

## Three Bears

During the Rocky Mountain Fur Company's fall hunt in 1830, John Hawkins and Joe Meek were proceeding up the Yellowstone River, when they observed an outstandingly large grizzly bear on the opposite bank of the river. Firing their guns almost simultaneously, the monstrous beast collapsed. In order to obtain a trophy from this enormous bear, the men stripped naked, and leaving behind their guns, mules, clothing and equipment, swam across the river to where the carcass was lying. As the men approached the "dead" bear, it suddenly raised to its feet and looking about perceived the naked men in front of it. The Grizzly charged

the men, whose only hope of escape was to leap into the river with the bear in close pursuit. Hawkins tried to outfloat the animal going downstream, while Meek attempted to outswim the bear by going upstream. However, the current was so swift and turbulent that neither man had much success in putting distance between himself and the enraged monster, who was having difficulty deciding which man to attack first. Finally Hawkins succeeded in gaining the shore, where he set up such a racket screaming and hollaring that the startled bear made for the opposite bank. Meek then swam to safety, leaving a single bear on one bank of the river, and two "bare"s on the other.

