

Dr Francis

5th June 1810

Traders

to

At

Rock

Since you left the fort I was told
by Charles Lewis that some days past
you expressed some regret at going down
If that is the case & you have any wish
to stay you shall have the same bargain
which Maunel gave you last fall &
better should you desire it

But on the other hand if you have
really a wish to descend I will by no
means advise you to stay, but would
rather advise you to go home to your
family who I know will be extremely
glad to see you, altho the pleasure of
your company for a year in this wild
country would be ^{to me} inestimable

Should you continue down please
present my respects to Joph Pratt &
family to Jerry Fisher the Doctor Thomas
Cald & Nathan Smith & all my friends
~~John Pratt~~ Doctor Elliot &c

I am Dr Francis

very respectfully
Yrs friend

Dr Francis Vallis

A. H. Wray

rs to Trappers

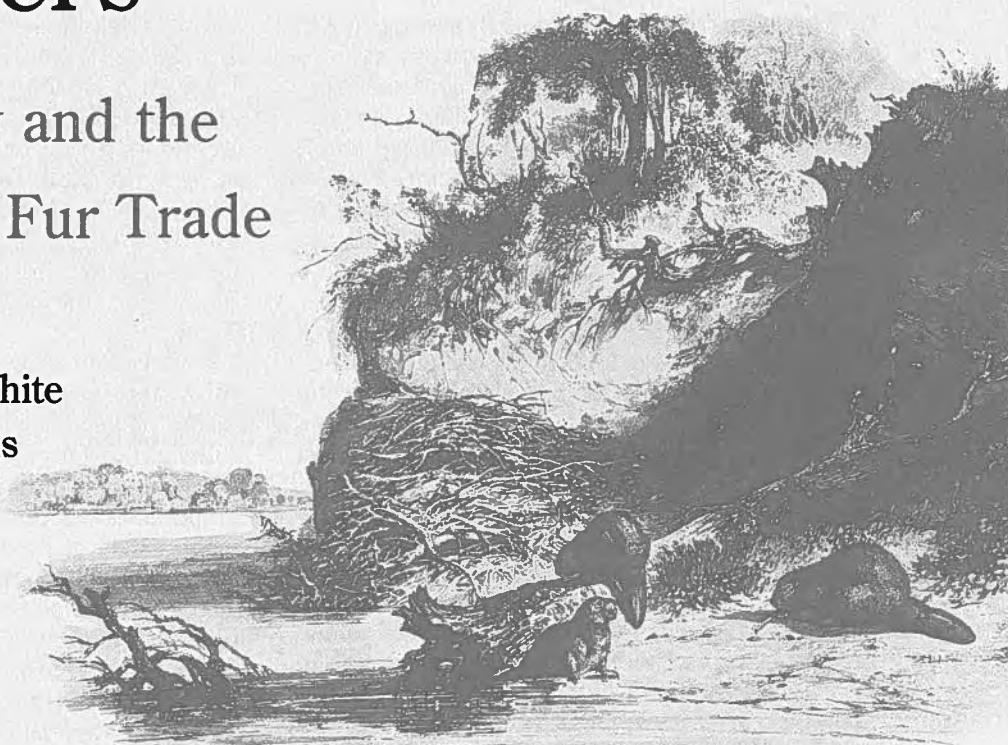
Andrew Henry and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

by Linda Harper White
and Fred R. Gowans

Although the era of the fur trade and the mountain man is long since gone, the passage of time has not dimmed its romantic appeal. Rather, time has enhanced it. Those intrepid men who claimed the western wilderness as their own, exploring uncharted, often hostile territory in their search for furs and wealth have become legendary, their exploits and adventures larger than life.

The race of both American and British fur companies to establish supremacy and gain control of the rich fur supply of the upper Missouri and Rocky Mountain regions was often fraught with tension and hostility, with intrigue suspected on all sides. In the early years trade with the Indians was the usual method of obtaining beaver pelts, but the American trapper, or mountain man as he came to be known, soon became the beaver's greatest enemy. Andrew Henry holds a unique place in fur trade history; as a partner in both the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company and the Ashley Henry Company he was not just part of the revolution in the method of obtaining beaver pelts, but one of its primary innovators. Largely through Henry's ideas, the business of

The quest for beaver, illustrated above in a lithograph *Beaver Hut on the Missouri* (12¾" x 16", 1839) by Karl Bodmer, brought men such as Andrew Henry to the fur-rich American West. (Left) A copy of Henry's letter to François Vallé



MHS Museum, Helena

trading for furs was supplanted by the business of trapping.

Most of our knowledge of the fur trade comes from the journals, correspondence, and reminiscences of its participants. While it is true that many of the mountain men were illiterate and therefore did not keep journals or leave written records of any sort, the same is not true of the partners in the various fur companies. Some left journals, while others wrote extensively, whether for personal, business, or political reasons. Through these various documents, historians have pieced together the history of the fur trade.

Although Henry was an educated man, he was not a prolific writer. No journal or memoirs by Henry has come to light and only two letters have surfaced; one to his close friend François Vallé, written from the Three Forks area in 1810, and an official letter to Moses Austin penned while Henry was serving as a peace officer in Ste. Genevieve. His signature can be found on various personal and official documents.

Because of a lack of records, Henry's achievements and his role in the development of the fur trade have been overshadowed and in many ways obscured by his better-known partners, William H. Ashley in particular.

The following description of Henry appears in the *Dictionary of American Biography*: "He was highly respected for his intelligence, enterprise, daring, and honesty. . . . Because of his adventurous exploits he figures largely in the early annals of the frontier, and no trapper of his time, with the possible exception of John Colter, had wider renown as a hero."¹ This description reflects the consensus of Henry's contemporaries. While a frank and open man in his dealings with others, he was a very private man when it came to his personal life. He was loyal to his friends and honest to a fault. Financial matters were not his strong suit; he was in debt much of his life, mostly from agreeing to pay debts for friends. His happiest years seem to be those spent in the mountains, where he was in his element. During his later years, he became a heavy drinker, and he died almost financially destitute.

Andrew Henry was born to George and Margaret Young Henry in York County, Pennsylvania, around 1775.² His parents were well-to-do, and Andrew received enough schooling to read and write. As a young man he was apparently headstrong. Family tradition tells of his leaving home when eighteen because his parents objected to his contemplated marriage. Family ties were severed permanently, for Henry never returned home nor communicated with his parents again.³

Henry's whereabouts for the next five years are unknown, but from 1798 to 1800 he lived in Nashville, Tennessee. While in Nashville Henry may have made his initial acquaintance with William H. Ashley. In April of 1800, Henry traveled to Ste. Genevieve in upper Louisiana, where he lived for two years. He returned to Nashville for a year, but by 1803 he had settled around Ste. Genevieve and began establishing business and community ties.⁴ Together with William Ashley, he purchased 640 acres of land in the mining district of Washington County, which became known as "Henry's Dig-

gings." Thus began the first of several partnerships for Ashley and Henry, as well as a friendship that would span three decades. The land had some improvements made on it, which Ashley and Henry lived in for a year or so. The deed was recorded on September 29, 1806, but may have been privately agreed upon and consummated earlier.⁵ A year later Ashley decided to concentrate on buying and selling lead rather than extracting it from the ground, and he sold his half of the mine to Henry.⁶

On December 16, 1805, Henry married Marie Villars, the daughter of Louis Dubreuil Villars and Marie Louise Vallé [Villars]. Henry's close friends William H. Ashley and François Vallé were among the witnesses. Although several of Henry's contemporaries mention the marriage, all are silent as to the cause of its dissolution just three weeks later. Marie and Andrew separated on January 3, 1806, and were divorced in October of the following year. A daughter, Mary Henry, was born of the union. Whatever the reason for the failure of the marriage, it did not affect the close friendship between Henry and François Vallé, who was a cousin of Marie Villars. Fur trade and biographical information on Henry show he was married twice—once in 1805 to Marie Villars and again in 1819 to Mary Fleming. Family records, however, reveal that his marriage to Mary Fleming was his third marriage. Although the name of the second wife or the date of their marriage is not given, they had a son named Andrew Patrick Henry.⁷

Soon after his arrival in Ste. Genevieve, Henry became involved in civic matters. He was a member of the grand jury for the court of common pleas for Ste. Genevieve on December 11, 1804, and was appointed a justice of the peace on November 21, 1805, as was his friend François Vallé. Their performances must have met with approval, for they were both reappointed the next year, along with William Ashley.⁸ Henry supported the establishment of an Academy in Ste. Genevieve, pledging fifty dollars in July of 1807. When the Academy opened the following year, Henry was on the board of trustees.⁹ In August of 1807 Henry was appointed second lieutenant in the Cavalry Company of the District of Ste. Genevieve, where he served for several years. He probably rose to the

1. Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (22 vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 8:546-47.

2. Andrew Henry's birth place is disputed. Two sources list it as Fayette County, Pennsylvania. See Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (2 vols., New York: Barnes & Noble, 1935), 1:249; and Louis Houck, *History of Missouri* (3 vols., Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908), 3:95. Another source lists it as York County, Pennsylvania. See Thomas James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans*, ed. Walter B. Douglas (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1916), 265. York County is probably correct, for Henry's wedding license of 1805 lists him as a native of York County. See Andrew Henry Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Henry Papers).

3. Interview with Mrs. George Henry, Andrew Henry's daughter-in-law, August 1, 1906, Henry Papers.

4. Richard M. Clokey, *William H. Ashley: Enterprise and Politics in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 10; notes by Adella Breckenridge Moore, Henry Papers; Dale L. Morgan, ed., "The Diary of William H. Ashley," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, 11 (October 1954), 11.

5. Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 12-13. Houck, in *History of Missouri*, 1:367. Houck claims Francis Azor (also known as Breton), assigned his grant to Henry and Walter Frenwick in 1806, but Clokey references county records that list Ashley and Henry as owners.



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The Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin rivers form the headwaters of the Missouri River shown here in *The Three Forks* from Alfred E. Mathews *Sketches of Montana* published in 1868, plate XI.

rank of colonel, a title others referred to him by during his early years in the fur trade.¹⁰

No pictures of Henry have been found, but Hiram Chittenden describes his physical appearance as "tall and slender, yet of commanding presence, with dark hair and light eyes inclined to blue. He was fond of reading and played the violin well. He was not a member of any church, but was a believer in the Christian religion." Henry was a mason, and the only keepsake he gave to his son George was his lodge pendant, which read, "Andrew Henry, Louisiana Lodge, No. 109." Henry was a man of high ideals and principles; he had definite beliefs about which personal qualities were important. He told James Harris, a boy he knew from working in the mines, that "honor and self respect were more to be prized than anything else." As Rufus Easton, a longtime Henry associate, wrote in a letter to a friend, Henry's "word was his honor," and Henry tried to keep any promise or obligation he made.¹¹

In March of 1809 Henry became a partner in the fledgling St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. He must have made favorable impressions or close friendships with influential families in the area, for he was a virtual unknown among the ten partners, most of whom came from wealthy merchant or politically important St. Louis families. Those partners not in this category already had extensive trading experience on the Missouri River. The company boasted the financial strength of

Auguste and Pierre Chouteau; the trading experience of Pierre Menard, William Morrison, Benjamin Wilkinson, and Sylvestre Labbadie; the political connections of Reuben Lewis and William Clark; and the leadership of Manuel Lisa.¹² Although a newcomer, Henry became, according to Richard Oglesby, "one of the ablest field captains the Missouri Fur Company had." Although a full partner in the firm, Henry may have been a late-comer, for he signed only one of the three original articles of agreement.¹³

The company's plans were grand. Various trading forts or posts were to be erected among the Indian tribes of the upper Missouri. Parties of company men were to travel deep into the wilderness, ascending the Missouri and other rivers to their headwaters, and establish forts to monopolize the trade of the entire region then in sole possession of the British. The company was "organized with a capital sufficient to carry on a trade with the remote tribes on the Upper Missouri . . . and prosecute the trapping business on an extensive scale."

A partner was to be left in command of each fort established. The partners could return to St. Louis only on a rotational basis, with the most influential company members returning soonest. Pierre Chouteau, Manuel Lisa, and Pierre Menard were to return first, with Benjamin Wilkinson and Auguste Chouteau comprising the next rotation.¹⁴ Whether Henry volunteered for or was assigned to his mountain duties is not known, but he ended

6. Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 13-15.

7. James, *Three Years*, 265; wedding license, Henry Papers; Morgan, ed., "The Diary of William H. Ashley," 11; interview with Mrs. George Henry, Henry Papers.

8. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:383-84; James Wilkinson to Thomas Oliver, November 21, 1805, James Wilkinson Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Wilkinson Papers); Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, vol. xiii, *The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri, 1803-1806* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948), 13:67.

9. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:177-79; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:67.

10. Dale L. Morgan, ed., *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964), xxxiv.

11. Chittenden, *American Fur Trade*, 1:250; interview with Mrs. George Henry, Henry Papers; Rufus Easton to unknown party, November 2, 1815, J. B. C. Lucas Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Lucas Collection).

up with the most difficult and arduous task of all.

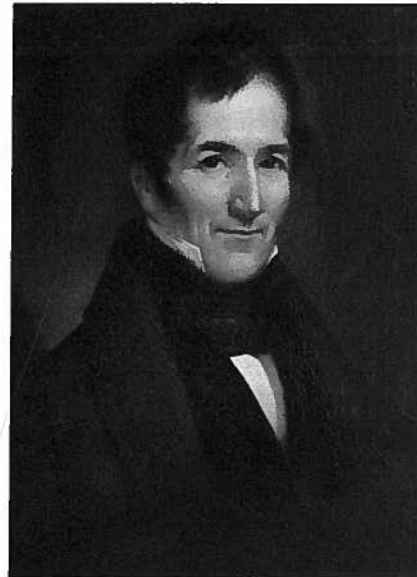
Two expeditions were mounted from St. Louis in May and June of 1809. William Clark, unable to leave St. Louis because of political obligations, took care of company affairs there while the other partners traveled upriver. The combined expedition was a substantial one—thirteen keelboats and barges carrying some 350 men.¹⁵

From the outset the venture was plagued with troubles. The party was made up of an uncongenial mixture of contracted American hunters and French *voyageurs*. Unaccustomed to the laborious task of poling the keelboats up the Big Muddy, the American hunters felt ill-treated and complained of insufficient food. The voyageurs and several of the partners, particularly Manuel Lisa, thought the Americans lazy and incapable of rationing their food. Tensions between the men were high, resulting in one confrontation at gunpoint, and many Americans deserted the company before reaching the Mandan villages.¹⁶ Little loyalty or trust existed among the men, and there was discord even among the partners.

At the Mandan villages the expedition met with disheartening news from Benito Vasquez, a company employee recently returned from the Three Forks country.¹⁷ Although the area was rich in beaver, Vasquez reported that the Blackfeet were hostile and had made a profitable trapping season impossible. The Blackfeet had stolen horses, traps, beaver pelts, guns, and ammunition as they drove the trappers off.¹⁸

Reports of Blackfeet resistance notwithstanding, enthusiasm for the abundant beaver supply at the Three Forks ran high, and two trapping parties were organized. Andrew Henry would command an overland party of forty men on horseback while Pierre Menard took charge of a party to carry supplies by way of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. The two parties were to winter at Fort Raymond and then head to the Three Forks for the

spring hunt. They set off from a point about ten miles above the Gros Ventre villages, where the remainder of the company began construction of the main outpost, which was to serve as a jumping-off point to overland travel as well as a trading post for the Gros Ventres and Mandans. Expectations were high: the company hoped to obtain three hundred packs of beaver in the first year—a small



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena

Pierre Chouteau, Jr.

fortune worth as much \$150,000.¹⁹

Despite optimism over the possibilities for profits, pessimism reigned in other areas. In a letter to a friend, Pierre Menard expressed his discouragement with the lack of unity among the company members, the amount of gifts and trapping equipment given to the Indians, and the disagreements among the employees. His only encouraging words concerned Henry. Menard wrote: "I have a lot of confidence in the party of Mr. Henery [sic]. He admits everything perfectly with his humor as well as his honesty and his frank manner and without beating about the bush."²⁰

Late in the winter of 1809–1810, probably in March, the combined parties set off from Fort Raymond with Pierre Menard in charge and John Colter acting as guide. The winter was fierce, and many of the men suffered from snow blindness,

12. Reuben Lewis was brother to Meriwether Lewis, then territorial governor of Louisiana. William Clark, Lewis's partner in the Lewis and Clark expedition, was superintendent of Indian affairs and brigadier general of the Louisiana Territory militia.

13. Richard Edward Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 68–70.

14. Articles of Agreement, St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, 1809, in Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 202–8; "Bradley Manuscript-Book II," *Contributions to the Historical Society* (10 vols., 1876–1940; reprint, Boston: J. S. Canner and Co., 1966), 8:127–96, 9:317–35 (hereafter *Contributions*). Joshua Pilcher, "Reports of the Fur Trade and Inland Trade to Mexico," *Glimpses of the Past: Missouri Historical Society*, 9 (January–June 1942), 13.

15. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 75; James, *Three Years*, 16.

16. James, *Three Years*, 19–22; Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 82–83.

17. Manuel Lisa, Pierre Menard, and William Morrison had formed a company in 1807 to trade and trap the upper Missouri, and Lisa had established Fort Raymond at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers to send out trapping and trading parties. Success was moderate, and Lisa realized both more men and more financial backing were needed. When the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was formed in 1809, the company bought out Lisa, Menard, and Morrison's goods and forts. Benito Vasquez was among those who stayed at Fort Raymond to trap and trade when Lisa returned to St. Louis.



Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis

Manuel Lisa

some begging to be shot to ease the agony of their burning eyes. They arrived at the Three Forks on April 3 and began building a stockade between the Jefferson and Madison rivers. Trapping was excellent, but the Blackfeet attacked a small hunting party of about nineteen men on April 12. Five men were lost—two killed and three missing. Also lost were seven horses, as well as guns, ammunition, furs, and traps. François Vallé, Michael Immel, John Colter, and the rest of the group escaped to the fort. Pursuit was made, and three horses and forty-three traps were recovered, but the hunters were intimidated sufficiently by the Blackfeet that the majority had no desire to hunt. Those who did go out were allowed only three traps each to minimize the loss in case of attack. The Blackfeet refused to negotiate so Pierre Menard devised a plan to encourage the Snake and Flathead Indians to join forces with them and make war upon the Blackfeet. They hoped to capture a prisoner and thus open communications.²¹

Before the plan could be put into effect, the Blackfeet attacked again, killing George Drouillard and two companions two miles from the fort and leaving their remains cut into pieces. British fur companies were thought to be inciting the Blackfeet, and Reuben Lewis thought a party of two hundred to three hundred men would be needed to insure safety for trapping and defense. As James wrote, the men were "in perpetual dan-

ger of assassination when outside the pickets" [fort].²² Grizzly bears also were a menace. After several terrifying encounters, the men became extremely cautious and stayed close to the fort.

Profitable trapping proved impossible, and Menard and Henry decided to abandon the area. They knew from the explorations of Peter Weiser that the upper branches of the Columbia River abounded in beaver and that only five or six days' travel up the Madison River would take them to an "eligible" place for a fort. It was decided that the company should split, with Menard descending the Missouri with all who wished to return to St. Louis. He carried with him thirty packs of furs, hardly the rich catch the company had hoped for. Henry, now in sole command of about sixty men, including Michael Immel, John Dougherty, William Weir, Nicholas Glineau, Archibald Pelton, Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reasoner, made plans to ascend the Madison River and cross the Continental Divide through present-day Reynolds Pass, with the hope of leaving the Blackfeet behind.²³

Early in the summer of 1810 Henry sent a letter downriver to François Vallé, who probably had left the Three Forks area with Pierre Menard. Henry wrote on June 5:

Since you left the fort I was told by Charles Davis that some days past you expressed some regret at going down. If that is the case & you have any wish to stay, You shall have the same bargain which Manuel gave you last fall & better should you desire it. But on the other hand If you have really a wish to descend I will by no means advise you to stay but would rather advise [sic] you to go home to your family who I know will be extremely glad to see you, altho the pleasure of your company for a year in this wild country would be to me inestimable.²⁴

Before the company left the Three Forks area, the Blackfeet attacked Henry's party again. For the first time the Americans came away the victors. Twenty trappers repulsed an attack of two hundred warriors, with the loss of only one man. Although the Blackfeet threat had been blunted, troubles with Indians continued when Crow Indians stole several horses while the party was traveling up the Madison.²⁵ On what is now known as Henry's Fork of the Snake, Henry established the

18. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 84-85.

19. Ibid., 84, 89-90; "Bradley Manuscript," *Contributions*, 8:189.

20. Pierre Menard to Adrien Langlois, October 7, 1809, in Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 91.

21. James, *Three Years*, 46-49, 53-54, 66; Pierre Menard to Pierre Chouteau, April 21, 1810, Pierre Chouteau Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Chouteau Papers); interview with Pierre Menard, *Louisiana Gazette*, July 26, 1810, in James, *Three Years*, 284.

22. James, *Three Years*, 83, 284; Chittenden, *American Fur Trade*, 1:143; Reuben Lewis to Meriwether Lewis, April 21, 1810, Meriwether Lewis Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Lewis Papers).

23. Peter Weiser had been a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition and joined Lisa's company in 1807. He, along with John Colter and others, had gone on various trapping and exploring expeditions. Reuben Lewis to Meriwether Lewis, April 21, 1810, Lewis Papers; James, *Three Years*, 83.

first of three posts known as Fort Henry or Henry's Fort, the first American fort west of the Rocky Mountains. No supply party had come in 1810 to restock what must have been a rapidly diminishing supply of provisions, particularly powder and ammunition, and the winter of 1810–1811 reduced itself to a struggle for survival. The winter was so fierce and game so scarce the men resorted to eating roots and some of their few remaining horses. A stone, found years later at the site of the fort, read, "Al the cook, but nothing to cook." Spring weather was no improvement. Heavy rains swelled the streams and made trapping difficult.²⁶

Back in St. Louis the partners agreed to send a relief party under Manuel Lisa to assist Henry. Traveling upriver in the spring of 1811, Lisa was relieved to hear from Benoit, a Missouri Fur Company employee, that although Henry was "in a distressed situation" over the mountains, he planned to return with his entire party to the Mandan villages in the spring. Whether Henry's plans to return with his entire group changed or the men simply mutinied is not known, but in the spring they parted into several groups, each choosing their own way back to civilization. Henry and his group recrossed the mountains, and upon arriving at the Missouri, built boats for the descent. Henry made contact with Lisa in June. Henry was gaunt and dressed entirely in skins, but carried forty packs of furs.²⁷ An account published in the *Louisiana Gazette* read in part:

The sufferings of Mr. Henry and his party on the Columbia, and in crossing the mountains, have been seldom exceeded; a great part of his time he subsisted principally on roots, and having lost his clothes, like another Crusoe dressed himself from head to foot in skins.²⁸

Despite his harrowing experiences Henry lost none of his enthusiasm for the opportunities offered by the "incalculable resources of that vast country" and believed the "most flattering prospect of future success" was possible. Of great interest was the discovery of several passes Henry felt were navigable for loaded horses or even wagons. Henry was dissatisfied with the Missouri Fur Company, however. He felt the company, particularly Lisa, was "preoccupied" with cultivating the friendship of the Missouri River Indian

tribes with gifts and trade goods. Henry wanted to concentrate on trapping, where he felt the real profits were to be made.²⁹

Believing the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company needed reorganizing for efficiency, the partners decided to let the old Articles of Agreement lapse. When new articles were drawn up in January 1812, Henry chose a greatly diminished role. He was present at the annual meeting of the Missouri Fur Company in December 1812 and voted to replace Manuel Lisa with Pierre Chouteau on the board of directors, but his activities were minimal. Why Henry withdrew from the fur trade is not known, but it may have been a combination of increasing British hostility, economic hardships, and his own dissatisfaction with the company.³⁰

Turning his back on fur trading, Henry soon became involved again in civic matters. On November 22, 1811, he signed a petition recommending Rufus Easton as a judge for the territory of Louisiana, and in July of 1812, Henry and his friend William Ashley enlisted in the volunteer army. Ashley formed a regiment—the Sixth—and became its lieutenant colonel. Henry served as major of the first battalion. Their duty was to defend the settlements along the upper Mississippi and lower Missouri rivers, mostly against Indians. The regiment saw no military action but worked at fortifications and repairs and held itself "in readiness for actual service at a moment's warning." In December 1814 Henry and a man named John Rice Jones were both nominated to the Territorial House of Representatives. Jones received the nomination, but Henry was nominated the following month by the House of Representatives of the Missouri Territory for a position on the territorial Legislative Council.³¹

Henry experienced financial difficulties after he left the fur trade. In November 1812 he and Robert Terry signed a note acknowledging they owed A. C. Dunn \$104. In January 1813 Dunn sued Henry and Terry for nonpayment, claiming an additional \$150 in damages. Lieutenant Dodge, sheriff of Ste. Genevieve, was commanded to confine Henry and Terry to ensure their presence before a judge in March, but William Ashley paid their bail. Several months later Dunn's bill still had not been paid, for in July 1813, Henry, Terry, and Ashley were "held and firmly bound" by the sher-

24. Andrew Henry to François Vallé, June 5, 1810, Fur Trade Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter Fur Trade Papers).

25. Letter, Henry M. Brackenridge to Joseph Charless, in *Missouri Gazette*, August 8, 1811. Some scholars question the credibility of this story because the outcome was so different from all other encounters with the Blackfeet.

26. Morgan, *The West of William Ashley*, xxxv; Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 116; Charles E. Brooks, *The Henry's Fork* (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1986), 8. Similar items have proven fraudulent.

27. "Bradley Manuscript," 8:190; Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 115. Benoit, company factor at the Mandan villages, probably heard the news of Henry from Indians visiting at the fort. See Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Early Western Travels: 1748-1846*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (32 vols., Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 6:89.

28. *Louisiana Gazette*, October 26, 1811.

29. Morgan, *West of William Ashley*, xxxvi; Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 188.

30. *Ibid.*, 136-37.



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Fur trader Black Harris and his brother Trapper make a fast escape in Alfred Jacob Miller's watercolor, *Escape from Blackfeet* (9 1/8" x 13 3/4", 1858-1860).

iff. Rufus Easton, the territorial judge whose appointment Henry had endorsed, may have lent Henry the money to pay this debt, for in a letter to a friend Easton wrote that Henry had promised to pay "his obligation of Ste. Genevieve court," as well as paying Easton 10 percent for the "time he kept him out of the money."³²

During his financial difficulties with Dunn, Henry received a letter from François Vallé requesting that Henry pay Vallé's debts because he (Vallé) had been ordered away on army duty before he could pay them. Henry agreed, setting a precedent that cost him dearly over the next few years. Between 1816 and 1821 Henry was in and out of court thirty times for agreeing to guarantee others' debts, which exceeded \$12,000 and forced Henry to sell much of his land to meet his obligations. What occupation Henry turned to is unknown, but his mine remained unworked from 1816 to 1819. Mining may not have been profitable, for Henry's daughter-in-law remembered hearing that the mines near Potosi had "run out," after which Henry moved up towards Webster

(now Palmer), Missouri. At some point, Henry apparently turned to farming, for prior to his second venture into the fur trade Henry owned one of the best farms on the Black River in Washington County, Missouri.³³

In 1819, when Henry was about forty-five years old, he married Mary Fleming, a beautiful "eighteen-year-old French girl. He had held her in his arms when she was a child and had playfully predicted he would marry her." A daughter, Jane Henry, was born in February the following year.³⁴ Three other children followed and their marriage lasted until Henry's death. Still, Henry never forgot his enthusiasm and love for the mountains and the wealth in furs to be found there, and 1822 found him once again in the mountains, this time in partnership with William H. Ashley. *M*

(to be continued)

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FRED R. GOWANS is professor of history and director of the Native American Studies program in Brigham Young University and a recognized authority on the fur trade. He is the author of several articles and books on the American West, including *Mountain Man and Grizzly* (2nd edition, 1992) and *A Fur Trade History of Yellowstone Park: Notes-Documents-Maps* (1989).

31. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:499-500, 14:802, 15:3; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:106-7; Kate Gregg, "War of 1812 on the Missouri Frontier," Part II *Missouri Historical Review*, 33 (January 1939), 187, 190.

32. A. C. Dunn vs. Henry and Terry, Bogy Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri; Rufus Easton to unknown party, November 2, 1815, Lucas Collection.

33. François Vallé to Andrew Henry, April 8, 1813, Ida M. Schaefer Collection, Ste. Genevieve Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 63; interview with Mrs. George Henry, Henry Papers.

34. Ibid.; Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, 8:546.

Traders to Trappers

Andrew Henry and



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Scene at Rendezvous by Alfred Jacob Miller (watercolor, 15½" x 9", 1858–1860)

Henry and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade

Part 2

by Linda Harper White
and Fred R. Gowans

Andrew Henry (1775–1833) was an honest, respected man of the American fur trade, someone with ideas and the tenacity to carry them out. Nonetheless, Henry has received less attention from historians than he deserves, largely because of the prominence of his partner, William Ashley. Henry entered the mountainous northern West of the upper Missouri twice during his lifetime. His first sally in search of furs came between 1809 and 1812 as one of several partners in the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. Authors Linda Harper White and Fred R. Gowans detailed this early part of Henry's career in part one of "Traders to Trappers: Andrew Henry and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade," appearing in the Winter 1993 issue of this magazine. Part two of that article follows here. It details Henry's second foray into the upper Missouri region between 1822 and 1824 as a partner in the new firm of Henry and Ashley.

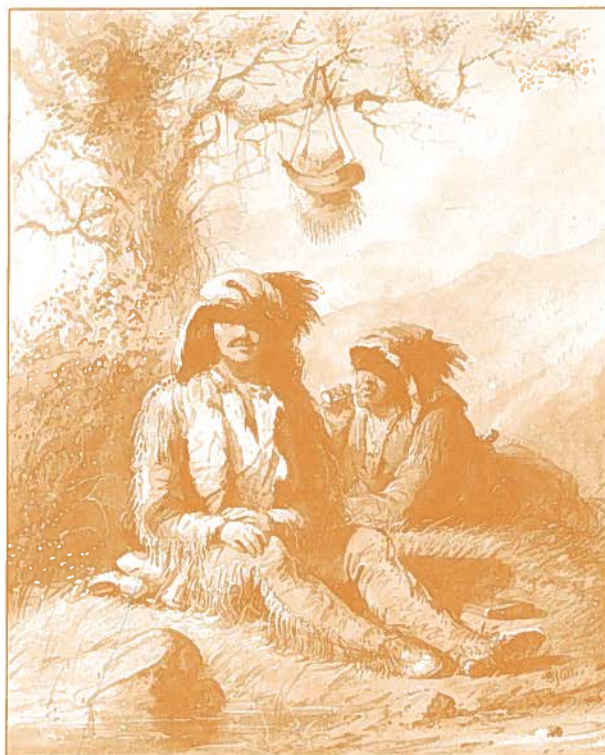
By 1821 St. Louis was in a financial depression. In spring and summer 1819 a land speculation bubble had burst, carrying the city along in its financial wake. Men struggled to keep their businesses going and pay creditors. The fur trade, however, still showed signs of prosperity. Beaver hats were regaining popularity in Europe, and the demand for peltries was great, with a good beaver skin commanding \$3.00 to \$4.90 a pound. Although some furs could be obtained from the Indian tribes along the lower Missouri, the real wealth in furs lay farther northwest. Furs there were in great abundance, and the fur of the northern beaver was thicker and richer and commanded a higher price.

American fur companies had abandoned the upper Missouri in 1811 even before war was declared between America and England, and the country had been left in sole possession of rival British fur companies. Not until 1819 was a boundary line between the United States and Canada officially settled, and although an expedition to reopen the country to American trade was contemplated, the expedition was not carried out. By 1821 the upper Missouri trade lay open to anyone willing to take the risk.¹

Andrew Henry and William Ashley were among those eager to meet the challenges and opportunities found on the Upper Missouri. Henry's finances had taken a beating in the decade following his involvement with the Missouri Fur Company. He had been in and out of debtor's court thirty times, many times for guaranteeing the debts of friends. He was still involved in mining, although he had abandoned his mines near Potosi, Missouri, and moved to Palmer. He also owned a farm along the Black River in Washington County, Missouri. He married Mary Fleming in 1819, and their first child, a daughter named Jane Henry, was born February 19, 1820.²

The fur trade offered a double appeal to Henry. Not only was it a chance to reverse his financial woes but an opportunity to again see the country that had captured his heart years before. Planning the venture must have been exhilarating for despite the physical hardships and dangers of the mountains, it was there that Henry was in his element. Henry possessed little business acumen, but he and Ashley divided company duties to capitalize on one another's strengths. Henry was to command the mountain expedition, guiding it to the rich fur country and directing trapping activities, while Ashley took charge of business aspects in St. Louis such as obtaining credit, arranging for supplies and transportation, and buying trapping equipment.

The partnership seems to have been an ideal blending of talent, ability, and experience. Henry and Ashley were accustomed to working with one another, having formed various partnerships over the years and serving together in the army. Their friendship, trust, and mutual respect alone set their partnership apart from others in the fur



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Trappers by Alfred Jacob Miller (watercolor & gouache, 9⁷/₁₆" x 11¹⁵/₁₆", 1858-1860)

trade. That, combined with Ashley's entrepreneurial skills and Henry's mountain experience, made them a formidable threat even to established fur companies.

Because of Henry's previous involvement in the fur trade, he possessed firsthand knowledge of the problems involved in obtaining beaver pelts. Henry had disagreed with some of the Missouri Fur Company's actions, believing that too much time, money, and trade goods were expended in cultivating the trade and friendship of Indian tribes along the Missouri, with little gain in return. He preferred to concentrate on trapping, where the real profits were to be made.³

Although later generations refer to the company as Ashley and Henry's or as Ashley's alone, the official title of their firm was "Henry and Ashley."⁴ The majority of the credit seems to have gone to Ashley because of his high profile in politics and business. Ashley was well known in St. Louis and found it politically advantageous to remain in the public eye, an opportunity gained

1. Dale L. Morgan, ed., *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964), li-lij, xlviii; *American State Papers, Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States, Indian Affairs* (38 vols., Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), 2:335.

2. Richard M. Clokey, *William H. Ashley: Enterprise and Politics in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 63; interview with Mrs. George Henry, Andrew Henry Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter Henry Papers); Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (22 vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 8:536.

3. Andrew Henry's dissatisfaction with the Missouri Fur Company (MFC) is not supported by documentation, but Henry's friend and associate in the MFC, Pierre Menard, expressed the same views in a letter. See Richard Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 90, 188. The best evidence for supporting Henry's views are the actions of the Henry-Ashley Company itself, with its emphasis on trapping and minimal trading with the Indians.

4. Application of Henry and Ashley for government reimbursement, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 70.

through involvement in the fur trade. Ashley's activities therefore were written up in the newspapers, and he left personal accounts and correspondence, while Henry remained a more private man.

From the beginning, Henry was the partner most involved in the company; not only did most of the innovations probably come from Henry, based on ideas and views developed from his experience in the fur trade, he was the partner who was to spend the next several years in the mountains, devoting all his energies to the success of the venture. Although devoted to the company, Ashley remained involved in St. Louis politics, real estate, and other business.

Thus, with Henry's ideas and experience and Ashley's business sense, the two partners made plans for their fur company. They tried three significant innovations. First, the Henry and Ashley company was to be the only American fur company exclusively devoted to trapping. Other companies sent out trapping parties, but to them trapping was of less or no greater importance than trading with the Indians as a method for obtaining furs. Second, because Henry and Ashley would be trapping their own furs they would not need a trading post or fort as a central location. This left Henry and his men free to work the best trapping areas. Their third innovation, met with some skepticism from other fur companies, was to have men work for them not as employees but as independent businessmen. Each trapper would receive guns, powder, lead, and other supplies from Henry and Ashley in exchange for half of the furs caught, leaving the trapper free to sell the remainder wherever he wished. Some of the trappers in the Missouri Fur Company during 1809–1811 had worked on commission, and Henry recognized the value of the concept. Whether Henry and Ashley used this idea as part of a grand scheme or out of financial necessity is not known, but in theory it was a good arrangement for everyone. Not only were the men offered an incentive, but the partners saved \$20,000 in wages in the first year alone.⁵

Throughout summer and fall 1821 Ashley competed with other fur companies to purchase keelboats, supplies, and provisions. His success went beyond merely procuring the necessary items for the Henry and Ashley company; it reduced the equipment and supplies available to rival companies. Thomas Hempstead of the Missouri Fur Company, for example, complained to his partner

that he was able to purchase only a few knives because Ashley had taken all he could get, as well as purchasing the only two boats that might have fit their needs.⁶

Ashley ran an advertisement in the *Missouri Gazette* and in the *Missouri Republican* in February and March 1822, offering employment to one hundred "enterprising" young men. It read:

The subscriber wishes to engage ONE HUNDRED MEN, to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years—For particulars, enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the County of Washington, (who will ascend with, and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.

Wm. H. Ashley

There was no shortage of applicants, and the positions were quickly filled. The brash young men aroused the imagination and spirit of the citizens of St. Louis, whose excitement was fueled by an eagerness to see which of the fur companies would be first to leave St. Louis. Henry and Ashley won by a narrow margin. With one keelboat, a shore party on horseback, and a force between 100 and 180 men, Henry left St. Louis on April 3. Henry set out with one keelboat while Ashley planned to send a second keelboat as soon as it was ready.⁷

About a week after Henry's departure, the partners received official permission for their venture, a license that allowed them to trade with the Indians on the Missouri. Although the license was only to trade, the company's intentions to trap were well known, for a St. Louis *Enquirer* article gave the following information:

We neglected to notice last week the departure from St. Louis of the expedition for the Missouri Mountains, under the direction of Gen. Ashley and Maj. Wm. Henry. The latter gentleman commands the party, in person, and is well known for his enterprising adventures in the Oregon country. The object of this company is to trap and hunt—they are completely equipped, and number about 180 persons. They will direct their course to the three forks of the Missouri, a region it is said, which contains a wealth in *Furs*, not surpassed by the mines of Peru.

5. Thomas Hempstead to Joshua Pilcher, St. Louis, April 3, 1822, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 3–4; Thomas James, *Three Years among the Indians and Mexicans*, ed. Walter B. Douglas (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1916), 271–72; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 67–69.

6. Hempstead to Pilcher, St. Louis, April 3, 1822, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 3.

7. St. Louis *Missouri Gazette & Public Advertiser*, February 13, 1822, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 1; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 70.



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Breakfast at Sunrise by Alfred Jacob Miller
(watercolor, 13⁷/₈" x 10¹/₄", 1858–1860)

Deliberate blurring of the definition between trapping and trading aroused controversy in government circles. Some politicians opposed all trapping by Americans, some thought to place limits upon company activities, and other officials, such as William Clark, thought Henry and Ashley would use discretion in dealing with the Indians because it was in their best interests to do so. Clark and others saw nothing wrong with Henry and his men trapping on hostile Indian lands but believed that limits should be set on their trapping once peace was established.⁸

As a safeguard, Ashley eventually obtained Henry's appointment as an Indian subagent. Although the request had not been answered when Henry left St. Louis, Benjamin O'Fallon, a government Indian agent, later approved the appointment, which involved no financial remuneration but did give Henry added authority in dealing with Indian tribes.⁹

Henry's party continued upriver without incident, passing Franklin, Missouri, on April 25, and on May 1 they arrived at Fort Atkinson. The second keelboat, the *Enterprise*, set off May 8 under the command of Daniel S. D. Moore. The first of

many setbacks for the Henry and Ashley company occurred when Moore's keelboat, carrying the newly recruited Jedediah Smith, sank with a cargo valued at \$10,000 near the mouth of Sni Eber Creek just two or three weeks after its departure. The crew camped where the boat had gone down while Moore returned to St. Louis to inform Ashley of its loss. Despite the shortage of available goods and boats, as well as his own low credit, Ashley somehow managed to obtain another keelboat and supplies. Unwilling to trust the precious boat and cargo to anyone else, Ashley took command personally.¹⁰

When Henry's party reached Cedar Fort, provisions were running low. Henry followed the standard practice of planning to hunt game as the primary source of food, but game proved scarce. Daniel Potts, a young man in Henry's party wrote:

arrived at Cedar fort about the middle of July when we were reduced to the sad necessity of eating

8. *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, 2:428; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 78-82; St. Louis *Enquirer*, April 1, 1822, in Donald McKay Frost, *Notes on General Ashley, the Overland Trail and South Pass* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Gazette, 1960), 13.

9. Hempstead to Pilcher, St. Louis, May 5, 1822, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 9.

10. Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 7, 11; J. Cecil Alter, *Jim Bridger* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 16-17; St. Louis *Enquirer*, June 3, 1822, *Missouri Republican*, June 5, 1822, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 11; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 70-71.

any thing we could catch as our provision where exhausted and no game to be had, being advanced five hundred miles above the frontiers, we were glad to get a Dog to eat and I have seen some geather the skins of Dogs up through the Camp sing[e] and roast them and eat hearty this so discouraged me that I was determined to turn tail up stream and bear my cours down in company with eight others.¹¹

Henry's party continued upriver and met a party of three hundred Assiniboiné Indians about one hundred miles above the Mandan villages. Henry attempted to hide the horses in a grove of timber, while he invited the chiefs aboard the keelboat for a conference. During the meeting, a party of Assiniboinés stole twenty-four horses, twenty-two of Henry's and two belonging to his men. The theft was discovered during the council, and Henry thus demanded the return of his horses. The Assiniboiné chief said the horses had only been borrowed for the purpose of transporting goods and would be returned to Henry a short distance upriver. Henry moved upriver to the appointed place, where he hoisted the flag for a signal, but the Indians were nowhere to be found. Henry and his men followed their trail for several days before it disappeared. In addition to the horses, the Assiniboinés had taken pistols, saddles, and blankets, which together with the horses constituted a monetary loss of \$1,440.¹²

The horses were the real loss, however, making it impossible for Henry to make it to the Three Forks in time for the fall hunt. Instead, the mouth of the Yellowstone became their goal, and Henry's company began construction of Fort Henry upon arrival in late August. Fort Henry was intended to be a storehouse rather than living quarters, a base from which the men would trap both the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. When Ashley's company brought additional provisions to Fort Henry on October 1, the fort was completed and the men may have already begun the fall hunt. After furnishing the mountain parties with the goods he had brought, Ashley returned to St. Louis to obtain supplies and equipment for the next spring. He took with him one keelboat, a few men, and some furs.¹³

Henry organized the men into two main trapping parties, leading one party of twenty-one men

in canoes and a keelboat up the Missouri as far as the Milk River. The other party, probably under the command of John Weber, went up the Yellowstone in canoes toward the mouth of the Powder River. Henry stayed with the trapping party through the fall hunt and then returned to Fort Henry with eight men. Jedediah Smith had been assigned to a hunting party to store up meat for the winter and met Henry coming down the Missouri. Henry told Smith that the trapping party was to winter on the Musselshell, so Smith ascended the Missouri, reaching the winter camp about November 1, just as the Missouri began to fill with ice.¹⁴

Henry remained at the fort until late winter, perhaps sometime in March, then headed up the Missouri after taking command of a party of trappers at the Musselshell. The river was still frozen, so he probably traveled on horseback. The ice covering the Missouri broke on April 4, and the trappers were visited by a party of Indians the next day. On April 6 Henry led a small group of men including Jedediah Smith, Daniel Potts, and Jim Bridger up the Missouri in canoes and headed for the mouth of the Judith River. Along the way Daniel Potts was wounded in both knees by an accidental rifle shot and had to be taken back to Fort Henry. Potts was accompanied by Jedediah Smith, who was to continue down the Missouri until he met Ashley's ascending supply party. Smith was to notify Ashley of a dire need for horses, in hopes that Ashley would be able to acquire forty to fifty animals from the Indian tribes along the Missouri. Without the horses Henry would be unable to carry out their plans to hunt the Powder, Tongue, and Big Horn rivers the next fall.¹⁵

His party reduced even further, Henry continued his dangerous journey into Blackfeet country. In April four of his horses were stolen by an Indian tribe assumed to be the Blackfeet, and on May 4 a group of Blackfeet attacked Henry's party about ten or fifteen miles above the mouth of Smith's River. Four of his eleven men were killed. In a hasty retreat, Henry had his men bury 172 traps, hoping to recover them later. They abandoned some 30 more traps in the river, and the Blackfeet took four rifles with pouches and ammunition.¹⁶ A similar fate befell the Missouri Fur Company party

11. Daniel T. Potts to unidentified friend [Thomas Cochlen], Rocky Mountains, July 7, 1824, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 7.

12. Account of Henry and Ashley for property lost, 1822-1823, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 70; deposition of Joshua Griffith, St. Louis, January 12, 1824, in Morgan, *West of William Ashley*, 71.

13. Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 75; Maurice S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Fine Arts Press, 1934), 8.

14. Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953), 42-46; Frost, *Notes on General Ashley*, 15-16.

15. Potts to his brother [Robert Potts], Rocky Mountains, July 16, 1826, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 40. See also Alter, *Jim Bridger*, 23; Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 50; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 90.

led by Michael Immell and Robert Jones. They had spent the spring hunting in the Three Forks area without incident and were returning to the Yellowstone when Blackfeet Indians ambushed them on May 19. Immell, Jones, and five other fur men were killed. The Blackfeet took all the traps, guns, and other equipment, as well as the furs the Missouri Fur Company had collected. Not only had the Blackfeet made trapping in the Three Forks area a tremendous risk, the Missouri Fur Company reported the area, once so rich in furs, to be almost trapped out.¹⁷

Henry returned to Fort Henry to await Ashley's arrival. He had been at the fort less than two weeks when Jedediah Smith brought unwelcome news in an express from Ashley. Smith had reached Ashley when his party was just below the Arikara village at the end of May. Ashley had attempted to trade with the Arikara for the necessary horses but had been attacked. Thirteen of his men were killed, ten more wounded, and nineteen horses, thirty-one rifles, a boat, blankets, pistols, and saddles were taken. The majority of Ashley's men were unwilling to stay with him, and he had been forced to send one keelboat back to St. Louis. The remainder, between twenty and thirty men, half of whom were boatmen who planned to head downriver after delivering Ashley's group to Henry, agreed to stay with him only if he moved downriver to await reinforcements from Henry. Ashley requested that Henry provide "all the aid he could spare him [from] his fort" and descend the river to assist him.¹⁸

Henry left a skeleton force of twenty men at Fort Henry and with some fifty men headed downstream in canoes, bringing the furs they had managed to collect in the fall and spring hunts. The party slipped past the Arikara village by night and reached Ashley at the mouth of the Cheyenne River during the first week in July.¹⁹

Because the Three Forks area was too dangerous and not as rich in furs as hoped, Henry and Ashley changed their plans for the coming year. They decided to purchase horses from the Sioux Indians and send out two trapping expeditions, one to the tributaries of the Yellowstone as previ-

ously planned and another across the mountains to the headwaters of the Columbia. Their financial resources exhausted, the partners were able to come up with funds for the horses only by borrowing from their men.²⁰ Despite near financial disaster and disappointments in the mountains, both partners were confident.

Henry and Ashley had dropped farther down the Missouri to meet up with the Sioux when they heard that Colonel Henry Leavenworth with a military force of 230 men was coming upriver in a show of force to chastise the Arikaras, who were thought to number more than 600 warriors. Ashley had requested that troops be sent but was surprised when he received word of their approach. Leavenworth intended to demand the return of Ashley's property and ensure safe passage along the river for future parties. Joined by 80 of Henry and Ashley's men, as well as 40 men from the Missouri Fur Company and more than 700 Sioux warriors, the combined force was a strong one, capable of carrying out its intent.²¹ The result, however, has been termed the Leavenworth "debacle."

Retaining their commissions in the Missouri militia, Henry as a major and Ashley as a brigadier general, the partners divided their men into two groups, one under the command of Jedediah Smith, the other under Hiram Scott. On August 9 the combined forces reached the vicinity of the Arikara villages. The Sioux warriors were to engage the Arikaras in an initial skirmish, with the remainder of the force to engage after that. The Sioux fought the majority of the battle, and when the army arrived, Leavenworth's men did little more than surround the well-fortified village and pepper it with shots through the remainder of the day. The next morning, while Leavenworth vacillated over the proper course, it was discovered that the Sioux warriors had deserted during the night. Perhaps disgusted with the weakness of Leavenworth's attack, they had taken seven more of Ashley's horses with them. Low on ammunition as well,

16. Benjamin O'Fallon to William Clark, Upper Missouri Agency, July 3, 1823, deposition of Hugh Johnson, St. Louis, January 13, 1824, account of Henry and Ashley for property lost, 1822-1823, all in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 44, 72, 70. Hugh Johnson was a member of Henry's party.

17. Report of Joshua Pilcher [1824?], William Gordon to Joshua Pilcher, Fort Vanderburgh Mandan and Gros Ventre's villages, June 15, 1823, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 41-42, 48-49. Michael Immell was a longtime MFC employee and had been in Henry's party 1809 to 1811.

18. Ashley to unidentified gentleman in Franklin, Missouri, June 7, 1823, account of Henry and Ashley of property lost, 1822-1823, both in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 29-31, 70.

19. Sullivan, *Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 12; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 101.

20. Ashley to O'Fallon, Fort Brassaux, July 19, 1823, in *Senate Documents*, 1 [Serial 89], 18th Cong., 1st sess., 84 (hereafter *Senate Documents*); Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 103.

21. Colonel Henry Leavenworth to General Henry Atkinson, Fort Atkinson, June 18, 1823, p. 78, report of Colonel Leavenworth, August 30, 1823, p. 95, General Edwin P. Gaines to Major General Jacob Brown, July 26, 1823, p. 87-88, all in *Senate Documents*; Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 52.

Leavenworth declared a victory rather than risk his depleted force on the annihilation of the Arikaras, who were asking to surrender.²²

Leavenworth asked Joshua Pilcher and then Andrew Henry to draw up a peace treaty. Pilcher angrily declined, believing that next to nothing had been accomplished. Henry declined also, perhaps for the same reason. Leavenworth drew up the treaty himself, and he, five officers, and Ashley signed it. The Arikaras restored part of Ashley's property, but only one of the valuable horses. On August 14 the army awoke to find that the entire Arikara village had departed during the night. Henry was sent to find them, but they had disappeared, taking refuge with the Mandans farther north. With the Arikaras gone, the army departed downriver, but before the army's boats were out of sight, they saw flames from the Arikara village. Leavenworth was furious, accusing the Missouri Fur Company of deliberately inciting the Arikaras further against Ashley and Henry, who now represented the only fur company operating on the Missouri.²³

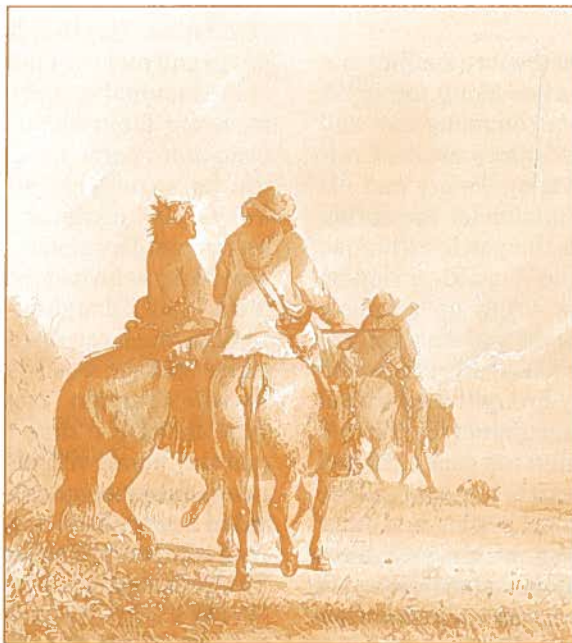
Henry and Ashley accompanied Leavenworth downriver to Fort Kiowa, where Ashley had stored his supplies. Upon arrival, they found the Sioux Indians had already moved westward, taking with them the partners' chance to purchase horses. Deciding that the Missouri was too dangerous because of the Arikaras and Mandans, Henry set off overland for Fort Henry with some men and only six horses.²⁴ He planned to close Fort Henry and trap the Bighorn in the more friendly Crow country, while Ashley was to purchase horses to outfit an overland group under Jediaiah Smith, who would then meet up with Henry along the Bighorn River for the fall hunt. The two partners had only twenty-five packs of beaver pelts, two or three of which had been purchased, and some two hundred buf-

falo robes to show for a year's work in the mountains.²⁵

Henry exercised caution in his trip to Fort Henry, keeping his small band together to protect them from a possible Arikara ambush. They traveled along the Grand River in South Dakota and found buffalo and berries in abundance. A member of their party, Hugh Glass, would not stay with the group but disappeared into the bushes. Hearing screams some time later, several men arrived and found Glass being attacked by a grizzly bear. They could not shoot for fear of hitting Glass.

When the bear turned to leave, however, two or three men fired at the grizzly. The bear immediately turned back on Glass and attacked him again. The bear was killed, but Glass was seriously injured, unable to speak or move. For six days Henry and his men carried Glass in a litter and cared for him, but he showed little sign of recovery. Time was an urgent factor, and Henry needed to reach the Yellowstone and then the Bighorn in time for the fall hunt. He offered \$400 to any two men who would stay and bury Glass when he died. A man and a boy (rumored to be Jim Bridger) offered to stay.²⁶

Henry and his men took their leave of Glass and his companions. Despite precautions taken to avoid the Arikaras and Mandans, the Mandans discovered their party and fired on it at night. The Indians fled when Henry's company returned their fire and killed one of their warriors, but two of Henry's men were dead, two more wounded, and two of the scarce horses lost. Henry reached the fort on the Yellowstone to be met with the disheartening news that twenty-three more of their precious horses had been stolen. Soon thereafter seven more were taken. Henry closed the fort, cached some goods, and loaded the remaining



Trappers Starting for the Beaver Hunt by Alfred Jacob Miller (watercolor & gouache, 9 3/4" x 11 3/16", 1858-1860)

22. Report of Colonel Leavenworth, August 30, 1823, pp. 95-96, General Atkinson to General Gaines, September 18, 1823, p. 100, in *Senate Documents*; account of Henry and Ashley of property lost, 1822-1823, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 70; Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 52-53.

23. Report of Colonel Leavenworth, August 30, 1823, in *Senate Documents*, 94-97; Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 52-54.

24. Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 58. The number of men in Henry's party is unknown. James Clyman said thirteen men, Daniel Potts, thirty men. Morgan says Potts's figure is more plausible.

25. Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 113-14; *Missouri Intelligencer*, January 22, 1824, in Frost, *Notes on General Ashley*, 22-24.

goods on a keelboat. He then ascended the Yellowstone and got as far as the Powder River, where rapids made it impossible to continue by water. Henry was able to purchase forty-seven horses from the Crow Indians and sent a trapping party southwest under the command of John Weber. He then continued on to the mouth of the Bighorn, where he proceeded to construct another fort.²⁷

Henry wintered at the fort, sending out various trapping parties along the tributaries. John Weber's command met and wintered with Jedediah Smith's party and the Crow Indians in the Wind River valley. Henry and his men scattered over the mountains for the spring hunt and made contact with the parties who had wintered with the Crows in the Wind River region. Ashley, meanwhile, did not bring up a supply company that spring because he was uncertain of Henry's whereabouts and because his credit was stretched to the limit. Henry brought the furs out of the mountains himself that summer. He arrived at the Yellowstone only to find his cache robbed by the Gros Ventre or Minnetarie Indians—all the blankets, powder, lead, clothing, kettles, and other goods completely gone. Four of his men were killed on the Yellowstone by the same tribes, and two more were killed by the Sioux while descending the Missouri.²⁸

Nonetheless Henry received a triumphant welcome in St. Louis. A newspaper article announced:

An arrival from the Mountains.—After an absence of nearly three years, we are happy to announce the safe return of Maj. Henry, (of the firm of Ashley and Henry,) with a part of his company, from the Rocky Mountains. He descended the Missouri in boats to St. Louis, with a considerable quantity of valuable furs, &c.²⁹

Henry had every intention of returning to the mountains immediately with supplies for Weber

and Smith. He had found beaver in abundance during the spring hunt and told a friend that "a fortune could be made if it were not for the difficulty of the Indians." Thomas Fitzpatrick, sent with dispatches from Smith, also told of success by the company's parties. Enough beaver pelts had been cached to restore solvency to the Henry-Ashley firm. Nonetheless, Henry never returned to the mountains.³⁰

Henry was a very private man, and even Ashley may not have known his reasons for withdrawing from their partnership. A close friend of Henry wrote that once back in his familiar surroundings at the mine, Henry reflected that he had "suffered much and met with many misfortunes" in his time in the mountains, and it was perhaps time to retire from the fur trade. The reason may have been even more personal. Most of the men involved in the fur trade were single, and Henry had been away from his wife and daughter for two-and-one-half years. His absence had been difficult for his wife Mary, who had "got out of money and sold the farm," said a daughter-in-law. "She was not raised to have much care in money matters. When Henry came back he was too proud not too stand up to his wife's bargain." Now fifty years old, Henry may have thought it time to leave the dangerous life and stay home with his family, taking care of their needs rather than chasing a dream that had provided many physical hardships and few financial rewards. In addition Henry was an honorable man. The encouraging news of the success of Smith and Weber's trapping party may have convinced him he could leave the partnership without Ashley's suffering financially from his departure.³¹

Given Ashley's financial success after 1825, Henry may have regretted his decision in later years. His marriage to Mary Fleming appears to have been happy, and three more children were born to the union: Patrick Henry, born April 6, 1828; Mary Henry, born July 28, 1830; and George Henry, born February 3, 1833.³² Henry worked at the mines the remainder of his life but struggled financially and began to drink heavily. Once a large land owner, Henry owned little at the time of his death, owing money to at least two individuals and a business establishment when he died at

26. Charles L. Camp, ed., "James Clyman, His Diaries and Reminiscences," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 4 (June 1925), 119; Potts to Thomas Cochlen, July 7, 1824, Yellowstone National Park Museum Collection, Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming; Charles L. Camp, ed., "The Chronicles of George C. Yount, California Pioneer of 1826," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 2 (April 1923), 26-27; Alfred Jacob Miller, "Rough Draughts for Notes to Indian Sketches," Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; all in Fred R. Gowans, *Mountain Man & Grizzly* (Orem, Utah: Mountain Grizzly Publications, 1986), 69-73.

27. Potts to his brother [Robert Potts], Rocky Mountains, July 16, 1826, in Frost, *Notes on General Ashley*, 57-58; Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 101; Leavenworth to Major General Alexander Macomb, Fort Atkinson, December 20, 1823, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 68.

28. O'Fallon to Atkinson, Upper Missouri Agency, July 15, August 13, 1824, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 84, 87; Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 114.

29. St. Louis *Enquirer*, August 30, 1824, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 87.

30. John Hawkins to Stephen F. Austin, September 21, 1824, notes by Adella Breckenridge Moore, Henry Papers; William Carr Lane to Mary Lane, August 31, 1824, William Carr Lane Collection, St. Louis, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 136-38, 139; Dale L. Morgan, ed., "The Diary of William H. Ashley," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, 11 (October 1954), 14.



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

his home in Washington County, Missouri, on June 10, 1833. A newspaper reported:

Departed this life, at his residence, in Harmony Township, Washington County, in this state, on the 10th inst. after an illness of a few days, Major Andrew Henry, a man much respected for his honesty, intelligence and enterprise. Major Henry was one of those enterprising Fur Traders who first explored the wild and inhospitable regions of the Rocky Mountains and at that time was a partner of the first American Fur Company that was formed for the prosecution of that trade.

Henry left no will, and Mary Fleming Henry later received \$150 from his estate.³³

Although Andrew Henry is not well remembered in fur trade history, he had the unique experience of being involved in the fur trade during two different eras, and it was he and Ashley who put into practice a series of innovations that forever changed the business. A mere three years after their entry into the trade, the dominant figure in the fur trade had changed from the trader

Crossing the River—Trapper Trying Its Depth, Ec.
by Alfred Jacob Miller (watercolor, 12 3/16" x 8 3/4",
1858–1860)

to the company trapper, from the company trapper to the legendary mountain man. Henry withdrew from the fur trade one year before the company realized any profits, and his role in this evolution is therefore often overlooked. It is highly probable, however, that he was the instigator of many of the company's innovations. It was Henry who thought the real profit was in trapping, not trading, and he who favored the concept of the free trapper. Ashley was continually in the public eye and is therefore conspicuous in historical records, while Henry slipped quietly from fur trade history. The two partners deserve credit in equal proportions.

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31. J. E. B. Austin to Stephen Austin, September 6, 1824, interview with Mrs. George Henry, August 1, 1906, Caledonia, Missouri, Henry Papers; Clokey, *William H. Ashley*, 135.

32. Interview with Mrs. George Henry, Henry Papers. On Henry see Douglas, ed., *Three Years among the Indians and Mexicans*, 265–66.

33. Notes of debt from Andrew Henry to John Burdett and A. Jett, 1832, 1833, unpaid bill from Hudspeth and McPhail for liquor, 1833, St. Louis *The Republican*, June 18, 1833, in notes by Adella Breckenridge Moore, receipt of Mary Henry to F. Manning for advance on estate of Andrew Henry, all in Henry Papers.