DEATH OF A FAMOUS TRAPPER

Jim Baker, One of a Little Band Who Tracked the Western Wilderness.

The Hero of Many Stirring Adventures and Narrow Escapes Before Rocky Mountain Civilization Came.

When Jim Baker died at his home on the Platte river, in Wyoming, a few days ago they passed away one of the most famous trappers, scouts and frontiersmen the West has produced. For nearly seventy years Jim Baker has been a noted figure in the West, and all the early men who aided in opening up the wilderness, Kit Carson alone was better known. Baker was about 80 years old at the time of his death. He came west from Illinois when he was knee-high, when only 10 years old. He started as an employee of the American Fur Trading company at Laramie, Wyo., about 1838, and from that time until his death he lived on the plains and in the mountains. He was a guide for several noted Englishmen, such as John C. Fremont, and for the Adams in the war after the Mormon massacre. His exploits were many and they were well known the part of the United States after the expeditions of Lewis and Clark. Of the men who served with them, Gabriel Lafontaine, always called by the name of the plains, Gabriel Lafontaine, the traditions are legion. Bridger, Langhlinn's "Evangeline," Hall, Antoine and Nicholas Lafontaine were his peers. Others of Baker's associates were Peter Ogden, who gave his name to the city of Ogden, Utah; Kit Carson, another man who for 50 years was in the map of the country, and Maxwell of Maxwell land grant.

Baker lived a life of more adventure, more than even a Cooper has ever been able to picture. For years at a time he lived among the Indians, hunted in the pathless forests of the North and West, wandered over the arches, suffered all the hardships, endured hardships and braved the greatest dangers. All this was in the time of the Indians, who died their arrival in 1851. Four times he took a wife from among the Indians and four times sent packing to a squaw with his pie. For several years he was hunted by the Indians, who had sworn for justice and death the moment he fell into their hands. A dozen times he escaped their vengeance, and on one occasion, several times he was mutilated in the neighborhood of the head of a stream and nearly died from his loss of blood. For many years was spent in evading hostile Indians and the numerous bands of trappers, hunters, boatmen and men and wars with Indians was eclipsed by a mass of scars on his grizzled body.

The first eight years of Baker's life in the West were spent in trapping in the north for the Hudson's Bay company. He left the employ of the company and hunted and trapped on his own account. The Utes were extremely hostile to the whites, and Baker succeeded in getting on very friendly terms with them. Then a young buck and squaw died. Baker believed a relative of Ignacio, to leave the tribe with him. Ignacio swore vengeance, and for a long time Baker was in constant fear lest one of the Utes should take him unawares. Finally the squaw returned to her tribe and left the safety Baker behind the Sioux Indians and became a Sioux squaw soon. Afterward he left the Sioux for the Cheyennes and also lived for a time with the Arapahoes. There are incidents without number kind of Baker by old pioneers. In 1847 Baker served as guide for Captain Mercer's expedition that went into Utah to drive out the Mormons. The Mormons "fixed" Mercer and drove off all his horses and mules, taking the greater share of the provisions. The men were in a desperate condition. Baker offered to cross the main range and go to Fort Garland for relief. It was early in December and the snow on the range was from two to forty feet deep. Baker started to work his way straight across the range. He became worn out and nearly fainted. In descending the range he became so exhausted that he was forced to give up and would have perished had not a band of Utes, the Indians he had aided for him. Had their people conspired him he would have been killed because the Utes hated him for death. He succeeded in reaching the fort in safety and escaping the monument of snow.

At another time Baker was camped alone in the end of a canyon, and a party of white men approached and saw him. About a quarter in the morning Baker awoke, ears back to the camp, and warned the men to leave. The men, which warned Baker to find a place where they could defend themselves. He said he felt that the red had come. The men refused. Two hours afterward a band of Indians came off on the camp, which to that time had been peaceful. In 1849 Baker, with Jim Bridwell, built an in a bluff on what is now Capitol Hill, Denver. Bridwell was a trapper and for a long time lived among the Indians. He was born at St. Charles, Mo., in 1799, and went west in 1831. The Crows had never seen a white man, and they conceived the idea that Bridwell was a Crow Indian who had been stolen from their tribe when a child. They watched Bridwell closely, and kidnapped Bridwell, afterward making him chief. He became a great warrior, and was much feared by the Indians. Baker and he were great friends, and went into partnership when Bridwell left his tribe to join Baker. Bridwell married a colored woman, and in 1861 murdered a man named Hall in a fight over a quarter. Bridwell attributed his wife's infidelity to his wife. Bridwell and Baker were for friends when sober, but quarrelsome and fought like tigers when drunk.

In 1849 Baker had one side of his face torn off by the explosion of a rifle. Many years afterward Bridwell was given. The injured one has rarely been seen. In Indian country Baker always rifles from Denver, he and Bridwell tributed a lot of rifles and cartridges. Baker was a good shot, and was feared. As he used to live in the mountains in the stock carried, and now it is to prove. Bridwell was a Baptist and left to preach. Bridwell's conscience, and all the time conscience, he stood in the way of his profession. Bridwell, Dr. Bitole Bird to his time pay by the use of wooden pins and used it