

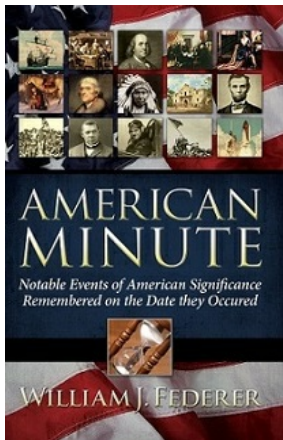
American Minute with Bill Federer Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Mountain Men of the Rockies, & fate of Buffalo & Indians from Railroads

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Following **Lewis and Clark's** expedition, **Christian missionaries** made their way to the **West** ... [continue reading American Minute here](#)

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[American Minute-Notable Events of American Significance Remembered on the Date They Occurred](#)

These include:

- **Jason Lee**, Methodist missionary to the Kalapuya tribe, who **founded the capitol city of Salem, Oregon**, and whose statue is in the U.S. Capital;
- **Marcus Whitman**, and his wife Narcissa, were

Methodist missionaries to the Cayuse and Walla Walla tribes. He **pioneered the Oregon Trail** and his statue is in the U.S. Capitol;

- **Henry & Eliza Spalding** were Presbyterian missionaries to the Nez Perce tribe and **helped found Lapwai, Idaho.**

During this time, **mountain men** explored America's west:

- **John Colter** was on Lewis and Clark's Expedition. Afterwards, he **explored Yellowstone National Park** and the **Teton Mountain Range**, spending several months alone the winter of 1807–1808. He is considered the first "mountain man."
- **John Frémont** led five expeditions west. He was one of **California's** first Senators, **Arizona's** Governor, and the **first Republican Presidential candidate;**
- **Joseph Meek** was a fur trapper in the **Oregon Territory** who led the Champoeg Meetings, the area's first government;
- **John Sutter** owned **Sutter's Mill**, where gold was discovered, and established "**Sutter's Fort**," which became **Sacramento, California's State capital.**
- **John David Albert** worked on a **Mississippi keelboat** before he became a fur trapper. In 1847, during the Mexican-American War, he survived an attack by 500 Indians and Mexicans at Turley Mill in **Taos, New Mexico;**
- **Jedediah Smith** pioneered the **South Pass** across the **Continental Divide**. He was the first to explore **Salt Lake** to the **Colorado River**, and the first to cross the **Mojave Desert** into **California**. Attacked by a bear, he had a fellow fur-trapper sew his scalp back on;

- **Hugh Glass** was mauled by a bear and left for dead by his companions. He crawled and stumbled 200 miles to **Fort Kiowa, South Dakota**.
- **John "Grizzly" Adams** captured bears with just a knife or his bare hands. His wilderness survival adventures were the basis for a movie in 1974;
- **James "Bloody Arm" Beckwourth** was a freed slave who lived with Crow Indians. A renown black frontiersman, he discovered **Beckwourth Pass** through the mountains of **Sierra Nevada** (Reno to Portola, **California**);
- **Jeremiah Johnson** was hunting in 1847 when a his Flathead Indian wife was killed by a Crow brave. He went on a vendetta and in revenge, according to historian Andrew Mehane Southerland, "killed and scalped more than 300 Crow Indians. A movie was made about him 1972, starring Robert Redford.
- **Peter Skene Ogden** explored with his **North West Company** through **Oregon, Washington, Nevada, California, Utah, Idaho** and **Wyoming**, often confronting the **Hudson's Bay Company**, North America's oldest commercial corporation and largest landowner from Great Lakes to Arctic Circle to the Pacific Northwest;
- **William Sublette** and his four brothers improved routes along the **Oregon Trail**. He was co-owner of the **Rocky Mountain Fur Company**;
- **Jim Bridger's** trail-blazing tales include being chased by 100 **Cheyenne warriors** into a dead-end canyon and barely escaping with his life.

Bridger explored **Jackson Hole, the Teton Range**, and discovered "**Bridger Pass**" across the **Continental Divide**, cutting some 60 miles off of what would become

the **Oregon Trail**.

He was one of the first white men to see the **geysers of Yellowstone, petrified wood forests, and the Great Salt Lake**.

Though illiterate, **Bridger** spoke the language of **Sioux, Black Foot, and Crow**.

Singer Johnny Horton recorded a song dedicated to **Jim Bridger** in 1960:

"Once there was a **mountain man** who couldn't write his name

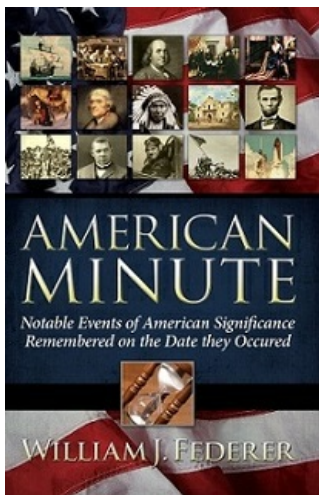
Yet he deserves the front row seat in **History's Hall of Fame**

He forgot more about the Indians than we will ever know

He spoke the **language** of the **Sioux the Black Foot and the Crow ...**

There's poems and there's legends that tell of **Carson's fame**

Yet compared to **Jim Bridger**, Kit was civilized and tame."



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Kit Carson was a fur trapper, soldier and Indian agent.

His exploits **west of the Mississippi** were as famous as

Daniel Boone's east.

Kit Caron's father fought in the **Revolutionary War**, then moved his family from **Kentucky** to a tract of land in Missouri owned by **Daniel Boone's** sons.

At age 16, **Kit Carson** followed the **Santa Fe Trail** to **Taos, New Mexico**, which was the capital of the fur trade in the **Southwest**.

He stayed with a friend who had served with **Carson's** older brothers in the **War of 1812**.

Learning the skills of a fur trapper, **Kit Carson** became **fluent in speaking:**

- **Spanish,**
- **Navajo,**
- **Apache,**
- **Cheyenne,**
- **Arapaho,**
- **Paiute,**
- **Shoshone,** and
- **Ute.**

Francis Parkman, Jr., wrote in ***The Oregon Trail*** (1849):

"The **buffalo** are strange animals ... in order to approach them the utmost skill, experience, and judgment are necessary. **Kit Carson**, I believe, stands preeminent in running **buffalo**."

In 1835, at the age of 25, **Carson** went to the annual **mountain man rendezvous** in **Wyoming**, where he met an **Arapaho girl** named **Waa-Nibe** or "**Singing Grass**."

Carson fought a **gun fight** with a **French-Canadian trapper** over her.

Kit married **Singing Grass** and together they worked with the **Hudson's Bay Company**.

Later they worked with **Jim Bridger** and the **Rocky Mountain Fur Company**.

Kit Carson and **Singing Grass** trapped beaver along the **Yellowstone River**, the **Powder River**, and the **Big Horn river**.

They traveled throughout **Colorado**, **Wyoming**, **Idaho**, and **Montana**.

Carson considered these years as "**the happiest days of my life.**"

It broke **Kit Carson's** heart when **Singing Grass** died of a fever after giving birth to their second daughter.

The **trapping of beaver** drove the **exploration of the west**.

It was fueled by demand for **beaver top hats** popular in **eastern America and Europe**.

Around 1840, **silk from China** allowed **hats** to be made less expensively and **the demand for beaver suddenly ceased**.

In 1841, **Kit Carson** married a **Cheyenne woman**, but she left him to follow **her tribe's migration**.

In 1842, **Carson** met **Josefa Jaramillo**, the daughter of a **prominent Taos family**.

Carson received religious instruction from **Padre Antonio Jose Martinez**, was baptized, married **Josefa** and together they had eight children.

Kit Carson led **John C. Frémont** on expeditions across the **South Pass of the Continental Divide** which "touched off a wave of wagon caravans filled with hopeful emigrants."

Carson led **Frémont** to map the second half of the **Oregon Trail**, from **South Pass** to the **Columbia River**, traveling along the **Great Salt Lake** into **Oregon**.

They came within sight of **Mt. Rainier**, **Mt. Saint Helens**, **Mt. Hood**, and ventured into Mexican territory, where **Carson's** wilderness skills averted mass starvation in the **Sierra Nevadas**.

Traveling across the **Mojave Desert**, they arrived at a watering hole called **Las Vegas** (Spanish for "**The Meadows**").

Jedediah Smith had first gone through the **Las Vegas Valley** in 1827.

When Congress published **Frémont's** reports in 1845, **Carson's** reputation as a frontiersman Indian fighter inspired writers to use him as the **hero in dime novels**.

In 1846, **Carson** accompanied **John Frémont** to **California**.

Carson participated in several battles which eventually led to **California** being brought into the Union as the **31st State**.

He even once courageously slipped through a siege at night and ran 25 miles barefoot through the desert to **San Diego** for reinforcements.

General Sherman wrote of meeting **Kit Carson** in *The Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*:

"As the spring and summer of 1848 advanced, the reports came faster and faster from the **gold-mines** at **Sutter's saw-mill** ...

... It was our duty to go up and see with our own eyes, that we might report the truth to our Government.

As yet we had no regular mail to any part of the United States, but mails had come to us at long intervals, around Cape Horn ..."

Sherman continued:

"I well remember the first overland mail. It was brought by **Kit Carson** in saddle-bags from **Taos** in **New Mexico**.

We heard of his arrival at **Los Angeles**, and waited patiently for his arrival at headquarters.

... His fame then was at its height, from the publication of **Frémont's** books, and I was very anxious to see a man who had achieved such feats of daring among the wild animals of the **Rocky Mountains**, and still wilder Indians of the Plains.

... At last his arrival was reported at the tavern at Monterey, and I hurried to hunt him up.

... I cannot express my surprise at beholding a small, stoop-shouldered man, with reddish hair, freckled face, soft blue eyes, and nothing to indicate extraordinary courage or daring.

He spoke but little, and answered questions in monosyllables ..."

Sherman added:

"He spent some days in Monterey, during which time we extracted with difficulty some items of his personal history.

He was then by commission a lieutenant in the regiment of Mounted Rifles **serving in Mexico** under Colonel Sumner, and, as he could not reach his regiment from **California**, Colonel Mason ordered that for a time he should be assigned to duty with A.J. Smith's company, First Dragoons, at **Los Angeles**.

... He remained at **Los Angeles** some months, and was then sent back to the United States with dispatches, **traveling two thousand miles almost alone**, in preference to being encumbered by a large party."

During the Civil War, **Kit Carson** was a **scout and soldier for the Union Army**, which carried out a Federal mandate of subduing the west.

When **General James Carleton and Colonel Chivington** used severe tactics against the Indians, **Carson** strongly objected and sent a letter of resignation, February 3, 1863, but **General Carleton** refused it.

Kit Carson's fame was such that "**Buffalo Bill**" Cody named his son after him.

His sister, Helen Cody Wetmore, wrote in ***Last of the Great Scouts-The Life Story of Col. William F. Cody 'Buffalo Bill':***

"The first boy of the family was the object of the undivided interest of the outpost for a time, and names by the dozen were suggested.

Major North offered '**Kit Carson**' as an appropriate name for the son of a great scout and buffalo-hunter, and this was finally settled on."

Helen Cody Wetmore described "**Buffalo Bill**":

"He may fitly be named the '**Last of the Great Scouts.**' He has had great predecessors.

The mantle of **Kit Carson** has fallen upon his shoulders, and he wears it worthily."

Buffalo once roamed the western plains, numbering in the millions, and were **hunted for blankets, meat and leather.**

When **railroads** began moving west, **buffalo** were **shot**

by the thousands to clear the way for the tracks.

Documenting the changing West, frontier artist **Frederic Remington** wrote:

"I knew **the railroad was coming** — I saw men already swarming into the land.

I knew the derby hat, the smoking chimneys, the cord binder, and the 30-day note were upon us in a restless surge.

... I knew the **wild riders and the vacant land were about to vanish forever** ... and the more I considered the subject, the bigger the forever loomed.

Without knowing how to do it, I began to record some facts around me, and the more I looked the more the panorama unfolded."

The **Federal Government** adopted a **big government solution**, namely, **force migrating plains Indians onto reservations** by **killing off the buffalo**.

A bill to protect buffalo was introduced in the **Texas Legislature in 1875**, but U.S. General Philip Sheridan retorted (John Cook, 164):

"They are destroying the Indians' commissary. And it is a well known fact that an army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage ...

For a lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell **until the buffaloes are exterminated** ... as it is the only way to bring lasting peace and allow civilization to advance."

As herds were slaughtered, Indian hostilities increased.

The **Federal Government** made treaties with Indians, which were later **often ignored by greedy politicians** if gold, oil or other valuable minerals were found.

Corrupt, deep-state bureaucrats profited by taking Indian lands in crony insider deals, such as the **Teapot Dome Scandal**.

Sympathetic to the **Indians' plight**, **Kit Carson** was appointed **Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Colorado**, January of 1868.

Like **Sam Houston**, who in 1818 escorted a delegation of **Cherokee** to Washington, D.C., **Kit Carson** escorted **Ute Indian Chiefs** to Washington, DC., to arrange a treaty.

Though physically weak and having difficulty breathing, **Carson** led them through **northern cities where they met crowds** and posed for pictures with western military notables, such as **General James Carleton** and Former California Governor **John C. Frémont**.

While staying with the **Indian Chiefs** at **New York City's Metropolitan Hotel**, **Kit Carson** almost died.

He wrote:

"I felt my head swell and my breath leaving me. Then, I woke ... my face and head all wet. I was on the floor and the chief was holding my head on his arm and putting water on me.

... He was crying. He said, 'I thought you were dead. **You called on your Lord Jesus**, then shut your eyes and couldn't speak.'

I did not know that I spoke ... I do not know that I **called on the Lord Jesus**, but I might -- **it's only Him that can help me where I now stand ...**"

Carson ended:

"My wife must see me. If I was to write about this, or died out here, it would kill her. I must get home."

Carson successfully arranged the treaty, as **President Andrew Johnson** wrote:

"I herewith lay before the Senate ... a **treaty** made on the 2d day of March, 1868,

by and between Nathaniel G. Taylor, **Commissioner of Indian Affairs**; Alexander C. Hunt, governor and ex officio **superintendent of Indian affairs** of Colorado Territory, and **Kit Carson**, on the part of the United States,

and the representatives of the **Tabeguache, Muaehe, Capote, Weeminuche, Yampa, Grand River, and Uintah bands of Ute Indians.**"

Carson returned to **Taos, New Mexico**, but unfortunately, his wife **Josefa** soon died from complications after giving birth to their eighth child.

A month later, **Kit Carson** died of an abdominal aortic aneurysm on MAY 23, 1868, at the age of 58.

He was **buried next to his wife.**

His last words were: "Adios Compadres" (Spanish for "Goodbye friends").

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This American Minute is in memory of **Foster Friess**, 1940-2021, who, with his wife Lynn, founded [Foster's Outriders](#), which



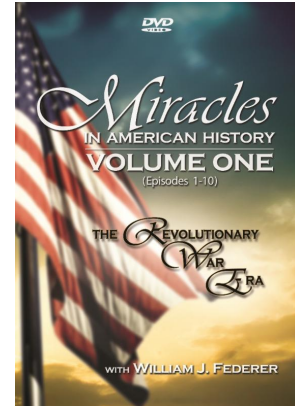
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