

attempting to set itself up as a separate country, so he ordered the Army to take it back. The loss of the wagon train and two other Army supply trains kept the Army from reaching Salt Lake City that fall. There was no loss of life. The location is apparently named for wagonmaster Lew Simpson of Russell, Majors & Waddell. There is no visible trace of the wagon train to be found currently.

- h. **Big Timber Station.** Ranking: M-F-23. (17 miles southwest of Farson, NE4SW4 of Sec. 19, T23N, R108W, USGS map "Gasson Bridge.") A metal post marks "Big Timber Station 1860." This station was located at a 3-way junction on the Oregon Trail. The Slate-Creek-Kinney Route led off to the west of the primary route. The other road led to the Lower Crossing of the Green River and forded the Big Sandy. Kinney's Cutoff was preferred to the Sublette Cutoff because there was water every 15-20 miles.
- i. **Lombard Ferry.** Ranking: H-F-02. (23.7 miles southwest of Farson, SW4SW4 of Sec. 17, T22N, R109W, USGS map "Thoman School.") The ferry site is 2.2 miles above the mouth of the Big Sandy. It was a commercial ferry established in 1847 by the Mormons. It was named for the Lombard Bluffs in that area. The crossing apparently varied from year to year from the mouth of the Big Sandy 15 miles above, according to diarists of the time. During low water, the river could be forded on a shallow sand bar 10 feet wide. If the wagons diverged any at all, they could be in trouble. The Mormons charged \$3-\$4 per wagon on the ferry. The only evidence left is a faint trace of the Oregon Trail leading to and from the Green River bank. It is on the Seedskafee National Wildlife Refuge, but the river banks are still private property. The Fish and Wildlife Service planned to acquire this property in 1981. The ferry is also on the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.
- j. **Green River Station.** Ranking: M-F-24. (20 miles northeast of Granger, Wyoming. SW4NW4 of Sec. 29, T22N, R109W, USGS map "Lombard Buttes.") According to Henderson's and Franzwa's maps, the stage station was 1 mile northwest of the mouth of the Big Sandy.
- k. **Bridger-Fraeb Trading Post (probable site).**
 Ranking: M-F-24. (17.5 miles northeast of Granger, Wyoming. NW4 of Sec. 8, T21N, R109W, USGS map "Lombard Buttes.") The trading post was established by Jim Bridger and Henry Fraeb about 1841. It operated for only about a year (1841-42) because Fraeb was killed by Indians on August 10, 1841. He was on his way to the trading post on the Little Snake River. The post was located west of Green

River below Dry Creek. It apparently was not too important to emigrants since it was mentioned in only a few diaries. After Fraeb's death, Bridger and new partner Vasquez relocated to Black's Fork and then the present location of Fort Bridger.

1. **South Bend (Granger) Stage Station.** Ranking: M-S-12. (At Granger, Wyoming. NW4NE4 of sec. 32, T19N, R11W, USGS map "Granger, Wyo.") There are two buildings at this site, one complete yet and one a ruin. They do not match with available descriptions of the station. Apparently they were built no earlier than 1895--for example, the nails are made of wire, which were manufactured 1892 and after. According to Henderson, the original Oregon Trail passed Granger a mile west.

- m. **Ham's Fork Crossing.** Ranking: M-P-24. (1.5 miles west of Granger, SE4NW4 of Sec. 30, T19N, R11W, USGS map "Granger, Wyo.") This crossing of the original Oregon Trail is about 1.2 miles above the mouth of Ham's Fork. It is probably near the location of the 1834 fur trappers rendezvous. The Mormons passed east of the Oregon Trail from Green River to Ham's Fork in 1847. There was a U.S. bridge built in 1857 or 1858 about 500 feet above the mouth of Ham's Fork. This was a shallow, wide crossing about 1.5 miles before the last Black's Fork crossing. There is a modern railroad bridge located about a half mile to the northwest.

8. UINTA COUNTY

- a. **Church Butte (Solomon's Temple).** Ranking: H-F-24. (Located 10 miles southwest of Granger, on the SW4 of Sec. 25, T18N, R11W, USGS map "Ogden, Utah-Wyo.") The sandstone formation is approximately 1000 feet in diameter and stands 75-100 feet above Black's Fork Valley. It was probably discovered by Jedediah Smith in March 1824; he may have been responsible for naming the location. It is eroded to look like a church or temple, hence the name. The weathering is so great that there are no readable names found. A cast iron plaque honoring the Mormons 1847--on which was fastened to the butte has eroded away and is missing; the cement slab it was attached to is on the ground. It is also on the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail list of historic sites. At one time there was a stage station west of the butte. By the time Jim Bridger guided Capt. Stansbury, U.S. Topographical engineer, through that area the site was already familiarly known as "The Church."

BY MEGHAN SAAR

Portrait of a Mountain Man

An artist famous for his majestic Rocky Mountain landscapes may have painted a likeness of Jim Bridger.

Albert Bierstadt legitimized the Western American landscape as a serious subject, first bringing to the East and the world the majestic perpendicular granite peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Many would be surprised to learn the artist, far more prolific in his landscape art, also painted about a dozen portraits. One, credited as being a portrait of mountain man Jim Bridger, hit the auction block at Jackson Hole Art Auction on September 17, 2016. Collectors bid more than \$1.7 million for Western artworks sold at the auction in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The Bierstadt portrait “most likely dates to 1859 during the artist’s first trip west,” Melissa Webster Speidel, director of the Albert Bierstadt Catalogue Raisonné Project, states in the auction catalogue. She adds, “During the trip, Bierstadt painted the portrait of a scout who is thought to be Jim Bridger.”

Although Bierstadt and Bridger certainly could have crossed paths before the Mountain Man died in 1881, the idea that Bierstadt met Bridger during his 1859 sketching tour, as an artist for Frederick W. Lander’s expedition, is unlikely.

Both were out West that year, but the Lander party explored the Rocky Mountain region, while Bridger served as a guide for Capt. W.F. Reynolds’ expedition of the region that would become Yellowstone National Park. If the artist met Bridger in 1859, the most likely scenario would be during his weeks in April in St. Joseph, Missouri, before the expedition departed on May 5. Bridger also left for his trip from St. Joseph, although later, on May 28. But perhaps he was in the area, after Reynolds got his orders on April 13.

Bierstadt did meet Rocky Mountain trappers, with sketches from the 1859 trip

informing works that include his 1861 oil *The Trappers’ Camp*. And he did focus on the people he came across, taking stereographs of them, including, reportedly, one of a trapper, and sketching them. “For a figure-painter, there is an abundance of fine subjects. The manners and customs of the Indians are still as they were hundreds of years ago, and now is the time to paint them, for they are rapidly passing away, and soon will be known only in history,” he wrote, in a July 10, 1859, letter.

Another opportunity Bierstadt may have had to meet Bridger was in 1863, when he set out on a Rocky Mountain journey to California. Bridger was guiding Lt. Col. William Oliver Collins in the area of present-day Wyoming’s Fort Laramie that year, before September, when he set off to take Capt. Jacob Humfreville to South Park, Colorado Territory, wintering with him at Fort Laramie.

Bierstadt left on May 12 and was in San Francisco, California, by July 17. Although he could have met the Mountain Man somewhere in between, the scenario proves more unlikely when you consider his traveling partner. Journalist Fitz Hugh Ludlow wrote a book, *The Heart of the Continent*, inspired by his journey with Bierstadt; he mentions Bridger as the man behind Bridger’s Pass, but does not state that he ever met him.

Without provenance documenting the artist ever met the Mountain Man, Bierstadt may have drawn the portrait based on the Rocky Mountain trappers he came across in his travels. In any case, the portrait remains a rare portrayal by an artist more famous for his awe-inspiring landscapes. 



Is this a portrait of Mountain Man Jim Bridger? Known for his landscapes, Albert Bierstadt painted about a dozen portraits in his career, including this one that sold for a \$27,500 bid.

Notable Art Lots Included

(All images courtesy Jackson Hole Art Auction)

UPCOMING AUCTIONS

December 2-4, 2016
Historic Firearms
Rock Island Auction Company
(Rock Island, IL)
RockIslandAuction.com
800-238-8022

December 5, 2016
American Indian Art
Bonhams (San Francisco, CA)
Bonhams.com • 415-503-3550

December 10-11, 2016
Arms & Armor and Civil War & Militaria
Heritage Auctions (Dallas, TX)
HA.com • 877-437-4824



The top lot hammered down at the auction for \$500,000. N.C. Wyeth's *He Rode Away, Following a Dim Trail Among the Sage* is one of three illustrations Wyeth created for an October 1909 *The Red Book Magazine* short story about Navajo Svenson, who strikes out to find work among white men.



Buffalo Hunting scenes are a popular theme in historical Western artworks. This 1894 oil, painted by master artist Charles M. Russell, sold for a \$425,000 bid.

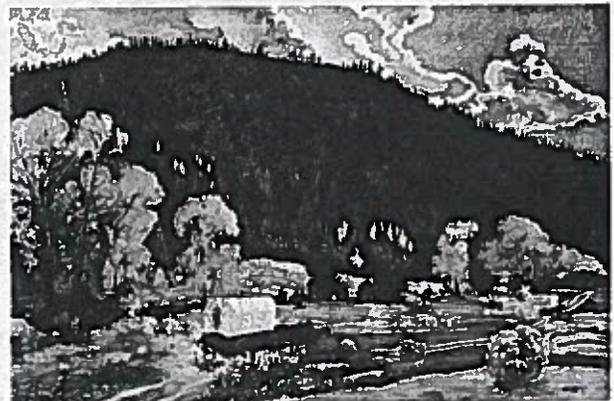


This Maynard Dixon relic is a preliminary design of a cattle drive for a portion of the Grassland mural, one of two Dixon murals featured at the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1939. The murals were destroyed in 1941 when a naval base opened at San Francisco's Treasure Island; \$350,000.



After a late fall hunt, a band of Crows hauls their replenished robes and food supplies on horse travois over a windswept ridge in Wyoming to their winter shelter in John Clymer's *Moving Camp*; \$325,000.

Dwarfed by the majesty of the New Mexico landscape, this covered wagon travels beneath dark clouds and a dramatic sunburst in Walter Ufer's *October*, which reinforces the power of nature over man; \$320,000.



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Discovered in 1825.

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To hear the participants tell it, that first Rocky mountain rendezvous was a fair to beat all fairs. Every day more trappers arrived, those on foot breaking into a joyous run at the first sight of "civilization", while those on horses swept down upon the encampment, galloping pell-mell among the tents and lodges, reckless of what they hit or overran, discharging their rifles in the air, shouting epithets, vaulting from their horses to pound each other on the back, while their pack animals wandered about uncertainly.

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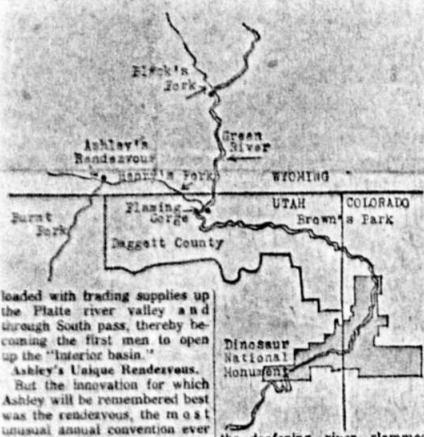
Evaluation.

Like a fresh summer breeze he is drifting about,
Outdoors and indoors, indoors and out.
He swims in the pool, and he rides on his bike;
He's the typical boy the neighbors can like.

He is good to his dog, he is kind to his cat;
He's a little of this and a little of that.
He is friend to the young and friend to the old;
In these simple facts is his stature foretold.

Since the weight of the world some forthcoming day
Will rest on young shoulders like this, so they say;
We must surely agree it behooves us to make
The most of the present for his innocent sake.

Billy B. Cooper.



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Ashley's Unique Rendezvous.

But the innovation for which Ashley will be remembered best was the rendezvous, the most unusual annual convention ever beheld. The spectacular was staged in Utah, Idaho or Wyoming every summer for 16 years, and was for decades afterward to be remembered around campfires with heavy nostalgia by those who attended, whose stories were heard with awe and envy by others.

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the deafening river slammed them from boulder to boulder down the narrow defiles, when his men fervently wished they'd never set eyes on that now famous St. Louis ad for "one hundred enterprising young men." Ashley recorded their despairing spirits, when at times through the dreadful Ladore, Hell's Half-mile, Whirlpool and Split mountain canyons, all in what is now Dinosaur National monument, they never expected to get out alive.

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at that time and place, such as dried fruit, even raisins; looking-glasses, razors, soap, handkerchiefs and copper kettles, along with staples like flour, bacon and horseshoes.

Swapping and Gambling.

After settling for sugar and gunpowder at \$2 a pint, \$4-a-pound coffee, \$4-a-pint watered-down alcohol, and guns, knives and traps, plus buttons a n d bows for the Indian maidens at corresponding prices (remember, the goods had been laboriously lugged, uninsured, over 1,200 miles of virgin landscape), the trappers then spent their time bartering for squaws, gambling on anything that was left of their year's earnings, galloping in horse races, running in foot races shooting in contests, fighting free-for-alls, drinking, rassing, recounting their narrow escapes, feasting on fresh antelope and buffalo steaks, and through it all, trying to out-do each other at whooping and hollering.

The Indians were allowed to come in, a few at a time, to haggle in their own way over the goods that were left. All told, there were estimated to be 200 trappers, including Ashley's men and free-lancers, and 800 Indians on hand, exhibiting their individual conceptions of uninhibited freedom during a week-long celebration of the Fourth of July.

Nearly all the mighty mountain men destined to become famous in the annals of American trapping and exploration were there. In the years to come an "Ashley" man was top hombre throughout the western territory. Besides Ashley's partner, Andrew Henry, there were young Jim Bridger and Jedediah Smith, Antoine Robidoux, Robert Campbell, David Jackson, Etienne Provost, Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Beckworth, James Clyman and Hugh Glass. Few of them had any money left to show for their year's

Evaluation.

Like a fresh summer breeze he is drifting about, Outdoors and indoors, indoors and out. He swims in the pool, and he rides on his bike; He's the typical boy the neighbors can like.

He is good to his dog, he is kind to his cat; He's a little of this and a little of that. He is friend to the young and friend to the old; In these simple facts is his stature foretold.

Since the weight of the world some forthcoming day Will rest on young shoulders like this, so they say; We must surely agree it behooves us to make The most of the present for his innocent sake.

Billy B. Cooper.