

Map of the Northwest Fur Country

**as drawn by Warren A. Ferris 1836, from "Life in the Rocky Mountains,"
Western Literary Messenger, Buffalo, NY, 13 July 1842 – 4 May 1844.**

MAP: <https://archive.org/details/FerrisMapOfTheNorthwestFurCountryIn1836184244>

Map Title Block Transcription by Steve F. Russell, Historic Trails Research, Ames, Iowa

The large dotted line drawn through this map shows the exact range of the Bison Westward in the year 1835. Previous to this period they have been seen a short distance west of it but are now annually returning eastward whence they came.

The small dotted lines circumscribe some of the luxuriant valleys. The words mountain and spurs are written where chains should be laid down. Oak and Maple shrubbery is found throughout the country south of the forty second parallel, but not north of it.

The Big Lake [Great Salt Lake] was circumnavigated by four men several years since. They were absent forty days and suffered much for fresh water which was quite wanting on its western shore. They assert that it has no visible outlet. This is likewise the case with the Savarah [Seiver] Lake. Of the country west of these two lakes, we yet know nothing certain. Hunters have frequently endeavored to penetrate it in quest of Beaver, but were always unsuccessful owing to the scarcity of game and barren aspect of the country which, according [to] their accounts, produces nothing [in profusion]¹ but prickly pears – or the hordes of Indians entirely naked who infest the country seeking opportunities to kill and eat the horses of those who visit them.

Notes by Steve F. Russell, Historic Trails Research, Ames, Iowa

“Life in the Rock Mountains” was originally published in a series in the Western Literary Messenger, Buffalo, NY, 13 July 1842 – 4 May 1844. It was published in book form at least three times.

There are two map versions in existence. The first one appears to be an original drawing by Ferris c1836 (or possibly 1842-44). The second appears to be either a scrivener copy, or enhanced original, by Walter McCausland that was published in 1940.

Additional Information

Notes by N. Sheedy, Willis, Texas 2006 (Personal Communications)

Warren A. Ferris, then in the employ of the American Fur Company, was trapping in the west from February 1830 to November 1835. He wrote an account of his adventures, obviously based on a diary he kept, and also drew this map. Ferris’ “Life in the Rock Mountains” was originally published in a series in the Western Literary Messenger, Buffalo, NY, 13 July 1842 – 4 May 1844.

Ferris’ original manuscript (and this map) were not found until 1900 and were not published until 1940.

¹ The hand-written text was not legible enough to be translated directly but, from the context, the message was that there was little food for game animals (or people) other than the Prickly Pear cactus.

Bibliographic Information for the 1940 publication obtained from:
<http://mtmen.org/mtman/html/ferris/index.html>

Several annotated editions have subsequently been published:

Author: Ferris, Warren Angus, 1810-1873.
Title: Life in the Rocky mountains, 1830-1835, by Warren Angus Ferris; arranged by Herbert S. Auerbach, annotated by J. Cecil Alter.
Published: Salt Lake City, Utah, Rocky mountain book shop, 1940.

Author: Ferris, Warren Angus, 1810-1873.
Title: Life in the Rocky Mountains; a diary of wanderings on the sources of the rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado from February, 1830, to November, 1835 by W. A. Ferris, then in the employ of the American Fur Company, and supplementary writings by Ferris, with a detailed map of the fur country, drawn by Ferris in 1836. Edited, and with a life of Ferris, and a history of explorations and fur trade, by Paul C. Phillips.
Published: Denver, Col., F. A. Rosenstock, Old West Pub. Co., 1940.

Author: Ferris, Warren Angus, 1810-1873.
Title: Life in the Rocky Mountains : a diary of wanderings on the sources of the rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado, 1830-1835 : with supplementary writings and a detailed map of the fur country / by Warren Angus Ferris ; edited, and with an introduction and notes by Leroy R. Hafen ; with a biography of Ferris by Paul C. Phillips.
Edition: New rev. ed.
Published: Denver, Colo. : Old West Pub. Co., 1983.

Time Travelers: Teaching American History in the Northwest, 2006
Regional Learning Project, University of Montana

Transcribed from 1836 Ferris map, reference: 1836 Ferris, Warren Angus. "Map of the Northwest Fur Country". Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. 917.8 F41m.

Transcription of map title block by University of Montana:

The large dotted line drawn through this map shows the exact range of the Bison Westward in the year 1835. Previous to this period they have been seen a short distance west of it but are now annually returning eastward whence they came. The small dotted lines circumscribe some of the luxuriant valleys. The words mountain and spurs are written where chains should be laid down. Oak and Maple _____ berry is found throughout the country south of the forty second parallel, but not north of it. The Big Lake was circumnavigated by four men several years since. They were absent forty days and suffered much for fresh water which was quite wanting on its western shore. They assert that it has no visible outlet. This is likewise the case with the Sava__ah Lake. Of the country west of these two lakes we yet know nothing certain. Hunters have frequently endeavored to penetrate it in quest of Beaver but were always unsuccessful owing to the scarcity of game and barren aspect of the country which according to their accounts produces nothing in _____ but prickly pears – or the hordes of Indians entirely naked who infest the country seeking opportunities to kill and eat the Hordes of those who visit them."