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Lewis & Clark Trail News

Bringing the Trail to Life

OCTOBER 17, 2026



Western Meadowlark

Photo courtesy of Rick Chromey

It was a Saturday morning in June 1805. One thought was foremost in the mind of Meriwether Lewis. At long last, the explorers would begin assembling his "experiment"—the iron boat." Then, he suddenly heard the lyrical fanfare of a bright-yellow lark. Here's what happened.

Meet Julia Bache Jacobs

LCTA's New Trail Engagement Manager

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance welcomes Julia Bache Jacobs as its new Trail Engagement Manager. With experience in historic preservation, nonprofit leadership, strategic consulting, fundraising, and community programming, Julia brings a strong combination of historical interest and organizational expertise to the role.

A Louisville, Kentucky, native and lifelong history enthusiast, Julia began her heritage work as a volunteer interpreter at Historic Locust Grove, where she portrayed Ann Croghan, William Clark's niece.



Julia earned a degree in Economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, with a minor in American History. She subsequently spent five years with Boston Consulting Group, working on nonprofit strategy, membership development, and marketing for a major travel and tourism brand.

Most recently, as Director of Administration for the St. Charles County Historical Society, Julia led fundraising and volunteer recruitment initiatives, increasing archival volunteers by 90%, and helped develop community history programs.

Connecting People Across the Trail

Julia will focus on strengthening relationships among LCTA members, volunteers, chapters, partner organizations, and communities along the 4,900-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Her work will include supporting local engagement, developing partnerships, encouraging collaborative programming, and connecting communities with LCTA's educational resources and heritage tourism initiatives. Based in St. Charles, Missouri, Julia will help turn LCTA's national priorities into meaningful local connections and opportunities for public engagement.

Please join us in welcoming Julia as we work together to connect more people with the Trail and its many stories.

Behind the Scenes at Yale: A Rare Look at Lewis and Clark Archives

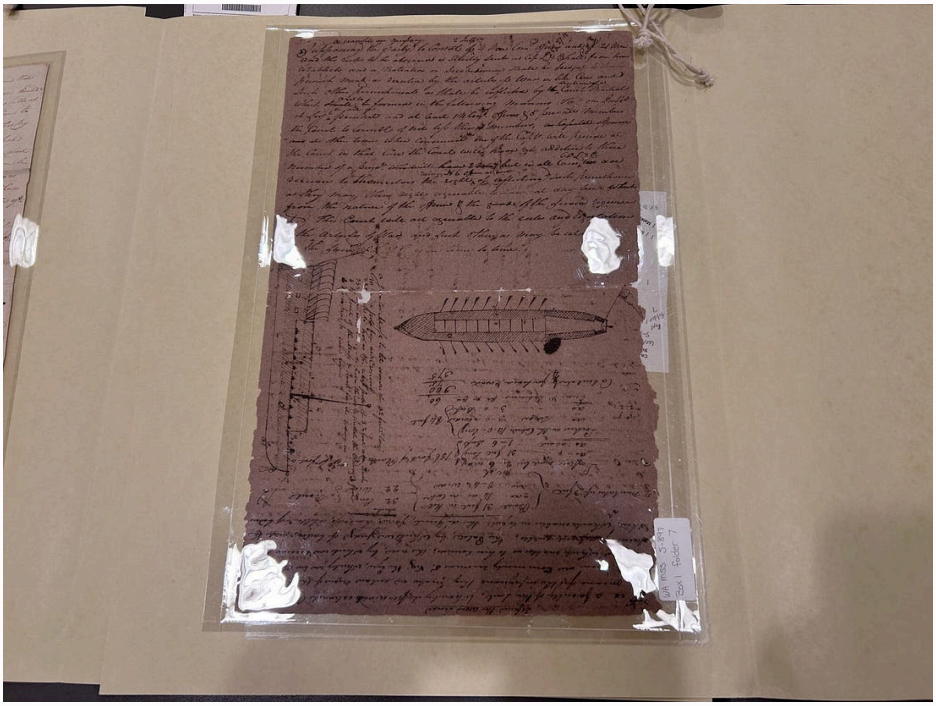
What would it be like to see Lewis and Clark's original maps, field journals, and sketches up close? Craig Fehrman author of *This Vast Empire: A New History of Lewis & Clark*, offers a rare glimpse on his Substack account of the inside of Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, sharing photographs and insights from a special viewing of the expedition's historic records.



Last week, Fehrman joined a group of 20 people at the Beinecke, where Sarah Keyes, one of the library's curators, and her staff assembled a selection of items relating to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Among the highlights was a map Lewis and Clark carried with them. It reveals the limits of their geographical knowledge at the time: they had considerable information about the Missouri River's lower reaches but far less about the country beyond.



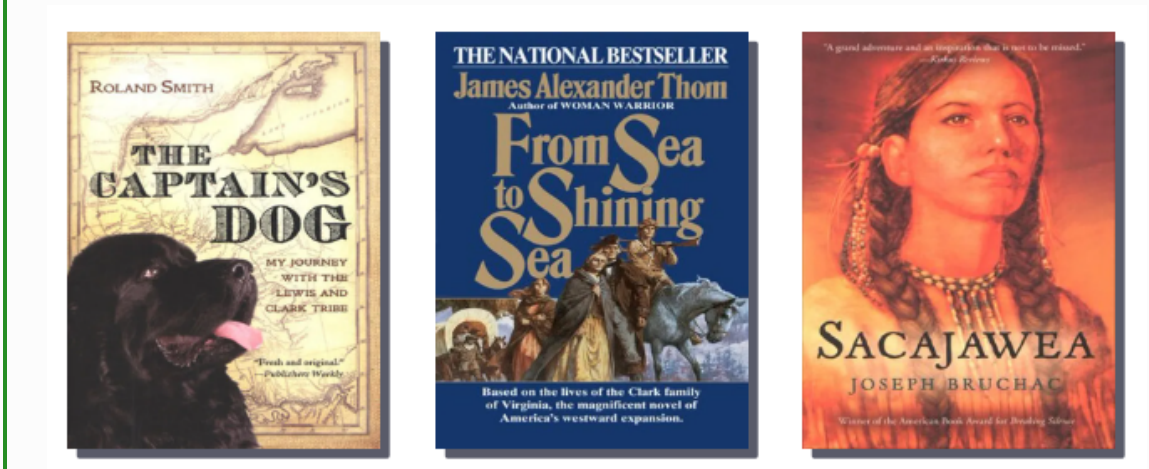
The group also viewed William Clark's well-known sketch of the expedition's barge. As Fehrman observed, paper was precious in the nineteenth century, and Clark made economical use of it.



Fehrman photographed several items during the visit, sharing a selection for those unable to attend. His account offers a fascinating look at the Beinecke's Lewis and Clark collection and the importance of preserving these records for future generations.

Want a peek inside the archives? Read Fehrman's Substack article, A Secret Peek at the Beinecke's Lewis and Clark Holdings, to see his photographs and learn more about this special visit.

Have you checked out the William P. Sherman Digital Library?



The LCTA Sherman 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

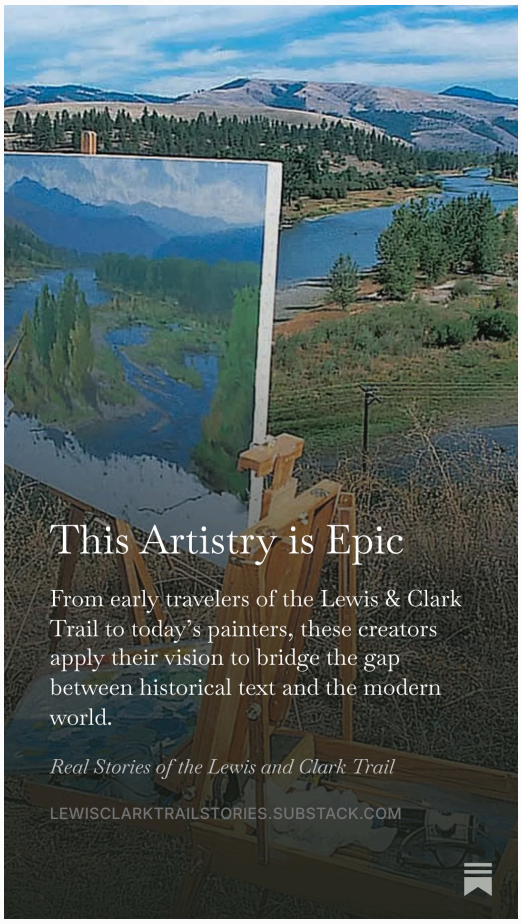
Access to the William P. Sherman Digital Library is an exclusive LCTA member benefit. If you are not currently a member, we invite you to join and take advantage of this new resource, along with the many other benefits of LCTA membership.

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.

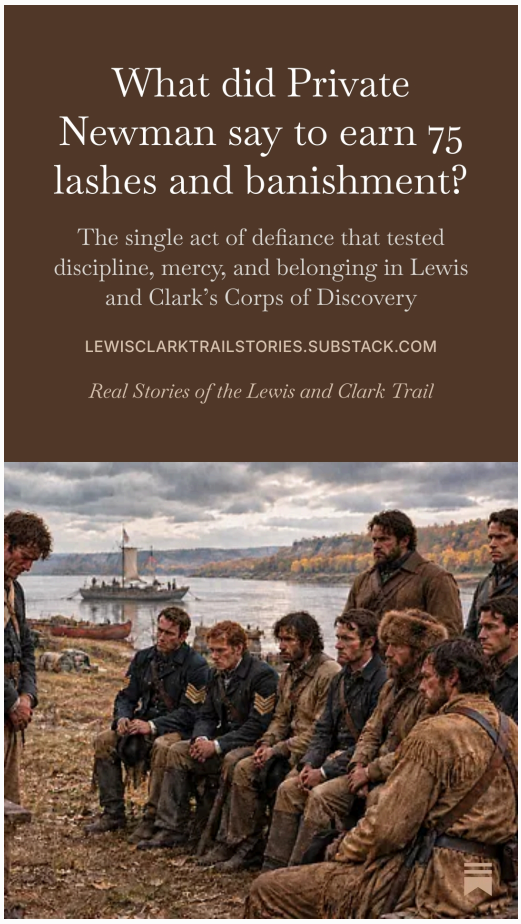
New Lewis & Clark Substack Articles

Subscribe to Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail



Lewis and Clark expedition members may have written the story down in words and sketches, but artists have spent generations helping us see it from a wider angle. Their paintings, drawings, and photography don't just illustrate the trail—they open it up, revealing new details, new voices, and a broader way of understanding not only the expedition but the world it moved through.

Read the Article



On October 14, 1804 somewhere above the Arikara villages on the Missouri River in present-day North Dakota, Private John Newman was lashed 75 times on his bare back before his assembled companions of the Corps of Discovery. As an Arikara chief watched in distress and pleaded for the soldier, it marked one of the starkest episodes of military crime and punishment on the expedition. Who was Private Newman, and what did he say to prompt such a reaction?

Read the Article

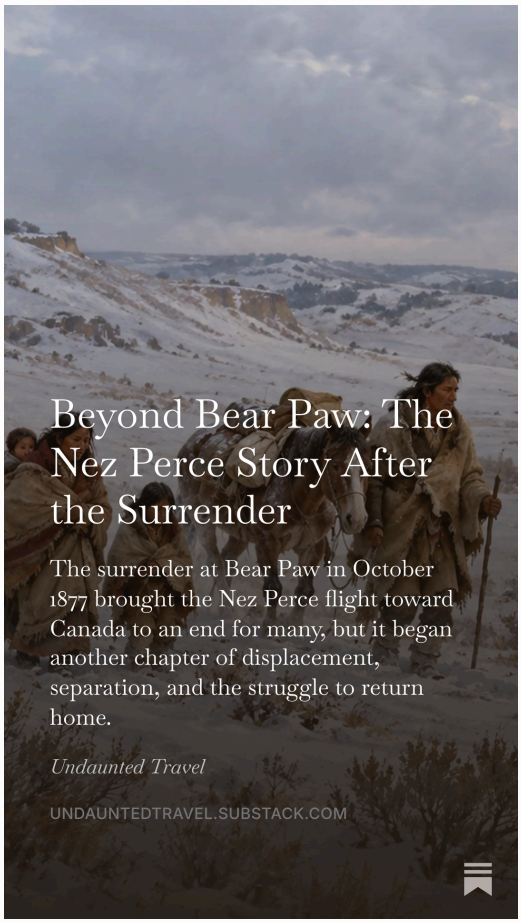
Subscribe to Undaunted Travel



The Nez Perce National Historic Trail extends approximately 1,170 miles from the Wallowa Valley of northeastern Oregon to the Bear Paw Mountains of north-central Montana.

Designated by Congress in 1986, the Trail follows the approximate route taken by the non-treaty Nez Perce during their 1877 flight from the U.S. Army. From Weippe to approximately Big Hole, the route is parallel to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

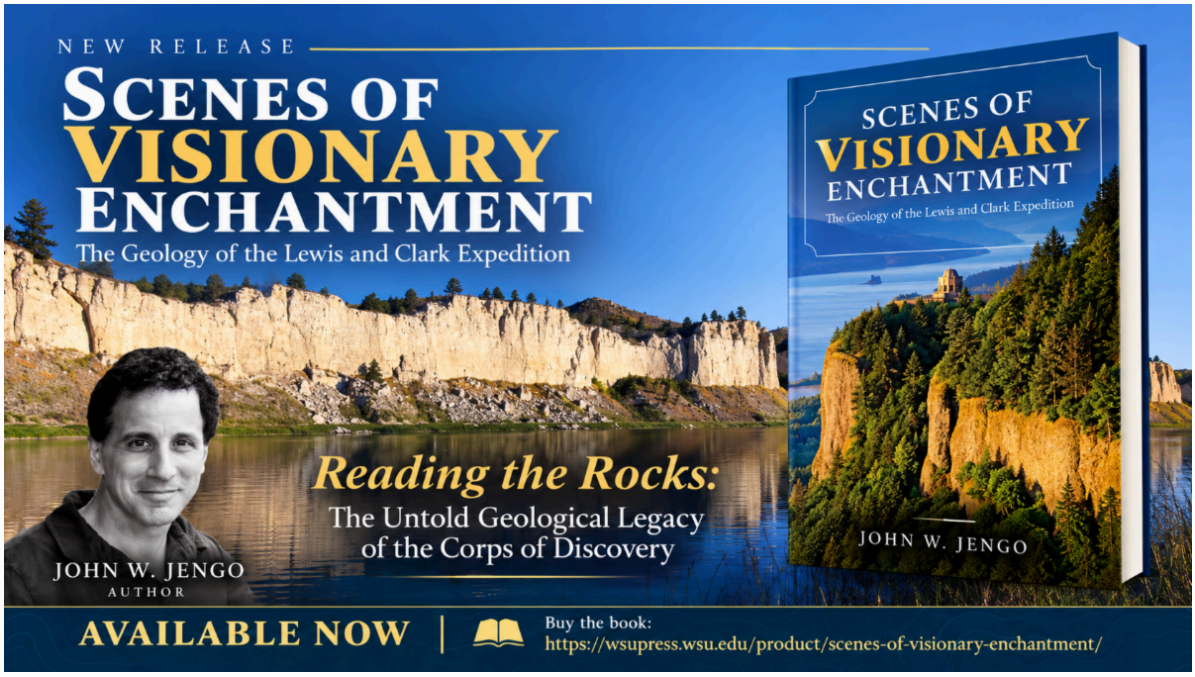
Read the Article



On October 5, 1877, Hinmatóowyalahtq̓it, known to the world as Chief Joseph, surrendered to Colonel Nelson A. Miles at Bear Paw in northern Montana. The Nez Perce people, who had traveled hundreds of miles seeking to protect their families and homelands, had endured weeks of pursuit and fighting. Many expected that surrender would allow them to return to Idaho, where they could reunite with their relatives and begin rebuilding their lives.

That did not happen.

Read the article



Scenes of Visionary Enchantment, John Jengo's new book on the geology of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is now available for purchase.

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



Wishram Women Drying Salmon (c. 1910) by Edward S. Curtis Library of Congress.

On October 17, 1805, the Corps of Discovery was temporarily paused at the confluence of the Columbia and Snake rivers.

With two companions, William Clark paddled a small canoe for about 10 miles up the Columbia River and visited lodges inhabited by local Natives. He noted in his journal that the river was “remarkably Clear and Crouded with Salmon in maney places.”

His journal entry also emphasized the Natives had been busy doing what?

Submit your answer

A hint: Check out the day on Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance's educational website.

Learn more about how Natives prepared salmon.

The trivia question in the last Trail News asked how many toasts were given at a ball held in the explorers' honor after their 1806 return to St. Louis. The answer was 18 toasts. (Take a look at the toasts.)

Thirteen readers submitted the correct answer. If more than one correct answer is submitted, a drawing is done to determine the winner. The winner was Rick Chromey.

Day by Day

Wine with Colonel Rodney

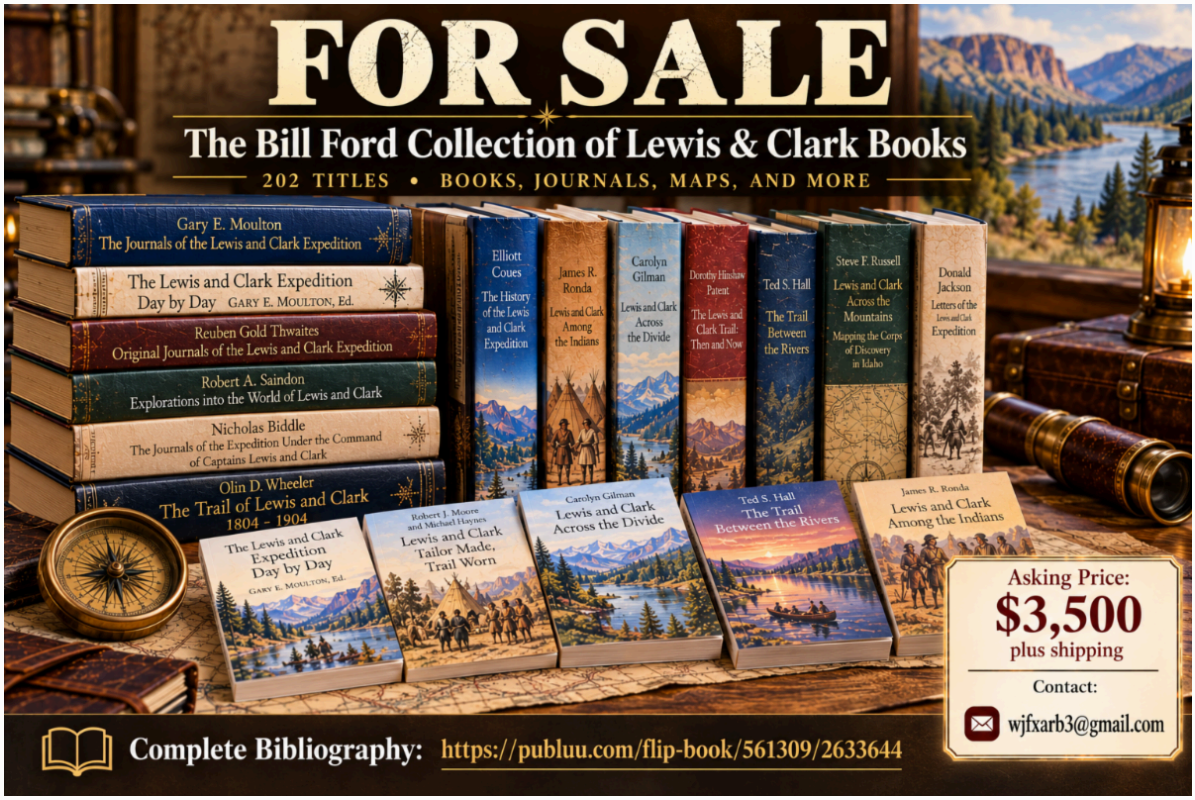


Colorized from an original image courtesy the Filson Historical Society, Louisville.

October 17, 1803

Clark and Lewis share wine with Thomas Rodney whose bateaux is moored at the Louisville landing at Beargrass Creek. Rodney mistakenly thinks Clark's brother, George Rogers Clark, is William's father.

In Washington City, President Jefferson gives his third Annual Message to Congress. He does not mention the western expedition to the Pacific, but discusses occupying and acquiring Native Nation homelands.



The Bill Ford Book Collection is for sale. This is a unique opportunity for a library, historical institution, researcher, collector, or Lewis and Clark enthusiast to acquire a substantial collection of books devoted to the Lewis and Clark Expedition and its enduring legacy.

Whether you are building a new research library, expanding an existing collection, or deepening your personal library, this collection offers an opportunity to bring together a wealth of literature about the Expedition, its people, and the history of the American West.

Bibliography - Email Contact

Words of the Expedition

“Pan”



In our world today, the word “pan” typically refers to the pan you cook food in, usually a flat-bottomed cooking utensil, such as a frying pan, skillet, or sauté pan.

In the time of Lewis and Clark, “pan” had other common meanings. Back then, a pan was the part of a flintlock that held a priming charge of black powder. (Note: sometimes the powder would flare brightly in the pan without firing the shot—thus, the origin of today’s term “flash in the pan” to describe something or someone that makes a big splash at first but quickly fizzles out.)

In his journal entry on August 22, 1805, Meriwether Lewis, in his creative use of spelling, recounted a story of that day of how George Drouillard pursued and caught a Native who stole Drouillard’s weapon: “the fellow (the Native man)… discovering that he must yeald the gun had p[r]esents of mind to open the pan and cast the priming before he let the gun escape from his hands.”

The thief’s actions made it impossible for Drouillard to shoot him until he had reprimed the weapon from his powder horn. This delay gave the man time to flee.

…And, lest you think “pan” was only a reference to weaponry for the explorers, on that same day of August 22 another journal-keeper, John Ordway, used the word in a joint reference to fishing and cooking: “…we being out of fresh meat and have but a little pork or flower we joined and made a fish drag of willows and caught 520 fine pan fish.” Such a fish was any that was easily caught and small enough to fit in a frying pan. Pan fish is a term still in use today

Read the journal entries for August 22, 1805.
It was an interesting day of conflict, friends, and discovery.

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Results

made possible with your support!



198 River Miles

49 Days





1,043 Trash Bags
285 Tires Recovered
6,339 Airplane Bottles
16 Refrigerators
973 Volunteer Hours

42,465 pounds of TRASH

"Thank you Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance for your continued support of the work of Missouri River Relief." *Becca Ray, MRR Grant Manager*

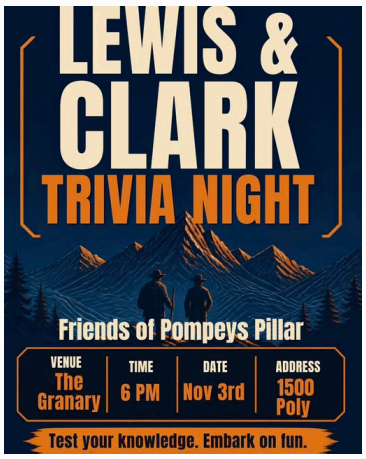
Missouri River Relief is a Bicentennial Trail Stewardship Grant Awardee

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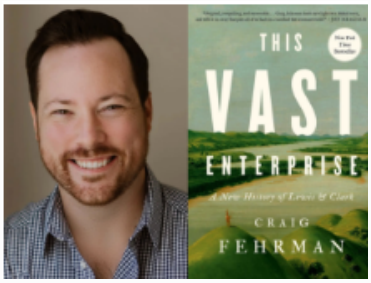
See all the events on the LCTE Events Calendar



Candle Making
Fort Osage, MO
October 24



Trivia Night
Pompeys Pillar, MT



This Vast Enterprise
Overland Park, KS
November 9

November 3



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

History, AI and the LCTA

What happens when the next generation learns the story of Lewis and Clark from a machine?

AI is rapidly changing how people find information. Ask a question about the Expedition or the National Historic Trail, and an answer appears in seconds. It is convenient and offers tremendous potential to introduce new audiences to history. But AI can also repeat errors, omit important context, and present misinformation with confidence.

That makes the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance's work more important than ever.

Our educational website, lewis-clark.org, reflects decades of scholarship and historical research. Our travel website, lewisandclark.travel, connects that knowledge to the places and communities where people can experience the Trail firsthand. These resources help ensure that reliable information remains available to those seeking to understand the Expedition and its legacy.

As AI becomes a growing source of information, LCTA has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to help keep the story accurate, accessible, and inclusive. That means supporting scholarship, maintaining our digital resources, and recognizing the many perspectives essential to understanding our shared history.

This is why LCTA matters. We are not simply preserving the past; we are helping shape how future generations will understand it.

Every member, volunteer, donor, and partner has a role in that work. Support our mission, share our resources, and help bring the Trail's stories to new audiences. In a world where answers are increasingly generated in seconds, let's ensure that the knowledge behind them is worth trusting—and that LCTA remains a keeper of the story for generations to come.

Proceeding On

Richard Hunt

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