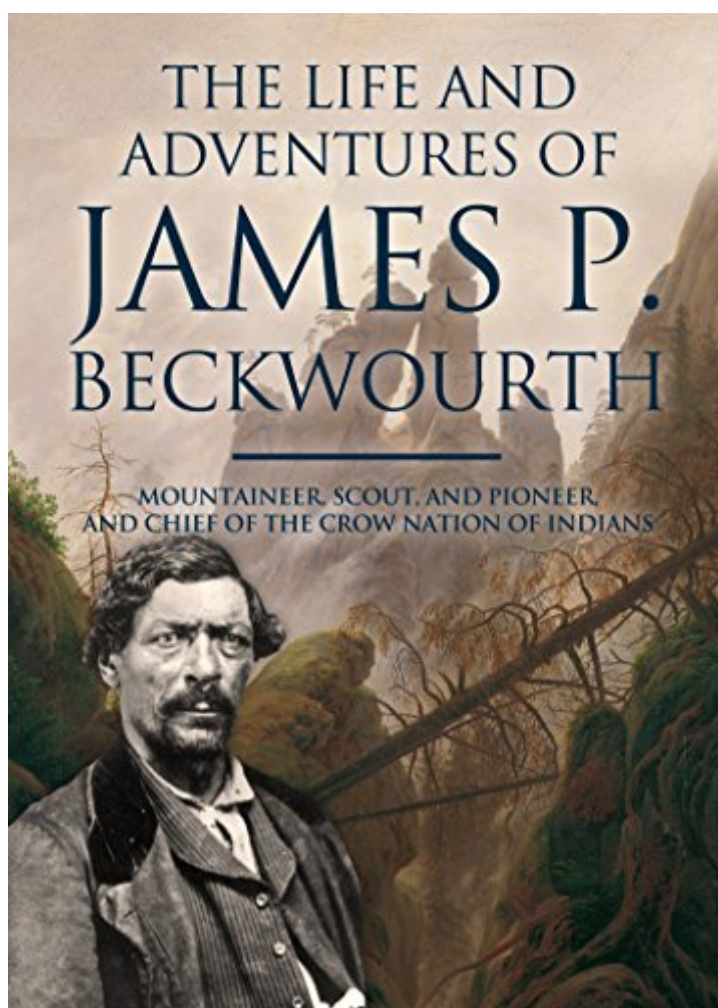


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# The Life And Adventures Of James P. Beckwourth: Mountaineer, Scout, And Pioneer, And Chief Of The Crow Nation Of Indians



## Synopsis

Born into slavery in 1798, James P. Beckwourth would go on to become one of the most remarkable mountain men to have ever lived. In 1824 Beckwourth left Missouri to head to the Rocky Mountains to work for William Ashley's Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He would never turn back. In his fascinating life, spent in the mountains and plains of the West, he lived as a trapper, hunter, guide, horse thief and Indian fighter. What is particularly fascinating about Beckwourth's book is his insight into the culture of the Native Americans, as for many years, this son of a slave and a slave owner, lived with the Crow Nation, trapping, hunting, marrying two of their women and raiding alongside them. It is even stated that he rose to the position of Chief of the Crow Nation. First published in 1856, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth* is a unique account of life in pioneer America in the early-nineteenth century. "This is a book of great importance to an understanding of the mountains, plains, and Great Basin West." *California Historical Quarterly* "It remains what it always has been since its first appearance in 1856—a rousing adventure story in which Jim Beckwourth plays the leading role." *San Francisco Chronicle* James Beckwourth was the only African American in the West to have his life story published. He was credited with the discovery of Beckwourth Pass which aided pioneers in reaching their destination in the West. He died in 1866.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bonner's autobiography gives the reader full insight to the life style of both the mountain men and the native Americans. His ability to survive in the extremes and perils of the plains and mountains is amazing. He provides the reader with a detailed picture of the western tribes.

Great first hand account of early days in the Old West. If you like this book you will also want to read the following similar books:1. My Sixty Years on the Plains: Trapping, Trading, and Indian Fighting (1905)2. Journal of a Trapper Or Nine Years Residence among the Rocky Mountains Between the years of 1834 and 1843 (1921)3. Three Years Among the Comanches: The Narrative of Nelson Lee, the Texas Ranger, Containing a Detailed Account of His Captivity Among the Indians, His Singular Escape ...(1859)4. My Life as an Indian: The Story of a Red Woman and a White Man in the Lodges of the Blackfeet (1907)5. The Old North Trail: Or, Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians (1910)6. Life Among the Apaches (1868)7. On the Border with CROOK (1891)8. Twenty Years Before the Mast: with the more thrilling scenes and incidents while circumnavigating the globe under the command of the late Admiral Charles Wilkes 1838-1842 (1896)9. The Evolution of a State or Recollections of old Texas days (1900)10. The Vigilantes of Montana, Or, Popular Justice in the Rocky Mountains: Being a Correct and Impartial Narrative of the Chase, Trial, Capture, and Execution of Henry Plummer's Road Agent Band ...

I am an avid reader of this era and understand these men were good story tellers. Therefore, I'm somewhat skeptical of all that he mentions. Nonetheless, entertaining narrative of Beckwourth's life. Does give insight into trials and tribulations of First American warrior attitudes and willingness to defend their territorial claims. All Mountain Men enjoyed good story tellers and he doesn't disappoint.

Thoroughly enjoyed this book- learned more on indian ways and their mindsets than any other book I've ever read on Indian history- and I've read many. It was long (542 pages)- but interesting enough to keep me glued the whole way. James Beckwourth (1800-1866) lived nine+ lives. Plenty of detailed descriptions on ceremonies such as weddings, burials, scalp and mourning dances, warfare, carnage, spiritual practices, medicine, woman's roles both domestic and as warriors. I

found it fascinating to learn how trading was negotiated between the civilized white man and uncivilized Indian. Example- Beckwourth describes one transaction selling 40 gallons of whiskey which cost next to nothing to produce- to indians and receiving 1600 bison robes worth \$5 each (which took hundreds of woman weeks of hard work to prepare) for a total value of \$8000.00+. Then describes sadly how the whiskey caused those drunk indians to abuse or even kill their women and children. You get a feel for how widely traveled he was - once covering 2750 miles in 50 days (by horse of course) through all forms of weather over wide open plains to the mountains. He also had an impressive vocabulary and I found myself going to the dictionary (in kindle) many times to see meaning of words lost to history. Everyone's heard how indians were notorious for stealing horses and I assumed that meant a few here or there. But there are many examples where the norm was stealing entire herds of 200-800-4000 horses in single raids and running them for days back to villages hundreds of miles away while being pursued by vengeful enemy warriors. I'm a little skeptical that most of the 542 pages contain verbatim quotes of conversations that occurred between him and other characters he engaged with over his life. I don't know how Beckwourth (or anyone) could have such a memory to be able to dictate such minute details of so many fast moving events that took place over such a long period of a lifetime in such exact detail. But the narrative comes across so precise, it's believable. What's surprising to me is this book was originally published in 1865 and sat on a shelf for 150 years collecting dust until it was recently re-published in 2015.

James Pierson Beckwourth (1798 - 1866 age 68) was an African American mountain man, fur trader, explorer and chief of the Crow Nation, guide for the US Army. His mother was a mulatto and his father was Sir Jennings Beckwith, a descendant of Irish and English nobility. Beckwourth spelled his name different than his father Beckwith. The book is a fast paced interesting books that is difficult to lay down. The period covers the early settlement of central America and the war with Mexico over California and southern America. It provides a large amount of first hand observation of the life in pioneer America, the life of the Indian, buffalo hunting, fur trading. He dictated his autobiography to Thomas Bonner and published in 1856. See the web for an interesting site dedicated to Beckwourth.

The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth: Mountaineer, Scout, and Pioneer, and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians by James P. Beckwourth is a very interesting piece of history. The harsh reality of the life that was lead back then and what he had to go through and even came out better

than he started, much better! Started a slave, then a mountain man, then a Chief of the Crow Nation, not bad! LOL. This book tells the rough life he had, his personal life, and his accomplishments also. Great history read.

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