

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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HAS MONTEREY ALWAYS BEEN A NICE PLACE TO VISIT??

One of the first "tourists" from the east to visit Monterey — in search of hospitality, good food, rest, and recuperation — was Jedediah Strong Smith. At the age of twenty-eight Jed Smith became the first explorer and mountain man to reach California overland from the American frontier. In order to reach California, Jed traveled through many hundred miles of wilderness, underwent an Indian attack and suffered severe shortages of food and water.

How was our friend Jedediah greeted by the governor, city fathers and general citizenry of Monterey when he finally arrived in 1827, and what were his impressions regarding the hospitality that Monterey has long been famous for?

Before we bring Jed to Monterey, let's take a look at the Monterey of 1827 and see what awaited him and what he found here in 1827.

If the reader had been born in the year that Father Serra and Portola arrived in Monterey, you would have only been fifty-seven years old. The flags of the Mexican Empire and Mexican Republic had been flying over Monterey for only five years. It had only been nine years since Monterey had been sacked and burned by the Argentinean pirate-patriot, Hippolyte de Bouchard. The north end of the Custom House may have been completed. The major scene of activity centered around the Presidio of Monterey and within its palisaded walls you would have found the Royal Presidio Chapel, barracks for the soldiers, quarters for the officers and their families, and the quarters for the civilians and their families.

About forty families, such as the Boronda's and Munras's, had built homes outside the presidio walls and these whitewashed adobes were scattered around what you and I know as Monterey. On the hill above the landing site you would have found the Mexican fort known as El Castillo. El Castillo had unsuccessfully defended the city against Bouchard and his pirates nine years earlier and would again see action in fifteen years when Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones would mistakenly capture Monterey for the United States.

The man that Jedediah would become very indebted to, Juan Bautista Roger Cooper, would not be building his fine home for another two years. There was, however, a very strong jail in Monterey.

Whalers and hide and tallow traders from Boston had been visiting Monterey for five years, but it would be seven years before Richard Henry Dana would be in Monterey and leave us his classic description of life in this community during the hide and tallow days.

Jose Maria de Echeandia was Governor of Alta California at the time of Jed's visit and we are told that he was "a tall, 6'4", thin, juiceless man possessing but little enterprise or force of character, and much concerned about the effect of the California climate upon his not too robust health." At first Echeandia so feared the foggy weather of Monterey that he came no farther into California than San Diego. We are also told that the governor was also interested in a young lady in San Diego and this may have been another factor in his reluctance to come directly to the capital here in Monterey.

The governor eventually did move to Monterey, so let's begin our story about Jedediah Strong Smith's visit to Monterey and take a look at how the first American to cross the continent by land was received.

Jedediah had been trapping beaver for William Ashley in the Rocky Mountains for four years before he *first* arrived in California in 1826. In 1826 William Ashley sold his Rocky Mountain Fur Company to Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette.

At the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, rendezvous of 1826, the three partners decided to expand their trapping operation southwestward in search of virgin beaver streams and perhaps open a new marketing outlet through California. The country into which they were going was the least known part of North America. Exploration had swirled all around it, but from the Great Salt Lake west and southwest to the Sierra Nevada no one had traveled. Such exploration was prerequisite to opening of the most convenient land routes from the United States to California.

Smith and seventeen men left the Jackson Hole rendezvous in August of 1826 on their southwest expedition. Along with trapping beaver, Smith wanted to find out if the legendary Buenaventura River, with its mouth on the Pacific Coast, really existed or not. The party carried seven hundred pounds of dried buffalo meat. They made their way to the Sevier River and the country was dry, barren and definitely not the kind you find beaver in. They came upon the Virgin River and moved down it. Game was very scarce. By October they had reached the Colorado River, but by the time they reached the Mojave Indian Villages they had only eighteen of the fifty horses they had started with and the men were on foot, worn out, and hungry. Jed and his party remained among the Mojaves for fifteen days to give men and animals a chance to regain their strength. In talking with the Mojaves Jed discovered that the California missions were not too far off and he decided that they should go there for supplies.

On November 10, 1826 Jed and his party, led by two Indians who had run away from the missions, set out across the Mojave desert for the Pacific. It took the party fifteen days to reach the San Bernardino Mountains. They were following an age old trail that the Mojaves used for obtaining sea shells. They crossed the San Bernardino Mountains south of Cajon Pass and on November 26, 1826 came down out of the rocky hills into the San Bernardino Valley. The valley was green with winter grass and the herds of cattle and sheep were a welcome sight to Jed and his men. An Indian herdsman took them to his quarters and a young cow was killed and they all feasted. Two padres from the mission arrived and Jed went with them to Mission San Gabriel, five miles away. At the mission Jed gave up his arms to the corporal in charge and proceeded to write Governor Echeandia describing his distressed situation, requesting horses, and permission to pass through the country

to San Francisco Bay. A messenger rode off to San Diego with Jed's letter and the news of their arrival out of the desert, the *first* of its kind in the history of California. The other members of Jed's party were brought into the mission and all were received very politely, after first being relieved of their rifles. They were supplied with plenty of beef, cornmeal, wine, and sixty-four yards of cloth with which to replace their tattered shirts.

Jedediah and his men were impressed with the jovial and kind Father Sanchez who was in charge of Mission San Gabriel. The party was also impressed with the prosperity of the mission: 30,000 head of cattle *and* equal numbers of horses, sheep and pigs. There were also orchards, vineyards, grainfields and skilled Indian workers making cloth, blankets and soap.

Jedediah put his blacksmiths to work making a bear trap in which to catch Indians who were stealing oranges from the orchard.

On December 8, 1826, Jed received word that Governor Echeandia required his presence in San Diego; as you can see, the governor had not yet moved to Monterey. Jed's impression of the governor was that he was "much of a gentleman, but very suspicious."

The governor couldn't conceive of men coming in from the desert after mere animals, but he could understand it being a military mission. Echeandia didn't understand about beaver or beaver hunters so Jed had several pelts sent to San Diego in order to show the officers how to face their cloaks. Jed explained again and again that he was only a hunter and that dire necessity had driven him to California.

The appearance of these mountain men in California announced to Governor Echeandia that an historic barrier had fallen and that it was only a matter of time before more Americans would be arriving out of the desert. The governor was very concerned.

Jed and his party were finally saved by American shipmasters in San Diego who signed a certificate vouching for the authenticity of his papers and the purity of his motives. This eased Echeandia's mind, but he said that Jed would have to leave California the way he had entered and would not allow him to go up the coast to the Russian settlement at Bodega.

Jed bought supplies and horses necessary for the return trip, and on January 18, 1827, they departed Mission San Gabriel. When Jed had gone back on his trail as far as the San Bernardino Mountains, he felt that he had complied with the governor's orders. He then recrossed the San Bernardino Mountains near Cajon Pass, crossed Antelope Valley and the Tehachapi Mountains, and then dropped down into the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. By April the party had worked their way north as far as the American River and had trapped 1500 pounds of beaver pelts. In May of 1827, Jed and his party attempted to cross the Sierra by way of the American River Canyon, but the loss of five horses in the heavy snows finally turned them back and they returned to the Stanislaus River where they set up a permanent camp.

Meanwhile, news of Jedediah's presence in the San Joaquin Valley had reached Father Duran at Mission San Jose and Duran was highly disturbed. Father Duran was President of the Missions and he wrote the Comandante of San Francisco accusing Jed of offering protection to the Indians if they would run away from the missions and that Jed and his men had been causing trouble at all of the missions in California.

Jed wrote an explanatory letter to Father Duran, but it was disregarded and Governor Echeandia, who was at last here in Monterey, ordered Jed to be taken

into custody. When the Mexican soldiers reached Jed's camp they found that he had left and was making another attempt at crossing the Sierra. The soldiers left the remaining men in Jed's party in peaceful occupation of their camp.

Jedediah was trying to reach the annual rendezvous in Utah by July 1st where he would get supplies and then return to California and pick up the remainder of his party and pelts — all within four months.

Jedediah started over the Sierra on May 20, 1827, with two men, seven horses and two mules loaded with hay for the horses. The snow on the summit was from four to eight feet thick, but was packed hard enough so that the horses could walk on it. The route Jed took was up the north fork of the Stanislaus River and he crossed the Sierra at Ebbetts Pass. The crossing took eight days and was the first crossing of the Sierra by anyone but an Indian. This was another of several firsts for our friend Jed Smith. Beyond the Sierra the three men struggled for twenty days across the desert, many times without water and food and they finally had to resort to eating their horses. After extreme suffering and the near loss of one man, they finally made it to the Great Salt Lake. They moved around the lake and on July 3, 1827, they arrived at rendezvous at Bear Lake. Jed and his men were welcomed with joy and a cannon salute by their fellow mountain men, as they had been given up for lost.

Jed remained just ten days at the 1827 rendezvous, and then re-outfitted with eighteen men and supplies for two years, he set out for California to rejoin his men. They followed approximately the same route as they had the year before and reached the Mojave Indian Villages where they wished to cross the Colorado.

Jed remained with the Mojaves three days trading for beans, wheat, corn, dried pumpkins and melons. On August 18, 1827, they made preparations for crossing the Colorado. Jed and his men made rafts of cane to cross the river with. He left half of his men and the horses on the east bank and put out into the stream with the rest of his party. At this moment the Indians attacked those on the east bank, killing them in an instant. Jed and his remaining men made it to the other side of the river and set up a position in a thicket in order to defend themselves against several hundred Indians which had been waiting for them on that side. As the Indians approached, Jed had two of his marksmen fire and two Indians were killed. This caused the other Indians to leave, and at nightfall Jed and his remaining nine men struck off across the desert for California. They had lost all of the horses and all but fifteen pounds of dried meat.

Jed and his men met some peaceful Indians in the desert and were able to trade what few possessions they had for four horses, some food and pitch covered baskets in which to carry water. With these meager supplies they were able to make their way to Cajon Pass. They crossed the San Bernardino Mountains at Cajon Pass and dropped down into the San Bernardino Valley on August 28, 1827. They killed some cattle for immediate food and for drying. Jed then sent a message to Father Sanchez at Mission San Gabriel explaining why he had returned to California and about the cattle he had killed. Jed and his men then struck out for their camp on the Stanislaus River, and by following the same route as he had done the year before, they reached camp on September 18, 1827.

Jed's party was most happy to see him again, but extremely disappointed at the loss of the supplies that they needed and had been expecting. Jed stayed two days with his party and then with three men set out for Mission San Jose, with the hope of getting much needed supplies.

Jed arrived at Mission San Jose about September 23, 1827. Father Duran was not at all happy to see Jed, and his horses and arms were taken from him and he

was put under guard with no provision for feeding him or his men. Father Duran wanted to see Jed punished and would give him no assistance.

In a few days Comandante Ignacio Martinez from San Francisco arrived and informed Jed that he was to be tried as an intruder and for claiming the country of the San Joaquin. Jed asked if he might go to Monterey and talk with Governor Echeandia, but the comandante said he would have to wait for a messenger to go to Monterey and return.

At this time our friend Juan Bautista Roger Cooper went to Mission San Jose and talked with Jed for two days and was willing to help him in any way he could.

Jed was kept at Mission San Jose for fourteen days before Governor Echeandia sent four soldiers with orders to bring Jed here to Monterey.

Near midnight of the third day after leaving Mission San Jose, Jedediah and his guards arrived here in Monterey. Jed was locked in the jail with no food. In the morning Juan Bautista Roger Cooper came to see him, bringing breakfast and words of encouragement. Later in the day he was taken to see Governor Echeandia. The tall and gaunt Governor met Jed at the doorway to his quarters, shook hands with him and began speaking in Spanish. Jed asked for an interpreter and William Hartnell was sent for. Hartnell was not immediately available and did not arrive until evening. Jed could get no concession from the governor except the freedom to walk around the town, presidio and the harbor. At another time I am sure that Jed would have enjoyed the charm of our fine community, but it has been recorded that he was not very happy during his stay in Monterey. On one of his walks he met two of his trappers who had deserted his party the year before.

At the second meeting with Echeandia, Jed was told that even though his story might be true, he still did not believe it and that he was to be sent to Mexico. Jed told the governor that he was ready to go and the sooner the better. Governor Echeandia, however, told Jed that he would have to pay his own passage if he went on a foreign ship, or wait several months for a Mexican ship which might as a favor take him for free. Jed informed Echeandia that there was no way that he would go to Mexico as a prisoner, and still have to pay his own way.

William Hartnell now came to Jed's aid and told him that British law allowed for four masters of vessels in a foreign port, in times of emergency, to appoint an agent who could act as consular agent until the home government could be advised of their action; and perhaps the Americans had such a law. Jed discussed this with Captain Cooper and the masters of several vessels in port. There was some question of the legality of the proposition, but the masters agreed and Juan Bautista Roger Cooper was appointed agent for our good friend Jed.

Echeandia proposed that Cooper not only become responsible for Jed's good conduct until he left California, but also guarantee that he would not return to California on any pretense whatever. Jedediah would not agree to such a restriction and the governor let the proposal drop. The governor now requested that Jed send a letter to his party on the Stanislaus River and have them proceed to San Francisco. After getting a promise from the governor that his party would not be imprisoned and that they would be given food, Jed wrote his men and told them to proceed to San Francisco. The party soon arrived safely in San Francisco.

Jedediah and Captain Cooper called on Governor Echeandia again — this time with a certificate setting forth the reasons Jed and his men had come to California. They outlined his needs and presented Cooper's offer to become responsible for Jed's conduct. On the conditions presented, the governor gave Jed three choices: he could wait for orders from Mexico; he could go to Mexico himself; or he could depart with the men he had and by the way he had come. Jed told Echeandia that he wanted

to get back to his business of trapping as soon as possible and that he would gladly leave even if he only had two men. I am sure that by now the reader is getting the decided impression that Jed did not enjoy being in our fair city. Echeandia agreed, bowed, and said he would draw up the certificate of agreement which Captain Cooper must be responsible for.

Jed arranged for the sale of his beaver pelts to the master of the ship *Franklin* here in the harbor. He received a lower price than he would have gotten at rendezvous, but he needed the money for outfitting his party for the return journey.

The bond was completed by Echeandia and finally signed on November 12, 1827. In this document Cooper guaranteed the good conduct and behavior of Jedediah. In order to protect Cooper, Jed signed a \$30,000 bond insuring the faithful performance of the articles he had agreed to in the document.

Governor Echeandia insisted that Jed go to Mission San Jose, take the road to Carquinez Straights and move northward. Jed was under no condition to delay on the way, or make excursions toward the coast. After much discussion, Echeandia agreed to the provisions Jed wished to purchase for the return trip. He granted Jed free and safe passport for himself and his seventeen men, each man could carry a gun, the party could have a total of seventy-five pounds of powder, one hundred twenty-five pounds of lead, five loads of clothing, six loads of food, two loads of trade items for the Indians, one load of tobacco, one hundred mules, and one hundred fifty horses. Gladly, on November 15, 1827, Jed received his passport from the governor, went on board the ship *Franklin* here in the bay, and at 2:00 p.m. he sailed for San Francisco. Jed was soon seasick and due to bad winds did not arrive in San Francisco until November 17th.

Jed called on Luis Arguello, who was now Comandante of San Francisco, found his men well, but not properly provisioned. Jed finished selling his furs for a total of \$3,920 and proceeded to purchase his needed supplies. Jed and his party left San Francisco on November 26, 1827, heading for San Jose, as there was no feed for the horses in San Francisco. Father Duran greeted the party a little more cordially this time and let them use the smithy for a week and rented rooms to Jed and his men.

Jed at this point had very little good to say about the Mexican government. Everywhere he turned he saw the iron hand of oppression and he even felt that they had ordered the Mojave Indians to attack his party at the Colorado River. Jed wrote the American minister at Mexico City complaining of the harsh treatment he had received in California and Governor Echeandia wrote his government complaining of the criminal conduct of Jed and his party.

Jed asked nothing of California now but to be quit of it, so Arguello ordered a detail of ten soldiers to see Jed and his party out of the territory. On December 30, 1827, Jed and his party set out in the rain from Mission San Jose, anxious to be rid of California and to be about the business of trapping.

Jed had invested the remaining money received from the beaver pelts in two hundred fifty horses and mules at ten dollars each. He planned to sell these animals to the free trappers at rendezvous for fifty dollars each.

On January 1, 1828, Jed and his party camped on a branch of the San Joaquin River and in two days trapped forty-five beaver. Through the month of January they trapped the lower tributaries of the rivers emptying into the valley. On February 22, 1828, they crossed the American River and were beginning to run out of traps, having only thirty-two left. During this period Jed and his men experienced some trying moments with Indians and bears, but they continued to move northward, stopping to trap whenever they found beaver.

On April 11, 1828, they crossed the Sacramento River above the present city of Red Bluff and they then moved down the south fork of the Trinity River. Due to the rough country they lost many horses by falling off cliffs and breaking their legs in the rocks. The party eventually made it to the mouth of the Klamath River. Jed and his men were most impressed with the magnificence of the redwoods, but it had rained the entire time, which added greatly to the misery of the trip. No game was to be had and they were forced to start eating their horses. They moved up the coast to Crescent City and then the travel became a little easier. At times, however, they were forced to take to the surf in order to keep moving north. On June 20, 1828, they crossed the river which today bears Jedediah's name and three days later entered Oregon. Thus ended Jedediah Strong Smith's visit to California, and Monterey in particular. Jedediah and his men had much to experience yet, but we will save that for another time.

The question now is, how do you feel this important historical figure from California's rich and colorful past was received here in Monterey — which everyone knows has long been known for its gracious and warm hospitality?

If you should feel that Jed was treated a bit shabbily, you will be pleased to know that at the annual Jedediah Smith Society rendezvous, held here in Monterey last month, the present Alcalde of Monterey issued a formal apology, on behalf of the City of Monterey, to the spirit of Jedediah Smith in the hopes that he will feel a little more kindly towards our fair city.

This narrative was presented to the Jedediah Smith Society at their annual meeting in Memory Garden on September 25, 1971. If you wish to learn the complete story about this great character, I would like to suggest that you read Dale L. Morgan's fine book, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* which is now available in paperback.

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

Reports of Committee Chairmen at the annual meeting in October revealed the growth and continuing vitality of our Association during the year of 1970-71. The Allen Knight Maritime Museum and the Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library were opened to the public. Both are staffed by volunteers. The Romeria to southern Monterey County was enjoyed by ninety-six persons. The garden at the Doud House and Library was landscaped and planted. Membership has grown in a few years from 500 to approximately 1800. The association is now actively working for the restoration of the Cooper-Molera adobes, and the new Urban Renewal planning of the City of Monterey emphasizes the historic values of the old adobes. To our new President Ted Durein, and Vice-President Robert McKeever—welcome aboard! To retiring President Edwin Bliss—thanks!

GIFTS: Dr. and Mrs. Milton A. Broemser have given 100 feet of wrought iron fencing; Mr. and Mrs. Hal MacLean an old Monterey street light; and Mrs. Charles De Vault a hand woven coverlet.

**THE EDITORS
MONTEREY HISTORY
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