

trade, for an extensive and rapidly improving territory, there are several branches of business that concentrate here. These are the mining business—the Indian fur trade and trapping enterprise;—the Mexican trade;—the frontier military posts and Indian agency;—and lately, the outfit of many thousands of California gold-hunters. In some of these branches, the people in the interior of Missouri have participated. We intended to have amplified each of these items in a series of sketches, but our limits are nearly exhausted.

The fur trade, to a limited extent, was extended high up the Missouri river, before the cession of Louisiana. The average annual value of the furs collected in St. Louis, for fifteen successive years, ending in 1804, is stated to have been \$203,750. James Pursley, in 1802, was the first hunter and trapper, and probably the first American, who traversed the great plains between the United States and New Mexico. The Missouri Fur Company, with a capital of \$40,000, was organized in this city in 1808, and the hunters in its employ, were the first who pitched their camps on the waters of Oregon. That company was dissolved in 1812; the fur trade of the Missouri was prosecuted by Messrs. Chouteau, Berthold, Pratte, Lisa, Cabanne, and others. Messrs. Pilcher, Lisa, Thos. Hempstead, Perkins and others, revived the Missouri Company soon after the war, and carried their enterprise into the defiles of the Rocky mountains.

In 1823, the late General William H. Ashley fitted out his first trapping expedition to the mountains and upon the western waters. He had a severe engagement with the Aricara Indians, in which he lost fourteen men. General Ashley and his men, ascended the Sweet water, *discovered the South Pass*, and thus opened a highway to Oregon and California. In 1824, he extended his exploration and line of trade to the Utah Lake. Between the years of 1824 and 1827, General Ashley and his men sent to St. Louis furs to the value of \$180,000. The annual value of the fur trade alone, for 40 years, has averaged from two to three hundred thousand dollars, and hence an important item in the growth of St. Louis.*

The Santa Fe trade from Missouri, originated in Franklin, Howard county, where the first enterprise was planned, and an outfit procured in 1822.† This has been since prosecuted with great enterprise and various success from this city.

The United States census of 1840, owing to the very limited bounds of the corporation, and the extension of the streets and blocks of the city beyond, misrepresented the population. The report exhibited only 16,469, whereas the population within the town of St. Louis, was not less than 28,000.

A similar discrepancy will appear in the census of 1850; for although

* Address of Thomas Allen, at the "Celebration" of St. Louis, February 14, 1847, pp. 14, 15.

† Wetmore's Gazetteer, p. 84.