[View Entire Newsletter]





Bellefontaine Cemetery

Grave of William Clark

Photo by Tom Elpel

The winners of the 2026 LCTA Photo Contest have been selected! Fourteen outstanding photographs will be featured in issues of Trail News and showcased in the LCTA 2027 Calendar. Calendars are now at the printer and will be mailed as a special gift to our Sustaining Members in recognition of their generous financial support.

You can enjoy these remarkable images of the Lewis and Clark Trail while helping support LCTA's mission. Purchase a 2027 calendar or become a Sustaining Member today to receive as a gift. Your support helps us preserve, interpret, and share the stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail for future generations.

Stevenson Students Retrace the Lewis and Clark Journey



For 20 years, Stevenson, Washington, High School students have taken their study of the Lewis and Clark Expedition beyond the classroom and onto the water. Each year, junior and senior students undertake a five-day, 132-mile-plus kayak journey down the Columbia River, from Beacon Rock to Astoria. The adventure serves as the culmination of a year-long study of the original expedition.

Students explore the history, geography, and challenges of the Corps of Discovery before experiencing a demanding journey of their own, one that requires preparation, teamwork, and perseverance.

Stevenson teacher Bill LaCombe has led the program since its inception, with assistance from fellow teacher Kevin Edwards. Their commitment, combined with the contributions of community volunteers serving as boat operators and chaperones, makes this unique educational experience possible.

Twenty years later, the program continues to connect historical study with firsthand experience, giving students a deeper appreciation of the Columbia River and the challenges Lewis and Clark faced more than 200 years ago.



In recognition of his dedication to this program, LaCombe was recently named Teacher of the Year by the LCTA Oregon and Washington Chapters.

The award was presented by Rennie Kubik and Alisha Hamel.

LaCombe is scheduled to share the story of the Stevenson expedition at the 2027 LCTA Annual Gathering at Skamania Lodge in September.

View the Stevenson High School Lewis and Clark kayak journey on YouTube.

LCTA Member Tony Turnbow Explores the Secret Life of Meriwether Lewis

What if Meriwether Lewis's final journey was about more than returning to Washington—and what if his mysterious death was connected to a secret mission

for President Thomas Jefferson?

In *Jefferson's Spy: The Secret Life of Meriwether Lewis*, LCTA member Tony L. Turnbow explores this intriguing possibility. Drawing on newly discovered documents, including Lewis's last will and testament,



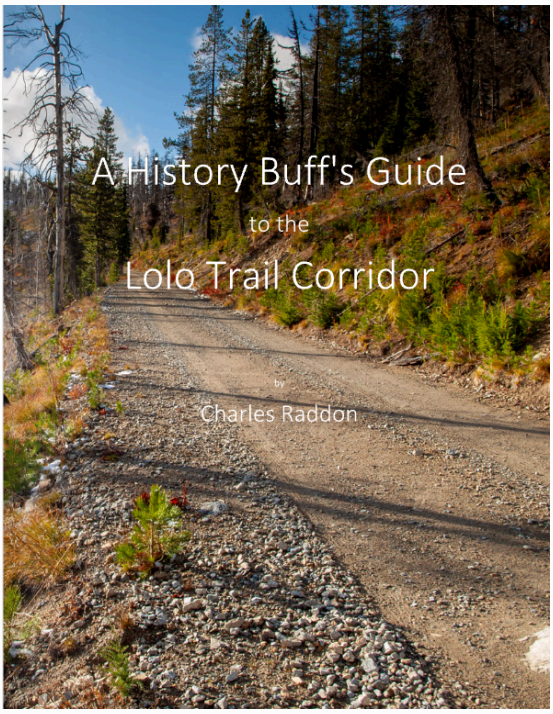
Turnbow presents evidence that Lewis may have conducted intelligence-gathering activities involving Spanish-controlled Texas and Santa Fe. He offers a fresh interpretation of Lewis's final days and the circumstances surrounding his death in 1809.

Join LCTA on **December 6, at 4 p.m. Central Time**, for a special Zoom lecture as Turnbow presents his research and makes his case.

Registration: Click here to register.
Registrants will receive a separate invitation with Zoom login credentials.

The latest feature in the Sherman Digital Library

An additional feature of the new LCTA Sherman Digital Library is the ability to publish books, articles, research, and other content online when LCTA holds the appropriate publication and distribution rights. Our first example is Charles (Chuck) Raddon's *Guide to the Lolo Corridor*, which is now available through the Digital Library.



Have you written a book, published an article, or developed research related to the Lewis and Clark story, the Trail, or its history? We invite our member authors to share their work and help make it accessible to a wider audience.

If you own the rights and are willing to grant LCTA permission to publish your work digitally, we encourage you to submit it for consideration. With your participation, we can make the knowledge, research, and stories created by our members available to readers for years to come.

Approved submissions will become part of the Sherman Digital Library collection.

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.

Lewis & Clark Substack

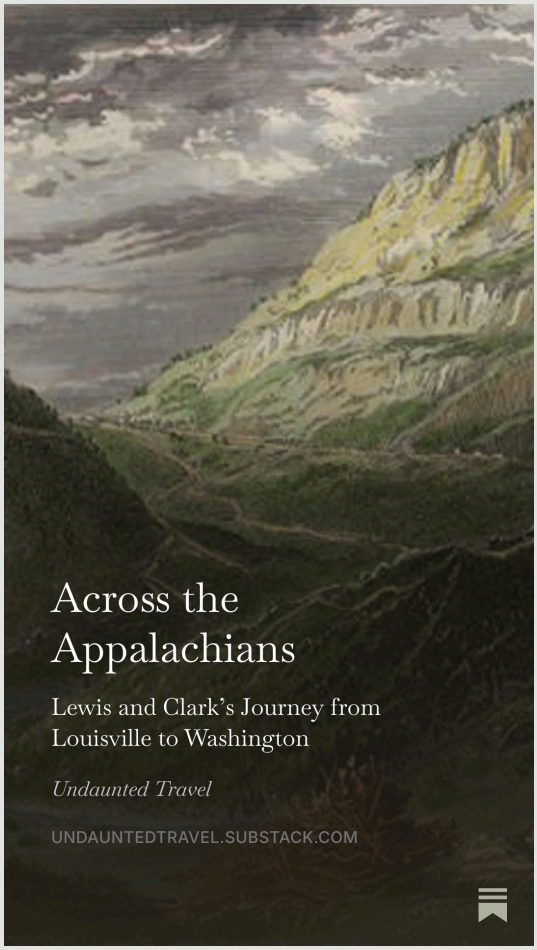
A Membership Benefit Worth Discovering

We're expanding Real Stories of the Lewis & Clark Trail with the introduction of paid content for selected exclusive articles. This new offering will provide readers with access to additional in-depth stories, research, and historical discoveries while helping support the continued development of quality historical content.

LCTA members will continue to enjoy access to this exclusive content as a membership benefit. For nonmembers, subscribing offers another way to explore these stories—and an opportunity to discover the added value of joining the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

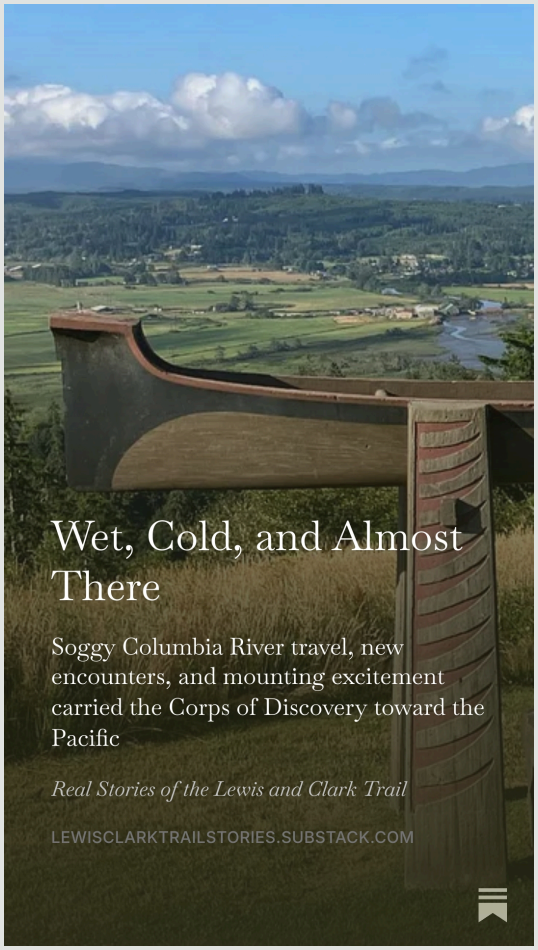
It's another great reason to become part of LCTA. If you enjoy exploring the history of the Trail, join LCTA today and receive access to these exclusive articles as one of your membership benefits!

Visit to become a member.



When Lewis and Clark reached Louisville on November 5, 1806, their journey home was far from over. Washington City lay hundreds of miles to the east, beyond the hills and mountains of Kentucky and Virginia. There was also unfinished business. Meriwether Lewis had been entrusted with bringing Sheheke-shote (Big White), a Mandan leader, to meet President Thomas Jefferson.

Read the article



On October 31, 1805, William Clark walked downstream through a cloudy, rainy morning to examine the obstacles still separating the Corps of Discovery from the Pacific. Behind him, men wrestled dugout canoes past the Cascades of the Columbia, hauling them over rocks and maneuvering them through channels of rushing water. Ahead lay something different.

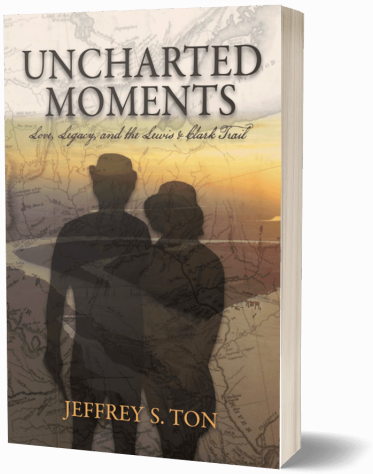
Read the article

Uncharted Moments

In *Uncharted Moments*, Jeff Ton recounts a six-year journey following the Lewis & Clark Trail with his wife, Carmen, an adventure that began as historical curiosity and became something far more personal.

What started as a shared interest in the Corps of Discovery evolved into a deeper exploration of love, legacy, sacred places, and the unexpected ways our lives unfold.

Buy Uncharted Moments from Bookshop.org



Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



Photo by Jim Wark, published in Discover Lewis & Clark.

On Nov. 14, 1804, the expedition was wintering over at Fort Mandan in today's North Dakota. The explorers were low on food. Hunters had been sent out to bring in fresh meat, but they were long overdue. Finally, the hunters returned days later; ice on the Missouri River had delayed them. Their arrival was good news; they had killed, William Clark wrote in his journal, "32 Deer, 12 Elk & a Buffalow…a timeley supply."

The hunters had so much fresh meat that it filled what?

1. A birch-bark canoe.
2. Their backpacks.
3. A Ford truck.
4. A pirogue.
5. The hold of the barge (or, as some folks today prefer, the keelboat).

Here's a hint: The answer is most likely not "A Ford Truck."
If you're still stumped, click here.

Submit your answer

The winner of this trivia contest will receive an email with a list of books about the expedition. The winner can choose one book to receive as the prize.

The answer to the trivia game in the last Trail News was Beacon Rock, which the explorers sighted on Oct. 31, 1805, as they headed down the Columbia River. Twelve readers submitted the correct answer. If more than one entry has the correct answer, a drawing is held. The winner was Jane Meirose.

New book from Robert Bartsch



No one witnessed Meriwether Lewis die. For more than 200 years, we've been told there are two possible explanations for Meriwether Lewis's death: Suicide or Murder!

But there's a problem with both explanations. The woman whose account became central to the story wasn't an eyewitness. And her descriptions of what happened that night are fraught with inconsistencies and contradictions. So how much can we really know about what happened at Grinder's Stand in October 1809? That question led Robert Bartsch to write *Meriwether Lewis: Lost American Hero*.

But Lewis's story extends far beyond the mystery of his death. Discover the overlooked years following the famous expedition and reconsider the legacy of a man whose contributions to the young American nation deserve far greater recognition.

Read the story that history often leaves untold.

Osages in Missouri



The LCTA Southern Prairie Region recently hosted an online presentation featuring *Wahzhazhe Missouri,* a powerful video produced by the Osage Nation. Introduced by Linda Vogt, Southern Prairie Region board member, the presentation explores the history, heritage, and continuing presence of the Osage people in Missouri and the surrounding region.

Through the voices of Osage tribal leaders, elders, and historians, the video examines Osage migrations, ancestral lands, cultural traditions, and enduring connections to the landscape. It offers an important opportunity to hear the Osage story in their own words and gain a deeper understanding of the people whose history is closely connected to the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Watch the Osage video, Wahzhazhe Missouri,
and discover this important story of Missouri's Native heritage.

Day by Day

End of the Ohio



Confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio
photo by Richard Hunt

November 14, 1803

The expedition moves down the Ohio and sets up a camp at its confluence with the Mississippi. Lewis is ill, but he finds relief from a strong laxative found in Rush's bilious pills.
In Washington City, "An Account of Louisiana" is presented to Congress. The report includes information about a mountain of rock salt and Spanish land grants.

Arriving at the Mouth of the Ohio

> *[P]assed Wilkinson ville about 12 Oclock oposite to which is the first or great chain of rocks streching in an oblique manner across the Oho this evening landed on the point at which the Ohio and Mississippi form there junchon*

—Meriwether Lewis



Browse Roger's art at Etsy

2026 National Bison Day



Pictured are ORC members Joan Jackson (with family members), Claire Kolkmeyer (Big Bone Lick State Historic Site animal care specialist), Adopt-A-Bison chairperson Jerry Wilson, Lorna Hainesworth, Mike Losech, Lorraine Losech, and Janice Wilson

On November several Ohio River Chapter members attended the annual National Bison Day commemoration at Big Bone Lick State Historic Site near Union, Kentucky. The chapter donates one year food and vet care for one Bison from the park's herd, We call this event Adopt-A-Bison. As of 2016, the American Bison is the official mammal of the United States which means it enjoys the same statis as the Bald Eagle. National Bison Day is always the first Saturday in November. The Ohio River Chapter is proud to make this year our tenth annual donation.

Big Bone Lick State Historic Site is part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Meriwether Lewis visited the site in 1803 as he was moving down the Ohio River on his way to meet Clark at the Falls of the Ohio. William Clark visited the site after the expedition in 1807.

Words of the Expedition

“Falling weather”



“Falling weather”—that’s a term seldom used these days. The first documented use in English was in 1639. It is occasionally used in some U.S. regions—particularly in the Midwest—to describe challenging weather: rain, snow or hail. Today, it’s commonly used by some meteorologists, but you may not hear it on the TV weather cast since the term is uncommon.

Lewis and Clark were avid weather-watchers; they knew meteorological information was important not only for the expedition but also to President Thomas Jefferson. They used “falling” weather in their journals. In their time, it was a colloquial phrase, too—not a technical scientific term. It was more of a description of rainy conditions that made travel difficult, caused river crossings to be more dangerous, and affected food preservation.

Artwork: Computer-generated.

See all the events on the LCTE Events Calendar



US Capitol Christmas Tree
Various
October 29 - December 25



Arrival Weekend
Camp Dubois, Illinois
December 12 - 13



Washington's Generals
Greenville, Ohio
December 12

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





[Pacific Northwest LCTA]

The Last Word - Momentum

There is something exciting happening around the Lewis and Clark story, and I think the word for it is momentum.

This week, author Craig Fehrman visited Kansas City on his book tour for *This Vast Enterprise,* taking time to meet exclusively with LCTA Southern Prairie members before speaking to a sold-out audience at the Johnson County

Library. On Thursday, we learned that Barnes & Noble had selected his book as its Nonfiction Book of the Year. Quite an accomplishment!

It reinforces what we have been seeing: public interest in the Lewis and Clark story remains strong, and a new audience is discovering its depth and relevance. Craig is among many talented LCTA member authors contributing to this interest, including John Jengo, Tony Turnbow, Chris Hodges, Bob Bartsch, Dennis Figg, Jeff Ton, Ted Hall, and others. Their work brings new research, perspectives, and stories to an eager audience.

Momentum is more than growing numbers. It happens when authors, chapters, libraries, historic sites, communities, and partners begin reinforcing one another's efforts. Each creates opportunities for the next.

Our challenge at LCTA is to harness that momentum and turn it into lasting impact through education, heritage tourism, recreation, and stronger partnerships.

The interest is there. The talent is there. The opportunities are greater than ever.

Momentum doesn't happen by accident. It comes from people who believe in something and keep moving forward together. I believe LCTA is building that momentum, and our best days are still ahead.

Best Regards

Richard Hunt

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