

Literature response essay

[Economics](#), [Trade](#)



Mountain men were threatened by wild animals, risk of starvation, and a possibility that they would not be able to trap enough animals to cover their expenses. All of these inconsistencies made the life of a mountain man extremely taxing, both physically and mentally. Hugh Glass suffered from extreme physical and psychological pain after he was attacked by a bear. “When they turned Glass over, they were surprised to find him breathing at all.

His face was partly raked away to the bones, his ribs were crushed. An awful tear in his throat bubbled every time he breathed. His body was littered with gashes. Any one of fifteen wounds was enough to kill him.” (Believing 41).

This illustrates the incredible damage that wild animals could do to humans. Mountain men put themselves at risk of attack every day, as they never knew what could possibly be hiding in the bushes. At this time their guns were not advanced enough to provide adequate protection from the fierce animals they could encounter, “The rifles of the mountain men, unfortunately, fired just once.

Then it took thirty seconds to get more powder and another ball in place” (Believing 41). Glass’s pain continued, as it took weeks for him to heal enough to even walk. In addition to his intense physical suffering, he was also plagued by exhaustion and fear for his life as he attempted to travel to safety. Glass’s story is a true testament to the danger that mountain men faced every day.

Just as dangerous as the animals around them could be, a lack of game could be just as terrible. Many times, mountain men were forced to go days

or weeks without food or water. The risk of starvation was high, especially in the winter, and often times mountain men were not sure where their next meal would come from. Sublet wrangled with him, but finally gave in. Both men were so weak they could hardly move, and lived in a half-tones land” (Bal veins 146). Starvation, in addition to taking its very evident toll on the body, could also impact a mountain man’s ability to concentrate, putting him in even more danger. Intense hunger could prevent mountain men from being able to trap or even enjoy the time that he was all in “ It had been a terrible journey. They were cold and miserable for two months; they almost died of starvation; they had run constant danger from unpredictable Indians” (Believing 147).

Just as the animals and land around them could impact a mountain man’s physical survival, his fellow mountain men could greatly influence their economic survival. Rendezvous, in addition to being an important social gathering, was also the main location for trappers to gather supplies for the next year. However, mountain men never knew if they would earn enough money trapping, to pay for their goods for the next year. “ The buying and trade ins could be candy rough. A man might have spent most of what he had on whiskey in the first day or two. Then he had to face prices that were marked up as much as ; o thousand percent” (Bal veins 138). If mountain men couldn’t afford to fund their expeditions for the next year, he could find himself in extreme financial and physical danger.

While independence and the unknown could be rewarding enough for some mountain men to overlook the great risk they put themselves in, personally I

would not be willing to do the job of a mountain man. While many men enjoyed their time on the mountain, the risk of animal attack, starvation and bankruptcy are too great for me to want to live that kind of life.