



We Proceeded On

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November 2004 Volume 30, No. 4

THE ARMY OF LEWIS & CLARK



MICHAEL HAYNES

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT • MYSTERIOUS JOHN PERNIER

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In this rendering by artist Michael Haynes, a platoon of infantry soldiers stands at attention at Fort Massac, on the Ohio River, in the fall of 1803. Post commander Captain Daniel Bissell and his friend Captain Meriwether Lewis are deep in discussion. Standing behind the two officers is interpreter and hunter George Drouillard. Lewis recruited fourteen of Bissell's men for the first phase of the expedition, but most returned from Fort Mandan in the spring of 1805 and did not accompany the Corps of Discovery to the Pacific. For more on the crucial role of the military in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, see Sherman J. Fleek's article beginning on page 8. More Haynes art can be found on his Web site, www.mhaynesart.com.



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Letters

Map maker Plamondon was Clark's alter ego

Thanks for your tribute to cartographer Martin Plamondon II (Passages, August 2004). This trusted friend, whose three-volume *Lewis & Clark Trail Maps: A Cartographic Reconstruction* is his lasting monument, was every bit the giant and trailblazer as his hero William Clark, and with the same easy-going demeanor and lightness of smile. I once heard historian John Logan Allen say, "If Clark walked into a room and met you for the first time I believe you would like him immediately." That sentiment applies to Martin as well.

I'm an airline pilot, and on long layovers in Tokyo or London I like to read Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage* and pore over the maps Martin created. In the short hours we spent together I asked Martin many questions about the L&C Trail. If we were talking at his house, sometimes in response to a question he would disappear for a moment and return with one of the original maps he had drawn.

He recognized the mistakes Clark made in his celestial sightings and understood what was going through Clark's mind when he recorded every bend in the river, angle of the sun, and eddy of the Missouri. Listening to Martin talk about Clark, I could feel the captain's aching feet at the Three Forks, his hunger on the Lolo Trail, and his exhilaration upon sighting what he thought was the Pacific ("Ocian in view!").

When Martin died, I believe he found an old friend waiting for him—a friend who greeted him warmly and showed him some maps he had just finished. Martin Plamondon, like William Clark, has proceeded on. I will miss him and am grateful to have known him.

J.P. BROOKS
Camas, Wash.

EDITOR'S NOTE. Our obituary for Martin Plamondon neglected to mention that he was the 2003 recipient of the LCTHF's Distinguished Service Award.

Bear-claw necklace

Thank you for your recent review of my book, *Arts of Diplomacy*, and for running



the news item "Lost Bear-claw necklace found after 105 years" about the newest L&C object at Harvard's Peabody Museum (L&C Roundup, May 2004).

There is, however, an important error in the piece about the recently discovered grizzly bear-claw necklace. The article states, "The 38-claw necklace was almost certainly presented to the captains during their stay with the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians in the winter of 1804-1805." That sentence did not appear in the Peabody Museum's press release circulated last winter. We would never speculate so freely about the cultural attribute of an object in the absence of research, which has barely begun. In fact, due to the widespread use of such items, we may never know for sure where this object was first made and used. I would appreciate your clarifying this point for your readers, as the cultural origins of the objects in this collection are a serious matter, especially to Indian people.

CASTLE McLAUGHLIN
Cambridge, Mass.

EDITOR'S NOTE: the writer is the associate curator of North American ethnography at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University.

Boudin blanc

WPO readers might enjoy the photo below. It is of *boudin blanc*, Toussaint Charbonneau's specialty sausage, after cleaning, stuffing, boiling, and frying. Some friends and I made it from actual buffalo intestines (courtesy of Crawdad, a mail-order company) using the recipe found in Lewis's journal entry for May



9, 1805. We were a little more judicious in cleaning the intestines. The sausages were prepared outdoors and cooked over a campfire. They were avowed by all as delicious (our word, not the captain's).

GARY LENTZ
Dayton, Wash.



Patrick Gass's descendants

As a fifth-generation direct descendant of Patrick Gass, I enjoyed the article about the Corps of Discovery's sergeant which appeared in the February 2004 *WPO*. The caption accompanying the photograph on page 21 says it was taken of the Gass family in 1915. One of the children is identified as Mary Smith, my grandmother. Mary looks to be a child less than a year old, and definitely under the age of two. Mary was born on October 31, 1909, in Charleston, West Virginia. If this photo were indeed taken in 1915, Mary would have been at least five years old. I believe it was actually taken in 1910 or possibly 1911. My father (Mary Smith's son) is still living in California, and he concurs.

LORRY LIBEU
St. Charles, Mo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: According to Gass descendants Edith Wade and Kathleen R. Smith Wade, who supplied the photo, it was taken at the Panama-Pacific Interna-

tional Exposition, held in San Francisco in 1915. A check on the Internet reveals that 1915 is the correct year for the exposition. A map of the exhibition (www.sfmuseum.net/hist/ppiemap.html) indicates there was an area for amusements and concessions, and the background of the photo shows something like an amusement park. We'll stay out of the middle of this question and hope that the Gass descendants can resolve it.

Airgun redux

Michael Carrick's letter in the May 2004 *WPO* defends his assertion that the 19th-century travel diary of Thomas Rodney proves that Meriwether Lewis carried a Girandoni-system repeating air rifle.

Carrick agrees with statements by Rodney's editors that his travel accounts include "creative exaggeration and rich embellishment" but suggests that such perverse reporting might not apply to his description of Lewis shooting his airgun. Is there some logical reason why we should believe that Rodney was honest in one account but not in another? As Rodney's editors noted, "it is virtually impossible to sift fact from fancy in some of his descriptions." They further state that some of his accounts should be considered "fanciful" and that his "tales multiplied imaginatively" or were otherwise "shaky." They tell us that Rodney was a mystic and reported not just what he witnessed but also "all that he dreamed of, mused of, or imagined," and that the truth in some of his accounts is "infinitesimal." They also report that Rodney's "bumpy" political career included accusations of corruption, bribery, and theft of funds that led to his serving time in prison.

Carrick notes that "Rodney's descriptions of his meetings with Lewis are corroborated by Lewis's journal accounts of the same meetings, even to the minor detail of sharing a watermelon." Actually, there are several discrepancies, including the lack of any mention in Lewis's journal of shooting the airgun in Rodney's presence. Surely this would have been a far more noteworthy event for Lewis than eating a watermelon, especially in light of the near disaster with his airgun at Brunot's Island just a few days earlier.

Carrick writes that I believe Isaiah Lukens made a single-shot airgun for Lewis and that this airgun was manufac-

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tured in Philadelphia. Actually, I believe that Lewis's airgun was made either by Isaiah Lukens or his father, Seneca Lukens, somewhere in the greater Philadelphia area, perhaps in nearby Hampton. The region was famous for its gunmaking, and they would have imprinted "Philadelphia" on any of their guns, whether they were manufactured in the city itself or in an outlying community.

Carrick further states that I believe the receivers and reservoirs of the Lukens and Girandoni airguns are similar. Not so. While the tops of the receivers may appear superficially similar, there is not the slightest indication that either gun resembles the other in style or design.

Girandoni-system air rifles were extremely rare in Europe and virtually unknown in the United States in 1803, but single-shot air rifles were common. It is far more likely that Lewis would have carried the latter. If Lewis indeed carried such a weapon, it is incredible that its remarkable firepower, design, and operation were never mentioned by any of the expedition's journal keepers (especially Clark, who recorded many detailed comments about the expedition's guns). The Lukens records are equally silent. It is unlikely that the Lukens men or their agent and successor, Jacob Kunz, ever saw a Girandoni-system repeating airgun. Instead of copying the Girandoni's elegant 20-shot repeating magazine, the shops of Lukens and Kunz increased the firepower of their post-expedition airguns by making them double barreled.

The replacement hammer on the Lukens airgun that I consider the one probably carried by Lewis almost surely came from a U.S. 1799 North & Cheney flintlock pistol. A pair of such pistols evidently was part of the Corps of Discovery's armory, and one of the hammers could have been used to repair the gun in the field.

Finally, a Girandoni would have been of great value for hunting large game such as deer and elk. Yet there is no mention of Lewis's air rifle ever being used for this purpose.

ROBERT D. BEEMAN
Healdsburg, Calif.

WPO welcomes letters. We may edit them for length, accuracy, clarity, and civility. Send them to us c/o Editor, WPO, 51 N. Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534 (e-mail: wpo@lewisandclark.org).

The L&C Bicentennial: Midpoint reflections

Two hundred years ago, the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were settling into their winter quarters at Fort Mandan, in today's North Dakota. Remarkable progress had been made since leaving their last winter camp, in Illinois. The group of soldiers and engagés had been slowly transformed into a cohesive unit working in a common cause. Only one member had lost his life, and that was from natural causes. Yet the goal of reaching the Pacific remained a daunting challenge, and their survival and ultimate return to St. Louis uncertain. They were increasingly dependent upon native peoples. In the many months still ahead their determination and skill would be constantly tested.

Today, the three-year-long bicentennial of this great American saga is at its halfway point. From the zero-degree temperatures at Monticello in January of 2003 to the blistering 95-degree sun of Independence Creek on July 4, 2004, Americans have ventured forward to participate in this commemoration. The National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, federal and state agencies, native tribes, and local communities have worked together to bring the story to life. In many ways the events have been a transcendental mirror of our society. Distinguished scholars have presented L&C history in venues ranging from college auditoriums to the National Park Service's traveling exhibit known as the Tent of Many Voices. Audiences have included elected officials, C.E.O.s, blue-collar workers, homemakers, and children, and have ranged in size from sparse to standing-room-only. The quality of living-history interpretations has varied from amateurish to highly professional. Gift shops along the trail offer both kitsch and treasures. Native Americans have spoken with pride of their culture

and continue to remind us they are integral to the story. The Missouri Historical Society has assembled a definitive collection of artifacts for an extraordinary touring exhibit.

Just as the expedition of 1804-06 was a snapshot of early 19th-century America, so is the bicentennial a snapshot of early 21st-century America.

The danger of attempting to evaluate the bicentennial at this point, either as an organizer, participant or spectator, is to impose our own expectations. The pragmatic facts of the expedition remain

relatively unchanged. How we as a society read the same set of facts and listen to and experience the events associated with the bicentennial will always be tempered by our own backgrounds, values, and perspectives. What can change is our willingness to listen to and experience divergent ideas and histories. The bicentennial commemoration has drawn hundreds of thousands of Americans together to listen, experience, enjoy, share, and learn. In that simple observation, its value is immense.

—Gordon Julich
President, LCTHF



L&C in other publications

"The Perilous Afterlife of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," by Anthony Brandt, published in the July 2004 *American Heritage*, details the fate of the L&C journals during the century after the expedition. The article includes Brandt's selection of the ten best L&C books.

The March 2004 issue of *Sunset* magazine (www.sunset.com) includes an article by Peter Fish, "Fresh Eyes on the West," about following the Lewis and Clark Trail from Montana to the Pacific. ■

Jefferson's vision for the West and its relevance today

Two hundred years ago, in November of 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their men were settling in for the winter among the Mandan Indians in what we now call North Dakota. The explorers had “councilled and camped” with the local peoples and had started to build Fort Mandan. This roughly triangular stockade and the cabins within it would serve as winter quarters. In the spring they would begin the next part of their journey, a voyage into the unknown—unknown, that is, to them and to most easterners. They met Toussaint Charbonneau and his wife Sacagawea and enlisted them as interpreters. It was a relatively quiet season for them as they visited with the tribes who lived in this area; observed migrating waterfowl; recorded weather conditions; and organized specimens they would send back to President Thomas Jefferson.

In Washington, D.C., Jefferson, too, was experiencing a relatively quiet period. He had handily won reelection in the spring of 1804. Political rivals Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr had both left the scene, the former dead by Burr's hand in a duel, the latter disgraced and off on his own presumably nefarious missions. Scandal about Jefferson's personal relations were under control; and his deep sorrow over the death, the previous April, of his beloved daughter Maria was becoming more bearable. Abigail Adams had communicated her sympathy, beginning a correspondence that would eventually lead to Jefferson's reconciliation with her husband after years of acrimonious political differences. European problems were on the horizon, but his presidency was not yet threatened with “entangling alliances.” As he did throughout his life, Jefferson was recording temperature and weather conditions, reading, and writing letters and notes for future study. We do not know what was uppermost in his mind in the late fall of 1804, but it is very likely that he often contemplated the expedition and

the mission of the men he had sent into the “unknown.”

As we know from the extensive instructions Jefferson wrote for Lewis before the expedition, he wanted to learn everything about the newly purchased Louisiana Territory and its inhabitants and natural history. He was eager for maps, measurements, detailed scientific observations. Yet he knew from the outset that communication after a certain point in the journey would be all but impossible. He knew there was even a risk that he would never again hear from Lewis and Clark, that the expedition might disappear into the “Stony Mountains” and never return. Surely he thought of them as he sat in comfort and contemplation before the fireplace in the President's House.

The mighty moose

As an advocate for the New World, Jefferson had for twenty years and more been detailing proof in rebuttal to the European notion that America was a degenerative place—its animals smaller, its plant life inferior, and its humans weak, crude, and sexually inadequate. Even those people who had emigrated from Europe, some Old World naturalists and philosophers claimed, grew feeble and impotent in the dank and malevolent environment on the other side of the earth. Jefferson's only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, was written in part to refute these aspersions. During his service as U.S. minister to France, he had sent for the preserved skin, skeleton, and antlers of a moose so that Europeans could see firsthand the true form and size of a mighty American creature. Although the specimen moose proved less spectacular than Jefferson had hoped—it had deteriorated in its year-long journey—the exhibit was sufficient to elicit a positive response from the Comte de Buffon, the leading French naturalist.



Despite his resolve to dispel demeaning allegations about America, Jefferson's own view of the West was mythic, even mystical. There in the lands beyond the Mississippi his agrarian idyll could be realized; the American republic could move forward unimpeded (the native peoples didn't count in even the most enlightened of Enlightenment minds); and the crowded conditions and corruptions of the (European) past could be left behind. His visionary plans for the Louisiana Territory included adaptable spaces and endless horizons, unlimited opportunity, and the fulfillment of ideals. The past, especially the urban European past, was irrelevant; the New World was the future.

Yet the past is not irrelevant. Recently, as we at the Missouri Historical Society packed up *Lewis & Clark: The National Bicentennial Exhibition* for its journey to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, we reflected on the popularity of the exhibit and the entire bicentennial commemoration to date. The true measure of the bicentennial's success is how wholeheartedly visitors and participants in all the events accept the opportunity to consider the legacy—both burdens and benefits—of this epic journey. Thomas Jefferson sincerely wanted to leave a better world for those who came after him. None of us can argue that his vision brought liberty and opportunity to all the peoples of America or to succeeding generations. But we so many generations later have the same desire. As the commemoration continues, we too proceed on and accept the invitation to reflect and consider how we will build upon legacies and overcome burdens, leaving as our own legacy a better world for the future's children.

—Robert R. Archibald
President, Bicentennial Council

Foundation I

Foundation II

The ARMY of LEWIS & CLARK



*The military molded the Corps of Discovery and its cocaptains
into an effective unit for exploring the continent*

BY SHERMAN L. FLEEK

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was first and foremost a military enterprise—outfitted by the War Department, manned by soldiers of the U.S. Army, and led by two commanders who had met a decade earlier while serving as junior officers on the frontier.

Before they were commissioned officers in the regular army, William Clark and Meriwether Lewis served as citizen soldiers in the militia, the predecessor of today's National Guard. Clark joined the Virginia militia as a 19-year-old in 1789 and also served in the Northwest Territory and Kentucky militias. After transferring to the regular army in 1792 as a lieutenant of infantry, he fought in several significant engagements in the Ohio Valley's Indian wars, including the Battle of Fallen Timbers, before resigning his commission and returning to civilian life. Lewis joined the Virginia militia as a 20-year-old in 1794, during the Whiskey Rebellion, and obtained a commission as an ensign in the regular army in 1795. He was later promoted to lieutenant and then captain, the rank he held while on detached duty as President Thomas Jefferson's personal secretary during the first two years of his administration.

Militias offered many American males their first (and in most cases only) military experience. This had been so since the mustering of the first colonial militias in the 1630s. Militia units served bravely during the American Revolution but in general were outmatched by British troops. The better trained and disciplined Continental Army provided the core of the tiny postwar regular army, which in the years immediately following the Revolution shrunk to a force as small as eighty men, with a captain as the senior ranking officer.¹ The national military's small size reflected Congress's strapped finances, its fear of a large standing army, and a continued reliance on militias for defense. The Militia Act of 1792 made all white males between the ages of 18 and 45 members of the enrolled, or common, militia. The first men recruited by Lewis and Clark for the expedition—the famed nine young men from Kentucky—were all, by definition, members of the enrolled militia. Whether any of them had ever participated in militia drills isn't known, but it is perhaps telling that the balance of men recruited in the fall of 1803 were members of regular army units.²

Following the adoption of the Constitution, in 1788, Congress established the War Department within the ex-

ecutive branch and confirmed Henry Knox, who had served as George Washington's chief of artillery during the Revolution, as the first secretary of war. Knox's domain encompassed the army, navy, and marines as well as all federal arsenals and coastal defenses. The Navy Department was established in 1798, during the administration of John Adams, in response to maritime threats from both Great Britain and France.³ Adams's fellow Federalist but political rival Alexander Hamilton, meanwhile, conceived an ambitious plan to greatly expand the army with the addition of 12 infantry regiments. Hamilton himself would mold and ultimately lead this New Army, as it was called, but his grandiose scheme came to naught when Congress, after much debate, refused to fund it.⁴

JEFFERSON AND DEARBORN

In the view of Thomas Jefferson, Hamilton's proposal for a large standing army represented a direct threat to freedom and republican values.⁵ When Jefferson assumed the presidency, in 1801, Federalist supporters of a strong military feared the worst; as one officer wrote to a friend, "the navy will be hauled up—the army disbanded."⁶ Jefferson lost no time giving the army what he called "a chaste reformation."⁷ The entire regular army comprised barely four thousand officers and men. Most officers were Federalists, and many were veterans of the Revolution long past their prime. A principal reason Jefferson made Captain Meriwether Lewis his personal secretary was his knowledge of the officer corps, and one of his first assignments was compiling a list of expendable officers; more than half were trimmed from the roster.⁸ Jefferson ultimately reduced the army to about three thousand men in two regiments of infantry, one large regiment of artillery, and a small corps of engineers.⁹ Logistical and administrative support for line units was provided by bureaus in Washington, D.C., whose officers reported directly to the secretary of war.

Notwithstanding his fear of a standing army, Jefferson was a realist who understood the importance of a viable military to a young nation threatened by imperial powers on its borders and hostile Indians along its frontiers. He also recognized the need for military engineers to build an expanding nation's canals, roads, and harbors. In 1802, he signed a bill creating the military academy at West Point, New York. Jefferson envisioned the academy as a place to educate future engineers. Lewis was a strong advocate of the new military college, and with Henry Dearborn, the secretary of war, he helped ensure that many of its first appointments came from good Republican stock.¹⁰

Opposite: Artist Michael Haynes's interpretation of William Clark (left) and Meriwether Lewis in the officer's uniforms of their day. The red plume in Clark's *chapeau de bras* is specific to the artillery corps. Lewis grasps his spontoon (a.k.a. espontoon), or half-pike, a symbol of rank he used as a walking stick. (It came in handy for fending off grizzlies.)

Dearborn served as Jefferson's secretary of war for the entire eight years of his administration. A native of New Hampshire, he came to the job with a wealth of military experience acquired during the Revolutionary War—he had fought at Bunker Hill, Quebec, and Saratoga, and later served on Washington's staff. A hands-on administrator with a penchant for detail, he peppered Joseph Perkins, the superintendent of the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, with suggestions about the design of the U.S. Model 1803 rifle. Lewis carried Dearborn's instructions to Perkins when he visited the armory to outfit the expedition. Although the Model 1803 went into production too late to be part of the Corps of Discovery's arsenal, some of its design features (including a half stock and relatively short barrel) were probably incorporated into the rifles issued to Lewis. Dearborn also came up with an idea, ahead of its time, for highly mobile "flying" artillery, which would be used to great effect forty years later during the Mexican War.¹¹

It was under Dearborn, too, that the army began the systematic exploration of the American West—an enterprise that was to last the better part of a century and for which the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with its emphasis on natural history and cartography, was a prototype. In 1805, while the Corps of Discovery was following the Missouri to its source on the Continental Divide, Lieutenant Thomas Freeman led a party up the Red River on the southern plains and Lieutenant Zebulon Pike explored the headwaters of the Mississippi. In 1806, Pike and Lieutenant James Wilkinson led a detachment up the Arkansas River to the Colorado Rockies. Subsequent decades were marked by the expeditions of other soldier-explorers, including Major Stephen H. Long (1819-20), Lieutenant John C. Frémont (1842, 1843-33, 1845), and Lieutenant William H. Emory (1846).¹²

DEARBORN AND CLARK'S COMMISSION

Dearborn has come in for criticism for his role in the confused affair of Clark's commission. As every student of Lewis and Clark knows, Jefferson agreed to Lewis's request to offer his friend a captaincy in the Corps of Engi-

neers, but to the chagrin of both men, the commission eventually authorized was a second lieutenant's in the artillery.¹³ Adding insult to injury, this was a grade below first lieutenant, the rank Clark had held when he left the army in 1796. Clark accepted Lewis's invitation and began recruiting men for the expedition in early August of 1803, but the commission that gave him the authority to do so was effective March 26, 1804, the date it was approved by the Senate as part of a list of nominations from the War Department.¹⁴ The late date of the commission denied Clark seniority important for future promotion, and because there was no provision for back pay, he was left uncompensated for his first eight months of service.

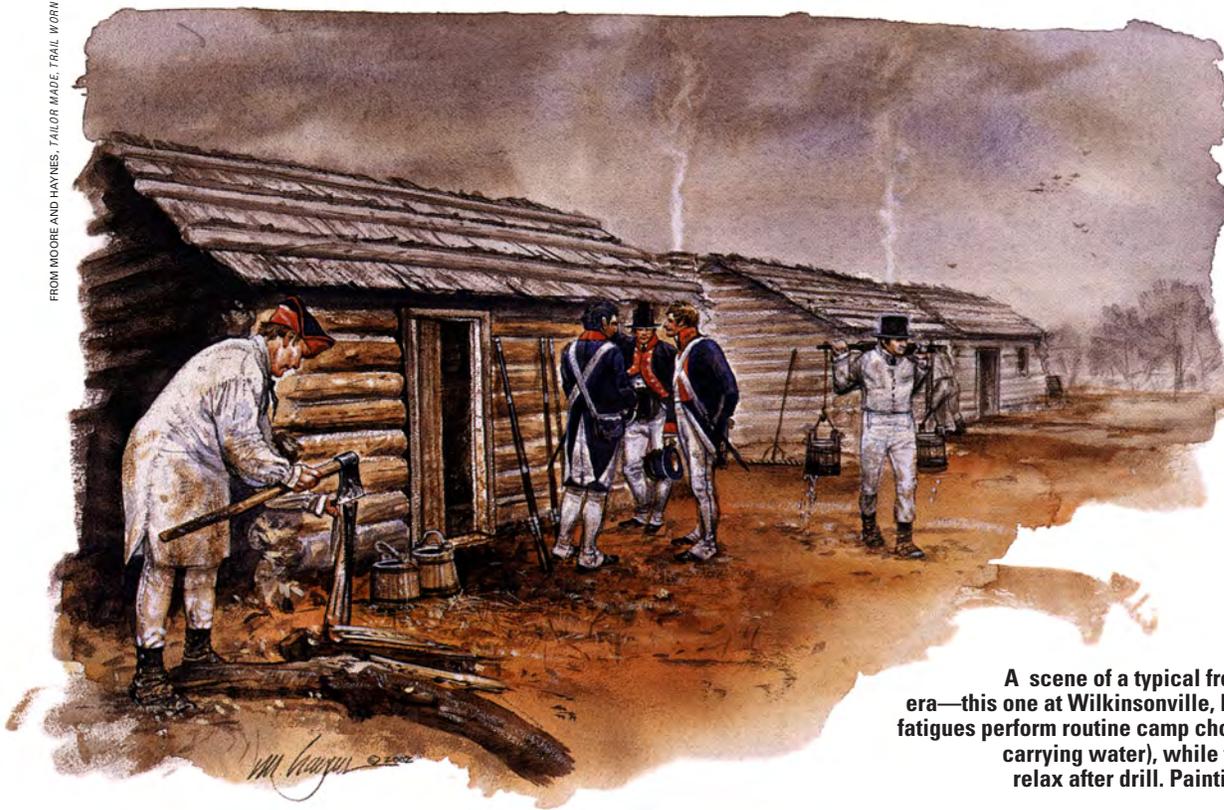
Lewis's biographer Stephen E. Ambrose offered several hypotheses for the government's failure to grant Clark his promised rank: Jefferson and Dearborn overlooked the details, or Jefferson wanted Lewis in "sole command."¹⁵ Commissioning Clark a captain would have jumped him ahead of lieutenants on the active-duty rolls, and it could be that Dearborn and Jefferson simply bowed to the army's seniority system. But there was a bigger problem, as William E. Foley points out in his recent biography of Clark: "In fairness to Dearborn he had to operate under the constraints of an 1802 statute designed to shrink the military establishment during peacetime, and there were no vacant captain's slots at the time."¹⁶ Ironically, this statute—the Military Peace Establishment Act—had been passed at

Jefferson's behest, and it would have taken another act of Congress to create a captain's slot for Clark.

Presumably at Dearborn's direction, the War Department eventually made at least partial amends for its shoddy treatment of Clark. Army pay records indicate that he was promoted to first lieutenant in February 1806, while the Corps of Discovery was still on the Pacific. Following the expedition's return, when the department computed Clark's back pay it did so from August 1, 1803, thereby restoring both the early pay due him (albeit as a second lieutenant) and his seniority. In addition, on Jefferson's orders the War Department made up the difference in total compensation (pay plus subsistence allowance) between



Henry Dearborn, Thomas Jefferson's secretary of war, was an able administrator who presided over the downsizing of America's armed forces.



A scene of a typical frontier garrison in L&C's era—this one at Wilkinsonville, Illinois. Two soldiers in fatigues perform routine camp chores (cutting wood and carrying water), while three in dress uniforms relax after drill. Painting by Michael Haynes.

a lieutenant and a captain, and like all members of the expedition, Clark was also awarded double pay for his service and a grant of land (in his and Lewis's case, 1,600 acres west of the Mississippi).¹⁷ Clark's total pay package for his 43 months with the corps amounted to more than \$4,000, equivalent in today's currency to about \$60,000.¹⁸

Dearborn also asked the Senate to promote Clark to lieutenant colonel in the Second Regiment of Infantry—a jump of three grades. His request was presumably intended to recognize Clark's contributions to the expedition, although Dearborn must have realized it had little chance of approval. Some senators were apparently unwilling to buck the seniority system, and the request was rejected.¹⁹

THE OHIO CAMPAIGNS

The regular-army service of Clark and Lewis had begun a decade earlier under the command of Major General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, the crusty, competent Revolutionary War veteran who directed military operations against the Miamis, Shawnees, and other confederated tribes of the Northwest Territory. Wayne, the army's highest-ranking officer, took charge in 1792 after a massacre on the Wabash River of more than six hundred soldiers commanded by his predecessor, Arthur St. Clair. (In their lopsided victory, the Indians lost perhaps forty men.)²⁰ The debacle

led to a major restructuring of forces. In a name evocative of the Roman Republic, the U.S. Army became the Legion of the United States. The legion was divided into four sublegions, each commanded by a brigadier general and with a complement of 1,280 men. A sublegion comprised eight companies of infantry, four companies of riflemen, and a company each of artillery and dragoons (cavalry). In theory, this structure did a better job of integrating forces, thereby increasing tactical flexibility.²¹

A strict disciplinarian, Wayne spent more than two years training his troops before the army again took to the field against the Indian confederacy, in a campaign that culminated on August 11, 1794, in the decisive Battle of Fallen Timbers. The officers distinguishing themselves in that engagement included 24-year-old Lieutenant William Clark, who led a column of riflemen on Wayne's left flank and drove the enemy back a mile.²² Hostilities ended soon after, but the army (and Clark) remained garrisoned in the Ohio country to ensure the peace. In November 1795, Clark was placed in command of the Chosen Rifle Company of the Fourth Sub-Legion.²³ Soon afterward, a 21-year-old ensign named Meriwether Lewis was transferred to Clark's unit following his court martial on charges of insulting a superior officer. Lewis was acquitted, but he and the offended officer were in the same company, and Wayne must have ordered Lewis's transfer to

prevent another altercation. In 1796, in yet another reorganization, the army abandoned the legion concept and returned to a regimental structure. Lewis then became a member of the First Regiment of Infantry. By this time, Clark had resigned his commission and returned to civilian life.

ARMY LIFE AND LEADERSHIP

Line units were spread out in small garrisons over hundreds of miles of the frontier. [See map, page 14.] There was no formal recruiting system as we know it today, and post commanders usually drew their men from the local population. The army made no effort to systematically educate its commissioned and noncommissioned officers (N.C.O.s). There were no professional or leadership schools, no career-advancement programs, and no specialized training beyond simple skill sets and tactical drilling. Promotion was based on seniority rather than fitness. With no retirement system, officers tended to stay in the service as long as possible. Low pay sometimes forced officers to moonlight as postmasters, justices of the peace, surveyors, and school teachers, while enlisted men found jobs as laborers and farm hands. Pay day at the many small garrisons depended on circuit-riding paymasters (Lewis was one), who thanks to the vagaries of frontier travel could arrive days, weeks, or months later than scheduled.²⁴

Garrison life was tedious and filled with the routine of drill, inspection, standing guard, and a wide range of fatigue duties, from cutting and hauling firewood to digging latrines.²⁵ Diet, medical care, and living conditions in general ranged from adequate to abysmal. Alcohol abuse was chronic. The hard life drove as many as one man in five to go absent without leave or to desert, offenses that accounted for about half of all court-martial cases.²⁶ Whatever the charge, those found guilty of even minor offenses were often flogged (the Articles of War allowed up to 100 lashes).²⁷

Lewis and Clark could be tough disciplinarians when necessary. Early in the expedition, three privates were flogged and one was forced to run the gauntlet; two of these four men were expelled from the corps. But such punishments were generally reserved for offenses that threatened the unit's cohesion or even survival, including disrespect toward superiors, drinking on guard, and desertion.²⁸ For lesser offenses the captains often showed flexibility and restraint, handling cases administratively instead of by court martial. When two privates got into a fist-fight at Camp River Dubois, for example, Clark ordered them to work together to build a hut for the camp's laundress. Later, when some of the men balked at follow-



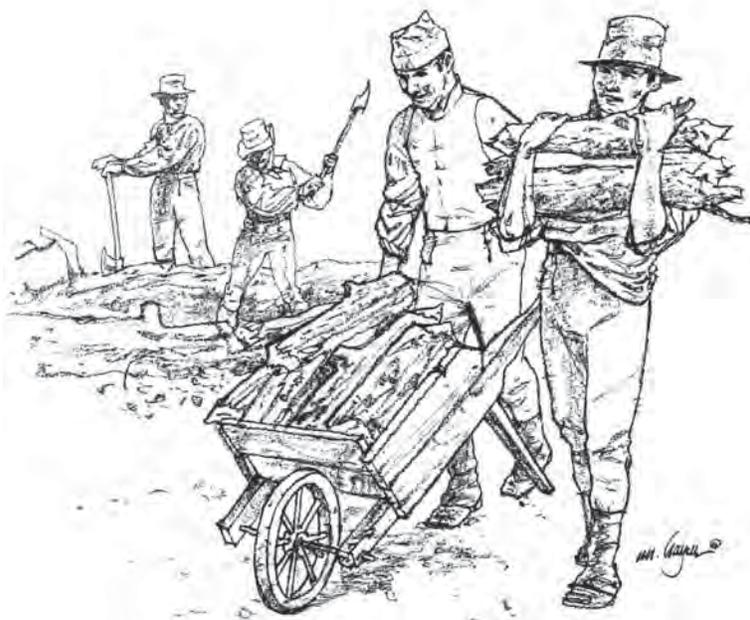
DRAWINGS BY MICHAEL HAYNES, FROM MOORE AND HAYNES, TAILOR MADE: TRAIL WORN.

Seated in two-tiered bunks, three soldiers relax in their barracks.

ing one of the sergeant's orders, they were confined to camp for ten days.²⁹

The captain's deft employment of discipline was just one of many examples of their leadership qualities. During the expedition and throughout their army careers Meriwether Lewis and Williams Clark exhibited resourcefulness, initiative, self-reliance, courage, and physical and mental toughness. To a greater or lesser extent such traits were also common to the Corps of Discovery's noncommissioned officers—its sergeants (Charles Floyd, Patrick Gass, John Ordway, and Nathaniel Pryor) and sole corporal (Richard Warfington)—and could be found throughout the army's ranks of officers and N.C.O.s. It is reasonable to attribute these qualities at least in part to the challenges faced by so many American males growing up on the nation's backcountry farmsteads. Although born into relative privilege, the expedition's cocaptains both fit this model. Clark, who spent his formative teenage years on the Kentucky frontier, was described by an uncle as “a youth of solid and promising parts and as brave as Caesar.”³⁰ Lewis passed three boyhood years on the Georgia frontier, where his biographer Stephen Ambrose imagines him hunting, fishing, exploring, learning about Indians, and “growing comfortable with life in the wilderness.”³¹

With the exception of Floyd, who died early in the expedition, each of the corps' N.C.O.s was entrusted with



Cutting and gathering firewood was an unending task.

extraordinary responsibilities, and they carried them out in exemplary fashion. Warfington, who wasn't part of the permanent party, commanded the expedition's keelboat when it returned to St. Louis in the spring of 1805 loaded with plant and wildlife specimens. Warfington negotiated the country of the troublesome Teton Sioux without incident, and Gass, Ordway, and Prior each led separate parties on the homeward journey.

THE ASTORIANS

Anyone who doubts the importance of military leadership and discipline in the Corps of Discovery's success should ponder the debacle, five years later, of the overland Astorians. In May 1811, a civilian party outfitted by fur merchant John Jacob Astor set out from St. Louis for Astoria, his post at the mouth of the Columbia, via the Missouri and Platte rivers. The expedition crossed the Wind River Mountains and descended to the Green and Snake rivers. Things went well enough on the plains but started to unravel when the explorers reached the Rockies and switched from horses to dugout canoes. The idea was to run the Snake to the Columbia, but when the ferocious river smashed their boats, they abandoned them and set out on foot. Split into smaller groups, they staggered into Astoria in stages—some reaching it in January 1812, some in February and May, the last in January 1813. Their

collective tale was a litany of drownings, desertions, intense cold and hunger, and harassment by Indians.

The return trip, begun in June 1812, proved no less harrowing. Men became disoriented and wandered in circles in the wilderness. Several died, one went insane, and one starving wretch talked openly of cannibalism, suggesting that his party draw straws to determine who would eat whom. With help from the ever-friendly Shoshones, most survived the ordeal and reached St. Louis the following spring.³²

The Lewis and Clark Expedition faced similar trials, particularly the brutal crossing of the Bitterroots, when the explorers endured bitter cold and near-starvation. Morale may have dipped on such occasions but never seriously flagged, because military leadership and organization proved more than equal to the challenge.

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NOTES

¹ Alan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 91. Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636-2000* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), pp. 69-73.

² The nine young men from Kentucky were John Colter and George Shannon (recruited by Lewis in Pittsburgh) and William Bratton, Joseph and Reubin Field, Charles Floyd, George Gibson, Nathaniel Pryor, and John Shields (recruited by Clark in the vicinity of Louisville). Regular army men recruited later in 1803 included John Newman, Joseph Whitehouse, John Collins, Patrick Gass, John Ordway, John Thompson, Peter Weiser, and Alexander Willard.

³ Warren W. Hassler, Jr., *With the Shield and Sword: American Military Affairs, Colonial Times to the Present* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1982), pp. 50 and 63.

⁴ Theodore J. Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801-1809* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), pp. 32-33.

⁵ Jefferson's fears of a standing army are well known, but militias concerned him, too. "Beware of a military force, even of citizens," he wrote to a friend in early 1800. (Crackel, p. 32.) John Randolph, a fellow Republican, referred to his own "dread of standing armies." (Crackel, p. 155.) Albert Gallatin, Jefferson's future treasury secretary, considered "our little army" a "perhaps necessary evil" for defending the frontier, but one whose forces should be garrisoned as far as possible from population centers. Jefferson did have limited military experience, having served at least nominally as a colonel in the Albemarle County militia in the 1770s. Willard Sterne Randall, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), p. 249.

⁶ Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the Ameri-*

can Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 3.

⁷ Thomas Jefferson to Nathaniel Bacon, May 14, 1801. Albert Ellery Bergh, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 volumes. (Washington D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), Vol. 10, p. 261.

⁸ Donald Jackson, "Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis, and the Reduction of the United States Army," in James P. Ronda, ed., *Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1998), pp. 59-61. Of 269 officers on Lewis's list in 1801, 131 remained on the rolls a year later. See also Arlen J. Large, "Lewis ... in Washington," WPO, August 1994, pp. 14-21. Reprinted in Robert A. Saindon, ed., *Explorations into the World of Lewis and Clark*, 3 volumes (Great Falls, Mont.: Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 2003), Vol. 1, pp. 113-121.

⁹ Millet and Maslowski, p. 105. Jefferson also downsized the navy. He stopped work on several ships of the line and a dozen or so frigates in favor of a "mosquito" navy of armed sloops.

¹⁰ Crackel, p. 109.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

¹² William H. Goetzman, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1991). James P. Ronda, *Beyond Lewis & Clark: The Army Explores the West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

¹³ When Clark left the army in 1796 he held the rank of lieutenant—not, it is sometimes erroneously reported, a captain. Nor was he a first lieutenant. At the time, the army didn't distinguish between first and second lieutenant; its lowest commissioned rank was ensign, the equivalent of second lieutenant. The army had abandoned the ensign rank by 1804 and replaced it with second lieutenant, its entry-level rank for commissioned officers. Ensign is still a rank in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army from its Organization, September 29, 1789 to March 2, 1903*, 2 volumes (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903; reprinted, University of Illinois Press, 1965), Vol. 1, p. 306.

¹⁴ Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 172-173.

¹⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 135.

¹⁶ William E. Foley, *Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), p. 70.

¹⁷ Arlen J. Large, " 'Captain' Clark's Belated Bonus," WPO, November 1997, pp. 12-14; reprinted in Saindon, Vol. 3, pp. 1259-1263. Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 363-364 and 375-376.

¹⁸ Web site, Economic History Services (<http://eh.net/hmit/ppowerusd>), September 6, 2004.

¹⁹ Jackson, Vol. 1, p. 376n. Foley, p. 158.

²⁰ Landon Y. Jones, *William Clark and the Opening of the West* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2004), p. 12.

²¹ Gregory J.W. Urwin, *The United States Infantry: An Illustrated History, 1775-1918* (New York: Sterling Co., 1991), p. 33. Heitman, Vol. 2, p. 562.

²² Jones, p. 78.



Army posts in Lewis and Clark's day were scattered throughout the frontier. (Not shown: Fort Mackinac, in northern Michigan.)

²³ The word "chosen" shouldn't be thought of as synonymous with "elite," a term associated in today's military with crack, highly trained units like the Rangers and Special Forces. Clark's troopers differed from ordinary, musket-toting infantrymen in carrying a specialized weapon—the rifle—and in the marksmanship training required to use it effectively.

²⁴ Coffman, p. 30.

²⁵ Robert J. Moore, Jr., and Michael Haynes, *Tailor Made, Trail Worn: Army Life, Clothing & Weapons of the Corps of Discovery* (Helena, Mont.: Farcountry Press, 2003), pp. 30-41.

²⁶ Coffman, p. 21.

²⁷ Moore and Haynes, p. 51.

²⁸ Four men were court-martialed during the expedition. Hugh Hall received 25 lashes for going AWOL and 50 lashes for being drunk on guard. John Collins received 100 lashes for disrespect and drinking on guard. Moses Reed was convicted of desertion and sentenced to run the gauntlet. John Newman got 75 lashes for mutiny. Reed and Newman were both expelled from the Corps of Discovery and returned to St. Louis after spending the winter at Fort Mandan. Elin Woodger and Brandon Toropov, *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York: Facts-on-File, 2004), pp. 93, 115-116, 167, 249, and 299.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁰ James O'Fallon to Jonathan Clark, May 30, 1791. Jay Buckley, *William Clark: Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, 1813-1838* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 2001), p. 11.

³¹ Ambrose, p. 24. James P. Hendrix, Jr., "Meriwether Lewis's Georgia Boyhood," WPO, August 2001, pp. 25-28.

³² Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 2 volumes (New York: Press of the Pioneers, 1935; reprint Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1986), Vol. 1, pp. 182-215.



THE ILLUSION OF CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT

Approaching the Pacific, William Clark voiced his excitement with the famous line “Ocian in view!” But what did he really see?

BY DAVID L. NICANDRI

On October 31, 1805, William Clark stood on a promontory on the north bank of the Columbia River, overlooking the tail end of a narrow, four-mile-long stretch of rapids. The Great Chute, as Clark called it, was the last major obstacle faced by the Corps of Volunteers for Northwestern Discovery in its quest to reach the Pacific Ocean. Beyond the rapids, Clark noted later in his journal, the river “widened and had every appearance of being effected by the tide.”¹

We can imagine the anticipation that Clark, Meriwether Lewis, and the rest of the party felt in camp that night and in the days following their descent of the Great Chute.

They still had many miles to go before reaching the Pacific, but their dugout canoes were now riding waters of the lower Columbia ruled by tides. Lewis had left tide-water on the Atlantic more than two years before, and it had been six months since the explorers had departed the Mandan villages, in today’s North Dakota. Memories of their laborious ascent of the Missouri, the arduous crossing of the Bitterroot Mountains, and the water-crested dash down the Columbia receded day by day with the gathering realization that the long-awaited Pacific was nearly at hand.

For the preceding quarter-century, maritime explorers

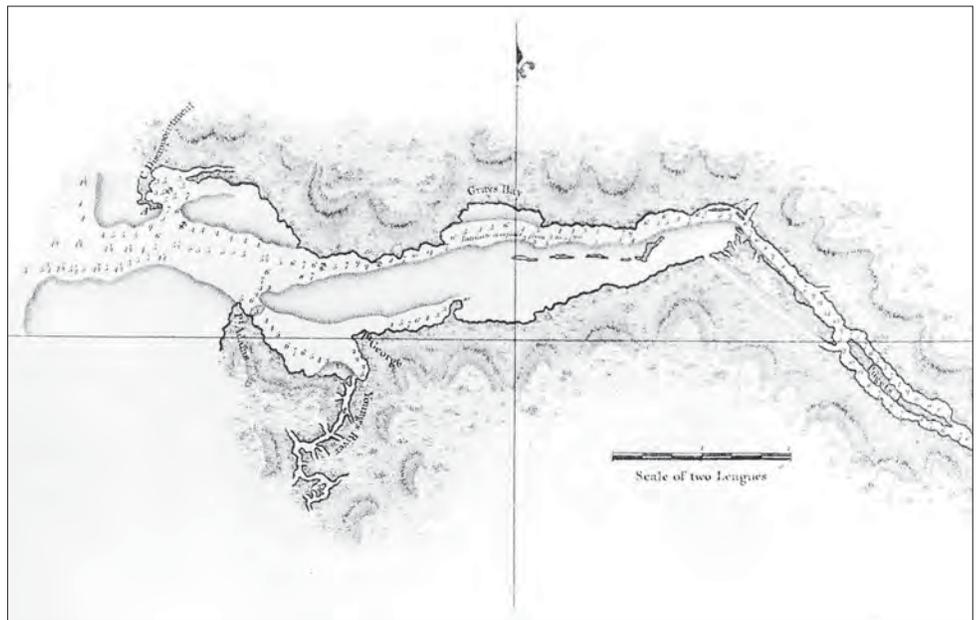
had sought the same grand confluence of the Columbia and the Pacific—the presumed western entrance to the fabled Northwest Passage. But the Columbia had eluded discovery. Sea captains were reluctant to brave the fog, treacherous currents, and shifting sandbars that guard the river’s enormous mouth, which from the ocean can be mistaken for a mere indentation in the coast. In 1775, Bruno de Hezeta, sailing for Spain off present-day Oregon and Washington, perceived only the hint of a large river and inscribed this sketchy prospect on his nation’s charts of the North Pacific. Three

year’s later, one of history’s greatest explorers, Captain James Cook of the British navy, sailed blindly past the Columbia. Maritime fur trader John Meares, representing British commercial interests, flirted with fame ten years later, when, following Hezeta’s lead, he coasted the same shores. But Meares concluded that the headland sighted at the 46th parallel guarded an oceanic inlet, not a gateway into the heart of the continent. He accordingly named it Cape Disappointment.²

The American fur trader Robert Gray finally crossed the bar of the river that would bear the name of his ship, *Columbia Rediviva*, in May 1792. Five months later, Captain George Vancouver of the British navy arrived at the Columbia’s mouth and sent a subordinate, Lieutenant William Broughton, to explore the river. Broughton traveled more than a hundred miles upstream, to the vicinity of present-day Portland. Vancouver related the details of Broughton’s journey in an account, published in 1798, of his Pacific explorations. This three-volume work, which also contained a detailed map of the Columbia estuary, was Thomas Jefferson’s primary source on the lower Columbia when he dispatched the Lewis and Clark Expedition.³

OCEAN IN VIEW!

On November 7, 1805, a week after Clark first noticed tidal action on the lower river, the expedition reached the vicinity of Pillar Rock, a prominent landmark lying just offshore on the north side of the estuary. Now Clark was certain he could see the Pacific. Lewis is usually cited as the great voice of the expedition, but one presumed shout by his co-leader has come down through history as the



Published in 1798, George Vancouver’s chart of the Columbia estuary was Lewis and Clark’s primary source about the lower river, although some of its details appeared to differ from facts on the ground.

most famous declaration in the record of their joint command: “*Ocean in view!*” “*O! the joy.*”⁴

For most of the past century, however, historians have been dousing Clark’s observation with water as cold as the Columbia’s, claiming that what he actually saw was not the true Pacific but merely the river’s lower bay.⁵ That notion has prevailed since 1905, when Reuben Gold Thwaites observed that Point Adams, projecting from the Oregon side of the inlet, would have blocked a direct line of sight between Pillar Rock and the ocean. Thwaites evidently didn’t realize that Point Adams, which in the late 19th century had been artificially extended to aid navigation, was much smaller in 1805 and would not have obstructed Clark’s view of the ocean. Rex Ziak presents this revisionist notion in *In Full View*, his recent book about Lewis and Clark on the lower Columbia, as does Martin Plamondon II in his three-volume reconstruction of Lewis and Clark’s trail maps.⁶ But neither author may go far enough in his analysis.

The sequence of events leading up to Clark’s famed but oft-disputed exclamation had commenced two days earlier, on November 5. That night, the captains posted a guard over the canoes to protect them from the vagaries of tides rising and falling by as much as three feet. After getting underway the following morning, the party passed a notable “Knob of high land,” later called Coffin Rock, so named because it was the site of Indian burials.⁷ Proceeding on a generally westerly course, (the Columbia makes its last major turn near its confluence with the Cowlitz River, entering from the north) the corps passed

a “Clift of verry high land” and camped on a narrow “bold rocky Shore.” This terrain is traversed today by Washington Route 4 from Stella to the vicinity of Cathlamet, the approximate location of camp that evening.⁸ [See maps, page 18.]

The explorers now found Indians who could speak “a few words of english.” The natives indicated they had recently traded with a certain “Mr. Haley,” presumably a merchant sea captain, giving rise to the possibility that he or some other American or British trader might still be present on the coast.⁹

As the party set out at 8 A.M. on the seventh, the fog was thick, necessitating the services of an Indian pilot who, wearing a “Salors” garb, guided the explorers through a network of islands and sloughs. One canoe became separated from the rest for most of the day but reunited with the party that evening. As part of the daily course and distance records Clark kept in his elkskin-bound field notes, he recorded:

we are in view of the opening of the Ocian, which
Creates great joy.¹⁰

This was the first—and, it is important to note, the most understated—version of three statements made by Clark about sighting the ocean. He does not dwell on the occasion but in the very next sentence turns his attention to Pillar Rock, describing this columnar specimen of basalt as a “remarkable rock of about 50 feet high and about 20 feet Diameter . . . opposit our Camp about 1/2 a mile from Shore.” Of the other journalists, only Joseph Whitehouse mentioned the rock’s characteristic form, noting that it “had very much the resemlance of a Tower.” Surprisingly, neither Whitehouse nor either of the two other enlisted journal keepers—John Ordway and Patrick Gass—mentions any particular excitement in camp that night.¹¹

When Clark wrote his reflection for the day in his regular journal, he expanded the entry found in his original elkskin field notes. This second, more frequently cited passage reads:

Great joy in camp we are in *View of the Ocian*, this great Pacific Ocean which we have been So long anxious to See. and the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distictly.¹²

Clark’s final version of this sighting—the shortest of the three, found in his recapitulation of courses and distances for the trip down the Columbia—is one of the most famous exclamations in the history of exploration:

*Ocian in view! O! the joy.*¹³

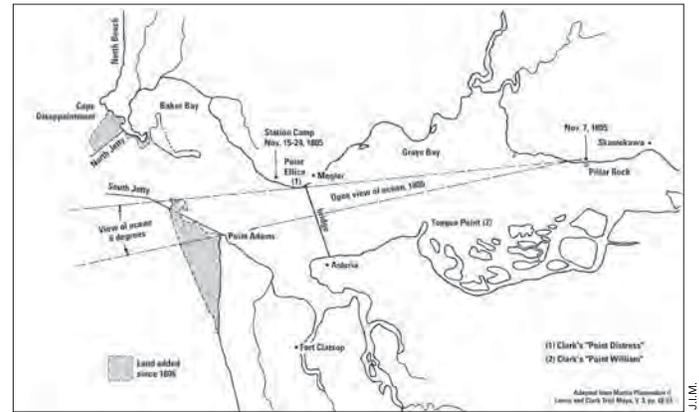
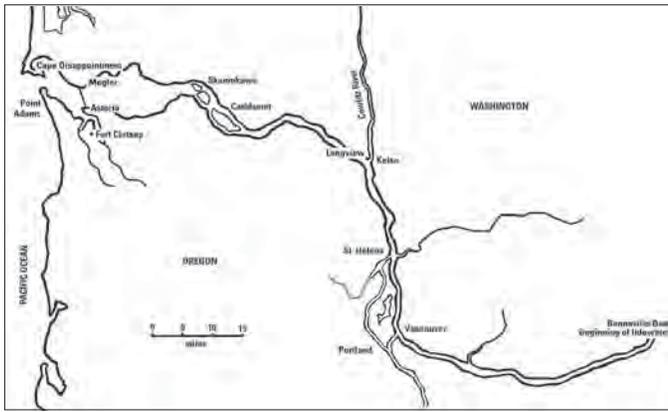
Clark almost certainly wrote these last two passages months after the fact.¹⁴

Gary Moulton, the most recent editor of the Lewis and Clark journals, and other scholars, including the influential John Logan Allen, have followed Twaites’s 1905 assertion that the explorers were looking out at the Columbia estuary, not the ocean. Clark, in other words, had gotten ahead of himself.¹⁵ Lewis’s observations aren’t known, since he either wasn’t writing in his journal at the time or his journal for this period has been lost. His biographer Stephen Ambrose muses that he might have written about this “moment of triumph” with the same flair found in his descriptions of the White Cliffs, Great Falls, and Three Forks of the Missouri—passages that “set the standard” for exploratory text.¹⁶ Echoing the conventional view, Ambrose says that Clark was “a bit premature” in his exclamation that the Pacific now lay before them.¹⁷

But caution should be taken before concluding that Clark was mistaken—especially, as Ziak and Plamondon point out, when that view is based on our contemporary perceptions of the Columbia. Today, standing in a boat at Pillar Rock and with the aid of binoculars, one can easily see the bridge between Astoria, Oregon, and Megler, Washington—a distance of 14 miles. Furthermore, for reasons discussed later, we can reasonably assume that in Clark’s time the bar of the Columbia was much farther inland than today—in the vicinity of where the Astoria-Megler bridge, whose northern terminus is Point Ellice, now stands. It would be difficult but not impossible at such a distance for a man with a telescope, standing in a boat at high tide, to see storm waves crashing on a bar.¹⁸

We should remember, as well, that Clark’s impressions were based on sound as well as sight. Thwaites himself noted that, after a storm, one could probably hear ocean swells breaking on the Columbia’s bar. November is storm season, and Clark could indeed have heard this distant roar, just as he claimed, especially if it was carried on the prevailing westerly wind. In our noise-polluted modern world, it is easy to forget how far sound once traveled. Five months earlier, when Clark was approaching the Great Falls of the Missouri, he could hear their rumble twenty miles away.¹⁹

There is also the matter of how one defines the boundary between the Pacific and the Columbia. Is it the farthest outer bar extending between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams, or a line farther inland where tidal forces subsume the river’s flow? William Broughton, for one, would probably have chosen the latter definition. Work-



Left: Tidewater portion of the lower Columbia, which begins at the site of today's Bonneville Dam. Right: Clark's line of sight from Pillar Rock to the Columbia's mouth. The author argues that Clark mistook Point Ellice for Cape Disappointment. He may also have mistaken nearby Tongue Point for the more distant Point Adams. Even though he had a clear line of sight to Point Adams, it could have been below the horizon or obscured by weather.

ing in the service of George Vancouver and therefore in contest with Robert Gray, Broughton had obvious geopolitical motivation to diminish the American's prior entry into the Columbia. Nevertheless, he decided that the true entrance to the Columbia was not between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams; nor could it be readily defined by reference to either of two inland features, Baker Bay and Grays Bay. Broughton tells us that the lower estuary was from three to seven miles wide and laced with "shoals that extend from nearly side to side." In effect, the entire lower estuary constituted an oceanic inlet. This broad, shoal-laden stretch, wrote Broughton, "ought rather to be considered as a sound, than as constituting a part of the river." Broughton, in other words, regarded this shoaly lower reach not as a tidal extension of the Columbia but as an arm of the Pacific—an arm that by Broughton's definition stretched as far east as today's Skamokawa, Washington, several miles *upstream* of Pillar Rock.²⁰

One of the corps' enlisted men, Robert Frazer, held essentially the same view. In the prospectus to his never-published account of the journey, Frazer referred to "the Columbia river and the Bay [Broughton's "sound"] it forms on the Pacific Ocean."²¹

At least one subsequent journal entry makes clear that Clark harbored no doubts about his journal entry for November 7. Both he and Lewis sometimes corrected (or edited for narrative effect) geographic findings based upon later observation or experience—but on this point Clark never wavered. On December 1, 1805, having by then traversed Cape Disappointment and a portion of the North Beach Peninsula, he wrote that it had been "24 days Since we arrived in Sight of the Great Western ... Ocean." Counting backwards on the calendar takes us to November 7 and the camp at Pillar Rock.²² It should also be noted that Clark's composite map of the lower Columbia, completed

at Fort Clatsop later that winter, includes the annotation "Ocean in View" adjacent to the Pillar Rock camp.²³

Clark's most definitive reassertion can be found, by implication, in the now most underutilized source of information about the expedition—the paraphrase of the journals by Nicholas Biddle, published in 1814. We know Biddle consulted with Clark at length while drafting his narrative and that he was also assisted by Private George Shannon.²⁴

In the Biddle account for November 7, the river widened into "a kind of bay" just past a Wahkiakum Indian village of seven houses, at present-day Skamokawa. This, of course, is a simple restatement of Broughton's conclusion (as well as John Meares's). The Biddle account continues: "We had not gone far from the village when the fog cleared off, and we enjoyed the delightful prospect of the ocean—that ocean, the object of all of our labors, the reward of all our anxieties." Notwithstanding the interposition of Biddle's florid prose, if anything this version suggests the ocean came into view well upstream of the oft-disputed vantage of Pillar Rock. Biddle adds, "This cheering view exhilarated the spirits of all the party, who were still *more delighted on hearing* the distant roar of the breakers." [Emphasis added.] Biddle tells us that from this location the voyagers traveled many more miles west until reaching a camp opposite Pillar Rock.²⁵

A consecutive reading of these sources—Clark's field notes, journal, and course and distance records, and Biddle's narrative—shows that with each retelling of sighting the ocean at Pillar Rock, the story is strengthened, not diluted. Why would Clark (and his amanuensis, Biddle) have been so aggressive in contradicting such apparent geographic fact?

The man-made changes at the mouth of the Columbia are one key to understanding Clark's supposed mistake. As noted, long after Lewis and Clark's day, Point Adams,

on the Oregon shore, was extended by construction of a rock jetty some six miles long. Landfill on the Washington shore created a shorter jetty extending from Cape Disappointment.²⁶ The principal function of these jetties is to regularize a channel to and from the sea, which they accomplish, effectively, by moving the line of the ocean's confrontation with the river well to the west. Before the jetties, ocean storms surged much farther inland than they do today. Old-timers recall seeing the surf line at the approximate location of the present-day Astoria-Megler Bridge. And it is instructive to note that Megler, approximately a mile upriver from the bridge, was established as the north-bank terminus for the old ferry service from Astoria precisely because it was easterly enough to avoid the worst the Columbia's bar could offer. Even so, there were many days when conditions kept the ferry from operating.²⁷

SEEING THROUGH CLARK'S EYES

A final, and perhaps most compelling, reason to believe Clark's statement is the principle of normative geographic expectations. Modern understanding of standard geographic information prejudices us to the world as the explorers saw it in real time. Clark's seemingly mysterious conclusion at Pillar Rock has to be appreciated from the river-level view of November 7, 1805, and his cartographic understanding of the terrain at the time. As the great 19th-century historian Francis Parkman stated, the historian "must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or spectator of the action he describes."²⁸

Here we must return to the elusive—not to say *illusive*—Cape Disappointment. We know Lewis made a copy of Vancouver's map of the lower Columbia [page 16] when preparing for the expedition in Philadelphia. We know too that the captains had Lewis's copy with them when they reached the lower Columbia, and that it confused and confounded them. Indeed, in both his journals and in dialogue with Biddle, Clark was emphatic in his dismissal of Vancouver's work.²⁹

Vancouver's map of the estuary clearly conveyed Cape Disappointment's hook-like protuberance extending southward from the mainland—a feature that Clark him-



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Pillar Rock today is adorned with navigational equipment. Tongue Point, which Clark may have mistaken for Point Adams, projects from the left in this photo and Point Ellice from the right. The land in the middle distance comprises several natural sand islands, enhanced by dredge spoils, that were not present in 1805.

self would later depict from his vantage at Station Camp. However, in this instance, the view of the world provided by a map in a library in Philadelphia had to be refracted by the lens of Clark's observations on the river in a dugout canoe. What Vancouver's chart did *not* adequately convey was the prominence of Point Ellice, which protrudes from the north shore, as a landmark when viewed from an upriver location such as Clark's at Pillar Rock. This is especially so from river level, which was Clark's vantage. Clark's entry for course and distance records on November 8 makes clear that he regarded Cape Disappointment as the farthest landform to the west. But—and this is the crucial issue—the "Cape Disappointment" he observed was actually Point Ellice. In his entry Clark initially wrote "Cape disappointment," but from his perspective at Pillar Rock he could not have seen the real Cape Disappointment because Point Ellice obscures it. Sometime later, presumably after further exploration, he realized his error, crossed out "disappointment," and renamed it Point Distress. But at the time, Clark thought he was looking at Cape Disappointment, and he knew from Vancouver's map that the ocean lay immediately beyond it.³⁰

(On the south shore, Clark probably mistook nearby Tongue Point for the more distant Point Adams.)

Further substantiation of the perceived oceanic sighting—call it "the Point Ellice effect"—can be found elsewhere in the record for November 8. Whitehouse reports that, shortly after the explorers resumed their voyage, the view "continued as far as our Eyes could discern; & we expect that the River continues its width to the Mouth of it." Ordway comments, "we can See along distance a head" to the mouth of the river.³¹ It would be another

10 days and 20 miles, however, before Clark reached the “real” Cape Disappointment and gazed like a latter-day Balboa on the vast Pacific. To mark the occasion he carved his name on a tree, along with the declaration that he had arrived there “by Land.”³²

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NOTES

¹ Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 5, p. 362. All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, by date, unless otherwise indicated. Meriwether Lewis referred to “the corps of volunteers for North Western Discovery” in his journal entry for August 26, 1804. The more commonly used term “Corps of Discovery,” per se, never appears in the primary documentary record associated with Lewis and Clark. This phrasing was coined as a portion of the subtitle of Sergeant Patrick Gass’s early, unauthorized account of the expedition, from whence it took its currency. See Stephen Dow Beckham, et al., *The Literature of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: A Bibliography and Essays* (Portland, Ore.: Lewis and Clark College, 2003), p. 105. Lewis and Clark refer to an expedition for “North Western” discovery (or variations of this term) in other primary documents. See Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with Related Documents: 1783-1854*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 113, 210; and Vol. 2, p. 549. Also, Moulton, Vol. 3, pp. 14, 153, 170, 172n; and Vol. 9, pp. 231-232. The military term typically employed to refer to the command was “detachment,” not “corps.” The prime example is the Orderly Book containing the rules of military comportment and discipline. Instructively, the first “Detachment Order” at Camp River Dubois, on April 1, 1804, records the names of men selected for the “Perminent Detachment.” A subsequent order at Wood River stated, “No man of the Detachment Shall leave Camp without permission from the Commanding officer present.” Lewis retrospectively wrote of May 14, 1804, as the day “the detachment left the mouth of the River Dubois.” After his court martial, Private Moses Reed ran the gauntlet through the “Detachment.” Moulton, Vol. 2, pp. 187, 212, 412, and 488.

² Richard J. Nokes, *Almost a Hero: The Voyages of John Meares, R.N., to China, Hawaii, and the Northwest Coast* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1998), pp. 7-8, 61, and 69-70.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 71n. George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795*, 3 volumes (London: Haklyut Society, 1984), W. Kaye Lamb, ed., Vol. 1, pp. 76-79, and 111-112; Vol. 2, pp. 757-760. This is a modern edition of a work first published in London in 1798.

⁴ Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 58.

⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) p. 305. Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806*, 8 volumes (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1904-05), Vol. 3, p. 210n.



Cape Disappointment. William Clark finally saw the illusive landmark after reaching Station Camp on November 15, 1805.

⁶ Rex Ziak, *In Full View: A True and Accurate Account of Lewis and Clark’s Arrival at the Pacific Ocean, and Their Search for a Winter Camp along the Lower Columbia River* (Astoria, Ore.: Moffitt House Press, 2002), pp. 186-189. Martin Plamondon II, *Lewis and Clark Trail Maps: A Cartographic Reconstruction*, 3 volumes (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2000-04), Vol. 3, p. 62.

⁷ Coffin Rock was destroyed early in the 20th century to provide jetty rock at Cape Disappointment and Point Adams.

⁸ Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 25-26 and 29-30n; Vol. 11, p. 388.

⁹ Moulton (Vol. 6, p. 29n) speculates that “Haley” may have been Samuel Hill, captain of the brig *Lydia* hailing from Boston, or William Shaler, captain of the brig *Lelia Bird*. On balance, Moulton favors Hill, who traded on the Columbia in April 1805, possibly as far upriver as the Cascades.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 31.

¹¹ The corps camped by a “Springs run” that can still be seen today. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 31 and 34n; and Vol. 11, p. 390. The basis for Pillar Rock’s name is only evident from the water. Over eons, the river currents have shaved its sides to create a narrow, pillar-like form.

¹² Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 33 and 58. Moulton believes that Codex H, in which these statements are found, was probably composed no earlier than April or May of 1806. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 23 and 25-26; Vol. 5, p. 300n; Vol. 6, p. 34n. Several well-known accounts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition have mistakenly attributed “*Ocian in View! O! the joy*” to Clark’s elkskin-bound journal (i.e., his field notes). See for example, Ambrose, p. 305. Given the line’s apparent spontaneity, this seems a logical choice, even though it is, in fact, the last of the three versions Clark wrote. The error can probably be traced to Bernard DeVoto’s influential abridgment of the journals, where in a footnote he places this quote in “the notebook which he [Clark] kept on his knee to record courses and bearings.” Following Thwaites’s lead, DeVoto adds that Clark was “mistaken” about seeing the ocean from his camp near Pillar Rock. Bernard DeVoto, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p. 279n.

¹⁵ Thwaites, Vol. 3, p. 210n; Moulton., Vol. 2, p. 7; Vol. 6, p. 35n. John Logan Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), p. 316. Ambrose, pp. 307-308. Ziak, pp. 186-189.

¹⁶ Ambrose, p. 307.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

¹⁸ Plamondon, Vol. 3, p. 62. Plamondon's discussion includes an analysis of how the horizon would affect Clark's view. He states, "The earth's curvature perhaps is a consideration here. The distance from Pillar Rock to Point Ellice [the north terminus of the Astoria-Megler Bridge] is about 21 miles, with curvature figured at about 8 inches per mile for this area. Thus, the curvature would be approximately 14 feet. However, surface water elevations at Pillar Rock are not constant, but probably vary from about 3 to 6 feet above sea level. Clark sitting or standing in a canoe would add another 3 to 6 feet. Perhaps with his telescope he could see the distant ocean's high surf on the sand bars or possible storm swells up to a score or more feet high." Plamondon supports the view that the surf Clark saw and heard was breaking near Point Ellice, not at Cape Disappointment. My own map work tells me that the distance from Pillar Rock to Point Ellice is more like 14-15 miles, a distance that would lend further credibility to Clark's claim.

¹⁹ Thwaites, Vol. 3, p. 210n; Moulton, Vol. 4, pp. 295 and 297.

²⁰ Vancouver, Vol. 2, p. 752n. Notwithstanding Broughton's technically correct assertion that a river is constituted by fresh water, Vancouver states unequivocally that the Columbia was a "river Mr. Gray had discovered." *Ibid.*, p. 691.

²¹ Jackson, Vol. 1, p. 345.

²² Ziak, p. 189. In his journal entry for December 1, 1805, Clark wrote that the ocean "roars like a repeated rolling thunder and have roared in that way ever since our arrival in its borders." Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 103.

²³ Jackson, Vol. 1, p. 345. Moulton, Vol. 1, map 82, and Vol. 6, p. 104.

²⁴ Elliott Coues, *History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark*, 3 volumes (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1893), Vol. 1, pp. xiii and lxxxiv. Coues is an edited and heavily annotated version of the Biddle edition, published in Philadelphia in 1814. See also Jackson, Vol. 2, pp. 497-545. I am indebted to both Roger Wendlick and Robert Carriker for their insights on the continued value of Biddle, a source historians should not neglect.

²⁵ Coues, Vol. 2, p. 702. Biddle's interlineation found in Clark's journal entry for November 7 is consistent with the view that the ocean sighting occurred early in the day. Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 33.

²⁶ Known locally as "jetties," these extensions are more than just piles of rip-rap. The South Jetty, which is more than six miles long, was constructed between 1885 and 1913. The North Jetty, some three miles long, was built between 1914 and 1917. The buildup of sediment and vegetation around these structures eventually created new land mass. As a result of these changes, the width of the Columbia's mouth—the span between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams—is about a mile, compared to three miles in Lewis and Clark's era. Plamondon, Vol. 3, pp. 62-63.

²⁷ Personal communication from Harold Lampi to the author, March 7, 2002. Mr. Lampi was born in 1917 and has lived most of his life in Clatsop County, Oregon. He has also served as a source for Roger Wendlick in his ongoing study of Clark's traverse of Tillamook Head in January 1806.

²⁸ Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), E.N. Feltskog., ed., p. 28a.

²⁹ Jackson, Vol. 2, pp. 540-41. Moulton, Vol. 1, pp. 16n; Vol 6, p. 47n, and 50. Very likely, the perceived deficiencies in Vancouver's geography owed as much to Lewis's "haisty manner" in mak-

ing his copy. Jackson, Vol. 1, p. 53. Stephen Beckham writes that Lewis made this copy of Vancouver's map because the composite map made for the expedition by Nicholas King provided no details about the mouth of the river. Beckham speculates that when Clark "could not see any island in the mouth of this river as laid down by Vancouver" he was misled by Lewis's handiwork, the latter having misinterpreted the placement of a sandbar for an island inside the capes. Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 50. Beckham, p. 41. However, it's also possible that Lewis mistook the cartographic symbol of an anchorage in the ocean outside the capes for an island. Vancouver's master map of the western coast of North America from Prince William Sound to San Diego only employs the anchorage symbol once, and very indistinctly, off the mouth of the Columbia River. Its inclusion may have been unintended, since a later edition of the map published in the octavo edition of Vancouver's *Voyage* in 1801 deleted the symbol. Alternatively, Lewis may have hurriedly copied Vancouver's section map of the northern tip of Vancouver Island to Cape Lookout on today's Oregon coast, which shows a penumbra or intimation of an island to the ocean side of Point Adams. It is this chart that contains an inset view of the map titled "Entrance of Columbia River." [Reproduced on page 16 of this article.] Vancouver, Vol. 1, p. xiv, back pocket.

³⁰ Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 35 and 52. Some have suggested that Lewis and Clark may have harbored additional oceanic expectations. As Rex Ziak has pointed out, preparing for a ceremonial arrival at the end of a voyage was a well-established exploratory tradition. In the few preceding days, the explorers had gotten under way early, but they broke camp late on November 8, "having Changed our Clothing." According to Ziak, the buckskin-clad captains, expecting to find a naval ship, may have changed into uniform in order to properly greet its captain. Such an expectation is suggested by Joseph Whitehouse's journal entry for November 7, which says that Indians reported "vessells lying at the Mouth of this River." There could also be a simpler explanation. As related in the Biddle narrative, "It rained this morning [November 8], and having changed the clothing which had been wet during yesterday's rain, we did not set out till nine o'clock." Subsequent and repeated references during the ensuing week about the party's deteriorated leather clothing would be consistent with this interpretation, especially in view of John Ordway's assertion that the party broke camp on the morning of the 8th "as us[u]al." Ziak, p. 9. Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 35, 39, 42-43, and 47; Vol. 9, p. 251; Vol. 11, p. 390. Coues, Vol. 2, pp. 702, 710, and 720. Lewis retained possession of his officer's coat until March 17, 1806, when it was traded for a canoe just before leaving Fort Clatsop. Clark traded his for horses at The Dalles on April 20. Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 426, and Vol. 7, p. 147. I am indebted to Roger Daniels, who took me and Roger Wendlick in his boat to see this part of the Columbia from Clark's river-level perspective.

³¹ Moulton, Vol. 9, p. 251, and Vol. 11, p. 390.

³² *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 62. Entry for November 18, 1805. Clark's exact words are "here Capt Lewis myself & Severl. of the men marked our names day of the month & by Land &c. &c." Clark's more famous graffito—his name followed by the ringing phrase "By Land from the U. States in 1804 & 1805"—was carved December 3 on a pine tree at Point William, on the Oregon side of the estuary. *Ibid.*, p. 106. Presumably, the wording of his November 18 carving was substantially similar, and perhaps identical, to his carving of December 3.

“A MAN DIMLY LIT BY HISTORY”

*Was John Pernier, Meriwether Lewis’s “faithful servant,”
in fact his murderer? The allegation is doubtful*

BY MARK CHALKLEY

As a good story often does, the Lewis and Clark saga includes sundry colorful characters. While the intrepid captains have long been the Corps of Discovery’s most admired members, we have learned over time to appreciate the roles of other participants in their epic journey. Sacagawea, who benefited from a wave of feminism coinciding with the expedition’s centennial, has been the subject of countless studies and several historical novels. In recent years, George Drouillard, the indispensable hunter and interpreter, has emerged as one of the expedition’s major players, and William Clark’s slave York has finally received the recognition he deserves, as if to compensate for the shabby treatment he got in life.

Scholars continue to turn up documents casting new light on the expedition and its aftermath and bringing the story’s participants into sharper focus. But one obscure figure has not benefited from these improved perspectives, although in a literal sense he was closest to Meriwether Lewis in the last months of his life. He was present when Lewis, on the morning of October 11, 1809, died of gunshot wounds—almost certainly self-inflicted—at a lonely roadhouse in Tennessee. I refer to his valet, John Pernier.

Admittedly, there is no rich palette of facts from which to paint Pernier’s picture. Little, if indeed anything, is known about his origins, formative experiences, or other aspects

of his early life.¹ He appears on history’s pages as a full-grown man waiting on the troubled Lewis when the latter served as governor of Louisiana Territory, and he vanishes a short time later, a penniless suicide in the malarial swamp that was then Washington, D.C. The late David Leon Chandler, author of the controversial *Jefferson Conspiracies*, characterized him as “a man dimly lit by history.”² Whatever the source, the phrase is apt.

Notwithstanding his obscurity, John (or perhaps Jean) Pernier (or Pernia) was present during a critical period of Lewis’s life, an eyewitness to the days and hours leading up to the explorer’s abrupt departure from this world. The hard information—what we can glean from existing documents—indicates that Pernier was a free man of mixed African and French descent whom Lewis employed as a personal servant in St. Louis. The first mention of Pernier in the written record is an entry in Lewis’s account book in November 1808, noting that he had to borrow \$49 to pay for his servant’s medical care.³ There is no indication of what the treatment was for, but Pernier must have been fully recovered by early September 1809, when he accompanied Lewis on his final journey.

Lewis departed St. Louis on a boat heading down the Mississippi. His ultimate destination was Washington, where he was going to protest the War Department’s re-



The afternoon of October 10, 1809: Lewis approaches Grinder's Stand on the Natchez Trace. His traveling companions included his mulatto servant, John Pernier, who was with him when he died the next morning.

fusal to reimburse him for personal expenses incurred as governor. Two weeks after Lewis arrived at Fort Pickering (the current site of Memphis, Tennessee), he proceeded on horseback to the Chickasaw Agency, in Mississippi, and then up the Natchez Trace to Grinder's Stand, south of Nashville, which he reached late in the afternoon of October 10. During this journey of five weeks Lewis on various occasions exhibited erratic behavior, was often in a feverish, even delirious, state, and at least twice attempted suicide.

The Chickasaw agent, Major James Neely, and his servant joined Lewis and Pernier on the last leg of the journey, and along with Mrs. Grinder, the inn's proprietor, they were present when Lewis died. Afterward, Neely entrusted Pernier with delivering some of Lewis's personal effects to his home in Virginia.

While in Virginia, Pernier also visited Thomas Jefferson, who had left the presidency earlier that year and was now retired at Monticello. Jefferson gives us a glimpse of the valet's role in a letter dated November 26 to his successor, James Madison, regarding the disposition of Lewis's affairs and the fact that he died owing Pernier \$240. At Jefferson's request, Pernier carried this letter to Washington and personally delivered it to Madison. An excerpt follows. ("Capt. Russel" is Gilbert Russell, the commander

of Fort Pickering, and "Mr. Marks" is John Marks, Lewis's half-brother and an executor of his estate.)

The other two trunks which are in the care of Capt. Russel at the Chickasaw bluffs, & which Pernier (Govr. Lewis's servt.) says contain his private property, I write to Capt. Russell, at the request of Mr. Marks, to forward to Mr. Brown at N. Orleans to be sent on to Richmond under my address. Pernier says that Governor Lewis owes him 240 D. for his wages. He has recived money from Neely to bring him on here, & I furnish him to Washington, where he will arrive pennyles, and will ask for some money to be placed to the Governor's account. He rides a horse of the Governor's, which with the approbation of the Administrator I tell him to dispose of & give credit for the amount in his account against the Governor. He is the bearer of this letter & of my assurances of constant & affectionate esteem.⁴

Somewhere in his travels, probably in Washington, Pernier encountered William Clark and gave him a poignant account of his friend's final march through the wilderness. As Clark related in a letter to his brother, Pernier told how the fever-racked Lewis imagined "that he herd me Comeing on, and Said that he was certain [I would] over take him, that I had herd of his Situation and would Come to his releaf."⁵

Some ten months after Lewis's death, we learn from

Jefferson that Pernier too had died by his own hand. In a letter dated August 21, 1810, to William D. Meriwether, a Lewis cousin and the other executor of his estate, the former president wrote, "You will probably know the fate of poor Pierney his servant, who lately followed his master's example."⁶ Lewis's biographer Richard Dillon gives the date of Pernier's death as April 29, 1810, and the cause as suicide by an overdose of laudanum, an opiate related to heroin.⁷

THE VALET DID IT

Anyone knowledgeable about Lewis and Clark is familiar, at least in a general way, with the controversy surrounding Meriwether Lewis's death. Whether he was a suicide or a victim of murder (with robbery the presumed motive) or assassination by political plotters remains a subject of fierce debate.⁸ With little evidence to back them, some proponents of the murder theory have labeled Lewis's valet a prime suspect. Pernier's alleged culpability seems to have originated with Captain Gilbert Russell, who first raised it in a letter to Jefferson in January 1810,⁹ and later it appears to have become a rooted belief among the descendants of William Clark.¹⁰ More recently, Vardis Fisher has posed this possibility in his 1962 book *Suicide or Murder? The Strange Death of Meriwether Lewis*,¹¹ and Leon Chandler entertained it at length in his tendentious if well researched *Jefferson Conspiracies*, which makes the case that he was assassinated for political reasons.¹²

It is hard, however, to find any but the most circumstantial evidence in the historical record to convict Pernier of his employer's death, since there were no eyewitnesses to the event who suggested any such thing. Whatever was suggested or inferred after the fact, no truly contemporary account places blame on Lewis's valet.

In his review of the "murder" case, Chandler can only point to one narrative that even implies guilt on Pernier's part. Published by a newspaper in 1845, this anonymous account by "an Arkansas schoolteacher" was based on an interview with Mrs. Grinder conducted more than three decades after the fact. The morning of Lewis's death, Mrs.

Grinder recalled, she saw Pernier dressed in Lewis's clothes. When asked about this, Pernier supposedly replied that Lewis had given them to him; he then led Mrs. Grinder to the corpse.

But one anonymous, isolated report hardly makes the case. Nineteenth-century newspapers were scarcely free of sensationalism, and, as contemporary followers of the Princess Diana story know, few scandals are more interesting than untimely deaths, even years after the fact. (It is remotely possible that Mrs. Grinder made up this story to deflect suspicion from herself; another theory implicates her and her husband in the killing.)

The Pernier-as-murderer thesis raises difficult questions. What kind of murderer, or accomplice to murder, would ride hundreds of miles from the scene of the crime to visit his victim's friends and family? If his motive was robbery, why didn't Pernier simply take off with his loot? The Natchez Trace offered a direct route to the Mississippi and from there to New Orleans. There was no organized police force in frontier Tennessee. If he was guilty of a crime, why didn't Pernier just disappear?

We should also remember that Pernier as a free man could have quit Lewis's service at any time. Yet he remained with him throughout his final journey with all its terrible trials. Citing a contemporary report in the *Missouri Gazette*, Chandler states that Pernier had to take Lewis off the boat in New Madrid, south of St. Louis, where they remained some days while Lewis, presumably under Pernier's care, recovered from "an in-

disposition."¹³ Was this the behavior of an assassin?

Pernier continued with Lewis from Fort Pickering, where Captain Russell had kept the explorer under a suicide watch for the better part of two weeks, into the Tennessee-Mississippi wilderness. This overland phase of the journey could not have been any more pleasant than the river phase. Here again, the details Pernier provided Clark suggest a servant who stayed by his delusional master during extremely trying circumstances.

In 1811, the ornithologist Alexander Wilson, who had known Lewis in Philadelphia, visited Grinder's Stand on a bird-collecting expedition and interviewed Mrs. Grinder.

Far from suspecting Pernier of murder, Jefferson listened to the valet's story and counseled him. In an obvious gesture of confidence, he entrusted him to deliver a letter to the President of the United States. And William Clark's letter to his brother Jonathan appears to confirm that he accepted Pernier as a trustworthy source when he himself was having to "contradict" many unfavorable reports about his late friend, Meriwether Lewis.

She told him that Lewis arrived at the rough inn with two servants, “one of whom was a negro.” (She was referring to the mulatto Pernier; the other servant was Neelly’s.) When Lewis “inquired for his powder,” she said, his servant “gave no distinct reply.”¹⁴ The point is telling: we can readily infer that Pernier was unwilling to supply Lewis with the means to kill himself.

On the contrary, in that dark hour Pernier was still humoring the explorer’s eccentricities. When Lewis refused the customary offer of a bed and insisted on sleeping on the floor with his buffalo robe, Mandan-style, Pernier spread the rustic bedding out for him.

Wilson’s account further confirms Pernier in the character of a horrified onlooker who did what he could for a dying man. According to Wilson, in that grim dawn



The author’s rendering of Pernier keeping a watchful eye on Lewis.

when Mrs. Grinder and the servants discovered Lewis mortally wounded, the governor begged Pernier for water and requested that he take a rifle and finish him off. It is significant that the valet acceded to the first request but not the second.

Later, after a horseback ride of some 615 miles along rough wilderness roads and over the Blue Ridge Mountains, Pernier visited Jefferson at Monticello. This is a pivotal point in the story. Far from suspecting Pernier of murder or rejecting his concerns, Jefferson listened to the valet’s story and counseled him. In an obvious gesture of confidence, he entrusted the now-unemployed man to hand-deliver a letter to the president of the United States. Jefferson told Pernier to sell Lewis’s horse, and he did so “with the approbation of the Administrator”—that is, with the approval of the executor of Lewis’s estate, his cousin William D. Meriwether. Nor, in Jefferson’s mention of Pernier’s death, do we find any trace of hos-

tility or suspicion: “Poor Pierney . . . followed his master’s example.” The reference may be patronizing, but it is clearly sympathetic.

Clark’s letter to his brother Jonathan appears to confirm that he accepted Pernier as a trustworthy source at a time when he himself was having to “Contradict” many unfavorable reports about his late friend.

In the eyes of Lewis’s closest friends, then, the mulatto servant was a man to be trusted. The words of Jefferson and Clark are no light testimony; both men were practiced judges of human conduct and character. Yet we hear not a whisper against Pernier from either.

It also seems significant that Lewis’s relatives were silent on the subject of the alleged murder. Lewis was part of a close and caring extended family. After his death, his half-brother John Marks and cousin William Meriwether corresponded for years with various claimants against his estate, paying just debts, saving receipts and copies of letters, even trying to reclaim Lewis’s personal property from far-off individuals in Tennessee. Would they have omitted to prosecute someone they seriously suspected of murdering their beloved kinsman? Among the Lewis-Marks papers at the University of Virginia, there is no evidence they even entertained the thought.¹⁵

One other claim of Pernier’s culpability rests on a report that, years later, several members of Lewis’s family saw him in Mobile, Alabama, wearing his late master’s watch. This hearsay account appears in *Persimmon Hill*, a memoir dictated in his dotage by Clark’s nephew William Clark Kennerly and a work shot through with inaccuracies. Lewis’s watch, in fact, was never missing, but was included in an inventory of possessions at the time of his death. And as we know from Jefferson, Pernier was dead long before this alleged sighting could have occurred.¹⁶

THE FREEDMAN’S DILEMMA

John Pernier emerges from this review of his life story as an uncommon character. Even as a member of a race that was mostly enslaved and considered inferior, he won the confidence of Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and William Clark. Though unable to stop Lewis from taking his own life, he demonstrated courage and fortitude in his solitary ride from the remote Tennessee frontier to Charlottesville. He endured personal hardships to complete his mission of informing Lewis’s friends and family about the explorer’s death.

After his vital moment in American history, Pernier

seems to have died poor and despondent in a Washington boardinghouse.

In a larger sense, both Pernier's unhappy end and his unmerited reputation reflect the dilemma of free blacks in the slave-owning society of the day. Although no longer subject to the caprice or cruelty that was the lot of chattel slaves, they still faced enormous social obstacles. In a culture that justified slavery in terms of race, their very presence was awkward, an uncomfortable reminder that it was possible for people of color to function independently. Only in certain areas of the South, such as Baltimore, had freedmen's numbers made their participation in society an accepted fact. In the rest of the nation, free blacks tended to be viewed with hostility and suspicion—as Pernier, it seems, has been to this day.

The man who stayed by Meriwether Lewis's side until the end—whom the explorer called “my good servant”—deserved better. Almost two hundred years later, perhaps he too, like York, may now receive his share of respect.¹⁷

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NOTES

¹ In different accounts Pernier is variously referred to as a Creole, a mulatto, a Spaniard, and a Frenchman.

² David Leon Chandler, *The Jefferson Conspiracies: A President's Role in the Assassination of Meriwether Lewis* (New York: Morrow/Avon, 1994), p. 15.

³ Lewis's account book is in the Grace Lewis Miller papers, held by the Missouri Historical Society.

⁴ Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, 2 volumes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), Vol. 2, pp. 475-476.

⁵ James J. Holmberg, ed., *Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 228.

⁶ Chandler, p. 314.

⁷ Richard Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965), p. 346. Dillon doesn't cite a source for this, and as Chandler notes on page 315 in *The Jefferson Conspiracies*, “There is no documented confirmation of Pernier's actual suicide.” There is, however, little or no reason to doubt that it happened.

⁸ The open-ended topic of Lewis's death is beyond the scope of this article. For some recent discussion, see WPO, February 2002, pp. 9-25; J. Frederick Fausz and Michael A. Gavin, “The Death of Meriwether Lewis: An unsolved Mystery,” *Gateway Heritage*, Fall 2003–Winter 2004, pp. 66-79; and John D.W. Guice, “A Fatal Rendezvous: The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis,” WPO, May 1998, pp. 4-12.

⁹ Chandler, p. 353n. Jackson, p. 574n.

¹⁰ Holmberg, p. 231n. Holmberg cites references to the tradition in William Clark Kennerly's memoir, *Persimmon Hill*, but William Clark's son Meriwether Lewis Clark was repeating this rumor much earlier in the 19th century. Kennerly, Clark's nephew, dictated his memoir as an old man, although it wasn't published until 1948.

¹¹ Vardis Fisher, *Suicide or Murder? The Strange Death of Meriwether Lewis* (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1993 reprint of 1962 edition).

¹² Chandler argues that Neelly killed Lewis at the behest of General James Wilkinson, a nefarious political plotter.

¹³ Chandler, pp. 278-279. Another author, Jonathan Daniel, in *The Devil's Backbone: The Story of the Natchez Trace* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962) implicated Wilkinson, Pernier, and Frederick Bates (lieutenant governor of Louisiana) in a scheme to kill Lewis. See Guice, p. 12n, and Dillon, p. 348.

¹⁴ Alexander Wilson, “Particulars of the Death of Captain Lewis,” *The Port Folio*, No. 7, January 1812. Reprinted in WPO, February 2002, p. 24.

¹⁵ Lewis Marks Papers, Alderman Library Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

¹⁶ Holmberg, p. 231n.

¹⁷ The author says that Chandler and several other writers, without citing any primary source, suggest that Pernier was a former servant of Jefferson's who followed Lewis west. “It's an intriguing notion: the idea that Pernier knew both Sally Hemings and York, and possibly Madison, and had some cause to believe he had the connections to find work in Washington.” (Mark Chalkley, personal communication with the editor.) Due to the lack of a primary source the author chose not to include the possibility that Pernier had previously been in Jefferson's employment, but the editor believes it is at least worthy of an endnote.



The obelisk over Lewis's grave at Grinder's Stand, now a National Historic Site in Tennessee.

**Portage Cache Store
1/2H
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from 8/04, p. 27**

**Fontinelle Nature
Association
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Foley's biography traces Clark's journey from explorer to agent of expansion

Wilderness Journey:
The Life of William Clark

William E. Foley

University of Missouri Press
326 pages / \$29.95 cloth

When it rains, as the saying goes, it pours. For nearly forty years, beginning with the publication of Richard Dillon's 1965 biography of Meriwether Lewis, historians of the West had talked about the need for a biography of his partner in exploration, William Clark. In four decades, the closest thing published was Jerome Steffens's limited study of the explorer's later career: *William Clark: Jeffersonian Man on the Frontier*, in 1977. But despite the earnest talk about a full-blown life story, no one followed through.

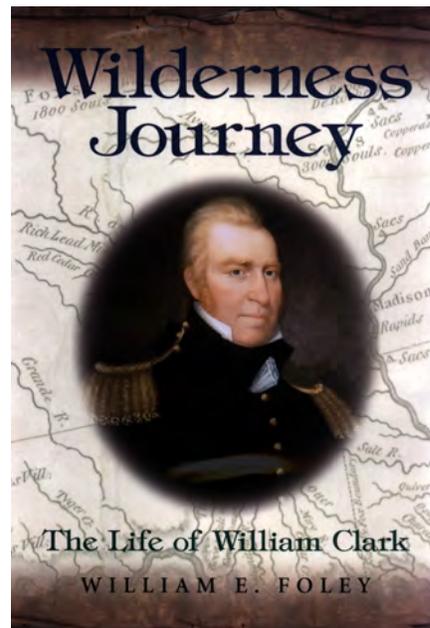
Now, in 2004, two biographies of Clark have appeared almost simultaneously, each vying to be the definitive work on the "Red-headed Chief" whose deeds on the 1803-06 expedition are being celebrated anew. Landon Y. Jones's *William Clark and the Shaping of the West* (reviewed in the August 2004 WPO) has been followed in short order by William Foley's *Wilderness Journey*, and those interested in the explorer's life may well ask, "What's the difference?"

The answer lies in the authors' differing responses to the choices that face every biographer of a major historic personality. Should the story be told so as to highlight the larger forces and events at play in the subject's life, or should the biographer strive mostly to provide insight into the individual at the nexus of great changes? Though it is possible to do both, the majority of biographers lean strongly one way or the other.

Landon Jones clearly takes the first approach. While supplying many relevant details about the Virginia-born, Kentucky-bred frontiersman, Jones is so interested in the bigger social issue of Indian removal that he sometimes

leaves William Clark off the page. Jones is a talented writer who creates a lively, readable narrative of the times, but would rather analyze the sociopolitical role Clark played than sort through the often unhappy twists of the explorer's personal affairs.

In contrast, William Foley's *Wilderness Journey* is decidedly more centered on Clark as a flesh-and-blood person



Foley's account shows Clark as someone with leadership qualities: courage, responsibility, steadfastness, and an eye fixed on the future. It also confirms his demanding attitude toward his slaves and a view of Native Americans that divided them into "good" and "bad" depending on their willingness to accept white hegemony.

than as a political instrument of westward expansion. Foley is quite aware of the larger social and political landscape in which Clark moved, but describes this mostly as it lay in the frontiersman's private and professional paths.

Foley is a professor emeritus of history at Central Missouri State University, and the strength of his work rests in his solid documentation, based on painstaking research. There is hardly a single positive assertion that does not carry a footnote referring to a published source, and the bibliography includes an impressive range of titles, from the well-known to the obscure.

From Foley's account there emerges a clear-cut picture of William Clark as someone with many qualities that made a leader; courage, responsibility, steadfastness, and an eye fixed on the future rather than the past. We learn about Clark's deep attachment to his family and loyalty to friends, as well as his keen (if seldom fulfilled) desire for business success. Also, if less forthrightly, Foley confirms Clark's demanding, seldom-softened attitude toward his black slaves, and a view of Native Americans that divided them into sharply defined "good" and "bad" categories, depending on their willingness to acquiesce to white Americans' expanding hegemony.

Foley carefully follows the thread of Clark's life through his boyhood on the Kentucky frontier, his early army career, the expedition to the Pacific, and the subsequent decades in which he served as superintendent of Indian affairs and territorial governor of Missouri. Along the way we find useful insights into the people his life touched: his wives, Julia and Harriet; his O'Fallon nephews; the frustrated York; Sacagawea; and, of course, Meriwether Lewis.

He provides fascinating details about Clark's reputed son by a Nez Perce woman who went by the tribal name of Daytime Smoker. (Clark's relationships with women were an impor-

tant part of his life, and it seems remarkable that, despite the greater average longevity of their sex, the old general outlived his two wives. Foley indicates that Julia died of breast cancer; he offers no such detail about Harriet.)

The “graying” warrior

For this reader, the weak point of Foley’s portrait is an excessive emphasis on the aging process as a factor in Clark’s choices, conspicuously displayed in a chapter titled “The Graying of the Red-headed Chief.” Even though not a few of Clark’s contemporaries (Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Gass, and John Quincy Adams come to mind) remained lucid and alert well into their eighties or beyond, Foley’s constant references to “the aging warrior,” “the western patriarch,” or “the old Army man” imply that the explorer had entered his dotage well before his death, at 68. This, in turn, serves as a convenient excuse for Clark’s handling of the tragic, bloody fiasco called the Black Hawk War. (Jones, in his account, is far less forgiving.)

Foley is a very competent writer, but in the re-telling of a story of which much is already known, a reader might reasonably expect more effort at original, lively diction. Oppressed, disadvantaged, or just unlucky people are invariably referred to as “hapless”; any Indian with an ounce of sophistication is “savvy.” The expressions “no doubt” and “undoubtedly” (mostly the former) are used by turns at least 32 times in 269 pages to introduce the author’s inferences about Clark, Lewis, or others. No doubt there are other ways of suggesting what must have been, but Foley seems to have avoided them.

Stylistic quibbles aside, Foley’s carefully constructed narrative gives the reader a coherent and believable picture of the man whose life was a crucial link between the years of exploration and the era of expansionism. We come away from *Wilderness Journey* with a sense of knowing the real William Clark, whose strengths and weaknesses were, in the end, America’s too.

—Mark Chalkley

Morris chronicles afterlife of the Corps of Discovery

The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition

Larry E. Morris

Yale University Press
284 pages / \$30 cloth

Pierre Cruzatte, the expedition’s genial fiddler, disappeared into the wilderness one jump ahead of imprisonment for debt. Patrick Gass published the first account of the expedition and volunteered for the Union in his nineties. Alexander Willard fought Tecumseh and carried dispatches for William Clark. These afterlives of members of the Corps of Discovery deserve more than a postscript to the epic journey. Larry Morris does them justice in *The Fate of the Corps*, which offers a vivid, unromanticized picture of the West in which many members sought their fortunes.

As Evan S. Connell wrote of the West in *Son of the Morning Star*, his compelling account of Custer and the Little Bighorn, “when it was not dull it was murderous. A man could get killed without realizing it.” During the expedition, the corps’ “medicine” was proof against river currents, storms, flash floods, Indian confrontations, bears, and disease (the exception being Sergeant Charles Floyd, the sole member to die on the expedition, probably of a ruptured appendix). But in the post-expedition era too many members discovered that the wilderness was dealing the cards and the odds favored the house.

Hazards verged from hell-bent war parties to tenacious litigants and creditors. John Colter, “the first mountain man,” while trapping with fellow ex-

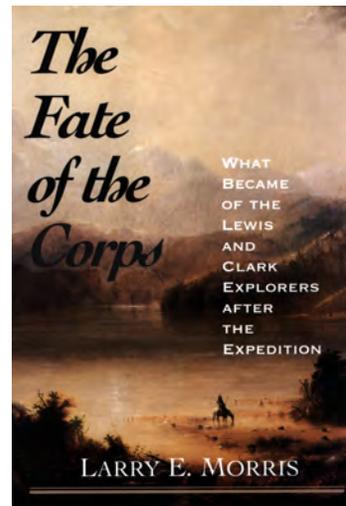
pedition veteran John Potts, was surprised by Blackfeet. He was stripped and invited to sprint for his life, then pursued in short order by his captors. Colter paused only to dispatch one warrior with his own lance (a Charles M. Russell drawing of the coup de grace is one of the book’s plates.) He then concealed himself in a river beneath a logjam while his baffled pursuers stomped around in the deadwood. Hungry and punctured by prickly pears, he staggered to safety.

“Colter’s run” became the stuff of western legend, reprised by Charlton Heston in the feature film *The Mountain Men*. Potts was not so lucky and sold his life dearly. He was hacked to pieces rather than take his chances on surrendering. He was not alone. The versatile hunter and translator George Drouillard, whom Lewis described as a “man of much merit,” joined him on the casualty

list of combat with the tribes.

Drouillard, while serving on an expedition with the St. Louis fur trader Manuel Lisa, had killed a “deserter” on Lisa’s orders and faced a murder charge. He was acquitted only to perish, barricaded behind his horse, in an attack by Blackfeet at the Three Forks. One spectator at Drouillard’s trial was expedition tenderfoot George Shannon, missing a leg lost in a battle with Arikaras that may also have cost Joseph Field his life. Shannon later built a career as a lawyer and politician and helped shape the Biddle edition of the journals.

Regarding Lewis’s death and other conundrums, Morris adroitly points out weaknesses in various hypotheses without necessarily stumping for a preferred theory. An appendix provides three accounts of inquiries into Lewis’s



demise. They include the recollections of Priscilla Grinder, proprietress of the gloomy roadhouse where Lewis died, recorded a generation after the fact. Morris aligns historians on either side of the “murder or suicide” dispute, concluding with issues for consideration by any reader who still possesses an open mind on the matter.

Morris does deconstruct some post-expedition myths. He argues that the York of legend, reputed to have lived out his life in honor, in the Far West among Native American friends, was not York but a legendary hard case of a mountain man, James Beckwourth. A friend of Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau, Beckwourth lived with and fought among the Crows. Morris also dismisses the notion that Sacagawea survived into old age. His clincher is simple and emphatic: William Clark’s notation in a post-expedition roster naming her among the dead. He also notes that John Luttig, whose somewhat ambiguous journal entry is the main (indeed

only) documentation that Sacagawea died at Fort Manuel in 1812 and not in Wyoming in 1884, adopted Sacagawea’s children, Jean-Baptiste (Pomp) and Lisette. Luttig was a former employee of Clark, who subsequently took legal custody of the boy and girl. Morris’s characterization of Luttig breathes new meaning into his oft-cited obituary for Sacagawea, “a good and the best woman in the fort.” Morris describes the factor’s journal entries as “rich with warmth and detail” and possessing “a powerful, understated poignancy.”

Intimate facts, extracted from estate documents and public registers, impart a sense of wistfulness to Morris’s narrative. The expedition’s inventive armorer, John Shields, who may have saved William Bratton at Fort Clatsop by improvising a sweat bath, died of nonviolent causes. His property was sold: a plow for \$6.75, a Bible for 75 cents, an Indian basket for 87 cents. The tumultuous life of John Colter boiled down at his estate sale to such artifacts

as one coffee pot sold for \$1.62½, one bottle for 50 cents, and two books for \$1.75 and 86 cents.

For all such pointed accuracy, *The Fate of the Corps* steers clear of forced erudition. It belongs on the bookshelf of any expedition enthusiast. Perhaps it will attract a wider audience, for one of Morris’s virtues is his readability. He relates the fate of John Ordway with a nice touch of disaster journalism. Ordway had achieved a “prosperous, steady future” in New Madrid, Missouri, until the earth played a nasty trick in the massive quake of December 15, 1811. The bizarre spasm caused the Mississippi River briefly to flow upstream. The ground resembled undulating surf with sand, water, and a charred substance spurting out of boils in the surface. Ordway was financially devastated and died in poverty, whereas William Bratton, crewing on a keelboat nearby, emerged with only a good story to tell.

—Dennis O’Connell

Reviews continue on page 32.

Farcountry Press
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from 8/04, p. 37

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Tim McNeil
repeat – pick up
from p. 12 of
May issue
(not August)

Reviews (cont.)

Lewis & Clark for the Pokémon set

With the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in full swing, bookstores are offering scores of new titles about the Corps of Discovery. Many target children and purport to put the expedition, or some aspect of it, into a kid-friendly format. More than a hundred children's Lewis and Clark books have been published since 1999; Meriwether Lewis's Newfoundland dog, Seaman, is the central character in at least a half-dozen. Given the abundance, it's sometimes hard to choose. Here are four recent works worth considering.



Carol A. Johmann's *The Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Charlotte, Vt.: Williamson Publishing, 2003, ages 8-14, \$12.95 paper, 111 pages, bibliography, index) offers a broad overview of the expedition within a hands-on context. The book makes liberal use of cartoons [example above] and good line drawings to illustrate points, and offers numerous "Try It" and "Think About It" sections designed to inspire critical thinking. A section on the Louisiana Purchase asks young readers to consider both the benefits and costs of the land transaction: Did the advantages gained by new natural resources and land outweigh the costs to the ancient cultures whose way of life was permanently changed with the influx of settlers? Other activities provide detailed instructions for building a keelboat model, learning some Plains Indian sign language, and conducting a land survey. The lively text and pictures should engage children as they learn.

Animals on the Trail with Lewis and Clark, by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

Bridger Press
1/3S repeat - pick up
from 8/04, p. 39
("Listening to
Lewis & Clark")

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: First Edition, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. Edited by Thwaites. Copyright 1904. Seven volumes and an atlas. Phone 406-475-3012.

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Whisperin' Waters
1/2H
repeat - pick up
from p. 49,
MAY issue
(not August)

Reviews (cont.)

(New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002, ages 9-12, \$18 cloth, 118 pages, index, further reading list) is a stunning compendium of photographs by William Muñoz showcasing the wildlife encountered by the expedition, accompanied by clear, easy-to-follow text. The large mammals—buffalo, wolves, grizzlies—comprise the central themes of several chapters, but everything from condors to Clark's nutcracker is covered, too. This is purely a sit-down-and-read book—no hands-on activities—although the pictures are so numerous and so good that adults will enjoy looking at them with their children. A chronology of animals recorded by the expedition ends this worthwhile read.

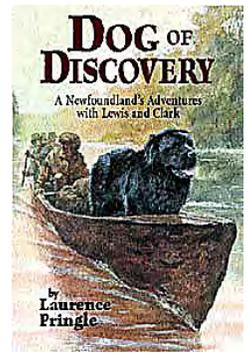
Any parent who travels the L&C Trail has heard the question, What happened to the dog? Two books tackle Seaman and his adventures, from quite different perspectives. *Lewis and Clark and Me: A Dog's Tale*, by Laurie Myers (New York: Henry Holt, 2002, ages 8-

12, \$16.95 cloth, 64 pages), is told from Seaman's point of view. Written in the first person, the story begins with Seaman's purchase by Lewis, and tracks the journal episodes that feature him—catching squirrels in the Ohio River, tangling, almost fatally, with a beaver, being dognapped by Indians on the Columbia River, and more. By the end, Seaman knows that he and Lewis "suited each other perfectly. Only a few dogs are lucky enough to have a man who suits them like that." Kids should relate well to this dog-told story. The facts of the expedition are mostly accurate, though Myers wrongly identifies the dognappers as Clatsop Indians (they were Wah-clel-lar, according to Lewis). Despite that error, this is a fun and engaging book with beautiful illustrations.

Dog of Discovery, by Laurence Pringle (Honesdale, Penn.: Boyds Mills Press, 2002, ages 8 and up, \$17.95 cloth, 149 pages, bibliography, index) follows the journals fairly closely while adding "informed guesses" about the dog's be-

havior based on what's known about dogs in general and the Newfoundland breed in particular. Handsome line drawings accompany the text, which is delineated by journal dates and highlighted with sidebars that provide further explanatory detail. The book also contains a useful chronology of journal entries about Seaman. *Dog of Discovery* is an enjoyable account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but readers should be aware that the explorers' viewpoint dominates. Interactions with American Indians are told from the expedition's perspective; parents may want to supplement this book with material that delves deeper into the many roles Indians played.

—Lauren Danner



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Julich heads LCTHF; 2004 kudos

Gordon Julich, the superintendent of historic sites for the county of Jackson, Missouri, is the new president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, a position he assumed at this year's annual meeting, held August 4-7 in Bismarck, North Dakota.

A resident of Blue Springs, Missouri, and a member of the LCTHF since 1996, Julich helped organize the Missouri/Kansas Riverbend Chapter and served as its president for two years. He was elected to the foundation's board of directors in 2001 and will serve a one-year statutory term as president.

In his day job Julich is directly responsible for two historic sites—Missouri Town 1855 and the reconstructed Fort Osage, which was built in 1808 under the supervision of William Clark—and is responsible for the cultural-resource management of three other historic sites. He is a past president of the Heritage League of Greater Kansas City.

Julich's goals for the year include development of a working plan for the foundation's role in the post-bicentennial era, improving the board's understanding of legal issues relevant to not-for-profit organizations, and initiating an endowment campaign to ensure the foundation's long-term financial health.

Julich succeeds Ron Laycock of Benson, Minnesota.

The board also elected new members Phyllis Yeager of Floyd Knobs, Indiana, who will serve as secretary; Jim Mallory of Lexington, Kentucky; and Jane Angelis of Carbondale, Illinois. Six members cycled off the board: Charles Cook, Larry Epstein, Sue Hottois, Dark Rain Thom, Jane Schmoyer-Weber, and Roger Wendlick.

Awards

Also at the Bismarck meeting, the foundation recognized four individuals for

their contributions to preserving the legacy of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Distinguished Service Award went to Eleanor Ward of Santa Barbara, California, and the Meritorious Achievement Award to Steven Wang of Olympia, Washington; Daniel Slosberg of West Los Angeles, California; and Jane Short Mallinson of Sugar Creek, Missouri.

The current president of the foundation's California Chapter, Ward has

been a chapter officer for more than ten years and has organized and promoted L&C-related events across California for much longer. She was instrumental in establishing the chapter and developing its membership base. Ward led the effort to restore and rededicate the headstone of Alexander Willard, an expedition member buried in

a cemetery near Sacramento.

Wang, who manages interpretive programs for Washington State, was responsible for the renovation and growth of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Cape Disappointment State Park (formerly Fort Canby State Park). The facility tells the Lewis and Clark story through texts, exhibits, pictures, and audiovisual materials. Wang researched, directed, and produced the center's film *Of Dreams and Discovery: Lewis and Clark's Arrival at the Pacific Ocean*.

Slosberg is widely known for his portrayal of Pierre Cruzatte, the Corps of Discovery's chief boatman and fiddler. He plays the fiddle, jaw harp, bones, spoons, and other instruments of the expedition. Slosberg performs at schools, libraries, museums, and bicentennial events.

Mallinson has dedicated much of her life to ensuring that the expedition's role in Missouri history and the location of its campsites are not lost to future generations. An authority in Mis-



Gordon Julich

WENDY RANEY

Yale University Press

souri on the history of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, she has spread the message to people across her state of the importance of the expedition and the preservation of related sites and trails.

Chapters

The foundation recognized the work of several of its more than forty chapters and several chapter leaders for contributions to preserving the expedition's legacy: the Washington State Chapter; George Eisentrout of Olympia, Washington; George Knapp of Missoula, Montana; John Maatta of Chester, Montana; David Aungst of Scottsdale, Arizona; the Portage Route Chapter, in Great Falls, Montana; and the Mouth of the Platte Chapter, in Omaha, Nebraska.

Washington State Chapter and Eisentrout were recognized for their sponsorship of a woodcarving exhibit, *The Flora & Fauna of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. The 30-foot display at the state capitol, in Olympia, includes more than a hundred woodcarvings of plants and animals identified by Lewis and Clark, as well as an Indian village and four wood-burned panels illustrating expedition events. Eisentrout was

instrumental in organizing the project, which was executed by more than forty woodcarvers who contributed their time and materials.

Knapp is a charter member and past vice-president of the foundation's Travelers' Rest Chapter. Knapp suggested the chapter create a trunk containing replicas of articles carried on the expedition. He then acquired grants to purchase materials for the trunk and spent hundreds of hours presenting the trunk to more than 25,000 people at schools and organizations across Montana and northern Idaho.

Maatta was a co-founder of the Marias River Chapter and is its secretary-treasurer. He is also a member of the North Central Montana Bicentennial Commission. Maatta has researched, developed, and presented programs on Lewis and Clark as botanists. He writes and distributes the chapter's newsletter and writes a Lewis and Clark column for the *Liberty County Times*, in Chester, Montana.

Aungst helped establish the foundation's Grand Canyon Chapter and served as its first president. He continues to serve as editor of the chapter's newsletter, *Desert Dispatch*.

The Portage Route Chapter was

recognized for contributions to the foundation's overall missions of outreach, education, and preservation. Its contributions include production of an audiocassette tape and CD that guide visitors on a three-hour tour of the expedition's portage around the falls of the Missouri River and a detailed map and brochure of the portage route. In conjunction with historian Robert N. Bergantino, the chapter has also developed and printed a map of expedition campsites in Montana. It sponsors an annual scholar-in-residence program, which brings a noted Lewis and Clark scholar to Great Falls for five weeks each summer, and an essay contest for middle- and high-school students.

The Mouth of the Platte Chapter was recognized for its overall support of the foundation's mission. The chapter worked for the official recognition of Lewis and Clark Landing, in Omaha. It also founded a Lewis and Clark study group that meets monthly to discuss the journals and other writings; raised money for a series of Lewis and Clark interpretive signs; and supported the Nebraska City Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trails and Visitor Center. ■

2004 annual meeting in Bismarck

Nearly 300 members of the LCTHF descended upon Bismarck, North Dakota, August 4-7 for the foundation's 36th annual meeting. Attendees visited On-a-Slant Village, the Knife River Indian Villages, and Fort Mandan. They were treated to informative and thought-provoking presentations by historians and authors including Clay Jenkinson, Amy Mossett, Richard Hetu, Tracy Potter, Landon Jones, and Michael Haynes and Bob Moore.

In other events, the Friends of the Library hosted a breakfast, authors participated in a book-signing reception, and a silent auction raised \$4,176 for the foundation's William P. Sherman Library and Archives. ■



Clockwise from left:
• Visitors stroll through On-a-Slant Village, reconstructed home of the Mandans. • Circle dance at Knife River Indian Villages historic site. • Talking with "York" at reconstructed Fort Mandan.



PHOTOS BY WENDY RANEY

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2005 Awards

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation is seeking nominations for its 2005 awards:

- **Chapter Award:** To a chapter or one of its members for some exemplary contribution to the foundation's mission. Qualifying activities include locally promoting L&C history, providing educational opportunities for chapter members or the public, preserving the historic integrity of the L&C Trail, sponsoring research, and strengthening the foundation financially.
- **Meritorious Achievement Award:** To a person, organization, or agency for scholarly research or other significant contributions that bring to the nation a greater appreciation and awareness of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
- **Distinguished Service Award:** To a foundation member who has made an outstanding contribution toward furthering the purpose and objectives of the LCTHF.
- **Appreciation Award Certificate:** To a person or organization for gracious support (in deed, word, or funds) of the foundation and its endeavors to preserve and perpetuate the lasting historical worth of the L&C Expedition.

Send nominations to Carol Bronson, executive director of the LCTHF, for forwarding to the Awards Committee. (cbronson@lewisandclark.org)

Lewis and Clark: What Else Happened?

What else happened
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From the Library

L&C genealogy documents will soon be available

The William P. Sherman Library and Archives has received a generous donation from the Clatsop County (Oregon) Genealogical Society. The records of the Lewis and Clark Descendent Project have been donated so that researchers can access the documents used to create the society's recent publication, *The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery: Their Lives and Their Lineage*.

The book, and the project, sets out to certify descendants of the members of the permanent party of the Corps of Discovery. Persons who could show a relationship to a member of the corps sent in legal documents such as birth certificates, wills, land deeds, marriage licenses, death certificates, and other records for each generation. The society then researched the documents to determine if the individuals or families were indeed related to members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Upon its completion, the project was able to certify 1,669 persons as descendants. There could easily have been more, but for practical purposes the project had a deadline of December 31, 2003.

Sandra Hargrove, a former president of the society, conceived of the project during the summer of 1999. It took five years of research and hard work, but the society produced a massive collection of documents and the associated book and in August hosted a reunion for descendants. It was attended by 740 people, including Barb Kubik, a past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, who delivered the boxed records to Amtrak's office in Portland for shipment to us. As a partner with the LCTHF in Trails & Rails, a program to encourage interest in the L&C Bicentennial, Amtrak provided this service free of charge. The boxes arrived safely in Shelby, Montana, where Larry Epstein, another past president, picked up the documents and brought them to Great Falls. We thank everyone involved in this project, from conception to delivery!

We have received numerous calls from researchers who learned these records are now housed at the Sherman Library. Given the size of the collection, however, it will take some time to make it accessible to the public. Dick Smith, a retired Forest Service manager and one of the library's most dedicated volunteers, is processing the collection.

There are a number of steps in this procedure. First, an extensive inventory must be taken of the contents of the nine boxes of materials. Then the contents are re-housed in acid- and lignin-free file folders and special archival boxes. As part of this process, all staples, paper clips, and similar materials are removed. Any items that were folded or rolled are flattened. Any other steps necessary to preserve the collection are taken. Since the records are contained in a variety of mailing envelopes, the front of each envelope is photocopied onto acid-free paper to preserve the information written on it, then the envelope itself is discarded.

Finding aid

Once we've completed the preservation and organization work, a document called a finding aid will be created. It will contain a historical sketch of the collection and information about its scope, contents, and provenance, as well as a container list, appendices, and an index. We will post the finding aid on the foundation's Web site, www.lewisandclark.org, so that researchers can plan which records to view prior to arriving at the library.

The Descendent Project records will not be available to researchers until sometime next year. Once the records are processed, we will develop a policy for handling long-distance research requests. We simply do not have the manpower to provide substantial research. If you are interested in access to the records, please plan a visit to the Sherman Library.

—Jill Jackson
Librarian and Archivist, LCTHF

**John Fisher
1/2H**

**Montana Historical
Society
1/2H**

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Lewis & Clark College site of 2005 meeting

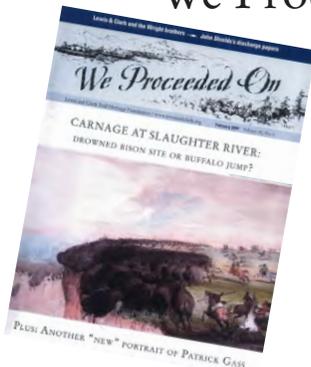
Every 100 years, Lewis and Clark make news in the Portland, Oregon–Vancouver, Washington, region. When the explorers arrived there, in November 1805, the Clatsop and other tribes, who had been dealing for a decade with maritime traders, spread word of traders coming for the first time from the east. The Corps of Discovery’s journal keepers rightly predicted the area would be a good port and had a “handsome appearance.”

A century later, in 1905, Portland’s Lewis and Clark Centennial Exhibition and Oriental Fair drew thousands of visitors to the region. It was here that Susan B. Anthony dedicated a statue honoring Sacagawea. Now these two women share honors on dollar coins.

Next August 6-10, the Oregon and Washington chapters of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation will host the organization’s 37th annual meeting at the very place, Lewis and Clark College, where the founders of the LCTHF met weekly for coffee. The college will be opening its rare-book collection on the literature of Lewis and Clark for viewing. Gary E. Moulton, the editor of the Lewis and Clark journals, leads a growing list of presenters who will focus on the shared discoveries and legacies of the Columbia basin tribes and the expedition. The agenda will include field trips to historic and scenic sites up and down the river.

Watch the foundation Web site (www.lewisandclark.org) for updates and links to helpful information. Registration details will be on-line in January. E-mail annualmeeting@lewisandclark.org for further information. ■

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For the Record

An obituary for Martin Plamondon II on page 42 of the August 2004 WPO incorrectly stated the name of the publisher of his three-volume work *Lewis and Clark Trail Maps: A Cartographic Reconstruction*. The publisher is Washington State University Press. ■

Tales of the Lolo Motorway: sweat, bears, wolves, and Lucy Marks

I spent three days in late September on Idaho's Lolo Motorway (a primitive, one-lane road north of U.S. 12) with a group of volunteers and U.S. Forest Service employees. As part of its bicentennial strategy, the Clearwater National Forest has committed to monitoring the natural and cultural resources along the trail. The commitment is enormous and involves a lot of time and on-the-ground work.

The project includes monitoring and cleanup of dispersed campsites along the motorway. This was the second year of the project so we had baseline data to reference. The work is very detail-oriented and demands what I deem impressive powers of observation. Visitation to the motorway had not increased dramatically over the year, and fortunately we found that the campsites had not grown in size or suffered damage.

The first hour on the motorway wit-

nessed a lot of wardrobe changes for volunteers as they looked for the right mix of moisture protection and warmth. With long johns, rain pants, winter packs, down jackets, hats, scarves, and mittens to shield us from the cold, drizzly weather, we began our training.

During the planning phase of the bicentennial, there was much talk about how many people would visit the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail during the L&C Bicentennial. Estimates soared to the millions, and though numbers that great have not been seen, public and private entities have planned and prepared for such a maximum influx. The Forest Service is monitoring sites along the motorway to determine what, if any, action should be taken during and after the bicentennial.

We measured campsites to find out whether use had increased their size and

took photos from specified locations so the Forest Service can make visual comparisons over time.

We estimated what percentage of the area, on- and off-site, was covered with vegetation, including grasses, brush, flowers, and trees. We calculated how much of the ground was covered by forest duff and other woody debris. The Forest Service uses that information to determine vegetation loss and changes in the amount of exposed soil.

While we worked, a Forest Service archaeologist explained how she conducts a dig. Over a picnic lunch on the second day (when the sun came out), she shared stories of her archeological finds and encounters with wildlife.

We recorded tree damage at each campsite and the amount of root exposure. I was astounded by the number of nails pounded into trees, bear-claw marks, and the abundance of places

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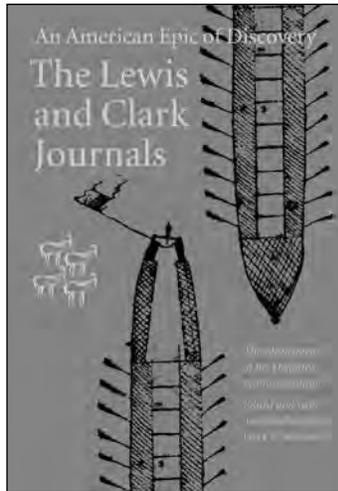
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Trail Notes (cont.)

where wire or rope had been tied to tree trunks, resulting in deep grooves where it had dug into the bark. I had never seen a meat pole, but along the motorway they are commonly built by hunters to elevate game and keep it from the clutches of hungry and opportunistic wildlife.

A resource manager/archaeologist for the National Park Service shared stories about the Nez Perce National Historic Park. As volunteers asked about markings on trees and why particular information is recorded, his answers evolved into tales of fur traders, tribal legends, and historic fires.

Our favorite observations were fresh wolf tracks straight down the middle of the motorway and a tree marked with the perfect imprint of a bear claw. Both animals appeared sizeable.

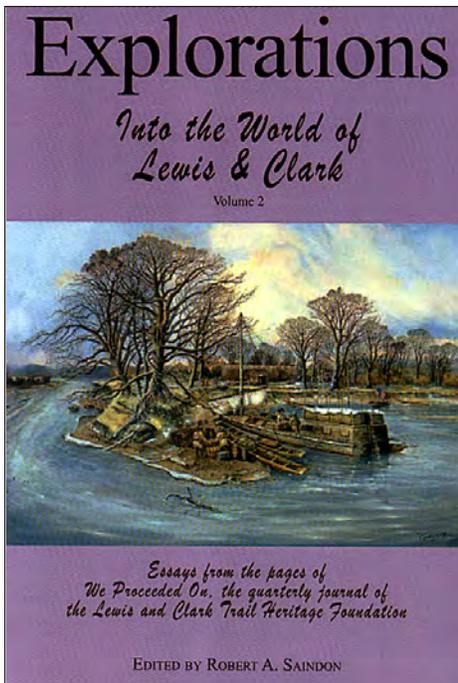
Those who participated in the cleanup performed some hearty physical labor. The crew pulled nails from trees, dismantled hunter-made meat poles and tables, stacked firewood, cleared fallen trees, and raked around fire rings. Rangers had kept the sites clear of litter throughout the summer.

In the evenings, we admired the sunset while devouring lasagna and chicken and rice prepared in massive Dutch ovens. Huddled around the campfire, we discussed our favorite scenic views along the motorway, compared our day's discoveries, and enjoyed lighthearted banter. The final evening, we were treated to a visit by Lucy Meriwether Lewis Marks (Connie Grant of Grangeville, Idaho) who read from her son's journals and talked about her life.

Some may disagree with the policies and procedures of various land-management agencies or organizations, protest or encourage development, argue over historical accuracy, debate project merits, and dispute actions and decisions, but during this week in September, a dozen people who care about the legacy of Lewis and Clark and the trail they traveled tried to do right by the expedition and the people who choose to follow in its footsteps.

—Wendy Raney

Director, Field Operations



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