



Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary Mountain Man (Oklahoma Western Biographies)

Barton H. Barbour

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Jedediah Smith: No Ordinary Mountain Man (Oklahoma Western Biographies) Barton H. Barbour Mountain man and fur trader Jedediah Smith casts a heroic shadow. He was the first Anglo-American to travel overland to California via the Southwest, and he roamed through more of the West than anyone else of his era. His adventures quickly became the stuff of legend. Using new information and sifting fact from folklore, Barton H. Barbour now offers a fresh look at this dynamic figure.

Barbour tells how a youthful Smith was influenced by notable men who were his family's neighbors, including a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition. When he was twenty-three, hard times leavened with wanderlust set him on the road west. Barbour delves into Smith's journals to a greater extent than previous scholars and teases out compelling insights into the trader's itineraries and personality. Use of an important letter Smith wrote late in life deepens the author's perspective on the legendary trapper. Through Smith's own voice, this larger-than-life hero is shown to be a man concerned with business obligations and his comrades' welfare, and even a person who yearned for his childhood. Barbour also takes a hard look at Smith's views of American Indians, Mexicans in California, and Hudson's Bay Company competitors and evaluates his dealings with these groups in the fur trade.

Dozens of monuments commemorate Smith today. This readable book is another, giving modern readers new insight into the character and remarkable achievements of one of the West's most complex characters.

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