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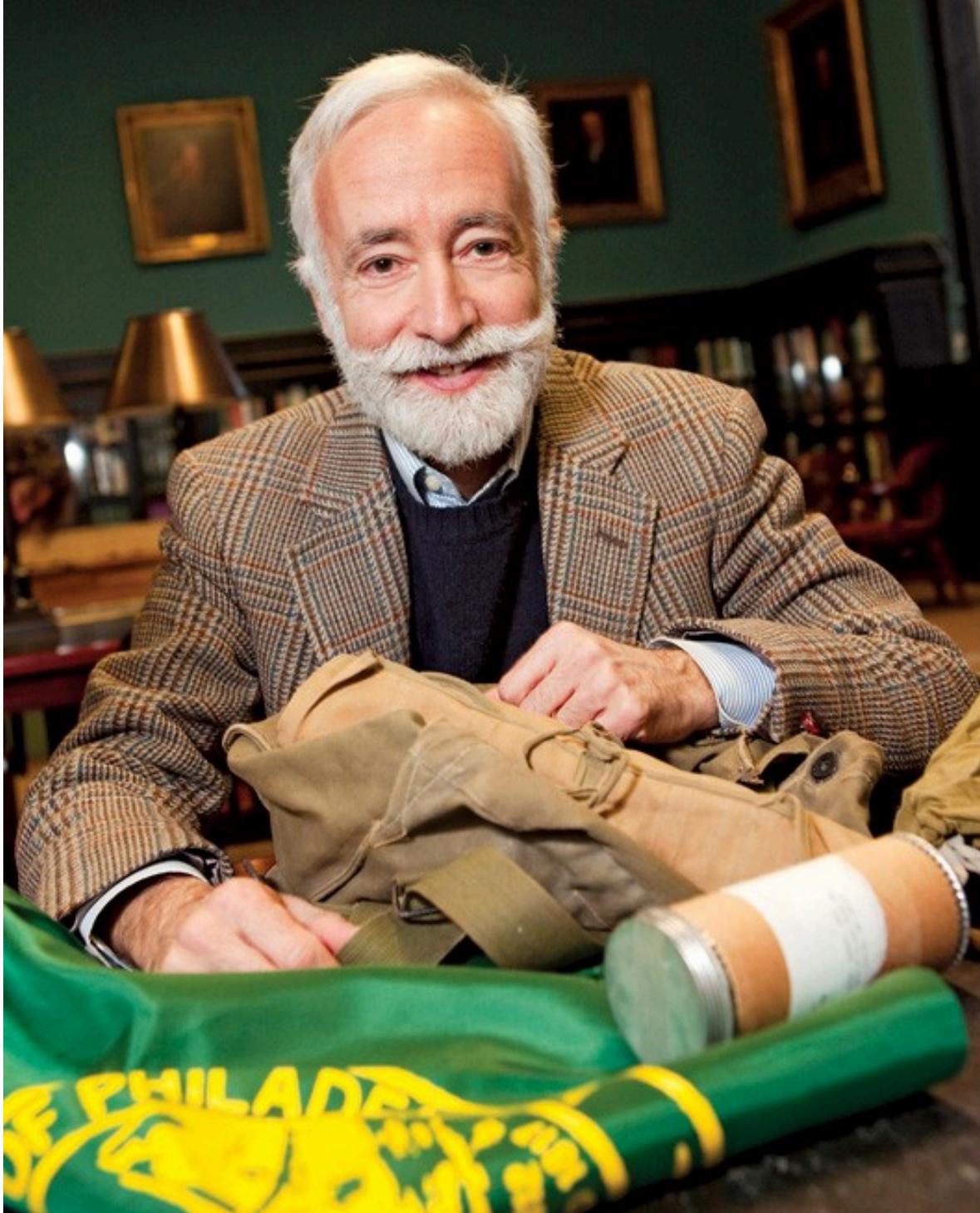
**Lewis & Clark Trail News**  
*Bringing the Trail to Life*  
February 21, 2026



*Photo courtesy of the [Upper Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center](#)*

At the Upper Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center in Fort Benton, you can explore the powerful story of the Missouri River, a lifeline that has shaped the landscape and the people who have lived along its banks for thousands of years. Through engaging exhibits, visitors learn about the river's role in westward expansion, from the awe-inspiring journey of Lewis and Clark to the bustling steamboat era that made Fort Benton the "world's innermost port."

**Moulton Lecture Announced**  
**2026 LCTA Annual Gathering**  
**Great Falls, Montana**  
**June 21 - 24**



**ORDERING THE COSMOS  
CHARLES WILSON PEALE AND THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM  
by Robert McCracken Peck**

In 1790, Charles Wilson Peale announced to the citizens of Philadelphia that he was preparing to open a museum of "objects of natural history and things useful and curious" which he hoped might one day be recognized as a cultural and scientific repository for the nation. It was to represent the culmination of a long and distinguished career in art and science that made Peale one of the most remarkably versatile figures of his age.

Peale's Philadelphia Museum, to which Thomas Jefferson would later give many of the artifacts collected by Lewis and Clark during their pioneering trip across North America, began its focus on the flora and fauna of the Delaware Valley, but quickly

expanded to include other parts of the country and ultimately objects from around the world. It set standards for museums that are still applicable today.

[Robert McCracken Peck](#), senior fellow of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, is a writer, naturalist, and historian who has traveled extensively in North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Mr. Peck is the author of *The Natural History of Edward Lear* (2016), *A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes* (1982), *Headhunters and Hummingbirds: An Expedition into Ecuador* (1987), and *William Bartram's Travels* (1980), and co-author of *All In The Bones: A Biography of Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins* (2008) and *A Glorious Enterprise: The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the Making of American Science* (2012).

An active member of the Explorers Club (which has honored him with its Explorers Award and its "Medal for Integrity and Courage"), Mr. Peck has developed a special interest in the history of exploration, retracing the travel routes of a number of 18th- and 19th-century naturalists, including William Bartram, John James Audubon, Henry David Thoreau, Alexander Von Humboldt, John Burroughs, and John Muir.

Using images of Peale's remarkable collections of paintings and artifacts, Mr. Peck will discuss Peale's seminal contributions to American art and science and place his museum in its broader cultural, artistic and scientific context.

[Meeting](#) and [Hotel](#) Registration available now

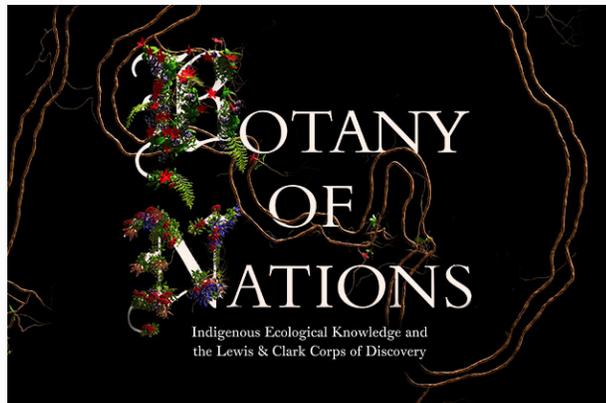
Explore the updated [Meeting Guide](#)

## Botany of Nations

Experience *Botany of Nations*, a groundbreaking exhibition that provides a new perspective on the legendary Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery. Co-curated with Enrique Salmón, PhD, an ethnobotanist and author of *IWÍGARA: The Kinship of Plants and People*, and developed with

contributions from Indigenous cultural historians, *Botany of Nations* offers a culturally layered view of the plants of North America.

Collected on the famous expedition, some of the oldest plant specimens in the country today are housed in the Academy's own Lewis and Clark Herbarium. Learn how the Native Nations Meriwether Lewis met on the trail shaped America's plant knowledge long before Western scientists claimed these "discoveries." Centering the voices of Native Nations who have protected and cared for the lands for thousands of years, *Botany of Nations* presents plants as portals to Indigenous storytelling and knowledge.



**March 28, 2026 - February 14, 2027**

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University  
1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103

## Food of the Expedition



*Images by Jim Rice and John Fisher*

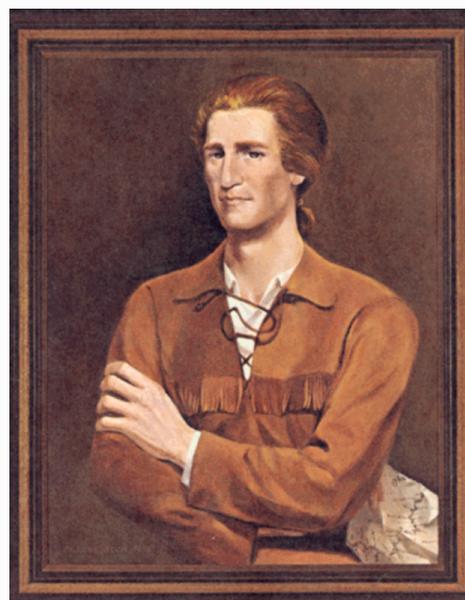
In late December of 1805, while finishing the construction of Fort Clatsop, the expedition learned from passing Indians of a whale stranding down the coast. In early January they had a chance to sample some cooked blubber and resolved to travel to the site to purchase as much as their meager supply of trade goods would allow. Clark reported that Sacagawea showed her strong character by insisting to join the trip to see the "monstrous fish". Clark ultimately brought back "about 300 wt. and a few gallons of oil; Small as this Stock is I prize it highly;"

In 2015, a blue whale came ashore along the Oregon Coast. Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance member and researcher John Fisher obtained authorization to render approximately 30 pounds of blubber for preservation and study. The majority of the processed material was subsequently transferred to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, where it was distributed to museums and educational institutions for interpretive and research purposes.

### Forts of Ohio Tour

Join a unique opportunity with fellow history enthusiasts May 15–18 for a curated, expert-led motor coach tour exploring the forts of western Ohio associated with the post-Revolutionary War period and the Northwest Indian War.

The tour begins with arrival at our staging hotel near the Cincinnati airport on Friday evening, May 15. On Saturday morning, we depart by coach, tracing [General Anthony Wayne's](#) 1794 march north. Highlights include Greenville, Ohio—where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark witnessed the signing of the [Treaty of](#)



[Greenville](#), formally ending the conflict—and a visit to Fort Recovery.

On Sunday, the itinerary includes Defiance, the [Fallen Timbers Battlefield](#), and Fort Meigs in Perrysburg. The day concludes with an evening dinner cruise on the Maumee River.

On Monday, we follow the reverse route of [William Henry Harrison's](#) 1813 campaign, including a visit to the site of the Loramie Trading Post, destroyed by General [George Rogers Clark](#) during the Revolutionary War, before returning to our starting hotel. Every day will include additional stops of interest.

The cost of the excursion is \$375, plus hotel accommodations, two meals on your own, and any expenses incurred on Tuesday. Registration and full payment are due by March 25, 2026. The tour is subject to cancellation if minimum participation is not met.

For information and to register, contact [Lou Ritten](#)

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## LCTA Grants

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance annually provides grants to organizations that need assistance on projects that tell the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. For 2026, 17 organizations received a total of \$94,415 in grant funding.

### Strengthening Cultural Awareness for Students

The Salmon Valley Stewardship received \$8,500 to help fund the annual *Expedition in a Day* in Salmon, Idaho. About 300 local students attend the event—held at the [Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural & Educational Center](#)—that also receives funding from the government and nonprofit organizations.

With guest educators from the region's Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the event strengthens cultural awareness about the Agaidika and Shoshone-Bannock, improves historical knowledge about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and, among other benefits, fosters pride and belonging among local youth.

The educators provide culturally relevant information and lead hands-on learning activities through animal furs, beadwork, and native plants, all designed to cultivate the next generation of stewards of the Salmon River region's cultural and natural heritages.



[Watch a 2-minute video about the Sacajawea Center](#)

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# Lewis and Clark Trail Resurvey 2026

In 2026, [Snapshot USA](#) will conduct a one-time resurvey of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Trail using camera traps to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary. The survey will follow the same protocol as Snapshot USA, but will be restricted to within 80 km of the historic trail and the cameras may be deployed any time during the growing season. Read more about this project in this [summary document](#).

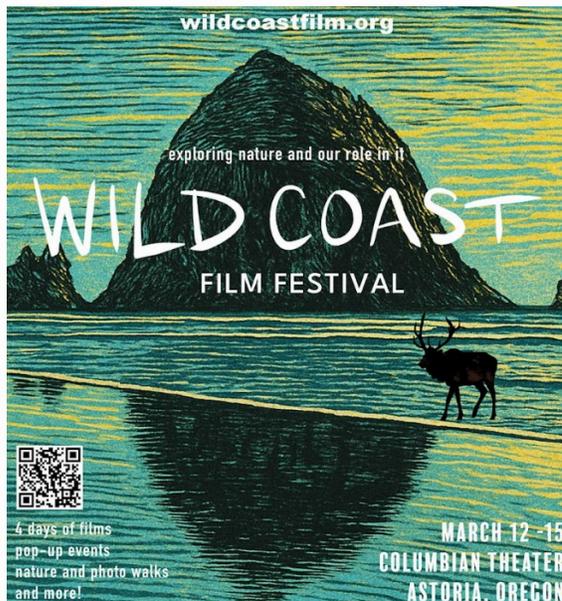


Registration: Please register [through this form](#) if you would like to contribute. You can find detailed protocol instructions [here](#). Please contact Survey Coordinator Brigit Rooney ([rooneybr@si.edu](mailto:rooneybr@si.edu)) with any questions about the project.



Additionally, on Monday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m., (Eastern Time, available through [Smithsonian Associates](#)) conservation biologist [William McShea](#), a leading expert in the use of camera traps for wildlife surveillance, describes how camera technology and the help of citizen scientists make possible the important work of understanding and protecting the creatures who call the American West home.

McShea will explain the development of wildlife observation and tracking protocols and how ordinary people can help advance scientific knowledge of mammals and the ecosystems they inhabit, with this project and beyond. [Register here](#)



## Wild Coast Film Festival

The 3rd annual Wild Coast Film Festival, exploring nature and our role in it, takes place March 12 - 15 at the [Columbian Theater](#) in Astoria, Oregon.

The festival features films by renowned regional and international storytellers and will host a special screening of [Big Medicine: York Outdoors](#).

There are seven film blocks, each approximately two hours long as well as local pop-up events in

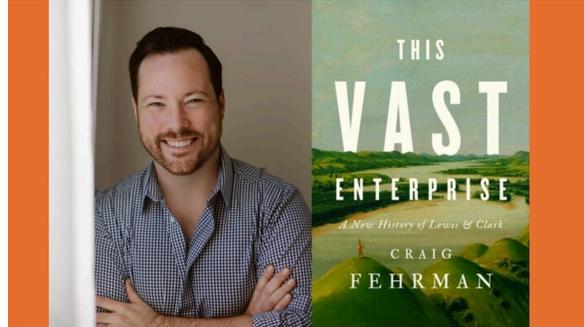
Astoria. These informal gatherings are open to the public and feature special panel discussions. Attendees can eat, drink, and nerd-out on conservation topics.

[Wildcoastfilm.org](http://Wildcoastfilm.org)

# Vast Enterprise

## Zoomcast

Join the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance on February 22 at 4 p.m. (Central Time) for a second online conversation with Craig Fehrman. After his first well-received event—on his groundbreaking forthcoming book, *This Vast Enterprise: A New History of Lewis and Clark* (Simon & Schuster, 2026)—Fehrman will share another round of insights, this time focused on Clark.



In specific, Fehrman will share two new documents: a forgotten memoir written by a Clark family friend and a notebook of Clark's. These documents allowed Fehrman to prove that Clark spent a year at college in Virginia. Forget the bad spelling—William was actually the better-educated of the two captains!

Fehrman will discuss what Clark studied and how it shaped him, first as a military officer and then as an explorer. As in Fehrman's first presentation, attendees can expect a behind-the-scenes look at his research process and a new perspective on Clark's personality and journals.

[Zoomcast Information](#)

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## Day by Day Radio Episodes



[February 21, 1805](#)

At [Fort Mandan](#), [Big White \(Shekeke\)](#) and Big Man tell [Clark](#) that several Mandan men left the [Knife River Villages](#) to consult their Medicine Stone. [Lewis](#)'s hunting party returns

with about 3,000 pounds of meat.

Listen to the full library of [Day by Day broadcasts](#)

Originally aired by [Yellowstone Public Radio](#) during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial observance. These 627 radio episodes parallel the expedition dates starting May 14, 1804, and ending September 25, 1806. They are narrated by Hal Hansen, scripted by Whit Hansen and Ed Jacobson, and produced by Leni Holliman.

### Of Interest

[KY Humanities Magazine](#)

[Listening to America](#)

[Glacier Country MT](#)

[Columbia River Hike](#)

### Grants

[Healthy Forests](#)

[BUILD Grant](#)

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## Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



On Feb. 21, 1805, William Clark made an important journal entry. He delved into one of the many topics that President Thomas Jefferson wrote in his pre-expedition instructions to Meriwether Lewis. Jefferson wanted to learn about the culture, customs, “state of morality, religion, & information among them”—meaning Native Americans encountered by the explorers.

Clark noted that several natives were on their way to visit a sacred site where they believed a stone will inform “them of every thing which is to happen.” Later travelers, like explorer Stephen H. Long and naturalist Prince Maximilian of Wied, also recorded the cultural importance of the site. In the late 1880s, a young rancher named Teddy Roosevelt, wrote that the site was “as fantastically beautiful a place as I have ever seen.” Today, the place—full of history, culture and interesting topography—is a North Dakota state historic.

What is the name of the site? (*Hint*)

[Submit your answer](#)

The Trivia Game winner will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark-related books to choose one from as the prize. The books are used but in excellent shape.

“Smallpox” was the answer to the last newsletter’s trivia question. Although exact death figures are unknown, the estimation is that about 10,000 natives, nearly 50 percent of the population along the Columbia River, were victims of an 1802 smallpox plague. The first Pacific Northwest smallpox plague, in the 1770s, was introduced by Europeans arriving by sea.

Twelve readers correctly answered the question. When more than one reader has the correct answer, a drawing is done. Kathy Baird was the winner.

## Mark Your Calendar



**MAY 15-17:** Join Us in Celebrating America250 and Lewis & Clark in St. Charles

**JULY 2-6:** Keelboat Adventure and Camp for Atchison, KS Fourth of July Celebration

[Lewis & Clark Boathouse and Museum](#)

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## Words of the Expedition

*White Pudding*



*Well, yum, yum, yum...* In his journal entry of May 9, 1805, near today's Fort Peck Reservoir in northern Montana, Meriwether Lewis used the term "white pudding." But...before you get too psyched up with a mental image of a sugary treat, white pudding has no connection to what we think of today.

"White pudding" was Lewis' English translation of a French-Creole term used by expedition member Charbonneau, a French-Canadian: "boudin blanc." Or, in another *delicious* description, buffalo-gut sausage made of fat and organ meat.

Lewis wrote that hunters brought in several buffaloes that morning, one of which he shot. After tasting the sausage subsequently prepared by Charbonneau, Lewis stated, "this white pudding we all esteem one of the greatest delacies of the forrest."

Today, boudin blanc is a classic French delicacy, a white sausage, traditionally enjoyed during Christmas. The phrase dates back to the Middle Ages. Lewis' journal entry is believed to be the first written use of "boudin blanc" in the American West. The term demonstrates the expedition's cultural mix—Americans, French-Canadians and Indigenous People—and shows Lewis' characteristic blend of scientific observation and frontier practicality.

[Read Lewis' journal entry to learn how Charbonneau made "white pudding"](#)

## Share the Adventure!



Help us expand the community by sharing the newsletter with your network. Simply provide this [sign-up link](#) to friends, family, and fellow Trail enthusiasts.

## See all the events on the [LCTE Events Calendar](#)



### [Naturalist Hike](#)

Ponca, NE  
March 14



### [Historic Cooking](#)

Missouri Town  
March 21



### [Celebrating 25 Years](#)

Travelers Rest  
March 31

## Where on the Trail?

Our newest fun feature invites you to guess the location along the Trail.

### [Answer](#)

This aerial photo was taken by aviator and photographer Jim Wark, who began retracing the Lewis and Clark Trail by air in 1999. Many of his photos are featured in articles on our educational website, Discover Lewis & Clark.

[More about Jim and his photos.](#)

[Discover Lewis and Clark](#)



## The Last Word

The previous *Last Word* reflected on the scale and ambition of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland. This week, LCTA National Board Member and Oregon Chapter President Alisha Hamel expands that story, drawing our attention to a powerful and enduring legacy of the fair.

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On November 9, 2025, I was walking through Portland's Washington Park when I came across tributes to Portland's role in the Centennial Exposition—including the Sacagawea statue depicting her with her son Jean Baptiste (Pomp) on her back. It is widely regarded as the first public statue of Sacagawea in the United States. Standing before it, I was reminded that this monument is more than a tribute to the Expedition; it is also a reflection of the political and cultural forces at work in 1905.

The Exposition unfolded during the height of the national campaign for women's suffrage. The National American Woman Suffrage Association raised the funds necessary to commission the statue, deliberately linking Sacagawea's role in the Expedition to the contemporary fight for women's voting rights. The inscription reads:

“Erected by the women of the United States in memory of the only woman in the Lewis & Clark expedition, and in honor of the pioneer mother of old Oregon.”

That language is intentional. Sacagawea is presented as both patriotic participant and pioneer mother—an embodiment of civic virtue and western resilience.

In a senior honors thesis submitted to the University of Utah, Diya Shah examines what she calls the appropriation of Sacagawea by the women's suffrage movement. She argues that suffragists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries elevated Sacagawea into a “mythic heroine,” positioning her as a female patriot in order to advance claims for women's full citizenship—citizenship defined most directly as the right to vote.

As I reflected on this, I was struck by how strategically the suffragists used the historical record. They pointed to the well-known “vote” at the mouth of the Columbia River, when Sacagawea's opinion regarding the winter encampment was recorded alongside those of the men. That journal entry became powerful rhetorical evidence: if a woman's judgment could be trusted in 1805, why not in 1905?



2025



1905

The statue itself was designed by Alice Cooper and unveiled on July 6, 1905. Standing seven feet tall, it was cast in New York using more than twenty tons of Oregon copper. Originally placed at the center of the Exposition grounds, it was relocated on April 6, 1906, to Washington Park, where it remains today.

Walking away that day, I was reminded that public monuments are never just about the past. They reflect the priorities, aspirations, and debates of the era that produced them. In this case, the statue tells two intertwined stories—one of the Expedition itself, and another of the women who, a century later, used Sacagawea's image to argue for a broader and more inclusive definition of American citizenship.

Alisha Hamel

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