

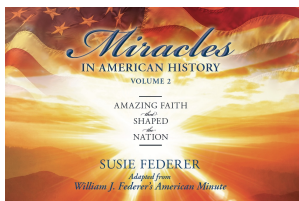
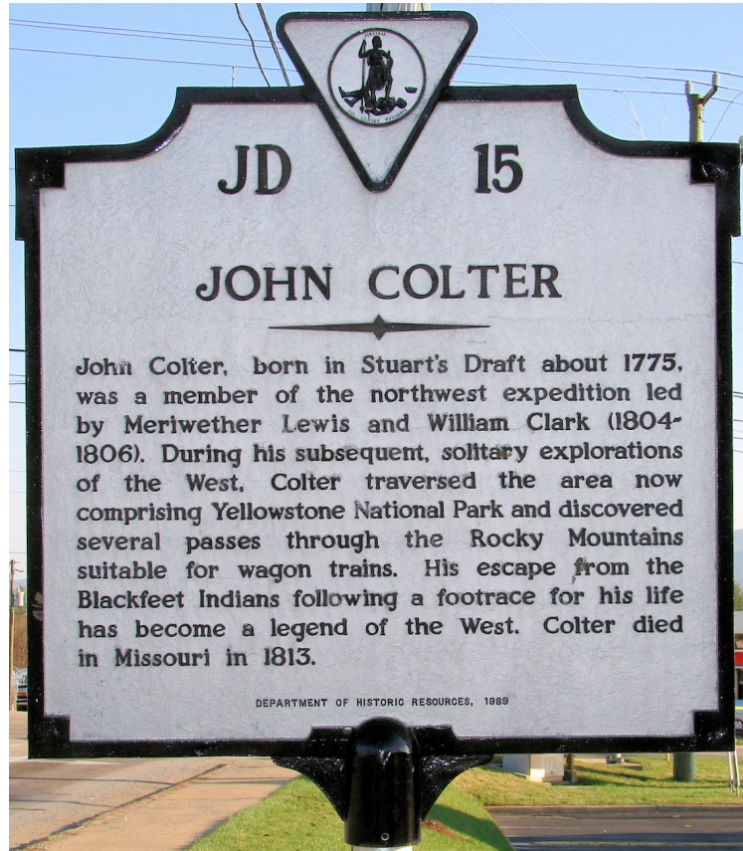
## American Minute with Bill Federer Colter's Run, Jedediah Smith & the Mountain Men

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**John Colter** accompanied **Lewis and Clark** on their expedition, 1804-1806...

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**Colter** then traveled through the mountain wilderness alone for months, being considered **the first "mountain man."**

In 1807, **Colter** became the first person of European descent to see the **Teton Mountain Range** and traverse the area that became known as **Yellowstone National Park.**

His description of bubbling mudpots, geysers and

steaming pools of water, resulted in the area being named "**Colter's Hell.**"

In 1809, hundreds of **Blackfeet** captured **John Colter**.

His friend, **John Potts**, was riddled with bullets and hacked to pieces.

Wanting to make a sport out of killing **Colter**, Indians stripped him naked and forced him run the gauntlet.

He was chased by dozens of young warriors across miles of prairie.

After running for his life nearly five miles, bleeding from his nose, **Colter** grabbed the spear from his charging assailant, then quickly turned it around, and killed him with it.

As other warriors stopped to see their dead friend, **Colter** raced ahead to the chilly **Madison River**, where he dove in and swam under a beaver dam.

Washington Irving wrote in *Astoria* (1836, chapter 15):

"**John Colter** ... swam below water until he succeeded in getting a breathing place between the floating trunks of trees ...

He had scarcely drawn breath after all his toils, when he heard his pursuers on the river bank, whooping and yelling like so many fiends. They plunged in the river ...

... The heart of **Colter** almost died within him as he saw them, through the chinks of his concealment, passing and repassing, and seeking for him in all directions ...

He remained until nightfall ... finding by the silence around that his pursuers had departed ...

**Colter** dived again and came up ... then swam silently

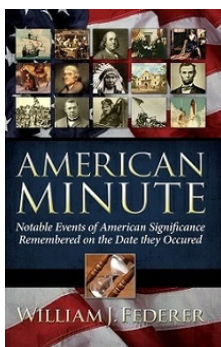
down the river."

**Colter** then walked naked and exposed to the weather for 11 days to a trading fort on the **Little Big Horn**.

Other famous **mountain men** of the early 19th century included:

- **John "Grizzly" Adams;**
- **John David Albert;**
- **William Henry Ashley;**
- **Jim Baker;**
- Black mountain man **James " Bloody Arm" Beckwourth;**
- **Jim Bridger;**
- **Robert Campbell;**
- **Kit Carson;**
- **Jean Baptiste Charbonneau**, the son of Sacagawea and French fur trapper, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau;
- **James Clyman;**
- **Thomas Fitzpatrick;**
- **John C. Fremont;**
- **Joseph Gervais;**
- **Hugh Glass;**
- **Moses "Black" Harris;**

- **David Edward Jackson;**
- **John Jeremiah "Liver-Eating" Johnson;**
- **Joseph L. Meek;**
- **Robert "Doc" Newell;**
- **Peter Skene Ogden;**
- **Étienne Provost;**
- **"Blackfoot" John Smith;**
- **Jedediah Smith;**
- **Thomas L. "Pegleg" Smith;**
- **William Sublette;**
- **John Sutter;**
- **Louis Vasquez;**
- **"Old" Bill Williams, M.T.**



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

**Jedediah Smith's** travels were exceeded only by **Lewis and Clark**.

He led expeditions up the **Missouri River** with such characters as keelboatman **Mike Fink** -- the notorious brawler and braggart.

**Jedediah Smith** was a renown frontiersman, hunter,

trapper, and map-maker.

He explored the **Rocky Mountains**, from the Northwest to the Southwest.

**Smith** helped discover the "**South Pass**" through the **Rockies** and the **first land route to California**, which opened the door for the **largest voluntary mass migration in world history of nearly 400,000**.

Leading settlers across the **Santa Fe Trail**, **Smith's** party were the first white Americans to cross the the **Mojave Desert into California**.

Returning east, **Smith** and his party were the first U.S. citizens to cross the treacherous **Sierra Nevada** and **Great Basin Desert**.

His was the first documented exploration from the **Salt Lake** to the **Colorado River**.

**Smith** and his companions were also the first U.S. citizens to travel by land up the **California** and **Oregon coast**.

Born JUNE 24, 1798, **Jedediah Smith's** adventurous career began at age of 22, when he answered an add in the *Missouri Gazette*, place by Missouri's Lieutenant Governor, William H. Ashley, seeking:

"Enterprising Young Men ... to ascend the river Missouri to its source ... to be employed for ... three years."

**Jedediah Smith** was known to carry two books, **the Bible** and a copy of **Lewis & Clark's Expedition**.

He never drank alcohol, never used tobacco, and never boasted.

**Jedediah Smith** wrote in his Journal:

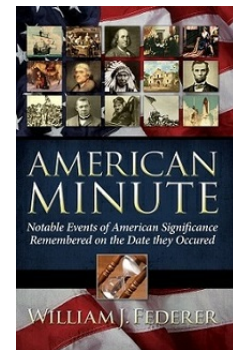
"Then let us come forward with **faith**, nothing doubting, and He will most unquestionably hear us."

**Jedediah Smith** entered into a fur trapping partnership, "**Smith, Jackson and Sublette**," and in 1827 sold furs at a **rendezvous** near the **Great Salt Lake**.

When fellow trapper John Gardner died, **Jedediah Smith** gave the eulogy, as recorded by another expedition member, Hugh Glass:

"**Mr. Smith**, a young man of our company made a **powerful prayer** which moved us all greatly and I am persuaded John died in peace."

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



As captain of his second expedition, **Jedediah Smith** was attacked by a Grizzly bear, as Jim Clyman described:

"The Grizzly did not hesitate a moment but sprang on the capt taking him by the head first pitching sprawling on the earth ... breaking several of his ribs and cutting his head badly ...

... The bear had taken nearly all his head in his capacious mouth close to his left eye on one side and close to his right ear on the other and laid the skull bare to near the crown of the head ...

... One of his ears was torn from his head out to the outer rim ..."

**Smith** had **Jim Clyman** sew his scalp back on, but the ear was too cut to save.

**Smith** insisted he try, as **Clyman** wrote:

"I put my needle sticking it through and through and over and over laying the lacerated parts together as nice as I could with my hands."

After two weeks of rest, **Smith** resumed leading the expedition.

On December 24, 1829, from the **Wind River** on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, **Jedediah Smith** wrote to his parents in Ohio:

"It is a long time since I left home & many times I have been ready, to bring my business to a close & endeavor to come home; but have been hindered hitherto ...

... However I will endeavor, by the assistance of **Divine Providence**, to come home as soon as possible ... but whether I shall ever be allowed the privilege, **God** only knows ..."

**Smith** continued:

"I feel the need of the watch & care of a **Christian church**. You may well suppose that our society is of the roughest kind.

Men of good morals seldom enter into business of this kind -- I hope you will remember me before the **Throne of Grace** ...

May **God** in **His infinite mercy** allow me soon to join my parents is the **prayer** of your undutiful Son, **Jedediah S. Smith.**"

In a letter to his brother, Ralph, December 24, 1829, **Jedediah Smith** wrote:

"**Many hostile tribes of Indians** inhabit this space ...

In August 1827, ten men who were in company with me lost their lives by the **Amuchabas Indians** ...

... In July 1828, fifteen men who were in company with me lost their lives by the **Umpquah Indians** ...

Many others have lost their lives in different parts ...

My Brother ... I have need of your **prayers** ... to bear me up before the **Throne of Grace.**"

**Jedidiah Smith** sold his shares in the **Rocky Mountain Fur Company** in 1830 and retired, buying a townhouse in **St. Louis**.

However, he had agreed to go on one last trip for the **Sublette and Jackson Company**, leaving in the spring of 1831.

On May 27, 1831, while looking for water along the **Santa Fe Trail** in southwest Kansas, **Jedediah Smith** was ambushed by **Comanche warriors** and killed.

Just four months earlier, January 26, 1831, **Jedediah Smith** had written to his brother Ralph in Wayne County, Ohio:

"Some, who have made a profession of **Christianity** & have by their own negligence caused the **Spirit** to depart, think their day of grace is over; but where did they find Such doctrine?

I find **our Savior** ever entreating & wooing us."

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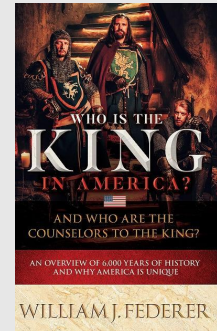




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