



Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
October 3, 2026

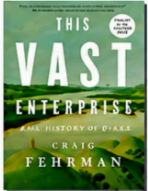
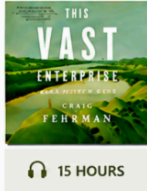
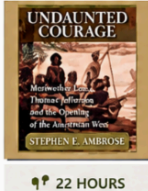
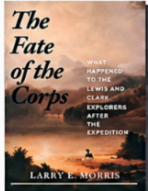
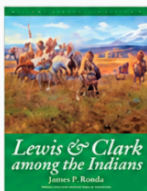


Neat Coulee Slot Canyon, Upper Missouri Breaks

Photo courtesy of Nathan Klatt

New William P. Sherman Digital Library Now Available

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Board of Directors and Library Committee are pleased to introduce the William P. Sherman Digital Library, a new exclusive benefit for LCTA members.

Craig Fehrman This Vast Enterprise  Borrow Read Sample Save This Vast Enterprise is a page-turner and a fantastic achievement. — The New York Times • "Immensely engaging." — The Wall Street Journal	Craig Fehrman This Vast Enterprise  Borrow Play Sample Save 15 HOURS This Vast Enterprise is a page-turner and a fantastic achievement. — The New York Times • "Immensely engaging." — The Wall Street Journal	Stephen E. Ambrose Undaunted Courage  Borrow Play Sample Save 22 HOURS From the New York Times bestselling author of Band of Brothers and D-Day, the definitive book on Lewis and Clark's exploration of the Louisiana...
Larry E. Morris The Fate of the Corps  Borrow Read Sample Save Combines adventure, mystery, and tragedy... a 'Who's Who' of explorers who opened the pathway for an ocean-to-ocean America. — ST...	James P. Ronda Lewis and Clark among the Indians  Borrow Read Sample Save Particularly valuable for Ronda's inclusion of pertinent background information about the various tribes and for his ethnological analysis. A...	Vernon Preston Lewis and Clark  Borrow Read Sample Save By Terry Nathans he weather and climate of the trans-Mississippi west was virtually unknown at the begin- Tning of the nineteenth century. This...

The Digital Library is now available through the Libby website and app, providing members with convenient access to a growing collection of Lewis and Clark-related books and other digital resources. The initial collection includes more than 80 titles, with both eBooks and audiobooks available.

Members can explore the library, browse the catalogue, and begin enjoying the collection at: [Sherman Digital Library](https://www.shermandigitallibrary.org)

The initial launch represents the beginning of what we believe will become an important digital resource for the Lewis and Clark community. The LCTA Library Committee will continue to identify additional titles for inclusion, as well as materials for which LCTA has the necessary rights to digitize and make available to members.

The Digital Library is designed to provide greater value to current members while also creating a new reason for others who share an interest in the Lewis and Clark story to become part of LCTA.

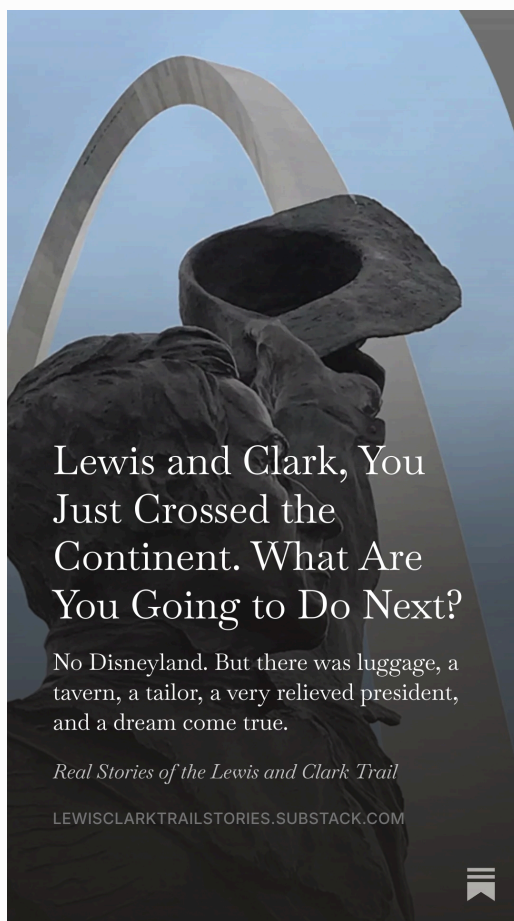
Access to the William P. Sherman Digital Library is an exclusive LCTA member benefit. If you are not currently a member, we invite you to join and take advantage of this new resource, along with the many other benefits of LCTA membership.

[Join LCTA](#)

If you have difficulty accessing the Digital Library or have questions about your account, please contact LCTA at info@lewisandclark.org or 406-454-1234.

New Lewis & Clark Substack Articles

[Subscribe to Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail](#)



Lewis and Clark, You Just Crossed the Continent. What Are You Going to Do Next?

No Disneyland. But there was luggage, a tavern, a tailor, a very relieved president, and a dream come true.

Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail

LEWISCLARKTRAILSTORIES.SUBSTACK.COM



At noon on Sept. 23, 1806, the Corps of Discovery came within sight of St. Louis, fired three rounds, met with three cheers from the townsfolk, and headed for shore. After more than two years away—long enough for many to fear the explorers had perished somewhere beyond the “Stony” Mountains—Lewis, Clark, and their men were home. Or, at least, they were back in town. Now what?

[Read the Article](#)

You know I’m Bad, I’m Bad, You Know It?

How a Stop at the Bad River Turned Worse for Lewis & Clark

LEWISCLARKTRAILSTORIES.SUBSTACK.COM

Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail



If Lewis and Clark had known about Michael Jackson’s moonwalk, perhaps they could have walked back a few bad moments at the Bad River in late September 1804, where they came dangerously close to violence.

What really happened those four volatile days on the Missouri River, when the Corps of Discovery were one breath away from a fight it might not have survived?

[Read the Article](#)

[Subscribe to Undaunted Travel](#)

Into Nez Perce Country

Lewis and Clark, the Bitterroots, and the beginning of a remarkable story

UNDAUNTEDTRAVEL.SUBSTACK.COM

Undaunted Travel



There are a lot of ways to tell the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Importantly, there are the stories of the people who were already living in this country when the Corps of Discovery arrived. Among those stories, the history of the [Nez Perce](#), or Nimiipuu, is one of the most remarkable.

[Read the Article](#)



The Nez Perce

Lewis and Clark Return (twice)

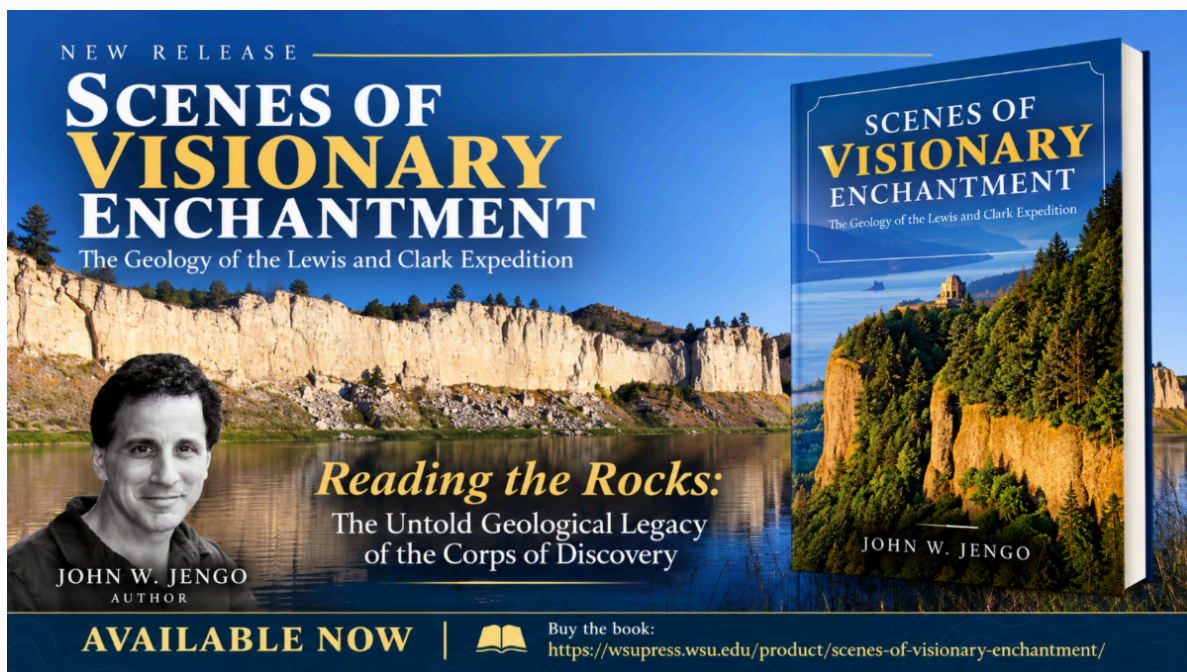
Undaunted Travel

UNDAUNTEDTRAVEL.SUBSTACK.COM



When Lewis and Clark came back to the Clearwater in May 1806, the Bitterroot Mountains were still covered in snow, and the men were anxious to get home. For nearly a month, from May 14 until June 10, the Corps camped near present-day Kamiah, at a place later known as Camp Chopunnish or Long Camp.

[Read the article](#)



LCTA @ REI

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is celebrating National Public Lands Day by bringing the Lewis and Clark Trail directly to outdoor enthusiasts at REI stores across the country.

National Public Lands Day is a great opportunity to introduce new audiences to the stories, landscapes, communities, and experiences that make the Lewis & Clark Trail unique. From hiking and paddling to history, heritage, and cultural exploration, the Trail offers countless ways to get outside and connect with the American story.



[National Public Lands Day](#)



Larry McClure and Jeff Mandell greet a shopper at the REI store in Tualatin, Oregon - September 19

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



The Lewis and Clark Expedition's return to St. Louis in late September 1806 was a grand, joyous occasion. Some folks were surprised—it had been so long since anyone had heard from the explorers that some people believed they had become bleached bones lost somewhere in the wilderness.

St. Louis residents gave the explorers a hero's welcome. This included a ball in their honor. During the celebration, everyone often raised mugs of spirits in a toast. The very last toast of the night was to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark: "Captains Lewis and Clark—Their perilous services endear them to every American heart."

How many toasts were made during the ball?

1. Four.
2. Seven.
3. Eighteen.
4. Twelve.
5. Too much consumption of spirits for anyone to remember.

[Submit your answer](#)

Here's a [hint](#). FYI: Even if you're not playing this trivia game, check out the [hint](#)—it's fun to read the toasts.

The winner of this trivia question will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark books to choose from as the prize.

The answer to the trivia question in the last Trail News was 72 miles, the distance the explorers traveled on the Missouri River on Sept. 19, 1806, as they neared the end of the expedition.

Twenty-one readers submitted the correct answer. When more than one entry is correct, a drawing is held to determine the winner. The winner was Laura Keller.

Photograph by Kris Townsend.

A Remarkable Connection to the Lewis and Clark Expedition



Courtesy Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Two rare Jefferson peace medals recently authenticated by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West offer a remarkable new connection to the people and places encountered by the Corps of Discovery.

The medals were among those carried by Lewis and Clark during the 1804–1806 expedition. One is a large Thomas Jefferson “shell” medal—one of only three of its size carried by the expedition. The second is a two-inch medal, one of just 16 of that size.

Historical research suggests the larger medal may have been presented to Mandan chief Black Cat during a council in October 1804. The smaller medal may be

connected to Cameahwait, Sacagawea's brother and a Shoshone leader encountered by the expedition in 1805. Although these identifications are not considered conclusive, professional numismatist Lawrence Lee determined that the evidence supporting them is strong.

The medals were authenticated as part of an examination of 33 peace medals in the Plains Indian Museum collection, combining historical research with X-ray fluorescence analysis to confirm their metal composition without damaging the artifacts.

Four of the rarest medals are now displayed at the [Buffalo Bill Center of the West](#) in Cody, Wyoming.

Day by Day

Two Canoes Nearly Ready



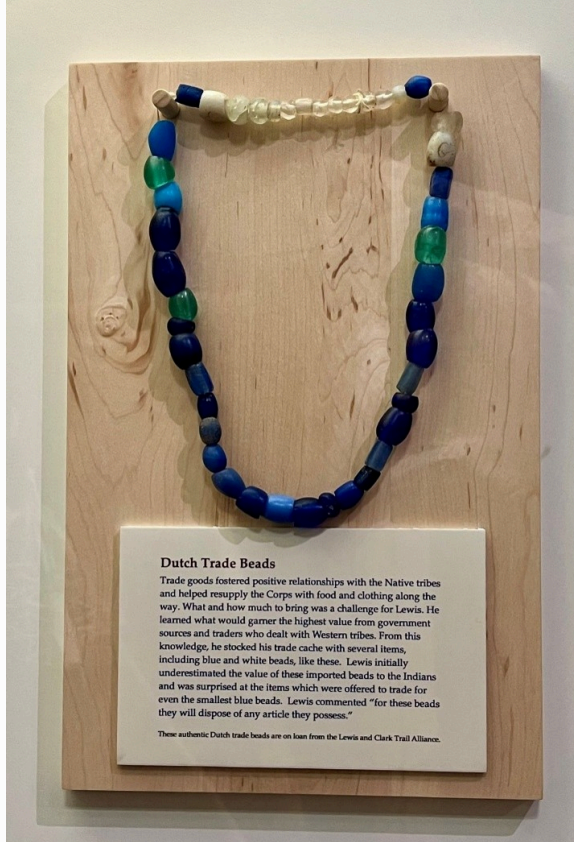
Illustration from the Weippe Discovery Center. Photographed 2013 by Kristopher K. Townsend.

[October 3, 1805](#)

At [Clearwater Canoe Camp](#) near present Orofino, Idaho, the canoe builders—refreshed by yesterday's horse beef—work to finish the five [dugout canoes](#). Two are nearly ready. After dark, the captains take [celestial measurements](#) of the moon.

Beads Tell a Story of Trade and Exchange

Authentic Dutch trade beads dating to before the Lewis and Clark Expedition are now on display at the [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center](#) in Great Falls, Montana, thanks to a loan from the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance's [William P. Sherman Library and Archives](#).



The beads were originally collected by Roger Wendlick, an avid collector of Lewis and Clark artifacts. Following Wendlick's death, longtime LCTA member Phil Barney purchased the beads and donated them to the Sherman Library. Recognizing the opportunity to give these artifacts greater public exposure, the Alliance loaned them to the Interpretive Center for inclusion in its exhibit on early trade goods.

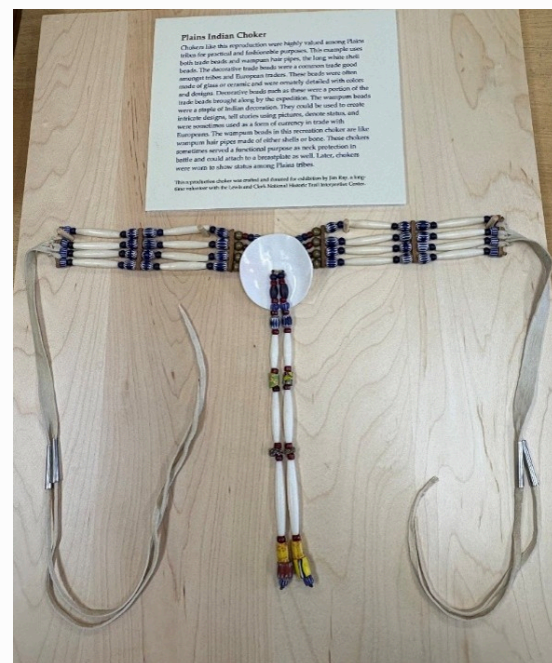
Lewis initially underestimated the value Native people placed on the small, colorful beads. He was surprised by what they were willing to exchange for them, writing in his journals, "For these beads, they will dispose of any article they possess." The blue and white beads carried by the Corps of Discovery could

be exchanged for food, clothing, and other supplies. More importantly, trade goods helped facilitate relationships between the expedition and the Native nations it encountered.

The Portage Route Chapter funded the [trade bead display](#) and a companion exhibit featuring a bead choker created by Jim Ray, a dedicated Interpretive Center volunteer.

The choker incorporates colorful trade beads and wampum hairpipes—the long, white shell beads shown in the accompanying photograph. Chokers served both practical and decorative purposes among Plains tribes. Some provided protection during battle and could be attached to a breastplate, while later examples could signify status.

Trade beads, often made of glass or ceramic and available in a remarkable variety of colors and designs, were widely exchanged between Native peoples and European traders. Wampum, made from shell, was also used for decoration and to convey meaning, status, and, in some circumstances, value in trade.



Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Begins Exhibit Upgrades



The Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, will undergo significant exhibit and facility improvements beginning October 1, 2026. The project is scheduled to continue through March 31, 2027, with the Center reopening to the public on April 1, 2027.

The improvements will include exhibit enhancements, window replacement and lighting upgrades designed to refresh the visitor experience and prepare the Center for its next chapter while continuing to tell the remarkable story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and its enduring connections to the region.

Although the exhibits will be temporarily unavailable, the building will remain open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except during special events. The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance National Headquarters office, the Portage Cache Gift Shop, foyer, restrooms and Resource Room will remain accessible.

The Center's grounds, trails and outdoor attractions will also remain open, providing visitors an opportunity to experience the landscape and views surrounding this important Great Falls landmark.

For more information, call 406-899-7993, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



The Grand Adventure Begins Start of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, 1802-1804



The [Traveler's Rest Connection](#) is pleased to sponsor a nationally acclaimed Lewis and Clark History and Art Exhibit titled "The Grand Adventure Begins – Start of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1802-1804." The exhibit will run from November 1 to January 3, 2027 at the Traveler's Rest State Park, 6717 Highway 12 West, Lolo, Montana. Exhibit hours will be daily, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

The exhibit celebrates the compelling story of the beginning of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Corps of Discovery). In observance of our country's 250th Anniversary, this part of our history is known as the Eastern Legacy of the Corps.

The traditional date and location the Expedition began for many years was May 1804 at the mouth of the Missouri River. The complete story began two years before that. During that time, plans were formed, funding was approved, leaders were chosen, members of the Corps were recruited and the foundation of the

Expedition was laid. These important, critical activities resulted in the ultimate success of the Expedition.

Jean and Steve Ludeman from Welches, Oregon, are honored to be working on this project with the National Park Service and the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance. Their exhibit depicts the Corps of Discovery traveling down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi River, to the mouth of the Missouri River. In 1802-1804, this was the beginning of the epic journey West across the continent.

Words of the Expedition

"Flack"



Not commonly used today, the word “wrack” originated back in the day—way back in the day, as early as the 1100s A.D.—to mean the destruction of a ship by wind, waves, or rocks.

The word had a slightly different use by the Lewis and Clark explorers. For them, the word meant driftwood or floating debris—dangerous items that could damage their boats on the Missouri River.

On June 14, 1804, for instance, the explorers faced a Missouri River rising higher and more clogged with debris due to the early summer runoff. “the River Rose the wrack Run Rappidly we had to S[t]rike Streat Across the River,” wrote Joseph Whitehouse in his journal.

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



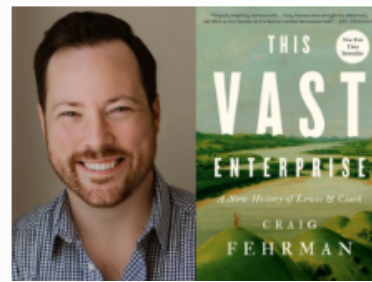
[18th Century Firearms](#)

Fort des Chartes, IL
October 10



[Salt Festival](#)

Big Bone Lick, KY
October 16 - 18



[This Vast Enterprise](#)

Overland Park, KS
November 9

Where on the Trail?

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is filled with fascinating museums, breathtaking landscapes, and historic sites—but it also features the unexpected.

This issue's "Where on the Trail?" spotlights one of these gems. Can you identify where this photo was taken?

[Answer](#)



The Last Word

More People. More Stories. More Discovery.

A little over two years ago, the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance began a focused campaign to expand how we tell the story of the expedition, the people it encountered, and the places that shaped its journey. The results show that more people are discovering—and engaging with—the story.

Since June 2024, annual visitors to our travel site - the *Lewis and Clark Trail Experience*, have grown from 137,000 to 340,000—a 148% increase. Travel page views have increased an extraordinary 684%, from 306,000 to 2.4 million. Our educational outreach is growing, too, with annual visitors to *Discover Lewis and Clark* increasing from 185,000 to 442,000 and page views reaching 3.1 million.

Our digital travel platform now features 2,675 partner listings, 69 curated trips, and 863 events. More than 3,300 people have downloaded our mobile app. Our Substack publications have attracted 853 subscribers since launching in March 2026 with more than 32,000 article reads, while our Facebook page and *All Things Lewis & Clark* Facebook group now reach thousands more people.

These numbers represent more than website traffic. They represent people discovering the Trail, planning journeys, learning history, and connecting with stories that remain relevant more than 200 years later.

A New Benefit for Members

The new William P. Sherman Digital Library adds another valuable dimension to membership. Available through the Libby app, the library already offers more than 80 titles of audio and e-books, with more to come. Access to the Sherman Digital Library is a membership benefit.

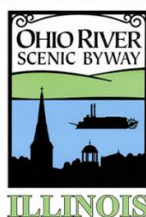
Membership provides more than access to resources. It helps make this growing outreach possible—supporting the Alliance's work to preserve, interpret, and share the Lewis & Clark story while connecting members with publications, programs, digital resources, events, and fellow enthusiasts across the country.

If you are not a member, we invite you to join today and become part of the growing community helping carry the Lewis & Clark story forward. If you are already a member, thank you—and consider inviting a friend, renewing your support, or giving a membership as a gift. Join us in keeping the trail alive, opening the story to new generations, and ensuring that the remarkable legacy of Lewis and Clark continues to inspire discovery for years to come.

Proceeding On

Richard Hunt

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