

in New Jersey, and removing thence in 1810 to St. Genevieve, Missouri, and a little later to St. Louis. About three years after his Colorado and New Mexico experiences, he went to Cuba and cultivated a coffee plantation for ten or twelve years. After his return to the United States in 1831, he was appointed Secretary and Translator for the Board of United States Land Commissioners, and in 1842 elected Recorder of Deeds for St. Louis county. He died in 1843.

Of the engagés of these two expeditions, we know the names of only about one third. Three of these — Etienne Provost, Toussaint Charbonneau and Joseph Bissanette — are sufficiently well known in the early annals of the West to merit brief notice.

Etienne Provost, in the early twenties, was one of the capable and trusted partisans of General Ashley, in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He is believed to have been the discoverer of South Pass, late in the autumn of 1825, though ~~some~~ Stuart and Crooks' party, returning from Astoria, crossed the continental divide in the vicinity of that pass eleven years earlier. ~~In the summer of 1834, some months before~~

~~the river was discovered by James W. Wey~~
 Jim Bridger had seen Great Salt Lake, a party of trappers under Provost, in the valley of Utah lake, and on a tributary of it which, like the lake itself, the aborigines called Timpanogos, suffered a terrible massacre at the hands of a band of Shoshone Indians under the rascally chief, Hauvais Gaucho, in which most of the party, of about twenty men, were killed. The chief invited the white men to smoke with his band, but said it was against his "medicine" to have objects of metal near by during the ceremony. To humor his supposed religious scruples, the whites foolishly and contrary to their usual custom in dealing with Indians, ^{says Chittenden,} "placed their guns to one side" and sat down in a circle to smoke. In the midst of the ceremony the Indians sprang up at a preconcerted signal and fell upon the whites with knives and tomahawks which they had kept concealed within their clothing. Most of the men were killed. Provost, who was a powerful and athletic man, extricated himself from his assailants, and with three or four others made his escape." From this event, ~~which~~ ^{Chittenden} ~~said he had taken place in a river of unknown name destroyed about a mile from the lake~~ it is said, the river of the Timpanogos and later the city of Provo, situated on it, were given, in phonetically abbreviated spelling, the name of this intrepid French hunter, who at the close of 1824 probably knew the Rocky mountains, from northern New Mexico and Utah to Montana, better than any other white man, having already known them at least seven years when, in 1823, they were first seen by the far famed Jim Bridger. In 1826 Provost had a falling out with General Ashley and undertook to compete with the Rocky

Mountain Fur Company by negotiating with Bernard Bratte & Co., to organize an expedition in the latter's interest, a scheme which the General circumvented by offering this company a share in such an expedition, to be led by himself. In the fall of 1833 we find Prevost in

With his later history, and that prior to 1815, the writer is not acquainted. He was nearly contemporary and ~~undoubtedly~~ ^{undoubtedly} may ~~have been~~ have been a relative of Jean Baptiste Prevost (called "Prevost" by Bradbury, 1817), who was one of the voyageurs that accompanied Bent's famous overland expedition from St. Louis to Astoria, and who was drowned on the 11th of December, 1811, in Snake river.

Toussaint Charbonneau was a Canadian, and was best known as an interpreter, especially of the language of the Winnetaree Indians, or "Gros Ventres of the Missouri". The Prince Maximilian zu Wied, in his valuable and superbly illustrated "Travels in Interior North America", tells us that Charbonneau settled among the Winnetarees in 1796, and acknowledges his indebtedness to him for many valuable contributions to the knowledge of the aboriginal tribes of the upper Missouri. Besides that of Shouteau and Se sun, Charbonneau accompanied several celebrated expeditions. Before coming to the Winnetarees, he had travelled with Alexander Henry of the Northwest Fur Company; he had been in the Winnipeg country, and had wintered on the Assiniboine river. He went to the Pacific ocean and back with Lewis and Clark, who found him living at the Winnetaree villages on their arrival there in 1804, interpreting for traders and ~~trading~~ ^{trading} on his own account as well. In 1819, the first year of Long's expedition to the Rocky mountains, he accompanied Jay's detachment to the Kansas Indians, ^{which their ancient abodes on} ~~which their ancient abodes on~~ driven back from the Missouri river by the Sacs and Foxes in the previous century, had reestablished their village on the north bank of the Kansas river, two miles east of the mouth of the "Blue Earth" (Big Blue) and of the present town of Manhattan, where it remained till about 1830. In the arduous journey to the Pacific, Charbonneau and his Indian wife, Sacajawea, both participated. Lewis and Clark thus write of them, under date of April 7, 1806, the day on which the expedition started westward from Fort Mandan: "The two interpreters were George Brewer (Brouillard) and Toussaint Charbonneau. The

wife of Charbonneau also accompanied us with her young child, and we hope may be useful as an interpreter among the Snake Indians. She was herself one of the tribe; but having been taken in war by the Minnetarees, was sold as a slave to Charbonneau, who brought her up, and afterward married her." She was the sister of a Snake chief, Samahwait, and her name -- pronounced with the "j" as in French and the "e" long and strongly accented -- was not that of Shoshone bestowal, but Minnetaree, meaning "Little Bird Woman". She is thus chattily described in Eva Emery Dye's "The Conquest":

"Moreover, Charbonneau was a polygamist with several wives to cook his food and carry his wood and water. But he had been kind to the captive Indian girl and her heart clung to the easy-going Frenchman as her best friend. The worst white man was better than an Indian husband.

"Captured in battle as a child five years before, Sacajawea had been brought to the land of the Dakotas and sold to Charbonneau. Now barely sixteen, in that February at the Mandan fort she became a mother. Most of the men were away on a great hunting trip; when they came back a lusty little red-faced pappoose was screaming beside the kitchen fire."

"The men had walked thirty miles that day on the ice and in snow to their knees, but utterly fatigued as they were, the sight of that little Indian baby cuddled in a deer skin robe brought back memories of home.

"Clark came in with frosty beard, and moccasins all worn out.

"Sacajawea has a fine boy", said Lewis.

"No wonder the Captains watched her recovery with interest. All winter they had sought an interpreter for those far away tongues beyond the mountains, and no one could be found but Sacajawea, the wife of Charbonneau. Clark directed York [his black servant] to wait on her, stew her fruit, and serve her tea, to the great jealousy of Susanne's wife, who packed up her papposes in high dudgeon and left the fort. Sacajawea was only a slave. She, Madame Susanne, was the daughter of a chief.

"Poor little Sacajawea! She was really very ill. If she died who would unlock the Gates of the Mountains?

"Charbonneau was cook. He set himself to preparing the daintiest soups and steaks, and soon the "Bird Woman" was herself again, packing and planning for the journey".

~~of the river, and the river was in the middle of the valley, but having been taken in one by the Minnetarees, and~~
~~and as close to Charbonneau, who brought her up, and after a short~~
~~Charbonneau~~ Charbonneau was for many years in the employ of the American Fur Company, and for a short interval, in that of the Columbia Fur Company. In 1835, while in the service of the latter company, he was sent with one other man by Mr. Kipp, the factor of the company, to the post at Lake Traverse, for a wagon-load of goods; but returning, the two men were met by a band of Assiniboines, and had to forsake goods, wagon and horses to escape with their lives. During his residence with the Minnetarees, and prior to the Prince su Wied's interviews of 1833 with him, Charbonneau had witnessed two great floods of the Missouri river. In the earlier one of these, the river rose to forty feet above its mean level, leaving only the tops of the tall cottonwoods visible; and the drift-ice remained on the land for very nearly a month, until wasted by the sun. In 1833, Charbonneau no longer remembered what year brought this flood. The Prince su Wied seems to have understood that it was not 1784, which was a flood year in Europe as well as in North America, and by the Louisiana French was called "l'année des grands eaux", or the year of the great waters, but ~~that~~ that it was within the period of Charbonneau's residence on the upper Missouri; and Tassé thinks that it may have been 1822, in June of which year there was a considerable inundation on the upper Mississippi. But the flood of 1822, like those of 1784, 1844 and 1903, must have been due to excess of the rains that annually cause what is known as ~~the~~ "the June rise" of our western rivers, while the first flood described by Charbonneau ^{from the quantity of ice,} seems attributable to either ~~the~~ yielding of an ice-gorge or to an unusually rapid and closely coincident breaking up of the ice on the higher tributaries of the Missouri, and hence to have occurred considerably earlier in the season than "the June rise." The second great flood of the Missouri witnessed by Charbonneau, was on the 6th of April, 1836. At daybreak the water rose so rapidly and so high that it compelled him, ~~and thus was again~~ ~~the~~ the Middle Minnetaree village, two miles from the river, to take refuge, with some of his effects, on a corn-scaffold, where he spent three days without fire and exposed to a cold north wind and flurries of snow. The water ^{reached} ~~rose~~ ^{to a height of twenty-five} ~~in~~ ^{feet} above its average level. Among the Mandans, Charbonneau is said to have had five different names: "the Chief of the Little Village"; "the Man who has many Pumpkins"; "the Great Horse from Afar"; "the Bear of the Forest"; and a fifth "which, as often transpires with the Indians", says the Prince su

wied, "does not sound very æsthetic". Of Charbonneau's history after the spring of 1834, when he was still living at the Windstarce villages, the writer has no positive knowledge.

On the last day of July, 1833, Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, who, with his 200 New Englanders, was creating a brief ripple of excitement among his predecessors in the mountain fur trade, met on Wind river four of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company's trappers who had been surprised by a band of Snake Indians and left without horses and with one of their number severely wounded. One of the four, a "half-breed" named "Charbonneau", had bravely pursued the Indians in an effort to recover the animals and avenge the attack; but wading his gun in crossing a stream, had been compelled to return. It would be interesting to know, and is by no means improbable, that this Charbonneau was the son of old Toussaint: the one, now grown to manhood, who in 1805 and '06 was ~~carried~~ carried, as an infant in cradle, by his Shoshone mother, from the Missouri to the Pacific and back with the expedition of Lewis and Clark.

(July 7.)

In the summer of 1833, Fremont found a "Mr. Chabonard", in charge of a party of Canadians, among whom was the famous reliable and experienced ex-subschief, Jim Beckwourth, encamped on an island in the South Platte river. "Mr. Chabonard", he says, "was in the service of Kent and St. Vrain's company, and had left their fort some forty or fifty miles above, in the spring, with boats laden with the furs of the last year's trade. He had met the same fortune as the voyageurs on the North fork [i.e., got stranded] ~~and, finding it impossible to proceed, had taken up his summer's residence on this island, which he had named St. Helena.~~ and, finding it impossible to proceed, had taken up his summer's residence on this island, which he had named St. Helena. There was a large drove of horses in the opposite prairie bottom; smoke was rising from the scattered fires, and the encampment had quite a patriarchal air. Mr. C. received us hospitably. One of the people was sent to gather mint, with the aid of which he concocted very good juleps; and some boiled buffalo tongue, and coffee with the luxury of sugar, were soon set before us. The people in his employ were generally Spaniards, and among them I saw a young Spanish woman from Taos, whom I found to be Beckwith's wife". This "Island of St. Helena", on which was Chabonard's camp, Fremont calls "Chabonard's island"; the locality is nine miles above the mouth of Bijou creek, and near the place, at mouth of Lowe creek, that later came to be

known as "Wrenmont's Orchard". Less than two months later, (August '70), Dr. Rufus Sage, trader, hunter, adventuring traveller, and withal a good observer and writer, met this same Chabonard, ^{in camp} guarding a quantity of robes on this same small island, and thus describes him. "The camp was under the direction of a half-breed, named Chabonard, who proved to be a gentleman of superior information. He had acquired a classic education and could converse quite fluently in German, Spanish, French and English, as well as several Indian languages. His mind also was well stored with choice reading, and enriched by extensive travel and observation. Having visited most of the important places both in England, France and Germany, he knew how to turn his experiences to good advantage. There was a quaint humor and shrewdness in his conversation, so garbed with intelligence and perspicuity, that he at once insinuated himself into the good graces of listeners, and commanded their admiration and respect". Now there are, as the Prince zu Wied observed, various corruptions of the name, Charbonneau; and he cites the form, "Charbonet", used by Haden. Lewis and Clark use "Chabonard", omitting the "r" from the first syllable. It seems, therefore, reasonable to query whether this "Chabonard" also may not have been the son of Charbonneau, the old Minnetaree interpreter. He may, of course, have been altogether a different person; but the writer has no other information of a Chabonard in the West, and introduces the "Chabonard" of "St. Helena" here as a test, to invite any one who can, to throw light on the question of his identity.

The third of the better known ~~persons~~ engaged of Chouteau and De Mun's Colorado expedition, Joseph Bissonette, was from St. Louis. He was probably also a native of that place and a grandson of either Louis or Francis "Bissonet", two brothers who were among its earliest inhabitants. Francis, by ten years the younger of the two, was one of those to whom, in 1765, Pierre ^{Laclede} ~~Liguest~~ made verbal grants of lots in the embryo city, then known as "Laclede's village". Both brothers married; and Louis, at least, who married in 1771, at the age of forty, had sons. The latter were the first four of his seven children and born within a period of six years. ^{They} ~~These~~ ~~names~~ were Louis, Charles, Joseph and Pascal; one of whom may have been the ~~father~~ father of the Joseph of Chouteau and De Mun's expedition.

From the writings of Dr. James, we learn that Joseph Bissonette served Chouteau and De Mun chiefly as hunter and trapper; that in the ~~spring~~ winter and spring of 1819-'20 he was and for some time had been a resident in the Pawnee villages on the Loup fork of the Platte; that in 1820 he accompanied Long's expedition to the Rocky mountains

an interpreter and guide; that his previous journeyings had taken him over the western plains in almost every direction, between the Arkansas river and the North fork of the Platte, as well as into the Rocky mountains, where beaver were particularly abundant; that he was partially acquainted with several Indian languages, among others, the Pawnee and Crow, as well as with the intertribal sign language; and that in 1820 he was commonly known as Bibeau, that name having been derived from a second marriage of his mother, his hereditary name being, as Dr. James spells it, "Hensonet".

Long's "Yellowstone expedition" was sent forth in 1819, to build a port at the mouth of the Yellowstone, establish our national influence in that quarter, and obtain detailed information about the West. Many hoped that it would result in carrying our commerce speedily to the Pacific. The undertaking was popular from its inception. Congress appropriated liberally for its equipment. It was lauded by the president and heralded by the press, for the glorious things it promised for the nation. Preparations were made for it on a grand and elaborate scale. Steamboats were built by special government contract for the conveyance of troops and scientific staff. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~, but the expedition never reached the Yellowstone. During its first year it succeeded in getting one of the steamboats and a cumbersome military escort up the Missouri to the vicinity of Council Bluffs. Early in the spring of 1820 it had ~~XXXXXXXX~~ cost the lives of about a hundred men, who died of scurvy in their winter cantonment; and in money, over a quarter of a million ~~XX~~ dollars. Appropriations proved insufficient; the Yellowstone enterprise was abandoned; and a small overland expedition to what are now eastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico, was made as a sort of substitute. As this expedition was not honored by Congress with provision for a report, an official "Account" of it was published under the editorship of Dr. James, its botanist; and through this it came to be known as "Long's expedition to the Rocky mountains". But it should be understood as an expedition literally "to", and not into, the mountains; for besides Pike's peak, whose summit was reached, ^{on the 15th of July, 1820,} for the first time, so far as known, by Dr. James and two others, and whose height above base was measured by Lieut. Swift, the expedition touched the mountains at only two points. It was, in fact, an expedition on and of the plains. As such, it afforded much valuable information; but even in this it committed one grave and cardinal mistake, and the people of the West have not forgotten that Long's expedition proclaimed the great plains a barren waste, ^{and} furnished Daniel Webster part of his material for the rhetorical figure and figment of "the

Great American Desert", with which he branded the whole western country, from plains to Pacific; retarded for a generation the development of *western* Louisiana, and nearly lost Oregon to the United States.

The few observations made on the Rocky mountains by Long's expedition, were confined to the Front range. Its information about the mountain region beyond that range, was merely that had from Bijou, who had traversed it with the trapping parties of Chouteau and De Run.

In the atlas of Long's expedition, its authors attacked the name of Bijou to one of the larger creeks of Colorado. Unlike the ^{"James"} name, which they attached to Pike's peak, it has stood in place, though in somewhat modified form. As it known, therefore, to a "Long ^{Received} ~~Received~~ Public", in re Bijou creek, that this well known stream and the beautiful "Bijou basin" at the head of it, take their name neither from a French "St. Jewel" nor from the opal, jasper, chalcedony and agate which for many years were had from the Bijou valley and cut and polished as "jewels" for the tourist trade, but ~~from~~ ^{from} the celebrated hunter, guide, interpreter and trader of early Colorado: Joseph Bissonette, alias Bijou.

Both Mr. James and Mr. Gay speak of Bijou in terms of warm approval. The former mentions him as having "performed in a very adequate and faithful manner the service of guide and interpreter", and adds, "he appears possessed not only of considerable acuteness of observation, but of a degree of candour and veracity which give ~~credibility~~ ^{credibility} to his accounts and descriptions". On the departure of the two French interpreters, Bijou and Ledoux, to return from the Great Bend of the Arkansas to the Pawnee villages, Mr. Gay writes: "We cannot take leave of them without expressing our entire approbation of their conduct and deportment, during our arduous journey; Bijou particularly, was faithful, ~~and~~ active, industrious and communicative. Besides the duties of guide and interpreter, he occasionally and frequently volunteered his services as hunter, butcher, cook, veterinarian, etc., and pointed out various little services, tending to our comfort and security, which he performed with pleasure and alacrity, and which no other than one habituated to the mode of life would have devised." ~~During the expedition~~ Though in 1816-'17 serving Chouteau and De Run ~~chiefly~~ chiefly in the capacity of ~~hunter~~ of a hunter, Bissonette seems soon afterwards to have embarked definitely in the Indian trade, and to have continued in it. In 1820, Long's expedition found him not only a "permanent resident" but a licensed trader in the villages of the Pawnees, curiously enough the very tribe against which he had waged bloody battle at Chouteau's island but four years earlier.

In 1825, a Bissonette, presumably Joseph, went up the Missouri river with Col. Leavenworth's Yellowstone expedition, as far as the "badans

and Minnetarees, and was the first trader employed by the great French firm of Bernard Bratte & Co. at their villages.

In the summer of 1842, Fremont, on his first expedition to the Rocky mountains, arriving at Forts Laramie and Platte, on the North Platte river, found Joseph Bissonette one of the traders at the latter post, regularly and since a number of years engaged in trade with the Ogallala Sioux. Through him, Fremont received a message from four Sioux chiefs, warning him not to go on west until the return of a war party of young Sioux. One of these chiefs was the celebrated Queue de Boeuf, or Bull Tail, who had come with his band to reside and trade in the vicinity of Fort Laramie as early as 1838, on representations brought to him by two messengers, one of whom was Cybille, later part owner of Fort Platte. Fremont dined at Fort Platte, discussed the situation with Bissonette, and hired the latter to accompany him as interpreter and guide, to where the regular road crossed the Platte. From thence Bissonette returned eastward with a party of Sioux, there met. Fremont did not follow the regular trail in going west from Fort Laramie, but took a course that better suited his fancy, returning to the road later. He remarked on Bissonette's ~~long~~ "long residence", yet little familiarity with the country to the west; and it appeared that the latter, in his trading excursions westerly with the Sioux, had rarely gone far from the fort. In 1842 Parkman, and in 1849 Atansbury, found Bissonette still at his accustomed haunt and vocation, on North Platte, Laramie and Chugwater, and associated with the same tribe.

When at last, in August, 1873, the Ogallalas, by treaty, removed to the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, Bissonette seems to have gone with them. Red Cloud, the great chief of the Ogallalas, in his letter to Mr. T. A. Bland, dated "Pine Ridge Agency, Dec. 10, 1880", said, "My good friends, Mr. Nicholas Janine and Joseph Bissonette, witnessed nearly all of our treaties with the Government since 1850". This would seem to indicate that Joseph Bissonette had lived to be a nonagenarian: not a very rare circumstance among the early St. Louis French.

About 1867 or 1868, the government of France published legal notice in American newspapers, to the effect that a young girl, "Bissonette" by name, had recently died, and was the last heir in France to a fortune of many (25?) millions, and that the only heirs remaining were the descendants of three Bissonette brothers who had emigrated to America during tempestuous times or wars in France (in a year stated, but now forgotten) two or three centuries ago. Two of these brothers had settled in Canada and one in the United States. The latter did not

marry. One of the two in Canada was surnamed Le Pouce Coupé, on account of a cut thumb; the other is supposed to be the progenitor of the two Bissonettes who later settled in St. Louis and whose descendants were Indian traders of the Missouri, Arkansas and Platte, including Joseph, the subject of this sketch. The notice warned all heirs to claim the fortune within a stated time, or it would revert to the French government. Mr. Joachim Bissonnette, a descendant of ~~Mr.~~ Le Pouce Coupé, and an uncle of Mr. Wesley B. Bissonnette, late of Colorado Springs, now a foreign missionary, went to Quebec in the interest of ~~his~~ some of the heirs, but discovered that a part of the archives essential to legal proof of their line of descent, had been burned; and the effort to establish such proof was therefore abandoned.