

Capt. Bonneville, Who Gave Name to Great Salt Lake

To have a real live man, one of the crowd still in the harness, talk of "My Friend, Captain Bonneville," and speak of days when they met, is to suggest almost an impossibility.

Yet this is what happened recently in a city not so far from Salt Lake and the man who mentioned him after whom "Lake Bonneville," of pre-historic times, takes its name, was promptly elected to the Annals Club, of much interesting which follows on one who has made himself remembered more perhaps than any other of the mountain men who made their way through west in wildernesses before the day of the permanent settler.

And the curious part of the investigation, as it has come out, has been the fact that Bonneville did only two thoroughly lucky things in his life. One was when he met Washington Irving, and was the one of the wood group to be properly written up. And the other was when another writer chose to name the Basin of the Great Salt Lake, after him, and there came into existence "Lake Bonneville," a lake in name only, no part of the territory of which Bonneville ever saw.

In commercial life his work was peculiar in that he was the first one of the mountain men to make a fortune in his work in the mountains. The others had borrowed heavily from bankers, but invariably made good. He came when the beavers were so scarce that he failed, and was the first to fail to forewarn others that the trapper era was near its end.

H. M. McCartney, the man who assisted in building the Union Pacific and Salt Lake Route and is now chief assistant engineer on the Western Pacific, is the man who in this day dared to claim acquaintanceship with Captain Bonneville. He had to produce a photograph of the captain to prove his veracity. The photograph is reproduced with this article, and shows Capt. Bonneville standing at the extreme left of a group of army officers.

Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville was born in France in 1796, and was brought to this country when an infant. His family settled in New York City. They were people of the education and evidently of some means. His father was a classical scholar well versed in Latin and Greek. The boy was well educated and as he evinced a fondness for a military career, a cadetship in West Point was secured for him by Thomas Paine. He graduated in 1819. In 1825, when Lafayette revisited this country, Bonneville was appointed his aide and accompanied him on his memorial tour. After that he served at several frontier posts and acquired a taste for wild life and exploration. He finally decided to make a long trip into the west for the purpose of establishing a fur trading company and returning to New York. He succeeded in obtaining a two year leave of absence from the army and in securing some capital for the venture.

RAILROADS UNKNOWN.

At that date there was not a railroad in the United States, and the Missis-



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sippi river was the western limit of civilization. The Rocky mountain region where Bonneville proposed to go was by no means unexplored. Gen. Ashley had reached Green river (then called Seedakee-dee-adle or Prairie Hen river) in 1823, and had established a post on the Provo river, in 1825. In 1830, the Rocky Mountain Fur com-

pany had been organized with Capt. Sublette as its most prominent member. The American Fur company was also in the field, but Bonneville's idea was that a third company could easily establish itself by starting in with superior equipment and picked men. His party was the first to take wagons into the region west of the continental

divide, although Ashley had previously brought a wheeled cannon to Utah. He gathered his party together during the winter of 1831-32, and started from Fort Osage on the Missouri (near the present site of Jefferson City) on May 1, 1832. From that time until his return in 1835, he disappeared from view. He went northward close

to where Kansas City now stands and reached the Platte at Grand Island. Following up the Platte he crossed the divide and reached Green river, where he established headquarters. From that as a base he explored the country to the west as far as the mouth of the Walla Walla river near the present town of Wallula. He found the Hud-

son Bay company strongly entrenched in that region and was obliged to return to Green river. It was from that point that his celebrated attempt to explore the shores of the Great Salt Lake was made—probably the most ludicrous episode of all western exploration. It does not appear that Bonneville ever saw Salt Lake. In his description which he gave Irving, he spoke of it as a sheet of water 150 miles long by 50 miles wide which lay at an elevation of a mile and three quarters above the sea level, which would make it 9,240 feet. In the tales told him by the trappers, the Provo and Bear rivers had been mentioned; but no one knew anything of the north or west sides of the lake and Bonneville decided that other rivers must exist there which would furnish good trapping ground. He therefore organized a party of 40 men which he placed in charge of one of his subordinates named Walker and started it out, so he afterwards declared, to explore the entire circumference of Great Salt Lake.

EXPLORING TRIP. The party went to Soda Springs, a well known resort of the trappers who called it "Bear Springs" and then started down the river. On reaching the canyon they found they could not get horses through it and they made a detour to the west crossing the Malad and landing on the upper waters of the Humboldt—then called Ogden river, which they followed to the Humboldt sink. The wooded slopes of the Sierras tempted them as a hunting ground and while there they encountered some hunters from the Spanish coast settlements who dilated on California climate—sea fishing and the charms of the scenery, very much after the manner of the modern colonization agent. It was effective and Walker and his party joined the coast men and eventually reached Monterey, where they spent the winter. They returned in the spring of 1834 nearly by the same route and actually reached Green river without ever having set foot on the shores of Salt Lake. What Capt. Bonneville said when Walker made his report is not recorded in history, but it must have exceeded some of Uncle Joe Cannon's happier efforts. Think of starting from Soda Springs, to go to Salt Lake, and landing in Monterey Bay! It was certainly a unique trip.

OUT OF ARMY. This was the last straw to Bonneville's disappointments and he decided to return home. He reached the Missouri river safely and landed in New York, in 1835. His fortunes were at a low ebb. He had overstayed his leave of absence nearly two years and had been dropped from the army lists. The money furnished him had all been expended and his proposed fur company was a failure. It was at this time that Washington Irving met him and wrote the celebrated book, "The Adventures of Captain Bonneville." But his friends did not desert him. He secured re-instatement in the army and afterwards fought in the Seminole and Mexican wars. He also served during the entire Civil war—most of the time on the staff of Gen. Grenville

M. Dodge, who was in charge of the Department of Missouri. He was made a brigadier general early in 1865. After the war he retired to a plantation which he had purchased near Fort Smith, Arkansas, and for many years led an active but peaceful life. He died June 12, 1878, after a career of stirring adventures such as few men in this country have experienced. He was a contemporary of Commodore Vanderbilt, being born within ten years and dying within one year of the well known American.

PHOTO OF CELEBRITIES. The photograph was sent to Mr. H. M. McCartney by Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, who is now living in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and shows the general and his staff in the early days of 1865. Capt. Bonneville is standing on the extreme left of the group. Gen. Dodge writes:

"I am sending you a large photograph of my staff at St. Louis, that shows Capt. Bonneville on the extreme left. This was taken in 1865. He was then about 70 years of age, and acting as my mustering officer. He was very proud, I suppose they would say he was a martinet. He would come into my office each morning to report and take his position as a soldier, would not assume to enter into conversation or sit down unless I told him to. I endeavored many times to get into conversation with him and have him tell me something of his experience on the plains. He knew that I had made surveys on the Utah Pacific, and been all over his travels and knew many of the men that had been with him, but I never could get him to go into any description or give me any experience. He was rather cheerful but as I say stood upon his dignity as an old officer, and perhaps he thought that we younger fellows who were up at the head were not entitled to be there. However, that is my own plea, he never said or intimated anything of the kind. Of course I had heard all about him and had been told by Jim Bridger and a great many others about his peculiarities and his experiences on the plains."

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PRESENT QUARTERS.

NEW QUARTERS.



ONE of the leading and most progressive furniture houses of Salt Lake City is the Nebraska Furniture Company, of 62 east Second south, who, February 1st, will be located in their new quarters at 234-236 south State street.

Nearly three years have elapsed since the present owners of the company purchased the business and good-will; it has been a period of activity and progression, making the present quarters entirely inadequate for the volume of business that is being done. Incorporation took place March 7th, 1906, the directorate consisting of the following well known business men: John A. Sharp, Edward E. Jenkins, C. E. Davey, H. J. Smith and Geo. A. Sanders.

"Trade With Your Friends" was the slogan of the new concern. Stock reducing sales were immediately commenced and these continued until every article taken over from the old company was disposed of. In the meantime, new, up-to-date, best quality goods had been purchased, and a showing made that equalled anything in the furniture line in Utah.

In March, 1907, W. G. Crawford and W. L. Crawford became associated with the company. By this time it was apparent that the present quarters were too small for the volume of business being done and steps were taken to obtain more commodious premises. The decision of the Harris Furniture Company to discontinue business gave the Nebraska Furniture Company their desired opportunity. The three-story building, with a large basement, located at 234-236 South State Street was leased and during January the building will be stocked with a splendid line of new furniture in readiness for the formal opening February 1st.

That success will continue to attend such a vigorous and energetic body of business men goes without saying.

Their aim will be the same as hitherto—the best quality goods only at fair, honest prices.

A motto that has been incorporated in a number of their advertisements recently, runs as follows:

"WE BELIEVE in the goods we are selling, and in our ability to get results. We believe that honest goods can be sold to honest men by honest methods."

