

A Message from the Booshway

Waugh Pilgrims and Pork Eaters!

Imagine if you lived like the mountain man did. Trading, trapping, living off the land...being wild and free. As exciting as it may sound, mountain man life was not easy. Only the toughest survived. Jedidiah Smith stitched his own scalp and ear back on his head after being mauled by a bear. John Colter was stripped of his clothing by hostile Indian braves but escaped by running naked through the forest to a beaver lodge where he hid for over 12 hours. After dark he left the beaver lodge and started his 12-day journey back to the closest trader's fort with only a light blanket. Hugh Glass literally crawled about 200 miles back to civilization after being attacked by a grizzly bear and left for dead. These men were tough!

Most mountain men learned how to survive in the woods. A very few didn't just *survive* but *thrived*. The famous ones not only loved the wild and free life the mountains brought but respected the land and its native peoples. The difference between *surviving* and *thriving* depended on the respect each man gave to his surroundings. It was not uncommon for them to become friends with the neighboring Indians and immerse themselves in their ways, cultures and customs. Some of them even married natives. Those who chose peace rather than war were the ones that truly *thrived*.

From 1825 to 1840, fur trading companies would host Rocky Mountain Rendezvous each year at various locations so that the mountain men could sell their furs and replenish supplies. Rendezvous were lively, joyous places, where all were allowed—free trappers, Indians, native trapper wives, children, travelers and even tourists. One mountain man, James Beckwourth, described the Rendezvous as a wonderful gathering with “songs, dancing, shouting, trading, running, jumping, singing, racing, target-shooting, yarns, frolic, with all sorts of extravagances that white men or Indians could invent.” For the mountain men this was the most anticipated event of the year, not only because it was how they made money but because of the many opportunities to socialize and learn from each other.

You may not fight off grizzly bears like the mountain men did but you fight a much deadlier enemy. Surviving spiritually today for you is just as hard as surviving physically for the mountain men. It requires a strong will and relentless endurance. It requires you to dust yourself off and crawl to safety. Just like the mountain men, you can not only survive but thrive today by immersing yourself in wholesome activities and surrounding yourself with good friends. What better way to do this than by participating in the world's biggest varsity scouting event?

The Rendezvous lives on! Just like the rendezvous of yesteryear, you will participate in all of the same activities: shooting, archery, knife throwing, blacksmithing, arrowhead-making, wilderness survival skills, trading, and the list goes on. When you are old and gray you will look back on this experience as one of the most cherished experiences of your life. We look forward to seeing you soon. Waugh!

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