keep in touch with each other.

The business portion of the meeting went quickly and we then ate and continued to shop at the craft fair. As always, lots of good treats on the table and we at them up!!!

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Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
November 4, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Joy Hicks. We welcomed all the old members and

again welcomed new members Barb and Jerry Walker. Again, Jerry has amazed us with examples of his fine scrimshaw work.

Minutes from the October meeting were approved as published in the *Mountain Man Monthly*.

Gwen Blanchard provided her Treasurer's report, with all the balances and funds located somewhere in our treasury. More importantly, she advised us that Stephen is doing great and hopes to be home for Christmas.

Ted Beaupre gave his membership report. He noted that they have purged the old membership roster and will be putting together and publishing a new Club Phone Book by the next meeting. Copies will be available for all members only. Joy stated that those who have friends that don't or can't make it to the meeting will be able to take a copy of the phone book to them.

Old Business: The turnout for the bird and buffalo event was good. Barb noted that this is the first auction we have had where everything on the table was sold!!!! Great job Marlin and Barb.

New Business: The State Association Annual Trade Show and Convention will be held on February 5 and 6 at the DoubleTree Hotel Denver North at 8773 Yates Drive in Westminster. In an effort to help defray some of the cost of this event, the Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders will be doing all the printing for the event.

Discussion held on offering turkeys for the primitive match in November. Dee Beaupre and Lois Schainost offered up the turkeys for this event.

Gun show scheduled for November 26-28. Don Stoner needs names of the volunteers so that he can arrange for free entrance to the event.

Upcoming events were announced. Don't forget the next meeting is the ornament exchange and we're bringing finger foods to share.

Motion made for adjournment; so done.

Before and after the meeting, the crafters of the club had items for everyone to do their Christmas shopping and there was plenty of treats and goodies to share.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Schainost, Secretary

## NOVEMBER 7 PAPER PISTOL MATCH

By: Ken "Suds" West

The match was shot on a beautiful, sunny, warm, calm day - - until a few minutes before the match started. Performance anxiety under control, I'm ready for a really good score - - - until I stepped out of the shop door and was blown back in. By the time we got up to the 25-yard range, we had a force 5 gale blowing with gusts up to force 8. Placing rocks on top of the lead balls on the loading table to keep them from blowing away, the scores were:

Jim Murray	89x
Ken West	71
Marlin Johnson	63
Tom Hendricks	56

I've shot worse scores under better conditions! If you run across a package of pre-lubed patches blowing free in Kansas, they're mine!

## Primitive Shoot November 19<sup>th</sup>

While Doug Davis could not host the primitive shoot on November 19<sup>th</sup>, Marlin Johnson volunteered to do it. As editor, I thought I'd go out at about 2:00 p.m. and see what the shoot was all about. However, after running a quick errand and then by the time I got to Ft. Melchert, the shoot was already over. Juanita told me that there were only about 6 shooters and they finished up and went home.

Sorry to have missed the shoot, but hope that you all had a good time. Thanks to Marlin for his efforts to put on this shoot for those folks!!!!

## SOME REMINDERS...

I know that most of you know it, but here's a couple more reminders about things.....

December 2 is the meeting and it will host the annual Christmas ornament exchange and finger foods. Bring a wrapped ornament and something that you could eat as a meal. We'll have fun and eat like always.

December 5<sup>th</sup> is the paper shoot at Ft. Melchert. Ken will be doing pistol and the range opens for rifle at 1:00 p.m.

December 19<sup>th</sup> is the primitive shoot. Again, range opens at 1:00 p.m.

Get your reservations in for the State Associations' Annual Trade Show and Convention. Registration flyer elsewhere in the newsletter. Let's show our support and be there. Gun makers take your guns and artists take your art. There will be contests for these items. Also another drawing with lots of good stuff and the auction after dinner.

Linda Taylor had some foot surgery recently. She is healing well but sure anxious to get the "boot" off the foot so that she can be more mobile and actually reach her toes. Linda's had some fun with her two-year-old granddaughter Elizabeth, telling her oww, oww, oww, all day.

Ron and Juanita Melchert have had a couple of bad days. Ron pulled something in his back and Juanita has been traveling to the doctor. Let's keep these good and generous folks in our thoughts and prayers. When you are at the range or in the shop, please pick up after yourself and save these folks the efforts. Pack your trash with you and put things back where they belong.

If you host one of the shoots, it's always good to send us information about the shoot and the scores from the shoot. Folks like to read about what went on and those who shoot sure like to see their scores printed. Gives them some bragging rights and food for their feuds. Need to have the information by the Thursday after the Primitive shoot date. THANKS!!!!

## FUR TRADE THOUGHTS & THINGS

During the opening years of the 1800s, trade in beaver pelts was a significant component of the economies of Europe and North America. Witnessing the amounts of profit that could be gained through trading furs, many business-minded men joined together to form companies for that purpose. As the century wore on and the number of companies increased, the demand for and supply of beaver fur fell - - - as did the profits to be made. As a result, many fur companies went out of business in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

### THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

One of the earliest companies to enter the North American fur trade was the Hudson's Bay Company, which was organized on May 2, 1670, as a joint-stock company. Establishing itself along the shores of Hudson Bay, the English company slowly expanded and offered strong competition to the French companies operating out of Montreal. After the French and Indian War and the end of French rule in North America in 1763, the fur trade based in Montreal was controlled by many small firms, managed largely by Scottish merchants. During 1779, several of these small firms joined together, creating the North West Company. By 1804 just three large firms remained in Montreal - - The NWC, Alexander MacKenzie's XY, and the Michilimackinac Company, which had been established in 1798. The first two competitors merged in 1804.

For over three decades the NWC and the HBC competed fiercely against each other. In 1821 the two companies merged, creating a fur trade monopoly in British North America. Before the United States became a country, employees of the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company scoured portions of the United States as far east as present-day Ohio and later, in the west, to Washington, Oregon, and California, and south to Nevada and Utah in search of furs.

### THE MISSOURI FUR COMPANY

Following the return of the Lewis and Clark expedition, St. Louis businessmen Manuel Lisa, Pierre Menard, and William Morrison established a fur-trading venture called Lisa Menard, Morrison & Company. Lisa, the field leader, traveled with a party of fifty or sixty men and two keelboats filled with trade goods up the Missouri river early in the spring of 1807. Lisa ascended the Yellowstone and established Fort Raymond at the mouth of the Big Horn River. He returned to St. Louis in the summer of 1808 with a respectable load of furs.

In 1809 Lisa joined with Pierre Chouteau, Sr., William Clark, Pierre Menard, Andrew Henry and others in forming the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, commonly referred to as the Missouri Fur Company. These men planned to build a string of forts along the upper Missouri River. Leaving St. Louis in late spring 1809, the expedition (led by Lisa, Menard, and Henry) consisted of thirteen keelboats and barges and 180 men. In March 1810 Henry and Menard led a party of men from the fort to trap near the headwaters of the Missouri, known as the Three Forks. Repeated attacks by Blackfoot Indians forced the men out of the Three Forks region.

In January 1812 the Missouri Fur company was reorganized with a three-member board of directors controlling it. Once again Lisa led a trading expedition upriver, taking his party to a point just twelve miles above the Arikara villages, where the men established a post to trade with the Teton Sioux. Returning to St. Louis in 1813, Lisa found he had been removed from the company's board of directors and replaced by Pierre Chouteau, Sr. Disappointed at the losses incurred by recent expeditions, members of the company voted to dissolve it on January 17, 1814.

In 1819, Lisa re-established the Missouri Fur Company with seven other partners, including Joshua Pilcher, a former director of the Bank of St. Louis. Following Lisa's death in the summer of 1820, Pilcher became the MFC's field leader. While trapping near the Three Forks in 1823, a party of Missouri Fur company men was attacked by

the Blackfeet, who killed seven trappers and took \$15,000 worth of equipment and supplies. After this disaster the company withdrew from the upper Missouri for good. Pilcher and his new lieutenants, Andrew Drips and William Henry Vanderburgh, contented themselves with trading for furs along the lower Missouri. By April 1824, the company possessed just one post and was teetering on the brink of collapse. Within a few months the MFC had gone bankrupt and Pilcher reluctantly closed the company's books.

### **THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY**

John Jacob Astor, a native of Germany who possessed many years' experience in the fur trade, petitioned the state of New York in 1808 to grant him a charter for his American Fur Company. The charter was approved. In 1810 Astor chartered a second company. He lured some employees away from the North West Company and, along with other recruits, sent them to establish a base at the mouth of the Columbia River from which to trade furs. He named this enterprise the Pacific Fur Company.

Astor sent one group of men and supplies by ship to the Columbia River, and a second group overland. After considerable hardship, he men established Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia. Following the outbreak of the War of 1812, Duncan McDougal, who was temporarily in charge of the post, received threats from NWC employees who said they would forcibly take Astoria. As a result of these threats, and possibly in collusion with his old partners, McDougal sold the fort to the NWC in October 1813. By 1814 Astor's Columbia enterprise was at an end.

The American Fur Company had already established itself in the Great Lakes region and, in 1822, expanded its operations to St. Louis. Stone, Bostwick & Company of Boston, the first firm to manage Astor's St. Louis affairs, was replaced in July 1827 by Bernard Pratte & Company, which became the AFC's "Western Department." In the fall of 1834 Ramsay Crooks, Astor's second-in-command, bought out Astor, who was retiring from the business. Crooks reorganized the AFC, choosing to focus his efforts on the Great Lakes region. The AFC's Western Department became Bernard Pratte, & Company, which soon became Pratte, Chouteau, & Company. This firm then controlled the upper Missouri and Rocky Mountain trade. However, Crooks continued his involvement with Pratte, Chouteau, & Company as its supplier of goods and purchaser of furs.

Pratte, Chouteau, & Company possessed 34 posts and employed 133 traders along the upper Missouri in 1834. Its "rocky Mountain Outfit," licensed to trade in the Rockies contained forty-seven men. The former Western Department of the AFC, often referred to as the American Fur Company by many in the fur business, expanded over the years and, by 1838 was worth \$260,000.

### **THE HENRY-ASHLEY COMPANY AND ITS SUCCESSORS**

In 1821 Andrew Henry, formerly associated with Manuel Lisa's Missouri Fur Company joined with William H. Ashley, lieutenant governor of the state of Missouri, in pursuing a fur trading venture on the upper Missouri. Their company, Henry-Ashley, combined the two men's strengths. Henry headed the field operations, while Ashley managed company affairs in St. Louis.

Though prospects looked bright for the new business, events turned against it. A series of disastrous encounters with various native tribes and with the Missouri River itself forced the company to abandon its efforts on the upper Missouri. Henry subsequently led a group of men overland to the Big Horn River. A second expedition, led by Jedediah S. Smith, traveled west from Fort Kiowa, in present South Dakota, to meet up with Henry's party along the Big Horn River and trade with the Crow. After spending the winter of 1823-24 on the Big Horn river, Henry transported a portion of the company's furs to St. Louis. Arriving in St. Louis in August 1824, Henry left the fur trade for good.

Meanwhile, Jed Smith's party explored the Rocky Mountain region, re-discovering South Pass in March 1824, and finding along the Green River an area rich in beaver. Smith sent word of this to Ashley, who brought supplies for his men out to the Green, arriving in April 1825. Ashley arranged for his men to meet at a site on

present-day Henry's Fork of the Green River, where they could deliver their furs and obtain supplies. During the last few days of June 1825, Ashley's men gathered at the proposed location. Upon his arrival, Ashley led his men twenty miles further up Henry's Fork, to the lush grassland between Burnt Fork and Birch Creek. Here on July 1, the first annual Rocky Mountain rendezvous was held. The next day Ashley began his journey to St. Louis with his harvest.

In 1825 Ashley took on Jed Smith as partner to replace Andrew Henry, but at the 1826 rendezvous, Ashley sold his company to three of his men - - - Jed Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette. He then returned to St. Louis with 125 packs of beaver worth \$60,000. This catch gave Ashley a \$12,000 profit.

The new company, Smith, Jackson, & Sublette, began its short life \$8,000 in debt to Ashley, through whom the three partners had agreed to purchase supplies. In 1830, having collected that year alone 170 packs of beaver worth \$84,500, Smith, Jackson, & Sublette sold out to five men; Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Milton Sublette, Henry Fraeb, and Jean Baptiste Gervais, who formed the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Bill Sublette became the new company's supplier of goods. The company was born deeply in debt and remained so throughout its existence. In 1833, the cash-strapped Rocky Mountain Fur Company welcomed aboard as a new partner Edmund Christy, who invested \$6,608. This did not save the company, however, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company broke up at the 1834 rendezvous and eventually sold out to the American Fur Company.

### **SUCCESSORS TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY**

After the Rocky Mountain Fur Company dissolved at the 1834 rendezvous, a new company, Fitzpatrick, [Milton] Sublette, & Bridger, took its place. This company was short-lived, however, and existed only on paper. When Andrew Drips and Lucien Fontenelle of the AFC's Western Department arrived at the rendezvous, they picked up the pieces of Rocky Mountain Fur company and joined Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette, and Bridger in establishing another company. The five men called their organization Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & company and used Fort Laramie as their base of operations. By making an arrangement wherein the new company traded their yearly catch of beaver to the American Fur company's Western Department (soon to be Pratte, Chouteau, & Company) in exchange for supplies, Fontenelle placed three former leaders of the RMFC into the service of their most bitter rival.

This arrangement continued until the 1836 rendezvous, at which time Pratte, Chouteau, & Company bought out Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & Company, including Fort Laramie. Now the entire fur business in the central Rockies belonged to the French businessmen based in St. Louis.

From the former Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, & company, Pierre Chouteau, Jr. created the "Rocky Mountain Outfit" to pursue the fur trade in the far west, while other of the company's departments continued trading for furs at posts along the Missouri River. Because of the falling price of beaver fur, the RMO lost money on each expedition to the mountains and, after Pratte, Chouteau, & Company became Pierre Chouteau Jr., & Company in 1838, the RMO was disbanded and the rendezvous system discontinued in 1840.

### **NATHANIEL J. WYETH'S COLUMBIA RIVER FISHING AND TRADING COMPANY**

Nathaniel J. Wyeth, a Boston businessman, traveled west in 1832 intending to establish a post on the Columbia River to harvest salmon and trade for furs. After failing in this first attempt, he returned to Boston to arrange for another expedition to the Columbia.

In January 1834 Wyeth organized his Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company, and once again headed west with supplies. Earlier, Wyeth had agreed to transport \$3,000 worth of merchandise to the 1834 rendezvous for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Upon hearing of this, William Sublette, who served as RMFC's supplier of goods and marketer of furs, set out across the plains with his own supply caravan. He beat Wyeth to the gathering and the RMFC purchased supplies from him. Arriving at the rendezvous shortly thereafter, Wyeth was unable to sell his goods to the trappers. The angry Bostonian led his men to a point near the confluence of the Snake and

Portneuf Rivers, where they erected Fort Hall in July 1834.

In the spring of 1836 Wyeth, who had not done well financially, approached HBC Chief Factor John McLoughlin with a proposal that the two companies join forces. McLoughlin, thinking he could eliminate competition by co-opting a rival company, entered into an agreement with Wyeth. When McLoughlin's superior heard of the contract with Wyeth, he ordered it terminated, thinking it better to oppose Wyeth vigorously. In late 1836, having lost \$20,000 in five years, Wyeth abandoned his western enterprises, sold Fort Hall to the Hudson's Bay Company, and returned to Boston.

### **BENJAMIN L. E. BONNEVILLE**

In 1831 Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville obtained a leave of absence from the U.S. Army to pursue the fur trade. In the spring of 1832 he, and the experienced fur trapper Joseph R. Walker as his able lieutenant, assembled 110 men and 20 wagons of equipment and supplies at Fort Osage, Missouri, and headed west. Near the junction of Horse Creek and the Green River, these men erected a small post from which to trade. Small parties of Bonneville's trappers hunted for beaver. At the 1833 rendezvous Bonneville and his men were reunited, and he learned that they had not fared well.

Bonneville had grand schemes, among which was a desire to erect a post near the Willamette River to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company. With this in mind, in 1834 he made two separate trips to Fort Walla Walla. On both occasions Pierre C. Pambrun, in charge of the HBC post, received the exhausted and bedraggled men with hospitality, but refused to provide them with supplies for the return trip. After the second rebuff, Bonneville retreated to the Bear river Valley, where he and his men spent the winter of 1834-35. The following summer, a thoroughly defeated Bonneville returned east to resume his military career.

### **TRAPPERS BASED IN NEW MEXICO**

Though the large fur trade companies operated out of London, New York, or St. Louis, numerous small bands of trappers operated in Mexican territory, with their base of operations in either Santa Fe or Taos. One of the most successful of these was Ewing Young, who arrived in Santa Fe in 1822 and began trapping along the Pecos river. In 1824 he led a party of men to the San Juan River to trap, later returning to Santa Fe with over \$10,000 in furs. In 1826 the Mexican governor of New Mexico issued trapping licenses to five trapping parties, all of whom planned to trap the tributaries of the Colorado River. Traveling with Young's party were several men whose subsequent fur trapping careers made them well known, including Milton Sublette, George Yount, and Thomas "Peg-leg" Smith. Michel Robidoux and James Ohio Pattie, whose trapping brigade members had been killed by Papago Indians, later joined them. In August 1829 Young led a band of forty men - - including young Christopher "Kit" Carson, who was on his first trapping expedition - - - to California's San Joaquin Valley.

Etienne Provost, another notable trapper based in Taos, joined with Francois LeClerc in 1824 in leading a small party northwest to the Green River. There they established a base camp. Leaving the Green, the trappers made their way into Salt Lake Valley, where Provost was one of the first white men to see the Great Salt Lake. Antoine Robidoux, a man of French extraction who became a naturalized Mexican citizen, trapped furs in the southwestern United States, the Mexican territory for several years before focusing his efforts in eastern Utah and western Colorado in the mid-1830s. In that region he built three forts - - - Uinta, Robidoux, and Uncompahgre - - - and opened trade with the Utes and other Native tribes. Hostile Indians and declining profits forced him out of the region in the mid 1840s.