

## Four Trappers

Four trappers were headed for the annual 1833 Rendezvous, being held that year at the confluence of Horse Creek and the Green River. They descended Teton Pass, and had to cross the Lewis Fork of the Snake River before turning up the Hoback River to reach their destination.

The Lewis Fork was running high, much too high to be forded on horseback. The men fashioned a crude raft. They then stripped their horses of saddles and all accoutrements and themselves of all clothing and equipment, and lashed all of the gear and their supplies to the raft. As the horses swam across the river to the far bank, the naked trappers pushed the raft into the current and began to swim. The powerful current seized the raft and sucked it beneath a huge pile of driftwood, beyond any hope of recovery. Only with great difficulty were the trappers able to avoid the same fate.

Lost were clothes, saddles, blankets, rifles, traps, beaver pelts, possibles and necessities. On the opposite bank, the trappers recovered their horses, but nothing else. There they stood on the river bank, white skin gleaming in the sun. With scarcely a ray of hope to cheer them on their dreary task, they mounted their horses bareback, and started off in quest of the rendezvous.

The burning heat of the sun parched their skins, and they had nothing to shield them from its powerful rays; the freezing air of the night chilled and benumbed their unprotected bodies, and they had no covers to keep off the cold; the chill storms of rain and hail pelted them mercilessly, and they could not escape the torture, the friction produced by riding without a saddle or anything for a substitute; chaffed off the skin and even flesh, and without any means of remedying the misfortune, or alleviating the pain, for they were prevented from walking by the jagged stones and sharp thorns of the prickly pear, which lacerated their feet. Not a morsel of food would they eat for four days.

They were compelled, though the agony occasioned by it was intense, to continue their equestrian march, till amidst this accumulation of ills they reached rendezvous. And what a sight did they present to their friends and compadres as they rode into rendezvous. Stark naked, their bodies an incandescent red from sunburn, and covered in the welts of insect bites, their feet a mass of cuts and lacerations, and yet unable to sit for the blisters on their bottoms. Aid and assistance were swiftly rendered, but certainly not without a full ration of hell.

