

## Warren A. Ferris

*Warren A. Ferris kept a journal called "Life in the Rocky Mountains" about his experience working for the American Fur Company from 1830-1835. The following comes from his journal.*

*[Changed for easier reading using ChatGPT.] Original found at*

<https://user.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/ferris/ferris.pdf>

We had barely started traveling on the morning of the eleventh when we saw several Indians on horseback riding toward us very fast. They soon made it clear that a large group of their people was nearby and coming to trade with us. Mr. Fontenelle did not believe they were coming just to trade and thought they really planned to rob us. Because of this, he quickly ordered everyone to stop and began getting ready to defend ourselves and give them a much harsher welcome than they expected...

There seemed to be about one hundred and fifty of them, which was about three times as many as us. They all had great horses and carried bows and arrows, spears, and a few guns. They wore buffalo robes around their waists, but from the waist up they didn't wear shirts. A few had leggings made of soft animal skins, but most of them wore only their robes and moccasins. Their bodies were covered in grease and paint. After some short conversations, they told us they were on a buffalo hunt and meant us no harm. They said they wanted to trade peacefully. We allowed them to come closer and trade some animal skins and moccasins for knives, red paint, and tobacco. But while they traded, they also stole whatever they could without being caught. Since this kind of trading was clearly unfair, we soon got tired of it, packed up our things, and left. They stood there staring at us in surprise as we rode away.

## Original

“Scarcely had we got under way on the morning of the eleventh, when we discovered several mounted Indians approaching at full speed, who soon gave us to understand that a large party of their people were close at hand coming to trade with us. Mr. Fontenelle not doubting but that they came for the express purpose of plundering us, immediately ordered a halt, and made preparations to give them a reception more warm than welcome...

“They appeared to be about one hundred and fifty strong, (only thrice our number), all admirably mounted, and all armed with bows and arrows, and spears, and a few with guns. They wore buffalo robes about their middle, but from the waist upwards were all magnificently naked. A few had on leggins of dressed skins, but generally save their robes and moccasins, they were just as nature made them, except in the matter of grease and paint. After some introductory chatterings, they informed us that they were on a hunting expedition for buffalo, that they intended us no harm, but on the contrary wished to trade with us in amity. They were then permitted to come up, and exchange a few skins, moccasins, etc. for knives, vermilion, and tobacco, pilfering the while every thing they could lay their hands upon without being discovered. The reciprocity of this kind of commerce being as the Paddy said, all on one side, we soon got tired of it, and unceremoniously packed up and off, and left them gazing after us in no small astonishment.” (Chapter V).