

"Powdered Wigs to Buckskin: Mountain Men Aiding the Spread
of Empire and Progression of Colonialism in the American
West"

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Abstract: This thesis is the explorative study of colonialism in the American West. The Mountain Men roamed the West in search of riches wrapped in fur. During their quest for wealth they helped the spread of empire in the West.

The American idea of Mountain Men during the mid nineteenth century has been one of fiction and one of truth. American society at the time expressed two different views of the Mountain Men, one being that of an outcast or renegade and one of being a free spirit or a hero in the wilderness. The opinion of being an outcast or a renegade was based on the Mountain Men going against the ideas of the time. Instead of finding a professional trade, such as a wheelwright or a blacksmith, they wandered the wilderness escaping the modern world. Many were compared to Native Americans as backwards or lacking sophistication or manners. The image of a free spirit or a hero in the wilderness can be traced to the popularity of the dime novels. These books were about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Later the American cinema has taken true events, like the ever popular dime store novels of the nineteenth century, and formatted these events into action-packed movies. One of the most popular movies was "Jeremiah Johnson", in which Robert Redford played Jeremiah Johnson. Jeremiah Johnson was a real man who earned the nickname "Liver Eating" Johnson, because of his practice of consuming the livers of Native Americans that he killed.

The Mountain Men seen in movies hold only a speck of truth versus scholarly works about Mountain Men. A

scholarly definition of a Mountain Man is an explorer who took tribute of the wilderness and wandered through the reaches of the outer west, an adventurer to whom danger became a daily occurrence.¹ This definition shows that the Mountain Men were not free, they were slaves to their work. The idea associated with the Mountain Men is that they "opened the West". This is true, however some Mountain Men understood that they were helping the spread of empire into the West. The evidence given in this paper will show that the Mountain Men aided the spread of empire and colonialism in the American West.

In reading Jefferey Ostler's book *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee (2004)*, holes in his work about Colonialism in the American West arose. He started with The Lewis and Clark Expedition then devoted one paragraph to the fur trade and Mountain Men. After this single paragraph he moved into discussing the Indian Wars of the West. He gives no credit to the Mountain Men for aiding the progress of colonialism.

The idea behind this paper is to give more credit to the Mountain Men for their role in imperial expansion. Ostler only devoted a paragraph to the Mountain Men which

¹Robert Glass Cleland, *The Reckless Breed of Men: The Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), 5.

only notes that they were in the West. He gives them no credit for aiding the expansion of the empire and colonialism in the West.

The term colonialism makes explicit the fact that expansion almost always involves displacement, conquest, and rule over foreign groups.² How does colonialism relate to imperialism? Imperialism is the process that leads to colonialism. Imperialism is the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory, and colonialism almost always is a consequence of imperialism because of the implanting of settlements in a distant territory.³ Thomas Jefferson understood imperialism and embraced its nation building abilities. At the beginning of the American Revolution Jefferson had the idea of the United States stretching from sea to sea.⁴ The Louisiana Purchase started to fulfill Jefferson's dream of the United States reaching both oceans and allowed his plans of exploring the Missouri River system to become a reality.⁵

² Jeffery Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 56.

⁵ Jon Kukla, *A Wilderness so Immense* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2006), 260.

The American West after the Louisiana Purchase was a wild and untamed region that few had explored. One of the first expeditions into the wilderness of the American West was the Lewis and Clark Expedition that was planned and commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson. President Jefferson, in 1803, commissioned this expedition to survey the new property purchased from Napoleon, to inform the native peoples of the change of ownership, and to start the process of United States colonialism in the American West. The Lewis and Clark expedition covered only a small portion of the land purchased and only came into contact with a few native groups. The Lewis and Clark expedition was the first of many expeditions into the American West, but future expeditions would not be commissioned by the United States government. Instead subsequent explorations were for personal economic prosperity.

Fashions of the early 1800's demanded furs for the production of clothing. With the demand of furs on the rise, fur trapping companies would commission men to travel into the American West to trap beaver and other game. The fur industry in the United States spawned an American icon that would live in dime novels and saloon stories for decades: the Mountain Man. The Mountain Men would use the demand for furs in the United States and Europe as an

economic boost to help them gain financial security in the high risk job that they had undertaken.

The Mountain Men viewed the American West not as a Garden of Eden, but as an economic resource that had not yet been tapped. The opportunity to gain economic prosperity drove many men to undertake such a great challenge, but the chance for adventure would also bring many into the industry. Men from all walks of life would try their hand at fur trapping in the American West. The economic prosperity promised by fur trapping would also appeal to immigrants who came to the United States with only the clothes on their backs and a will to work.

While the Mountain Men were working hard in hopes of gaining economic prosperity another event was taking place. The Mountain Men through their travels into the American West would encounter many groups of native peoples. The encounters with native peoples in the American West could be viewed as a good event, in that the Mountain Men gained the trust and assistance of the native peoples in gathering furs. In contrast, life threatening events, in which violence was exchanged between the two groups was possible. Trapping was a hazard to the Mountain Men because attacks by Indians

could come at any time.⁶ The interactions that were favorable to the Mountain Men would also become favorable to the native peoples through the institution of trade.

These interactions between Native Americans and Mountain Men would show the spread of the American empire through the placement of goods from the empire into the native people's cultures. Goods such as steel knives, guns, and cooking pots were sought after by many native peoples through trade with the Mountain Men. These goods were sought to ease the many hardships the native people had to endure. The way that Mountain Men aided imperial expansion was very different than that of the United States Government and Army, whose approach was one of forced colonialism in the late 1800's. The United States Government's approach to colonialism would be to continue the genocide of the native peoples in the Americas, which began with Columbus's discovery of the New World.

The fur trade industry in North America had been established by early French and British trappers before the French and Indian War. The areas for trapping during this period were mainly the western parts of northern Colonial America and Canada. The populations of game were abundant

for decades, but because of over trapping and hunting the regions game populations began to dwindle or move farther west. George Fredrick Ruxton, from England, wrote: "Beavers were once found in all regions of the United States and Canada, but has now retired from the encroachments and the persecutions of civilized man, and is only met in the far, far west."⁷

The reasons for the drastic decline in game populations were based on the lack of conservation applied to the region. As a result fur trappers had to exert more energy and time to the harvesting of game and travel farther to transport pelts to a trading post. At the same time, trappers would have to spend more of their earnings on supplies to make longer expeditions into the wilderness in search of game. The longer expeditions meant even more profits for the fur companies, because they owned the supply stores. The fur companies would set the market value for furs based on the demand for specific species and the demand for products made from their hides. In 1803 the fur trapping industry gained 530,000,000 acres of land to expand the industry with the Louisiana Purchase. This

⁷ George Fredrick Ruxton, *Wildlife in the Rocky Mountains* (1916), Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/ruxton.html> (accessed February 12, 2006).

purchase of the territory extending to the Pacific Ocean doubled the size of the United States.

On June 20, 1803 President Thomas Jefferson sent a letter to Captain Meriwether Lewis instructing him to:

"Explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by it's course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oreg[o]n, Colorado or and other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce. ⁸

The Lewis and Clark expedition was the first to explore the territory gained by the Louisiana Purchase. (See Appendix Map 1) The expedition would start the spread of the American empire in the West through their interactions with the Native Americans. In these interactions they dispatched government documents to inform the native peoples that their "Spanish and English fathers had departed and that a new father of the seventeen nations had taken their place."⁹ Even though Lewis and Clark led the expedition that bears their names, they were bureaucrats.

Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Captain Meriwether Lewis", June 20, 1806, <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/jefflett.html> (accessed February 19, 2006). ⁹ Ostler, 20.

The Lewis and Clark expedition aided in the spread of the American empire in the West by mapping regions they traveled through on their expedition. On September 13, 1806 Lewis wrote to President Jefferson: "We view this passage across the Continent as affording immen[s]e advantages to the fur trade, but fear that the advantages which it offers as a communication for the productions of the East Indies to the United States and thence to Europe will never be found equal on an extensive scale to that by way of the Cape of Good hope."¹¹ The maps created by Lewis, Clark and others using notes of the Lewis and Clark Expedition served as starting points for future expeditions into the American West by Mountain Men.

Some of the first Mountain Men to trap in the American West were men who were a part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. One of the most famous was John Colter. Colter was an ex-army private who enlisted to be a hunter for the expedition.¹¹ Clark wrote this about Colter's hunting abilities: "This mourning (December 30, 1803), Colter

¹⁰Meriwether Lewis, "Letter to Thomas Jefferson" September 23, 1806, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi^bin/query/r?ammem/mtj:@field\(DOCID+giit\(je00063\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi^bin/query/r?ammem/mtj:@field(DOCID+giit(je00063))). (Accessed February 17, 2007).

Larry E. Morris, *Fate of the Corps* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 39.

returned to camp with a deer and turkey".¹² Later during the expedition Colter was given the job of supplying meat for the expedition because he had displayed great hunting skills. Colter was a specialist at traveling alone in the wilderness.¹³ He loved the wilderness so much that he left the Lewis and Clark Expedition on the expedition's return trip to St. Louis to join a group of trappers.

Thomas James, a fur trapper, met Colter in 1809 and Colter told James of his decision to leave the Lewis and Clark Expedition. James wrote: "when Colter was resuming in 1807 with Lewis & Clark, from Oregon, he met a company of hunters ascending the Missouri, by whom he was persuaded to return to the trapping region, to hunt and trap with them."¹⁴ Colter is the biggest connection between the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Mountain Men.

The Mountain Men had not originally intended to aid colonialism in the West; they were looking for adventure and to profit from their labor. The idea of going west and making money through trapping was appealing to people from

¹² William Clark, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (December 30, 1803), University of Nebraska Edition, March 2005, <http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/index.html> (Accessed February 19, 2007).

¹³ George Laycock, *The Mountain Men* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 1996), 68.

¹⁴ Thomas James, *Three Tears Among the Indians and Mexicans* (1846), Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/james/chap2.html> (accessed February 15, 2006).

different backgrounds. The men who undertook the call for adventure by becoming Mountain Men came from urban areas and rural agrarian backgrounds. Many young men around the age of 19 had to make a choice between taking over the family business or family farm or seeking adventure in the West.¹⁵

W. A. Ferris, a Mountain Man wrote: "A love of wild adventure, and perhaps also a hope for profit, for times are hard and my best coat has a sort of sheepish hang-dog hesitation to encounter fashionable folk."¹⁶

The job of trapping was one of high risk with the possibility of gaining high rewards. One of the major products produced during this time period were hats made from beaver pelts. The fashion capitals of the world, Paris and London, during the early to mid eighteenth centuries demanded top hats made from beaver pelts. "The Dandy depended on the Mountain Man to help him keep his good looks and keep him up to date with the fashion trends of the day mostly in Europe and the eastern United States."¹⁷

The economic challenge of the Mountain Man lifestyle involved being a slave to the trade company and to their

Laycock, 4,

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W. A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1842), Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/ferris/index.html> (accessed February 12, 2006).

¹⁷ William H. Goetzmann, "The Mountain Man as Jacksonian Man," *American Quarterly* Vol. 15 No. 3 (1963): 402-415. www.jstor.org/ (accessed February 15, 2006) 403.

constantly changing prices. The image of Mountain Men being free to wander the wilderness and make a living as they saw fit was a myth. The fur trading companies set the prices for the Mountain Men and the prices changed often. Because many of the Mountain Men were under contract with various fur companies they could only rely on the prices that they sold furs for on their previous trips to gauge how much money they would earn.

Another concern of Mountain Men was the price of supplies they needed to stock up before making another trip into the wilderness. Many of the fur companies' trading posts had general stores in which a Mountain Man who worked for the company had to trade his furs as well as buy supplies for his next trip. The prices would be inflated to two or three times the prices of a non-company general store. Mountain Men, in fear of contract termination, had to buy supplies from their company's store. In addition to being expensive the goods purchased from these stores would be poor quality and would not last him a season. Watered down whiskey, traps made from inferior materials, and rising and falling fur prices made Mountain Men look for methods to help them harvest more furs. One of these methods was to enlist the services of Native Americans to help locate and trap game. George Fredrick Ruxton, a young

English adventurer, wrote, "The price of beaver has deprec[i]ated so much over the past year, fallen from eight to six and now one dollar a pound which hardly pays for traps, animals and equipment for the hunt." ¹⁸ Though Ruxton was not a Mountain Man, he traveled with many Mountain Men documenting their lives and trade.¹⁹ The fur companies would also control which Indian Nations the Mountain Men traded with on their expeditions.

The St. Louis Fur company had Articles of Association (1809-1812) for enlisted men to follow while on an expedition. One such rule was | that "no man would be allowed to trade with any Indians past the Mandan villages in fear of contract termination." ²⁰ The St. Louis fur company had made connections with the Mandan people to be allowed to trap on their lands. In addition, ending trade at the Mandan villages would help the Mandan to gain modern goods and the Mountain Man to gain a monopoly on trapping game in the Mandan territory.

Maps created by Mountain Men of the American West served in the progression of colonialism for decades to follow. The Mountain Men traveled by trial and error when crossing the Rocky Mountains. The mapping of the West by

¹⁸ George Fredrick Ruxton, *Wildlife in the Rocky Mountains*. ⁹ Laycock, 5.

²⁰ The St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, "Articles of Association," http://www.xmission.coiti/~drudy/mtman/html/mf_c/artassoc.html.

Mountain Men played a major role in the settling of the West. The fur trappers and traders of the American West did make noteworthy contributions to the geographical awareness of the Rocky Mountains.²¹ Robert Stuart, a member of the Astorian expedition, made a key discovery on his journey back east to get help for members of his trapping expedition who had run into trouble with hostile Indians and bad weather. Stuart discovered, in 1812, the South Pass, a twenty mile wide gap in the Rocky Mountains that allowed wagons to travel through it and became a part of the Oregon Trail.²² (See Appendix Map 2}

Unlike the misfortunes of establishing a passage to the Pacific by water, Stuart had discovered a passage that made the West accessible by wagon. Robert Utley wrote on the importance of finding the South Pass, "Scarcely any geographical feature held more portent for America's westward movement."²³ Colonialism is the placement of settlements into new territory. The Mountain Men, through

²¹ John L. Allen, "Maps and the Mountain Men: The Cartography of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade," in *The Mountainous West: Explorations in Historical Geography*, ed. William Wyckoff and Lary M. Dilsaver (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 63.

²² The Idaho State University Department of History, "Discoverers of the Oregon Trail,"

<http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/Discoverers.htmltAstoriananchor>.

²³ Robert M. Utley, *A Life Wild and Perilous* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 33.

the use of their mapping skills allowed pioneers to travel easily into the new lands.

The image of a Mountain Man slaving at his labors of trapping and hunting furs many of that time would classify him as a Jacksonian Man. The term Jacksonian Man does not mean that the Mountain Men were supporters of Jackson or his party but it is a fictional composite to describe the average man of the day toiling at his labors trying to make a better life for himself.²⁴ The life of a Mountain Man was one of hardship and loneliness, struggling against the elements, sickness, disease, and trying to keep his scalp. Many of the Mountain Men had a great desire to raise their status financially and culturally. The association between Mountain Men and citizens of the Jacksonian era, was that they shared the idea that a hard-working ambitious person could aspire to wealth and comfort.²⁵ The Mountain Men used the fur trapping industry as a stepping stone to better their lives. They could rise through the ranks of the fur companies they worked for or earn an income so they could go back east of the Mississippi River and buy property to farm or open a business of their own. John Ball wrote, "Some of the fur trappers had been trading their skins for

Goetzmann, *The Mountain Man as Jacksonian Man*, 409.

²⁵

William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 107.

cattle for years and had acquired about four hundred head, and then they had started the growing of wheat [in Missouri]." ²⁶ The Mountain Men aided the progression of colonialism in the American west, as they aided themselves with personal economic prosperity.

Another way for Mountain Men to make money and to earn favor with the United States government was to scout and collect information on Native American tribes. Jedediah Smith, one of the most famous Mountain Men, collected a lot of data on his many expeditions for the Office of Indian Affairs. (See Appendix Maps 3 and 4) He constantly kept in contact with General William Clark, the Superintendent of the Office of Indian Affairs during the mid 1820's until the mid 1830's.²⁷ Smith used his position as a man in the wilderness to gain extra income by assisting the United States Government with locating and studying Indians in their lands. Robert M. Utley wrote this about Smith: "No individual, American or British, knew more about the geography of the entire region from the Missouri (River) to the Pacific. From personal

²⁶ John Ball, *The Autobiography of John Ball, Across the Plains to Oregon* (1832) Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/jball.html> (accessed February 15, 2006) .

²⁷ William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West*, 130.

experience, he understood the Great Plains, the northern Rockies, the Great Basin, the lower Colorado (River), and the Pacific Coast from southern California to the Columbia (River); and equally important, he understood how they fitted together."²⁸

Through the locating and studying of native populations the Mountain Men would help the progression of colonialism and spread of empire in the West. Through their locating and mapping of new regions they aided future government actions against native peoples, like the Indian Appropriations Acts that were passed in 1851, 1885, and 1889, that created the reservation system. The Mountain Men aided the United States government in helping the spread of the empire in the West and also gained an extra income.

The Mountain Men played a significant role in opening the American West for colonialism to spread throughout the region. The main tool of colonialism is the establishing of settlements or colonies in an area or region. The building of trading post in the wilderness helped the progression of colonialism. During the golden age of the fur trade, the movement west did not exclusively belong to the Mountain Men, the fur company's trading posts also migrated west so

²⁸ Utley, 100.

as to keep up with the demand for furs. George Catlin wrote this about the importance of trading post moving into the wilderness: "The fort was placed at the mouth of the Yellowstone River so as to be able to gain fresh supplies during the season and to also gain trading items for trade with the Indians."²⁹ The fur company stores were mainly located along the bigger river systems so ships could navigate the river to bring furs to the port cities faster and then ship them to Europe or the Eastern United States to be made into articles of clothing.

The Mountain Men in the wilderness were limited in their choices of where they could get supplies. Trade among the Native Americans was one way to fulfill their needs.³⁰ The idea of trading with Native Americans was not invented by Mountain Men. It had started with the first peoples to set foot in the New World. The Mountain Men traded with Native Americans out of necessity. The biggest item sought by the Mountain Men from the Native Americans was buffalo robes.

²⁹ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians* (1844) Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/catlin/letter3.html> (accessed February 15, 2006).

³⁰ Lycock, 14.
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By the 1840's the beaver pelt hat was no longer in fashion because of the introduction of silk hats.³¹ Silk hats were easier and cheaper to produce than beaver pelt hats. Fur companies had to find a new market to continue to stay in business. The rise in popularity of buffalo robes in the Eastern United States gave the fur trade its new market. George Fredrick Ruxton, an observer of the Mountain Men, wrote: "The principle on which the nefarious trade is conducted is this, the Indians, possessing a certain quantity of buffalo robes, have to be cheated out of them, and the sooner the better."³²

Many of the Mountain Men used whiskey or another hard alcohol to cheat natives out of their products. The Native Americans had never produced or consumed alcohol, so they had a very low tolerance level to alcohol. The reason for dispensing alcohol was to inebriate the Native Americans so they traded their well crafted goods for cheap trinkets the Mountain Men had, like cheap knives, thin blankets and used metal tins. For a drink of alcohol an Indian sold his furs, his wife, and even his soul and the Mountain Men knew

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Parks Canada, "Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site of Canada," http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ab/rockymountain/natcul/natcul02_e.asp.²
George Fredrick Ruxton, Mountain Men, ed. Glen Rounds (New York: Holiday House, 1966), 156.

this.³³ The image of the Native American involved in this type of trade would be one of a "poor, naked, and drunken savage".³⁴ These interactions would be deemed illegal by the United States Government, because it was "explicitly prohibited to convey spirits across the Indian frontier and its introduction amongst the Indian tribes subjects the offender to a heavy penalty."

Another item that was illegal to trade with Native Americans was firearms.³⁵ The United States Government banned dispensing firearms to Indian nations in 1811 in fear of uprisings against the government. The tactics used during trade with Native Americans by Mountain Men would be used to help the Mountain Men to invest only a little into the items they offered in trade and gain valuable items and increase their profits. Even though these transactions were considered illegal if a governing authority was present these interactions helped the spread of empire in the American West by putting Eastern goods into the hands of native peoples. These goods, from the initial point of trade and thereafter, were sought by many native peoples

Robert G. Athearn, *High Country Empire: The High Plains and Rockies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), 37.

³⁴ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians* (1844). ³⁵ George Fredrick Ruxton, *Mountain Men*, 156.

⁶ An Act Establishing Trading Houses with the Indian Tribes: March 2, 1811, *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School*, November 2005, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/native/na019.htm>.

because of their curiosity about new goods. In many different interactions of trade throughout history the indigenous people who had never seen European goods would let their curiosity and fascination with these goods persuade them to trade for trinkets or junk. To the native peoples these items might not be trinkets or junk but items to show authority.

Another event that took place during the trade interactions was the exchange of language. Many of these interactions could not have taken place without one party understanding the language of the other. Many of the Mountain Men became fluent in many different native tongues to better their chances for economic prosperity. In addition, the Mountain Men's fluency in native tongues could also serve as a lifesaving skill; they could talk their way out of a life threatening situation. Joe Meeks, a trapper, told Frances Fuller Victor about his experience of being captured by a Crow war party and fearing for his life: ^M"I was captured, trapping on the Rocky Fork of the Yellowstone by a Crow war party, but was able to keep my scalp because I spoke Crow tongue."³⁷

³⁷ Frances Fuller Victor, "River of the West," in *A Rendezvous Reader: Tall, Tangled and True Tales of the Mountain Men*, ed. James H. Maguire, Peter Wild and Donald A. Barclay (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997), 234.

With the Mountain Men learning the native tongues, the native peoples would also begin to understand English. This served as a tool for faster transactions between Mountain Men and Native Americans. The native peoples' English would not be scholarly but would serve its purpose. The learning of English by the Native Americans in the West helped the spread of the American empire, by making communication easier and understanding simpler.

The idea of Colonialism in the American West was one of forcing the Native Americans to accept the Anglo-American way of life. The United States government tried to force this upon these people later. However the United States was forced during the 1850's to focus its attention upon the splitting of the nation and the rising tones of war drums. The Mountain Men undertook a job of high risk, with the hopes of receiving high rewards. They navigated the wilderness by using their hopes and dreams of adventure and of bringing home a large profit. While many were fulfilling their dreams of adventure and big profits, they also helped to build a nation by laying tracks in uncharted regions of the American West. The work the Mountain Men accomplished would serve for the next stage of Western American history, the pioneers. They would use maps and

trails discovered by the Mountain Men to continue the spread of empire in the American West.

AppendixMap 1

(Ed Note: to see map, view bound version) Image available
from:

The University of Virginia American Studies Project.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/HNS/Mtmen/images/lewis&clarkmp.jpg>

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"Act Establishing Trading Houses with the Indian Tribes 1811." The Avalon Project at Yale Law School. 1997.
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/native/na019.htm>. (November 2, 2006).

This act set rules and regulations for trade with Native Americans. It was put in place to hold individuals responsible for infractions against the government.

Ball, John. The Autobiography of John Ball. 1832. Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001,
<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/jball.html>.

John Ball (1794-1884) was member of Nathaniel Wyeth's 1832 expedition to the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest. Ball provides an account of Sublette's expedition across the plains to the 1832 Pierre's Hole rendezvous, the famous battle with the Blackfeet that occurred there, the continuation of Wythe's remaining men to Oregon, and the first settlements in Oregon.

Catlin, George. Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians (1844) Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001,
<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/catlin/letter3.html>.

Catlin wrote these letters and notes about Native Americans he encountered while in the wilderness of the west. He wrote this series of letters and notes to bring to light practices of the Native Americans for the masses back east.

Clark, William. The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. December 30, 1803. University of Nebraska Edition. March 2005.
<http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/index.html>.

These journals are firsthand accounts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. These journals speak about the daily

events that happened on the Expedition and the men who accompanied them.

James, Thomas. Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans (1846) Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/james/chap2.html>.

Jefferson, Thomas. "Letter to Captain Meriwether Lewis", June 20, 1806, <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/jefflett.html>

This letter is the beginning of the Lewis and Clark expedition. It details the task the President Thomas Jefferson wants Lewis to accomplish during the expedition. It gives the expedition the support of the United States Government.

Lewis, Meriwether. "Letter to Thomas Jefferson", September 23, 1806, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?amrnem/mtj:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(je00063\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?amrnem/mtj:@field(DOCID+@lit(je00063))).

This letter was sent to Thomas Jefferson to inform him of the successful return of the expedition to St. Louis and inform him of Lewis's opinion of the use of the overland route in official use.

Ruxton, George Fredrick. Mountain Men. ed. Glen Rounds New York: Holiday House, 1966.

This book is a first hand account of a fur trapping expedition from start to finish. It details encounters with different groups of Native Americans, surviving harsh weather in the wilderness, and the daily lives of trapping and processing furs in the wilderness.

---. Wildlife in the Rocky Mountains (1916), Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Virtual Research Center Project. January 2001, <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/ruxton.html>.

This set of articles shows the many different types of game in and around the Rocky mountains. It details the different game sought after by the Mountain Men. in

addition, it describes the harsh environment the Mountain Men had to endure to hunt such game.

The St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, "Articles of Association,"
<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/mfc/artassoc.html>.

These articles of association were a contract that Men working for the St. Louis Fur Company had to abide by while on an expedition for the company.

Victor, Frances Fuller. "River of the West," in *A Rendezvous Reader: Tall, Tangled and True Tales of the Mountain Men*, ed. James H. Maguire, Peter Wild and Donald A. Barclay. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997.

This is a first hand account of trapper Joe Meeks being captured by Crow. He tells Victor about how his ability to speak their language saved his life.

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