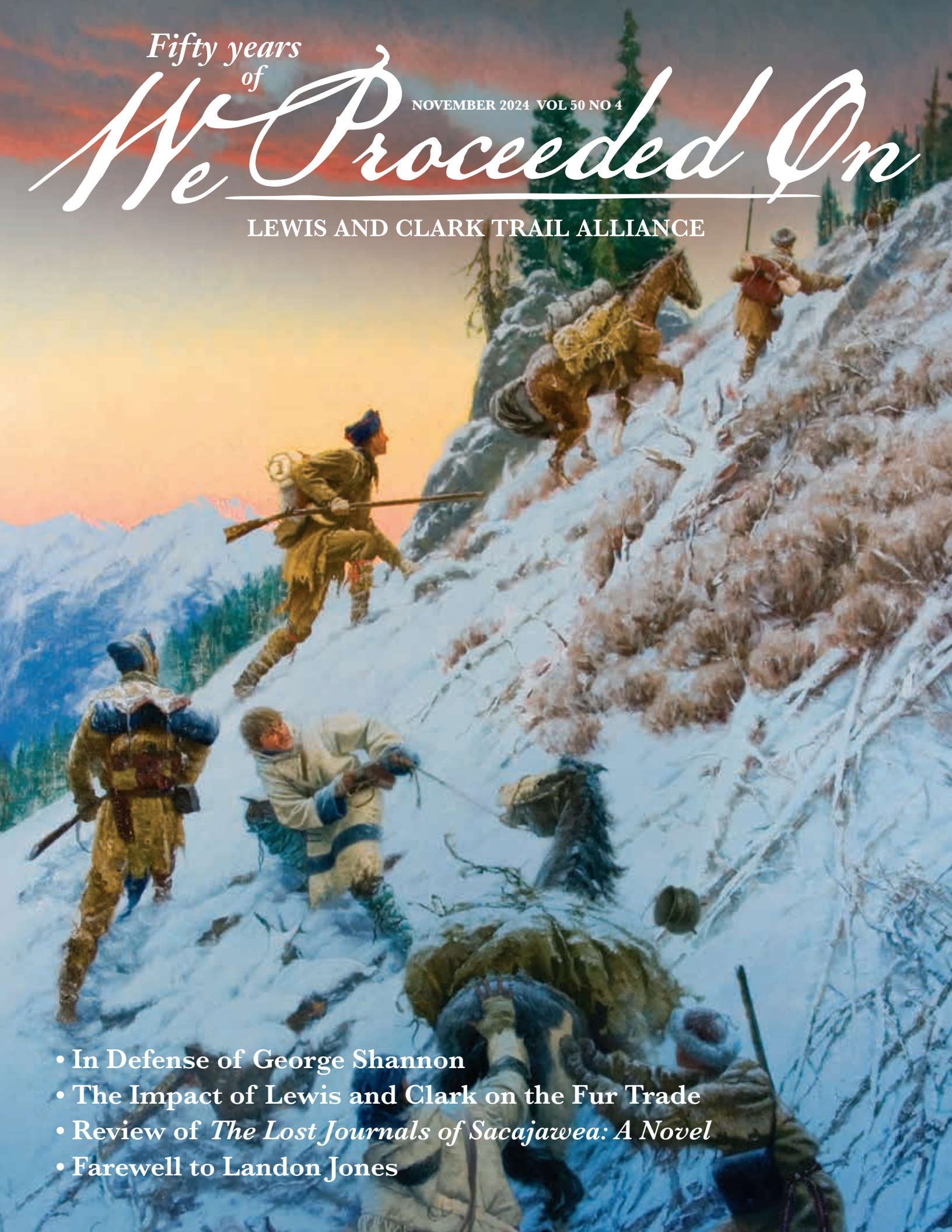
Fifty years of

We Proceeded On

NOVEMBER 2024 VOL 50 NO 4

LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL ALLIANCE



- In Defense of George Shannon
- The Impact of Lewis and Clark on the Fur Trade
- Review of *The Lost Journals of Sacajawea: A Novel*
- Farewell to Landon Jones

How do we know what we think we know?

David Nicandri's review of Deborah Magpie Earling's *The Lost Journals of Sacajawea: A Novel* raises questions that every lover of the Lewis and Clark story should consider. We think we know the story so well, but thanks to our increasing commitment to Native American perspectives and thanks to the "cultural revolution" in the humanities that began in the 1960s and found its first great expression in James Ronda's *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians* (1984), our old certitudes about the most famous exploration in American history are slowly eroding.

First, how do we know what we know? The great James Ronda reminded us that every Lewis and Clark historian or biographer combs the extant journals to construct a linear narrative. Typically the story begins in St. Louis, but it sometimes begins in Pittsburgh or the White House or Philadelphia or even Jefferson's study at Monticello. Typically the story ends on September 23, 1806, when the Expedition returned to St. Louis, where, as Sergeant Ordway wrote, "the people gathred on the Shore and Huzzared three cheers." Between those markers we find struggles with the rivers, encounters with the Natives, scientific observations, discipline issues, grizzly bear killings, evening entertainments, some geopolitical musings, and tantalizing glimpses into the actions and character of the thirty-some men (and one woman) who made the journey. Every historian pieces together an account of the Expedition from whatever found its way into the journals of busy, often exhausted, men who must have found the business of writing things down burdensome. The broad outlines don't change, but every historian selects bits of data from the journals to incorporate into the narrative, and every historian necessarily ignores a large number of incidents, offhand comments, turns of phrase, ethnographic data, and biological detail.

The journals are rich and fascinating. But clearly – official U.S. government documents of a military expedition – they don't tell the whole story. We grasp whatever was written down, but we'd give anything to know what wasn't written down: the friendships, the factions, the feuds, the jests and boasts, the private religious activities, whispered comments on the leadership, particularly Captain Lewis, inter-party sexual activity, plans for life after the

Who owns Sacagawea-Sacajawea-Sakakawea? Courtesy of Clay Jenkinson.

Expedition. We'd give anything for a full biographical and character sketch of Sacagawea, some sense of the private thoughts of York, a brief description of each member of the Corps of Discovery and his quirks.

As Ronda reminds us, as we comb out the few clues we have, we inevitably make them unfairly representative. Thus, as Mark Jordan's article in this issue of WPO indicates, we lock in George Shannon as "the guy who always got lost." Pierre Cruzatte is "the one-eyed man who played the fiddle and shot Meriwether Lewis in the buttocks." Until recently, York was depicted as a sort of minstrel figure, a sexual athlete with a frostbitten penis, a source of White men's bemusement, a slave mugging as a bear for the Mandan and Hidatsa children.

We think we know what we know, but just how closely our *construction* of a narrative conforms to the whole actual sometimes messy story, including the bits that don't lend themselves to the linear imperatives of a book about Lewis and Clark, is uncertain. We need to read between the lines (carefully, cautiously).

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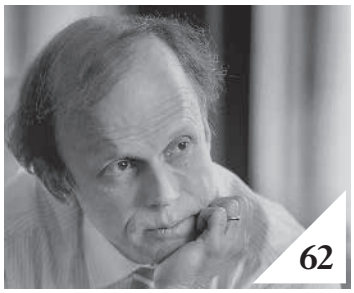

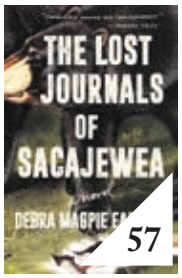

On the Cover
Front: Charles Fritz, *Crossing the Most Terrible Mountains We Ever Beheld*. Courtesy of the Tim Peterson Family Collection.

Back: U.S. Highway 12, completed in 1962, the route Lewis and Clark would have taken if they had only paved it in time! Photo by Clay Jenkinson.

We Proceeded On welcomes submissions of articles, proposals, inquiries, and letters. Writer's guidelines are available by request and can be found on our website, lewisandclark.org. Submissions should be sent to Clay S. Jenkinson (701-202-6751) at editor@lewisandclark.org.

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E. G. Chuinard, M.D.,
Founder, *We Proceeded On*

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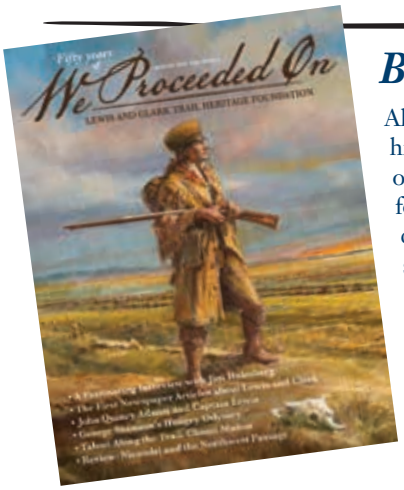

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Our mission:

As Keepers of the Story~Stewards of the Trail, the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance provides national leadership in maintaining the integrity of the Trail and its story through stewardship, scholarship, education, partnership, and cultural awareness.

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A Message from the President

LCTA President Bill Bronson

On a recent warm, sunny fall day in my hometown of Great Falls, Montana, I was able to stand on the front balcony of my house and look to the south, where I could see clearly portions of the portage traversed by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in June 1805. That vision reminded me of the close proximity of so many equally important historical landscapes. It also inspired some of the remarks I was asked to share in this, my first President's Message to the membership of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

The Portage Route is not the only significant landscape within close reach. I am but a few minutes' drive from where Meriwether Lewis likely had his perilous encounter with the grizzly bear along the river (I am thankful that in all my wilderness hikes, I have only been within about a hundred yards of this ferocious creature!) After an hour's drive from my house, I can put in a canoe in the Missouri River and within another hour view the iconic White Cliffs and be as amazed as the Expedition was at their splendor. The nearness to these and other famous sites and landscapes fills me with greater appreciation for the Lewis and Clark story.

Now that I have been called to serve as president of our Alliance, that sense of appreciation is enhanced, as is a profound sense of obligation. And so, allow me to share a few reflections on both that sense of appreciation and of obligation.

For several years, we thought of ourselves as "the Foundation." Like you, I am still getting used to our new name. While the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation remains our name, from now on our organization will be doing/business/as (dba) the "*Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance*." If it assists you in the transition, think of what we are as constituting a true "alliance" in the best sense of the word. Not only are we an organization allied in service to preserving a fascinating part of our history, but we are likewise allied now with new individuals and entities that will benefit us as much as I hope we will benefit them. All you need do to satisfy yourself of the truth of that proposition is to explore our new sister website, the "Lewis and Clark Trail Experience," at lewisandclark.travel. Our thanks to our longtime partner, the National Park Service, in granting us this exciting new means for promoting the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

And now something more personal about me, especially as it relates to Lewis and Clark, so that you know what helps shape my vision for the Alliance.

I'm blessed by having had several experiences over the years that have made both the story and the landscapes more intriguing. From sitting around a campfire listening to Stephen Ambrose bring the story of the Expedition to life to traveling through the White Cliffs and learning its unique geology firsthand from John Logan Allen; from retracing Lewis' 1806 journey through the Blackfoot River country to Lewis and Clark Pass with a retired oil company geologist who applied his professional training to identifying critical sites, to quizzing James Alexander Thom on how he could so magically capture the essence of George Drouillard for his book, *Sign Talker*, the opportunities to know this history are ones I will never forget. They have helped sharpen my vision for ensuring these and similar stories are shared with others in years to come.

Hopefully you have similar stories to tell, stories that have shaped your own vision. Or perhaps you will be moved to seek out these stories if you have not yet had the opportunity to do so. Either way, you and the Alliance will be enriched.

It has been said that the story of the Expedition is America's version of Homer's *Odyssey*. Having read that epic poem more than once through the years, there is no reason in my mind to question the comparison. However, if we are to be fair in making the comparison, it's critical we acknowledge that Homer's story was as much a statement of the weaknesses of his protagonist as it was his strengths. We cannot do justice to the history of the Expedition if we do not acknowledge,

as Jim Ronda reminded us in his seminal work, *Lewis & Clark among the Indians*, that the participants in America's *Odyssey* made their share of mistakes, particularly in relation to the Indigenous peoples whose descendants are with us today. I have no doubt that some of the intrepid explorers we admire came to this conclusion on their own in later years, if only quietly, when time, experience, and reflection enlarge one's sense of self-awareness. We are likewise obliged to do the same.

Although we are at our best when we tell our audiences the whole story, sharing the good as well as the not-so-good, we owe it to them and ourselves to do so with a sense of humility, one that reminds us that we, too, will be subjected to scrutiny by our descendants, and rightfully so. If anything, we will have a better understanding of our strengths as well as our foibles, and hopefully prepare new generations to draw upon those strengths and avoid our errors and those of our forbearers.

And now, I ask you to join the Alliance Board of Directors and our excellent executive staff team as we steer the message of the Lewis and Clark experience through the coming years of the twenty-first century. We may have changed the operational name of this organization, but we have not altered its essential mission: we are, and remain, *"Keepers of the Story, Stewards of the Trail."* Adherence to the mission will, at times, present challenges, but we owe it the memory of those who preceded us, as well as our posterity, to accept that challenge with renewed dedication and the deepest humility. ∎

Y'r obedient serv't,
Bill Bronson
President
Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance
Great Falls, Montana

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Photograph of Trapper Peak, Bitterroot Mountains, Montana, Courtesy of Steve Lee.

The Impact of Lewis and Clark's Experience on the Fur Trade

By Jim Hardee

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers near present-day Williston, North Dakota. The fort was reconstructed from contemporaneous renderings by artists George Catlin, Rudolf Kurz, and John James Audubon among others. Courtesy of National Park Service.

In the late morning of September 23, 1806, a dugout nosed into the shore of the St. Louis waterfront. Four more rustically-built canoes and a mud-spattered, white pirogue, all paddled by the buckskin-clad Corps of Northwest Discovery, nudged the beachfront to the cheers of an elated crowd. Townsfolk lined the riverbank, anxious to welcome home Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the men whom that duo had led across the continent and back. Rejoicing in their safe homecoming, everyone was eager to hear of their findings. This article examines how that journey's newly-gained data filtered into the public domain, influencing American opinion, particularly amongst fur traders who ventured into the same territory. References to the Corps, however inconsequential or insightful, be they from trappers, Native Americans, scientists, or travelers, demonstrate how Lewis and Clark shaped the continued exploration of the West.[1]

Except for sparse information contained in dispatches sent from Fort Mandan, the Expedition's first winter quarters, it had been over a year since the world had heard anything from the explorers. Tidbits from those reports, as well as a brief message President Thomas Jefferson presented to Congress, quickly spread, picked up by journalists throughout the States, despite the fact that the "intelligence" was not always accurate.[2] Earlier in 1806, newspapers claimed "captains Lewis and Clark, who were sent by the president to explore the source of the Missouri, have, with all who accompanied them, been murdered by the Indians."[3]

Accounts of the Expedition were already spreading in the West by word of mouth. While visiting the Mandans in

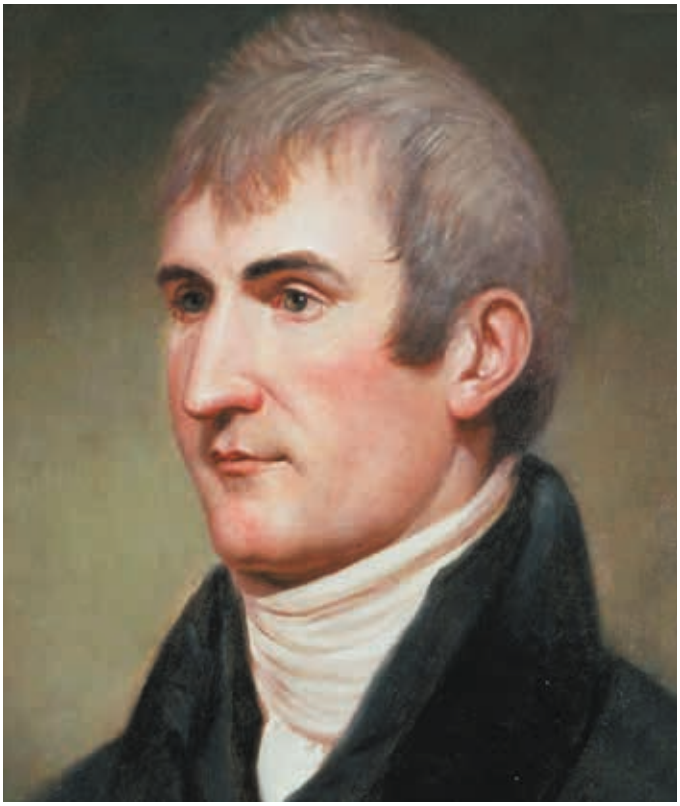
July 1806, North West Company (NWC) trader Alexander Henry met Black Cat, who displayed the flag and silver medal the captains had bestowed upon him. Henry also saw what was left of an "excellent corn mill, which the foolish fellows had demolished to barb their arrows."[4] Unfounded rumors were just as common in the mountains. A party of visiting Crows told Henry

> The American party of Captains Lewis and Clark had ascended the Missourie, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and fallen upon a large river which they supposed would conduct them to the ocean. They also informed us that these gentlemen had had trouble with the Snake, Flathead, and Oreille [Nez] Perce nations, who inhabit the Rocky Mountains.[5]

Needless to say, the Corps had no "trouble" with any of the Natives named. Lewis' run-in with the Blackfeet on the Marias River would take place the day after Henry reported these incidents.[6]

With the safe return of these valiant American explorers, the public, its eyes fixated on the western wilderness, was eager for reliable information direct from those hearty men. Sixty minutes into the revelry on the waterfront, one man slipped away to dash off a quick note to the press. John Mullanphy, a wealthy St. Louis merchant, wrote

> I have the pleasure to mention, that they arrived here about one hour ago, in good health, with only the loss of one man, who died … Their journal will no doubt be not only importantly interesting to us all, but a fortune

William Clark, *1810, (left) and* Meriwether Lewis, *1807, (right) by Charles Willson Peale. Wikimedia Commons.*

> for the worthy and laudable adventurers … We shall know all very soon.[7]

Of the many people who thronged about the newly-returned heroes, it is hard to imagine anyone more interested in learning about the Rocky Mountain West than that frontier town's fur traders. Their ears must have perked up upon hearing the "Missouri and all its branches from the Cheyenne upwards abound more in beaver and Common Otter, than any other streams on earth."[8] As more data from the Expedition were made available, this industry would benefit greatly.

To publicize their return, the captains immediately started writing. They scripted virtually identical letters, one drafted by Lewis, the other by both leaders jointly. Lewis' letter was addressed to President Jefferson. Clark's, though addressed to his brother, was intended for publication in local newspapers; everyone knew it would get excitedly reprinted across the nation.[9] As St. Louis would not have a newspaper for another two years, over two weeks passed before *The Palladium*, in Frankfort, Kentucky, published Clark's message.[10]

Meanwhile, a lavish dinner and ball were held in the captains' honor two days after their triumphant return. Hosted by Clark's friend William Christy, who had recently opened a tavern in the city, the affair was attended by a "respectable number of persons."[11] Christy's Inn, on the corner of Main and Walnut streets, was noted for its fine liquors and for being patronized by "the best classes of society."[12] One of these notables may well have been Manuel Lisa, a St. Louis merchant of Spanish descent, who would depart in spring of the coming year at the head of the first trapping expedition up the Missouri River after the Corps' return.

Wilson Price Hunt, another local businessman, may also have been a partygoer, intent on learning more about the Expedition while imbibing the evening's eighteen rounds of alcohol, each accompanied in turn by a suitable toast. Hunt had been approached by Lisa about a month before the Corps' return, attempting to enlist the American's involvement in a commercial endeavor in Santa Fe, New Mexico.[13] Though Hunt declined, the idea may have sparked curiosity about the West.

If Hunt did not talk privately with either captain at Christy's gala, he got the chance two days later when Lewis strode into his store. Hunt and his partner, John Hankinson, operated a local mercantile and dabbled in the fur trade, having dealt with John Jacob Astor's resident agent Charles Gratiot

Manuel Lisa c.1818. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Wilson Price Hunt, leader of the overland expedition to establish Fort Astoria for John Jacob Astor in present-day Astoria, Oregon. Wikimedia Commons.

and well-known St. Louis fur barons, the Chouteaus. Lewis spent $300 in Hunt's shop.[14]

From time spent with one or more of the Expedition leaders, Hunt learned – and remembered – many facts about the trip that served him well in the years ahead. On October 14, 1806, Hunt wrote his cousin John Wesley Hunt, laying out a detailed account of the Expedition's route. He mentioned precise mileage and exact distances, defined latitudes, and made note of landmarks. He described the falls of the Missouri and wrote of several curiosities collected during the tour. Historian James P. Ronda declared Hunt's letter to be "one of the earliest manuscript accounts of the expedition."[15]

Trapper Thomas James confirmed the frenzy stirred by the Corps' return:

> In the fall of this year, Lewis and Clark returned from Oregon and the Pacific Ocean, whither they had been sent by the administration of Jefferson in the first exploring expedition west of the Rocky Mountains, and their accounts of that wild region, with those of their companions, first excited a spirit of trafficking adventure among the young men of the West.[16]

In this early period after their return, the principals of the Expedition were available in person to tout their knowledge and inspire continued excitement about the Far West.

Actionable Intelligence from the Corps

Manuel Lisa was no newcomer to trading on the Missouri River, but hearing about beaver "larger, fatter, more abundant and better clad with fur than those of any part of the country" spurred the entrepreneur to take a crew farther upriver.[17] Among the fifty to sixty men Lisa recruited were former Corps veterans George Drouillard, Pierre Cruzatte, Jean-Baptiste Lepage, John Potts, Peter Weiser, and Richard Windsor – men already familiar with the area.[18]

Starting up the Missouri River in April 1807, as Lisa's boats neared the mouth of the Platte River, a lone figure was spied paddling a dugout downstream. Lewis and Clark veterans recognized another former comrade in John Colter. Colter had gained early release from his military assignment with the Corps, returning to the mountains to trap.[19] His new geographical information would boost Lisa's plan; Lisa convinced Colter to join the brigade. Together, they traveled on to the Yellowstone River, then up that watercourse to the mouth of the Bighorn.

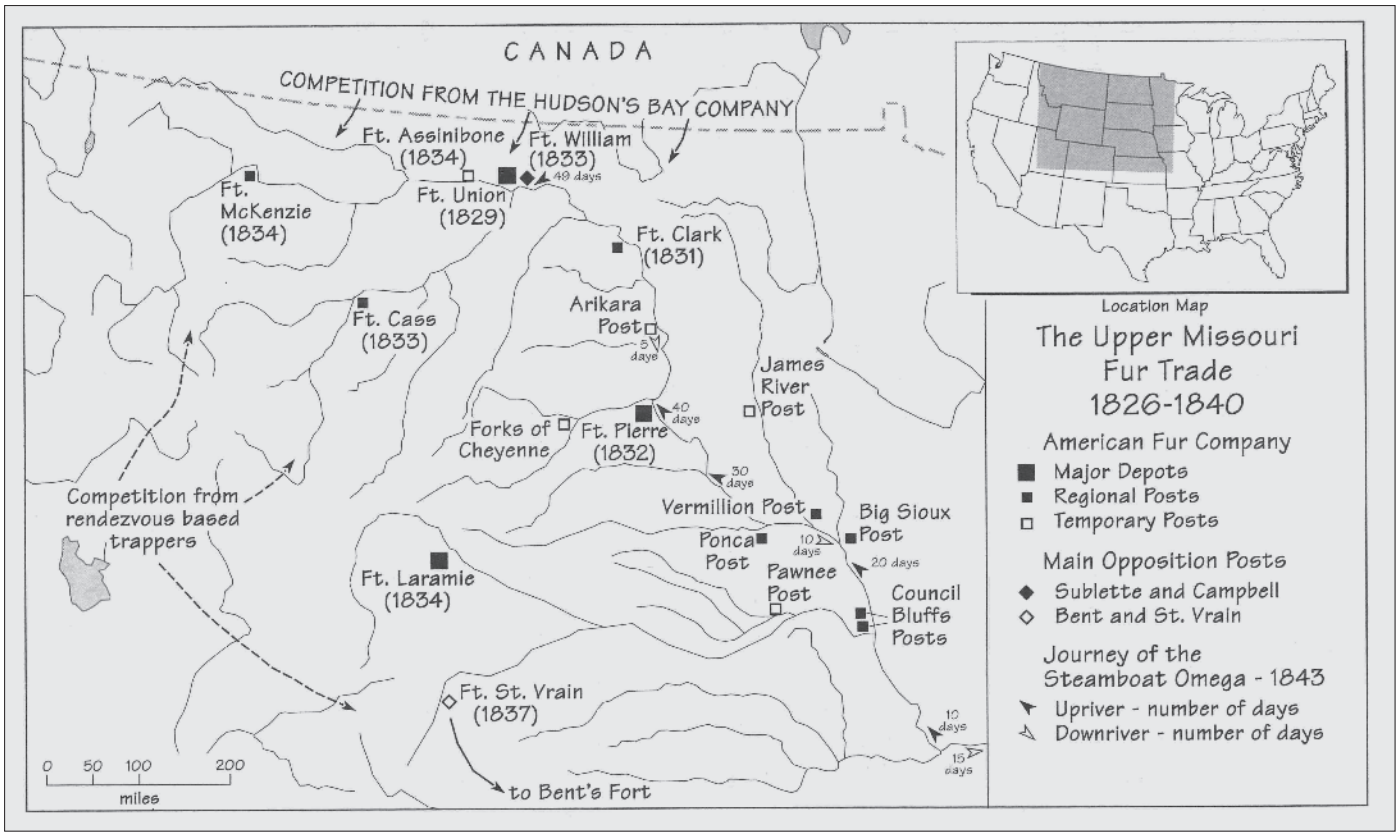
Beaver Hunt on the Missouri *(1839, detail) as rendered by Karl Bodmer during his trip along the western waters with Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied in1832-1834. Courtesy of National Park Service.*

There, they constructed a trading post, dubbing it Fort Raymond.[20]

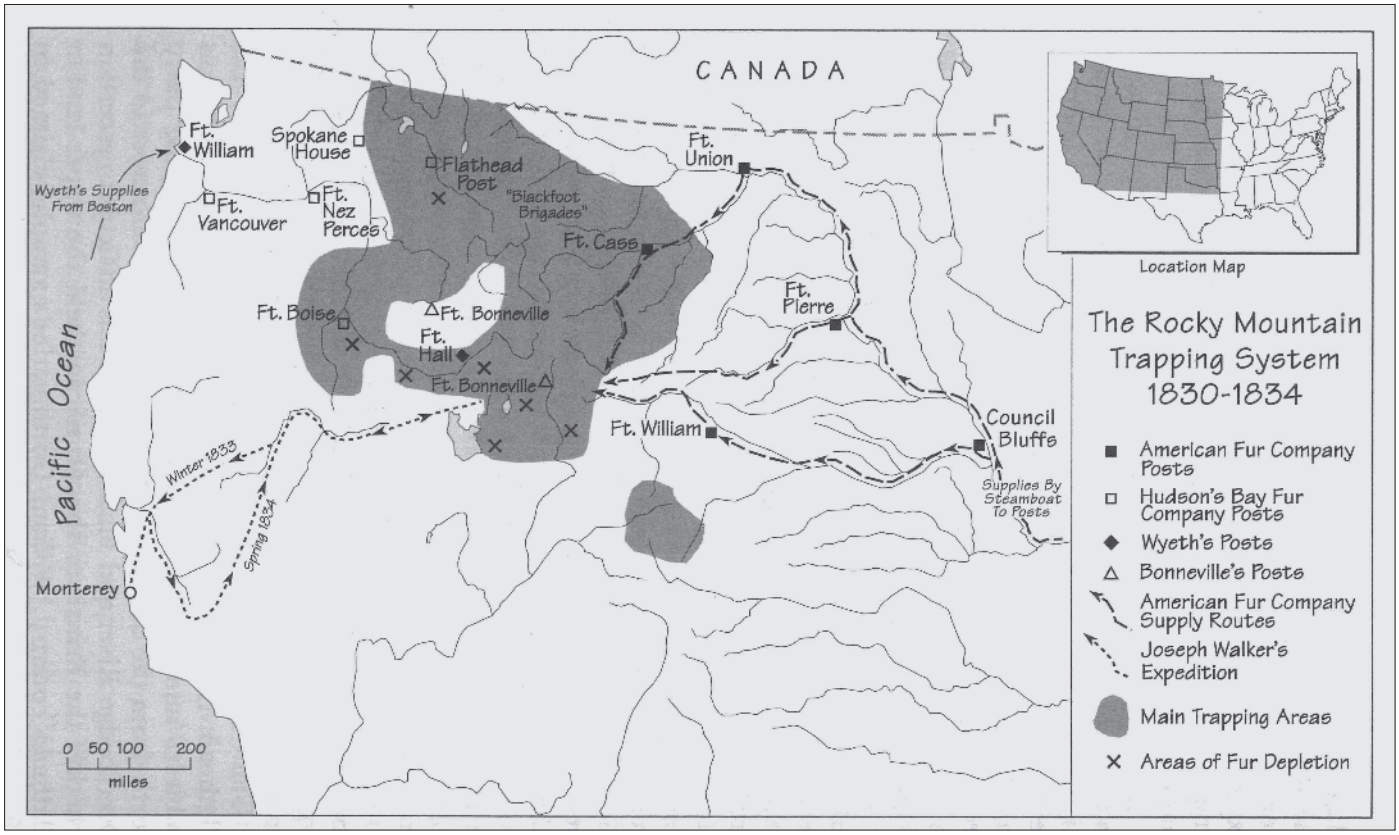
In May of that year, an official party was organized in St. Louis to return a Mandan chief to his village in present-day North Dakota. She-he-ke and his family had come downriver at the behest of Lewis and Clark in 1806, visited President Jefferson in Washington City, and were ready to go home. The entourage was commanded by Corps veteran Ensign Nathaniel Pryor, who had been promoted soon after returning to regular army duty. Another Expedition member, George Shannon, was also in Pryor's squad. Joining the flotilla was a keelboat belonging to fur trader Pierre Chouteau, Jr.[21] This trip ran into difficulty at the Arikara towns and was forced to retreat. During the skirmish, Shannon's leg was injured seriously enough to result in amputation.

Thus, in relation to the spread of Corps information, as the summer of 1807 progressed, nearly one hundred people, mostly fur traders and trappers, were on the Missouri River in the presence of nine men who had first-hand experience from over two years in the Far West. It is easy to imagine evenings around the campfire, being regaled with tales of adventure straight from a primary source. And not just great stories, but knowledge that would keep the listeners alive, like a modern-day Ted Talk on wilderness subsistence. Those old hands had accounts worthy of relating – stories of Native Americans and grizzlies, bison and rattlesnakes, starving and feasting – not to mention a keen idea of the lay of the land. Regarding beaver, Drouillard and Colter had trapped a fair number of them during that two-plus year outing and could pinpoint sites of each catch.[22] Information gleaned from the Lewis and Clark Expedition began trickling orally into the

In Style. Beaver top hat demand for which supported the fur trade, arguably the most significant industry in the United States from 1807-1840. Courtesy Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wikimedia Commons.



The Upper Missouri Fur Trade 1826-1840. *Courtesy of David J. Wishart,* The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840 *(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979; reprint 1992).*



The Rocky Mountain Trapping System 1830-1834. *Courtesy of David J. Wishart,* The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840 *(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979; reprint 1992).*

ranks of Rocky Mountain trappers. It was not long before material from Lewis and Clark's undertakings began showing up in the journals of westbound travelers as points of reference and comparison.

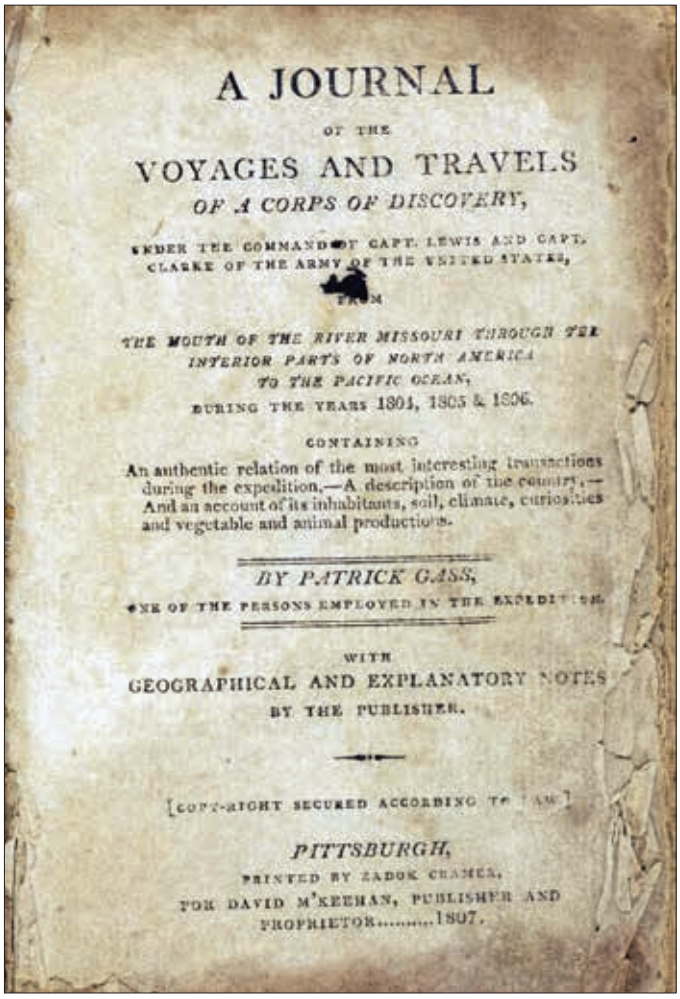
For example, while these events were transpiring in the U.S., out near modern-day Invermere, British Columbia, a NWC fur trader and explorer named David Thompson was settling in for a long, snowy winter. His journal entry for December 11, 1807, reported he had "Transcribed Captn Lewis's acct of his journey to the Pacific Ocean."[23] This was a lengthy letter Lewis had written to an unknown correspondent on October 14, 1806, well before any Expedition journals were published.[24] How it got into the hands of the NWC is not clear but this epistle contained a comprehensive summary of Lewis and Clark's route up the Missouri River, over the Rocky Mountains, and on to the Pacific Ocean, information of keen interest to a British explorer and mapmaker.[25]

At around this same time, Corps veteran Patrick Gass was preparing to publish the journal he had kept during the Expedition. His diary was one of three containing a continuous account of the trip.[26] By mid-March, word was out that his chronicle was in process and by October, Pennsylvania advertisers, where the book was printed, started promoting *A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corp of Discovery Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clarke, of the Army of the United States, from the Mouth of the River Missouri Through the Interior Parts of North America, to the Pacific Ocean, During the Years 1804, 1805 and 1806*. Its title page informed those willing to shell out $1.00 that it was written "By Patrick Gass, One of the persons employed on the expedition."[27] Published in the U.S. in 1807, this watershed book would also get published in London (1808), Paris (1810), and Germany (1814), giving readers across the globe opportunity to learn of Gass' achievements.

Back on the Missouri by late spring 1808, having left the bulk of his company at the Bighorn trading post, Manuel Lisa and a handful of men, including Drouillard, returned to St. Louis with a successful harvest of valuable pelts. There, Lewis and Clark's stalwart colleague "Dreywer" found himself charged with murder stemming from an incident on the way upriver the year before. He had been sent to fetch a deserter and, in the process, had fatally shot the man.

Drouillard was acquitted, but court expenses forced him to reenter the beaver trade to pay the debt.[28]

While working for Lisa in the fall of that year, Colter had his infamous run-in with Blackfeet that led to the killing of trapping partner John Potts. Much has been written and



A JOURNAL

OF THE

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS

OF A CORPS OF DISCOVERY,

UNDER THE COMMAND OF CAPT. LEWIS AND CAPT. CLARKE OF THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,

FROM

THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER MISSOURI THROUGH THE INTERIOR PARTS OF NORTH AMERICA TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN,

DURING THE YEARS 1804, 1805 & 1806.

CONTAINING

An authentic relation of the most interesting transactions during the expedition.—A description of the country,—And an account of its inhabitants, soil, climate, curiosities and vegetable and animal productions.

BY PATRICK GASS,

ONE OF THE PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE EXPEDITION.

WITH

GEOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

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PITTSBURGH,

PRINTED BY ZADOK CRAMER,

FOR DAVID M'KEEHAN, PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR.....1807.

Patrick Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels Of A Corps Of Discovery Under the Command Of Capt. Lewis A nd Capt. Clark Of The Army Of The United States... *(Pittsburgh: Printed by Zadok Cramer for David M'Keehan, 1807).*

imagined about this miraculous escape, running naked from the banks of the Jefferson River, some five miles across the bottoms, then plunging into the Madison where he secluded himself until his pursuers gave up the chase.[29] Former Corps members still active on the frontier generated near-mythic tales that, like this one of Colter, spread across the frontier, augmenting the Expedition's reputation.

While Drouillard sat in jail, Lisa organized the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company with several new partners, one of whom was William Clark. A new expedition was soon bound for the Three Forks of the Missouri River, a region of beaver-rich streams. Perhaps it was Clark who championed that location, remembering "the water courses in this quarter [contain] emence number of Beaver & orter maney thousand enhabit the river & Creeks near the 3 forks."[30] Drouillard accompanied three company partners – Andrew Henry,

The Jefferson River Above the Three Forks. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

Pierre Menard, and Reuben Lewis (Meriwether's brother) – when they left in mid-June 1809.[31]

Prior to departure, newly-appointed Governor Meriwether Lewis negotiated with Lisa to oversee the return of She-he-ke to his Mandan home, still languishing in Missouri after the aborted first attempt to return him to his homeland. In addition to monetary considerations, Lewis promised not to license any more traders above the Platte River before Lisa could get the expedition underway, giving him a head start on the season's market. The Mandan family was back in their village by the end of September after being on the road for more than three years. Once that was accomplished, Lisa continued up the Missouri, establishing another trading post, Fort Mandan, a few miles above the five earthlodge villages.[32]

They soon learned that a party that went to Three Forks had been driven from the area by hostile Blackfeet, losing beaver skins, traps, horses, guns, and other merchandise. They also got news of John Potts' death and Colter's soon-to-be famous flight from that same tribe. However, such news did not dampen Lisa's expectations of success. After a council of the partners, it was decided Lisa would return to St. Louis to prepare for the coming season and Andrew Henry would lead a party westward to Fort Raymond, then start for Three Forks in the spring.[33]

Henry's party made it to their trapping grounds at the headwaters of the Missouri River in April 1810, built a small fort, and began their work. The local Indigenous population, unhappy to find them in their neighborhood, continuously harassed them. Blackfeet made off with horses, stole traps and beaver hides, and attacked the Americans in raids that killed several men. George Drouillard bragged to fellow trapper Thomas James, "I'm too much of an Indian to be caught by Indians," and left the safety of the fort to trap.[34] Peter Weiser was among those who later searched for, and found, the mutilated body of their comrade. By mid-summer, having had their fill of Three Forks, Henry evacuated the party southward to the Snake River's north branch, known today as Henry's Fork.

The Fur Trade Steps Up Its Pace

At about the same time Lisa got back to St. Louis with his initial catch, the New York legislature had granted a charter to John Jacob Astor, officially forming the American Fur

The Missouri River Near Three Forks. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

Company (AFC) on April 6, 1808. Astor, a German immigrant, confided to New York City's mayor, De Witt Clinton, that he planned to build a line of trading posts along the route taken by the Lewis and Clark Expedition, extending to the Pacific Ocean. It is not clear how much Astor knew about the Corps of Discovery but, being an astute business man, it seems safe to assume he kept up with local newspapers. So, when the letter, mentioned earlier, that William Clark sent to his brother was published in the *New-York Evening Post*, Astor likely read it.[35]

Astor would become America's first multi-millionaire, based primarily on his fur-trade success. He put his new idea before President Jefferson and received sanction from the chief executive. Jefferson then wrote to Meriwether Lewis, as governor of the territory, telling him a powerful company was forming to enter the Indian trade on a large scale. Informing him the tycoon might decide to come to St. Louis, Jefferson recommended Astor to the attention of Lewis.[36]

In St. Louis, the governor apprised Charles Gratiot, Astor's local agent, of this latest communication from the president. Gratiot knew just whom to bring on board –

Gilbert Stuart, *John Jacob Astor,* c. 1794, Brook Club, New York. Wikimedia Commons.

Wilson Price Hunt, the man who had gleaned intelligence of the West when Lewis visited his store. Astor established the Pacific Fur Company (PFC) as an adjunct of the AFC and put a two-pronged strategy to work. Newly-hired Hunt would depart in 1811 at the head of a team traveling cross-country to the Pacific coast. A second crew would sail to the mouth of the Columbia River.

While Hunt slowly worked his way overland, that vanguard of seafarers would build Fort Astoria and begin operations.

As interpreter, Hunt hired Pierre Dorion, Jr., son of the same Dorion who spent time with Lewis and Clark on their way up the Missouri in 1804. The younger Dorion brought his Ioway wife Marie and their two toddlers. Marie Dorion's ultimate story is a remarkable saga of perseverance, resilience, and survival during the years 1811-1814.[37] It is a wonder she is not as well-known as her Lewis and Clark counterpart, Sacagawea.

Unlike Lisa, who had access to the first-person knowledge of several Corps veterans in his brigade, Hunt had to rely on his memory of information gleaned from previous contact with participants. Even Hunt's Expedition touchstone, the younger Dorion, had never been as far as the Rockies.

Also on Hunt's excursion was naturalist John Bradbury, a member of the Liverpool Philosophical Society and the Literary and Philosophical societies in New York. The Englishman visited Jefferson in August 1809, receiving a letter of introduction addressed to "General Meriwether Lewis, governor of Louisiana Territory." Jefferson told Lewis, "I recommend him to your notice, advice & patronage, while within your government and it's [sic] confines. Perhaps you can consult no abler hand on your Western botanical observations."[38] Regrettably, Jefferson's prod did not induce Lewis to work on his journals.

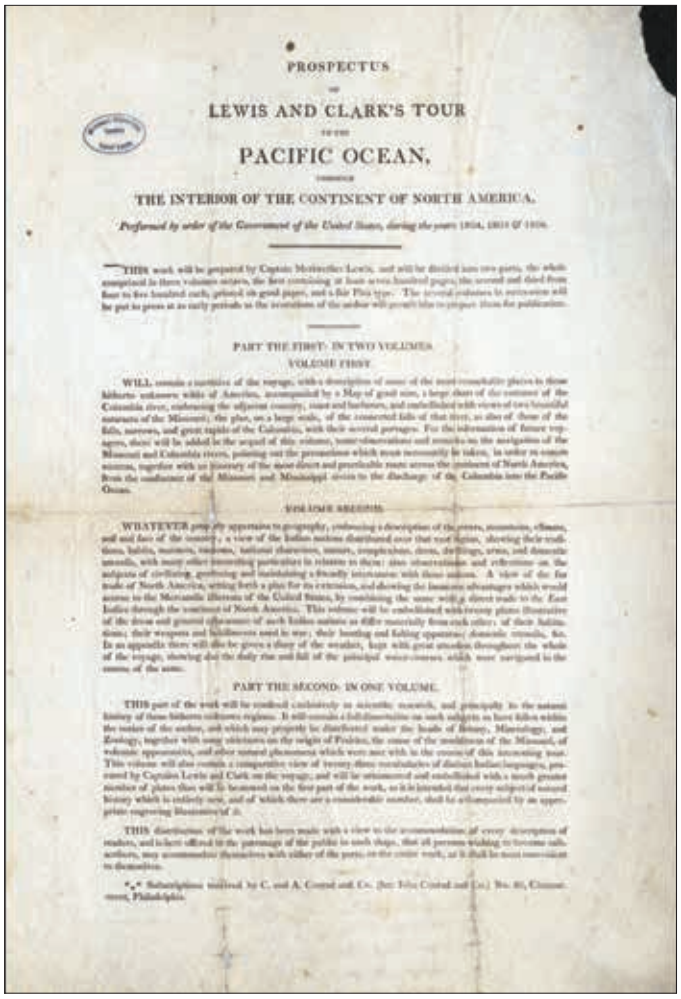
Bradbury learned of Hunt's imminent departure from St. Louis, venturing west "by the same route that Lewis and Clarke had followed," and got himself invited. William Clark suggested the botanist look up John Colter, who had quit the fur trade after too many close calls and now lived near frontiersman Daniel Boone. Clark told Bradbury that Colter could "point out the place on the Missouri where the skeleton of a fish, above forty feet long, had been found," during the Expedition.[39] Later, on the upstream voyage, Bradbury would be regaled with the story of Colter's recent escape from the Blackfeet.[40] Along the way, the naturalist also ran into Nathaniel Pryor, who had been trading with the Sauk and Fox people and told Bradbury how they extracted lead.[41]

As Manuel Lisa made preparations to resupply his trading post, he was approached by yet another man of science, Henry Marie Brackenridge, who also managed to finagle his way onto Lisa's boats when they headed up the Missouri. Brackenridge was familiar with Patrick Gass' publication because he quoted it several times in his own diary. He was also aware the actual journals of Lewis and Clark were to be published soon since more than once he deferred to that upcoming event. As one example, referring to Native vocabularies, he humbly wrote,

> I am informed that copious vocabularies have been made by Lewis and Clark, of nearly all the Indian languages of the Missouri. As their journal is expected shortly to appear, I shall not publish the collections made by me, which must necessarily be much inferior to theirs, they having had more time and much greater opportunities.[42]

Undoubtedly, Brackenridge was anxious to learn more about the plant and animal specimens Lewis collected during the two-year voyage. In the dispatch from Fort Mandan alone, sent in the spring of 1805, Lewis announced "67 specimens of earths, salts, and minerals, and 60 specimens of plants," each one labeled with the date and place the sample was obtained.[43] The captain already donated samples to the American Philosophical Society; newspapers had announced that Lewis gifted "Various specimens of Plant, Earth, Minerals, and some Seeds collected on the waters of the Missouri."[44] Perhaps Brackenridge had read Lewis' media declaration regarding the upcoming publication of the *Prospectus of Lewis and Clark's Tour to the Pacific Ocean, through the Interior of the Continent of*

Henry Marie Brackenridge burial site at Brackenridge Circle in the Prospect Cemetery, Brackenridge, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of Pittsburgh Cemeteries.



PROSPECTUS

OF

LEWIS AND CLARK'S TOUR

TO THE

PACIFIC OCEAN,

THROUGH

THE INTERIOR OF THE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA,

Performed by order of the Government of the United States, during the years 1804, 1805 & 1806.

THIS work will be prepared by Captain Meriwether Lewis, and will be divided into two parts, the whole comprised in three volumes octavo, the first containing at least seven hundred pages, the second and third from four to five hundred each, printed on good paper, and a fair Pica type. The several volumes to succeed each will be put to press at as early periods as the avocations of the author will permit him to prepare them for publication.

PART THE FIRST: IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME FIRST.

WILL contain a narrative of the voyage, with a description of some of the most remarkable places in those hitherto unknown wilds of America, accompanied by a Map of great size, a large chart of the entrance of the Columbia river, embracing the adjacent country, coast and harbours, and embellished with views of two beautiful cataracts of the Missouri; the plan, on a large scale, of the connected falls of that river, as also of those of the falls, narrows, and great rapids of the Columbia, with their several portages. For the information of future voyagers, there will be added in the sequel of this volume, some observations and remarks on the navigation of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, pointing out the precautions which must necessarily be taken, in order to insure success, together with an itinerary of the most direct and practicable route across the continent of North America, from the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers to the discharge of the Columbia into the Pacific Ocean.

VOLUME SECOND.

WHATEVER may fix appertain to geography, embracing a description of the rivers, mountains, climate, soil and face of the country, a view of the Indian nations distributed over that vast region, showing their traditions, habits, manners, customs, national characters, morals, complexions, dress, dwellings, arms, and domestic utensils, with many other interesting particulars in relation to them; also observations and reflections on the subjects of civilizing, governing and ameliorating a friendly intercourse with those nations. A view of the fur trade of North America, setting forth a plan for its extension, and showing the immense advantages which would accrue to the Mercantile Interest of the United States, by continuing the same with a direct trade to the East Indies through the continent of North America. This volume will be embellished with twenty plates illustrative of the dress and general appearance of such Indian nations as differ materially from each other: of their habitations; their weapons and implements used in war; their hunting and fishing apparatus; domestic utensils, &c. In an appendix there will also be given a diary of the weather, kept with great attention throughout the whole of the voyage, showing also the daily rise and fall of the principal water-courses which were navigated in the course of the same.

PART THE SECOND: IN ONE VOLUME.

THIS part of the work will be confined exclusively to scientific research, and principally to the natural history of those hitherto unknown regions. It will contain a full dissertation on such subjects as have fallen within the notice of the author, and which may properly be distributed under the heads of Botany, Mineralogy, and Zoology, together with many strictures on the origin of Fruits, the cause of the meridians of the Missouri, of volcanic appearances, and other natural phenomena which were met with in the course of this interesting tour. This volume will also contain a comparative view of twenty-three vocabularies of distinct Indian languages, procured by Captain Lewis and Clark on the voyage, and will be ornamented and embellished with a much greater number of plates than will be contained on the first part of the work, as it is intended that every subject of natural history which is entirely new, and of which there are a considerable number, shall be accompanied by an appropriate engraving illustrative of it.

THIS distribution of the work has been made with a view to the accommodation of every description of readers, and is here offered to the patronage of the public to such shape, that all persons wishing to become subscribers, may accommodate themselves with either of the parts, or the entire work, as it shall be most convenient to themselves.

*** Subscriptions received by C. and A. Conrad and Co. [See Title Conrad and Co.] No. 80, Chestnut-street, Philadelphia.

Meriwether Lewis' prospectus promised more than anyone in the United States would have been able to deliver.

North America, performed by order of the Government of the United States during the years 1804, 1806 and 1806.[45] Knowing the natural history recorded by the Corps of Discovery's extended outing would soon bring to light a myriad of specimens new to science must have had Brackenridge champing at the bit.

Intriguingly, Brackenridge included in his diary a "Table of Distances" showing mileages from the mouth of the Missouri to the Mandan villages, denoting rivers, latitudes, and the like.

Comparing this table with the more detailed list appearing in the 1814 publication of Lewis and Clark's journals reveals amazing similarities, though Brackenridge did make a few changes. He noted, "For the table which accompanies, I am indebted to general Clark. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to that gentleman, who politely favored me with every means of information in his power."[46] Though Brackenridge incorrectly interpreted some of the manuscript's names, this statement may indicate that he had unofficial access to the original Corps diaries.

While the Hunt and Lisa expeditions were gearing up, at a trading post known as Fort Vermilion on the North Saskatchewan River in present-day Alberta, Canada, NWC partner Alexander Henry was ensconced in winter quarters. On March 6, 1810, he set some buffalo tongues to thaw, then "perused Gass' Journal Across the Rocky Mountains."[47] America's competitors wasted no time in gleaning what they could from accounts of the Corps of Discovery. This would not have surprised Meriwether Lewis. In his *Prospectus* he declared, "For the information of future voyagers, there will be added in the sequel of this volume, some observations and remarks on the navigation of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, pointing out the precautions that must necessarily be taken, in order to insure success."[48]

Finally, on March 11, 1811, Wilson Price Hunt's party pushed its four keelboats into the Missouri's current, beginning their upstream journey. Just two weeks later, on March 25, Manuel Lisa's men steadily plied their push-poles along the *passant* of their craft, forcing it against the surge of the Big Muddy. The Missouri Fur Company (MFC) planned to travel as fast as possible in hopes of catching the PFC flotilla. This, Lisa surmised, would give them all a greater chance of safe passage through Sioux (Lakota) lands. In a Herculean effort on the part of Lisa's crew, Hunt was overtaken on June 2, and the five boats continued upriver together.[49]

With Lisa was Toussiant Charbonneau, as interpreter, and Sacagawea. Brackenridge recorded:

> We had on board a Frenchman named Charbonet, with his wife, an Indian woman of the Snake nation, both of whom had accompanied Lewis and Clark to the Pacific, and were of great service. The woman, a good creature, of a mild and gentle disposition, greatly attached to the whites, whose manners and dress she tries to imitate, but she had become sickly, and longed to revisit her native country; her husband, also, who had spent many years amongst the Indians, was become weary of a civilized life.[50]

Brackenridge received other instructions from William Clark before leaving St. Louis. When the fur company stopped at Fort Osage, the naturalist visited "*Sans Oreille* (a Warrior, and head man of this tribe)" to deliver a pipe Clark sent for him. Upon receiving the gift, the Osage tribal leader, as Brackenridge reported, "was flattered with this proof of gen. Clark's good will towards him."[51] This headman was a signatory on the treaty Clark had negotiated at Fort Osage in 1808.[52]

Brackenridge made regular entries in his daily log, often quoting directly from the Gass journal. For instance, he recorded the same data Gass used for the size of a grizzly bear killed on Porcupine Creek on May 5, 1805, adding that "Lewis and Clark's men, on several occasions, narrowly escaped from their attacks." Brackenridge also made comments identical to Gass' in regard to the varying heights of the falls of the Missouri that the sergeant had jotted down on June 26, 1805.[53]

As this pair of courageous brigades propelled their boats up the Missouri, they met several hunters who had been at Three Forks with Andrew Henry, had accompanied him southward, and had endured the hard winter of 1810-1811. Having barely survived, one trio was drifting downriver when its canoes were intercepted by the Hunt and Lisa armada. On May 27, 1811, after some discussion, Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor convinced the PFC partners "that the route followed by Lewis and Clark was very far from being the best, and that to the southward, where the head waters of the Platte and Roche Jaune rivers rise, they had discovered a route far less difficult."[54]

In spite of Hunt's original plan to follow the Lewis and Clark route, new first-person geographical information from the Kentucky trio persuaded Hunt to change course. When the parties got to the Arikara villages, Hunt abandoned the river, traded for horses, then took the more southern overland route suggested by the men who had so recently come that way. Lisa continued on to the Mandan villages and his company trading post. Bradbury got permission to travel with Lisa rather than go farther west than he desired.

Upon arriving at the Mandan villages, the two naturalists paid a visit to the Mandan chief. Bradbury reported,

> They conducted us to the lodge of She-he-ké, the chief, where we alighted. He met us at the door, and after shaking hands with us, said, to my great surprise in English, "Come in house." I was again surprised, on entering the lodge, to see a fine dunghill cock. On inquiry I found that She-he-kè had brought it with him from the United States, at the time he accompanied Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, where also he learnt his English.[55]

During their visit to the dimly-lit lodge, She-he-ke pointed to a little boy they had not noticed before. The chief told them the lad's father was "one of the party that accompanied Mr. Lewis," and revealed who that individual was, though Bradbury, perhaps from discretion, did not name the soldier.[56]

Strategic Position: Fort Osage National Historic Landmark stands above the Ohio River in present-day Sibley, Missouri. Courtesy of Ensign Peak Foundation.

Once Hunt left the river, his overland party had one perilous escapade after another. Eventually, as he trudged along the Columbia's shore toward Fort Astoria, Hunt was approached by an unidentified Clatsop man. This local Native knew a little English and gave Hunt an update on the "establishment at the mouth of the river." He also asked Hunt "for news of Messrs. Lewis and Clark and some of their companions. He already had heard of the death of Mr. Lewis."[57]

Meanwhile, Astor's men aboard the *Tonquin* had sailed around Cape Horn, eventually landing at the Columbia's mouth in March 1811. Within a few months of their arrival, Fort Astoria was nearly completed. The work of trapping beaver and trading with local people was initiated with a tolerable degree of success. In mid-May, Duncan McDougall, a PFC supervising partner, recorded in the headquarters log that Natives reported "a party somewhat similar to Capts. Lewis and Clarke's were on their way hither." Personnel at the fort presumed it must be "none other than our own people," for many of Hunt's overland party had still not arrived. While this was probably good news to the Americans, it also alerted them to how Indigenous populations remembered those visits from the Corps of Discovery, which had not been forgotten.[58]

At least one of those Astorians apparently had a copy of the Gass journal. Alfred Seton, a company clerk, while on his way to visit the Nez Perce, indicated he arrived at "the place where L & C had built their c[an]oes. We encamped in their encampment." This was where those earlier explorers had stayed from September 16 to October 7, 1805, constructing the dugouts that would take them to the Pacific.[59]

While trading amongst the Nez Perce on the Clearwater River, Seton wrote, "The river in which this empties itself is called Kamoenum, this latter name *Gass* in his journal gives

Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de Saint-Memin, Mandan Chief Shahaka [Sheheke-shote or Big White Coyote], Chief of the Mandans. *Courtesy of New-York Historical Society, New York, New York.*

correct, he also calls it Lewis River from Capt. Lewis."[60] On October 10, 1805, Gass had written the name "Ki-mo-ee-nem;" thus Seton's spelling may imply he did not have the journal at hand when he made his own diary entry.

Fort Clatsop, the Corps' home for the winter of 1805-1806, was visited by several of the Astorians, actually touching physical evidence of the captains' adventure. PFC clerk Gabriel Franchére was one of the earliest to mention going there. In early October, 1811, he "saw the ruins of the

Fort Astoria in 1813*, the earliest known representation.*

Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1805-1806 at Fort Clatsop near present-day Astoria, Oregon. Many fur traders made pilgrimages to the fort in subsequent years and reported on its condition. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

building that Captains Lewis and Clark had built in the autumn of 1805."[61] The headquarters log recorded Ramsay Crooks, another PFC partner, took "a party to view Capt Lewis & Clarke's house up the netut creek."[62] Later that summer, Donald McKenzie, to satisfy his own curiosity, "with four S. Islanders in a canoe went round to Fort Clatsop, Captns Lewis & Clarke's wintering place, having never been there."[63] That same daybook cited several instances in which the dilapidated fort was used by hunters as a drop-off point for harvested game.[64]

PFC partner Robert Stuart, who would lead a small contingent of Astorians east across the continent in 1812, commented, "Fort Clatsop (now in ruins) is at a distance of 7 miles in about a south west direction." In his opinion, the Corps' abode "was very disagreeably situated, being surrounded with swamps and quagmires, but the immense number of Elk & wild Fowl which resort thither in winter for feed more than compensates for that inconvenience."[65]

Arriving on the *Tonquin* was young Irishman Ross Cox, who had immigrated to America only the year before and secured a PFC clerk position. Cox kept a journal during his six years in the West that exhibited ample evidence of the Corps' material. For instance, he "visited Fort Clatsop, the place where Captains Lewis and Clarke spent the winter of 1805-6; an accurate description of which is given in the journal of those enterprising travellers. The logs of the house were still standing, and marked with the names of several of their party."[66] Like typical schoolboys carving their initials in a desktop, some of the men left their mark for posterity.

The Cox narrative was not published until 1832. Thus the numerous citations of Expedition knowledge show that he accessed the 1814 Biddle edition of the journals to strengthen his own story. To wit, he was as impressed with canoes built by Natives of the Pacific Northwest as had been the Corps' captains. "Their canoes," Cox wrote, "are of various forms and sizes. The following description of the largest kind of these vessels I take from Lewis and Clarke. It is perfectly accurate, and more technical than I could give it." He then transcribed a lengthy passage from Biddle's second volume.[67] As would many others, Cox realized the journals' descriptions became a standard that did not require additional comment.

A similar use of Expedition data is seen in Cox's account regarding the plank houses of Indigenous neighbors. In this instance, he started an extensive passage with, "The description of their houses, and their manner of building them, I also extract from the same authority," referring to Biddle's work.[68] He again repeated this sort of quotation in his remarks on Native uses of nets, scoops or dipping nets, and gigs for fishing.[69]

In one case, Cox took exception to Biddle's efforts:

> In the great plains between Oakinagan and Spokan there are at particular seasons numbers of small deer. The editor of Lewis and Clarke classes them as antelopes; but how much so ever they may resemble those animals in swiftness and shape, their horns, as described by naturalists, are totally different.[70]

Cox seems affronted by disparaging remarks on Chinook women appearing in the Expedition narrative. He addressed the "shameless profligacy" of Clatsop promiscuity in and around the mouth of the Columbia, but the young Irishman noted that as he moved inland, up the river, to the region around Celilo Falls,

> female impurity becomes less perceptible; beyond this point it entirely ceases. I think it necessary to mention this fact, in consequence of the sweeping censure passed by Lewis and Clarke on all the women between the Rocky Mountains and the sea. The reader must not suppose that I wish to cast any doubt on the general accuracy of those intelligent travellers; indeed, circumstanced as they were, the immense fund of correct and valuable information contained in their journal is surprising; but in this instance they have wandered from the fact.[71]

Looking back to the Rocky Mountains, on July 9, 1811, NWC explorer David Thompson met the "Principal Chief of all the tribes of the Shawpatin Indians" near the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers. This was Yellepit, a prominent Walla Walla man. Thompson wrote, "he had an American medal of 1801, Thomas Jefferson, and a small flag of the nation."[72] Indeed, Patrick Gass had reported, on October 9, 1805, "our Commanding Officers presented one of them with a medal and other small articles."[73] William Clark recorded presenting to "the great chief" the gift of "a Medal, a Handkercheif & a string of Wompom," making no mention of a flag.[74]

Several months later, in February 1812, Thompson was near present-day Missoula, Montana, when he described the route Lewis and Clark had taken in 1805 as the Expedition

traveled through the Bitterroot Valley, then up and over Lolo Pass. Thompson gave more detail than Gass provided so Thompson may have based his account on his own grasp of the area's geography:

> There is a Defile by a Bold Brook [Lolo Creek], up which Capt. Lewis went to the first of the Shawpatin Waters [Glade Creek] . . . from where he went abt WbS to a Height of Land [Lolo Pass], then descending this a day he came to where there are Salmon . . . the Brook is then bounded by high Craigs, which obliged them to cross over high snowy Mountains for 6 days to where he built his canoes on Lewis's Fork [Clearwater River].[75]

Over the subsequent years of 1813-1814, Thompson worked on two large maps of the North West Company's domain. One of these, the "Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada," in addition to typical landmarks such as rivers, mountains, and trading posts, included a dotted line representing the overland route taken by Lewis and Clark.[76]

In December 1813, Alexander Henry paid his own visit to the ruins of Fort Clatsop:

> We walked up to see the old American winter quarters of Captains Lewis and Clark in 1805-06, which are in total ruins, the wood having been cut down and destroyed by the Indians; but the remains are still visible. In the fort are already grown up shoots of willows 25 feet high. The situation is the most pleasant I have seen hereabouts, and by far the most eligible, both as to security from the natives and for hunting. The place is deeply shaded with spruce, pine, sapin, etc.; the woods seemed gloomy and dark, the beams of the sun being prevented from reaching the ground through so thick a foliage.[77]

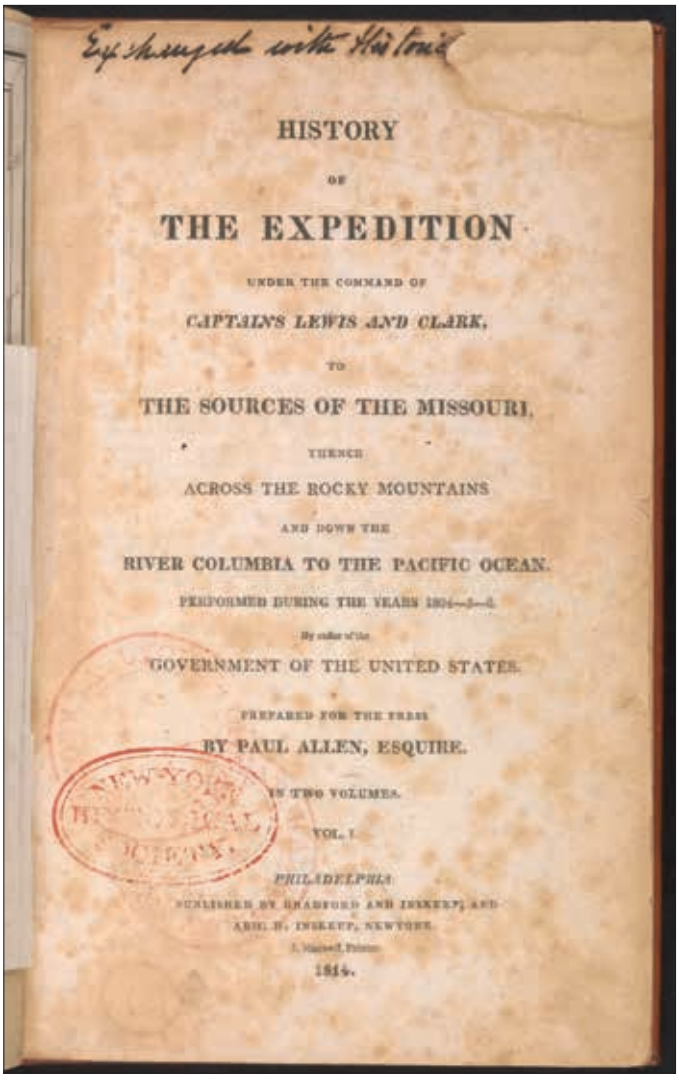
Henry, back in the area in May of the following year, ran into Clatsop chief Concomly (Coboway). "He showed me his writing from Captains Lewis and Clark, dated Fort Clatsop, 19th of March, 1806," with a list of men accompanying the American party. The NWC partisan copied the names into his journal, including such imaginative spellings as "Bradlen," "Gosdrick," "Warrener," "Patty," "Whichhouse," and "Widseor." But Henry's total of thirty-one men, one woman, and her baby, was spot on.[78]

William Clark resided in St. Louis in the years after the return of the Corps of Discovery. Local citizens encountered a living repository in the person of Clark, a touchstone of the Expedition whom people could see and talk to on city streets. Men like Lisa and Hunt checked in with Clark, tapping him for information in preparation for their own expeditions. Upon their return, they followed up with him. Anxious to improve his "Map of part of the continent of North America," Clark debriefed these returnees, adding and/or correcting data on his manuscript map. More and more, Lewis and Clark material was being recorded and confirmed; it remained the primary point of expanding references.

David Thompson. Painting courtesy of the artist Robert Carter.

The "Official" Journals Are Published

The fur industry in the West ground to a near halt with the outbreak of the War of 1812. Resources, particularly finances and manpower, were refocused on the conflict between England and a young America. The Treaty of Ghent ended the war in 1814, but life along the Missouri River remained in a state of upheaval as the temperament of Native inhabitants was still unpredictable. A financial panic in 1819 created further economic hardship throughout the nation but particularly along the western edge of American civilization. The time was ripe to re-examine one of the frontier's earliest commercial interests – the fur trade.



The Biddle Edition. History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the Sources of the Missouri, Thence Across the Rocky Mountains and Down the River Columbia to the Pacific Ocean. *Prepared for the Press by Paul Allen, Esquire (Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1814).*

The first edition of the Expedition's "official" journals had finally been published in 1814, as edited by Nicolas Biddle and Paul Allen, making the Corps' significant information available to the public at large. No doubt fur traders paid keen attention to what they could learn about life in the Rocky Mountains as they prepared to embark on new economic ventures.

Jedediah Smith is a familiar mountaineer to many who study this era. Family lore indicates that his mentor, Dr. Titus Gordon Vespasian Simons, gave Smith a copy of these newly-published journals.[79] Born in 1799, Smith would have been fifteen years old when those accounts hit the stands, a prime age for such adventures to stir the imagination. Some proclaimed that during his future fur trade career (1822-1831), Smith carried a copy of the journals in his saddlebags, along with a Bible.[80] However, there is no primary evidence that he carried those books into the West.[81] Looking ahead, a statement Smith would make in 1822, as he ascended the Missouri River, appears as though he was at least familiar with the Expedition journals. Similar to Ross Cox's revelation, Smith felt, "The country has been well described by Lewis & Clark, therefore any observations from me would be superflous."[82]

Meanwhile, out on the Columbia River, Donald McKenzie and Alexander Ross led a NWC trapping brigade into the interior in the summer of 1818. They stopped at the confluence of that river with the Snake where Ross reported,

> The site was remarkable among the natives, as being the ground on which, some years before, Lewis and Clarke, of the American exploring expedition, ratified, according to Indian report, a general peace between themselves and the tribes of the adjacent country by the celebration of feasting and dancing for several days.[83]

Once again, the Indigenous population reminded fur hunters of the great exploration mission that preceded trappers' entry into the region.

In the midst of the era's financial complications, one of the last government-sanctioned explorations of the Enlightenment era moved westward in June 1820. Led by Stephen H. Long, the expedition made its way to the sources of the Platte River. Botanist Edwin James, also the tour's surgeon, wrote an extensive account of the trip. It is clear that a copy of the recently published journals from Zebulon Pike's explorations was part of their library. Based on several comments by James, they probably had Lewis and Clark's journals in their possession, as well. The narrative was rife with comments like "so called by Lewis and Clark," "Lewis and Clark inform us that," "according to Lewis and Clark," and the like. There are several instances where James cited the volume and page number of the 1814 publication, such as; "a small fox was killed, which appears to be the animal mentioned by Lewis and Clark, in the account of their travels, under the name of the burrowing fox, (Vol. 2. p. 351.)"[84]

In discussing a run-in with a grizzly bear, James mentioned recurrent encounters the Corps had with this ferocious beast, much as Brackenridge did. "Lewis and Clarke frequently saw and killed these bears during their celebrated expedition across the continent," wrote the scientist. He continued,

> They mention one which was nine feet long from the nose to the tip of the tail. The forefoot of another was nine inches across, its hind foot eleven and three quarters inches long, exclusive of the talons, and seven inches wide. The talons of a third were six and one-fourth inches long.[85]

*Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*).*

This commentary was followed by a lengthy quote matching the May 5, 1805, entry from Biddle's 1814 publication. James put the entire paragraph within quotes and credited "*Lewis and Clarke*."[86]

James included an intriguing entry in which Thomas Say, a naturalist accompanying the Long party, learned that traders ascending the Red River were identified by Arapahos as "*Tabbyboos* (a name which they also applied to us, and which appears to be the same word which, according to Lewis and Clarke, in the language of the Snake Indians, means white men; but it was here applied particularly to the Americans.)"[87] This was the word, presumably learned from Sacagawea, that Meriwether Lewis used to introduce himself to the Lemhi Shoshone on August 11, 1805. Gary Moulton, editor of the definitive *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, provides an instructive lesson on this term which, fifteen years later, had seemingly filtered into the Arapaho dialect.[88]

It was not until 1822 that significant rumblings in the fur trade hinted at a revitalization of this frontier industry. In early May, Congress created a Superintendency of Indian Affairs, to be based in St. Louis, and appointed William Clark as its head. In addition to all his office dealt with regarding Indigenous populations, Clark was responsible for issuing licenses to those who wished to trade with Native peoples and passports for travelers hoping to enter Indian Country.[89] Clark was undoubtedly quizzed by mountaineers about his experience and what they could expect.

That same year, two major expeditions set out from St. Louis. One was directed by the partnership of Andrew Henry and William Ashley, doing business as The Henry and Ashley Company.[90] Jedediah Smith, now a young man, was a hunter for this company and his meager reference to Lewis and Clark (noted above) seems to be the extent of the Corps' influence on that group. Andrew Henry's earlier experiences must have sufficed.

The second party was organized by the MFC, its primary brigade under the leadership of Michael Immell and Robert Jones. The Company established a trading post near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers hoping to capitalize on commerce with local Crow people.[91] MFC's trapping in 1822 was undeniably profitable; a St. Louis newspaper reported $24,000 worth of fur had been shipped from the Yellowstone that fall. The article went on:

> In this first adventure (since the revival of the fur trade) to the Rocky Mountains, it is gratifying to learn that no hostilities of any kind have occurred with the Indians, and that present appearances promise great success to the enterprising citizens who are now extending their trade to that remote region.[92]

Unfortunately for the MFC, that was not to be. In the spring of 1823, Immell and Jones, along with twenty-seven mountaineers, set out for Three Forks. Finding the region nearly denuded of beaver, they continued up the Jefferson River in search of better trapping grounds. Here, they ran into a party of thirty-eight Blackfeet led by a warrior named Iron Shirt. Everyone got along well enough to camp together for the night.

The next morning, Iron Shirt was given a letter written on "Jefferson's River 40 Miles above the 3 Forks." It was dated April 19, 1823, attested to his "good conduct," and was signed by M. E. Immell, R. J. Jones, C. Keemle, and Wm. Gordon.[93] The two groups parted on friendly terms – the Blackfeet even invited the Americans to establish a post at the mouth of the Marias River.

But Immell and Jones were wary of this apparent friendliness and hastily vacated the country. Reaching the Yellowstone, they descended it for a considerable distance, feeling comparatively safe as they approached Crow territory. In the

The Yellowstone River. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

interim, the band of Blackfeet the MFC brigade had left on the Jefferson returned to its village and recruited 300 to 400 more warriors. With a keener knowledge of the land, Iron Shirt intended to intercept and ambush the trappers.

The resultant vicious attack, in the vicinity of present-day Billings, Montana, overwhelmed the outnumbered MFC brigade. In addition to both Immell and Jones, five trappers were killed, four others were wounded, but amazingly twenty-two mountaineers escaped Iron Shirt's snare. The party lost nearly all their property, including horses, traps, and some thirty-five packs of beaver; the value of the lost property was estimated at $15,000. The remaining survivors constructed a raft and crossed the Yellowstone and, after traveling ten miles from the ambush site, found some friendly Crows who provided assistance.[94]

The fascinating part of this story is what happened to that lost property and its connection to the Corps of Discovery. In the fall of 1823, beaver pelts marked "M. F. Co." and bearing the initials of "W. G., C. K., R. J., J. W. and others" were traded by a band of Blackfeet at Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) Edmonton Factory on the north fork of the Saskatchewan River. Some of the booty captured by the Indians was still being traded to the British a year later, for on March 16, 1824, the Edmonton Factory Journal recorded:

> Small & Deschambault finished trading with the Blood Indians – they brought principally Beavers & Robes – They have brought us some more trophies of their victory over the unfortunate Americans with whom they had fought last Summer, such as Rifles, the first Volume of the Arabian Nights, Lewis & Clarke's travels in two Volumes, and a small quarto marble covered book, in which is inserted the Names of 30 men with a statement of their Accounts kept in dollars & cents, amongst which are the Names of those who have signed the note we have received from the Iron Shirt on the 21 of November last a copy of which will be found in page 50.[95]

Was it the glowing report of the "emence number" of beavers at Three Forks in the 1814 journals of Lewis and Clark that enticed this MFC brigade? Did the journals' reference to the region raise MFC's expectations of finding plenty of fur-bearing animals there? Perhaps, but instead, they found disaster.

Hudson's Bay Company, one of the longest-running businesses in North America, displays its iconic striped wares. Courtesy of Hudson's Bay Company.

A British post thus acquired several packs of fur at the expense of American mountaineers who may have been trying to capitalize on what they gleaned from Biddle's publication. Other HBC trappers benefitted from what they learned through the Expedition journals. In February 1824, HBC trader Alexander Ross directed his Snake River brigade southward from Flathead Post. By the end of April, he and his men had

> wandered about through the intricate passes of the mountains, trapping and hunting with tolerable success for six days. During this time we passed the middle branch of the Missouri, and the track where Lewis and Clarke crossed over from that river to the waters of the Columbia, on their journey to the Pacific.[96]

Based on a map Ross drew later, it appears they left what he called "The Valley of Troubles," better known as Ross' Hole, near modern-day Sula, Montana, then crossed over the mountains to a branch of the Salmon River. Lewis and Clark had camped in Ross' Hole on September 4, 1805, then traversed today's Bitterroot Valley before crossing the mountains.[97] Ross was not clear on whether they tried to follow that "track" or merely intersected it.

Another HBC brigade, this one led by Peter Skene Ogden and William Kittson, took to the field in 1825. In February, Kittson, who kept a journal on this expedition, reported the party started out early to "cross a defile which devides the head waters of the Missouri from those of Salmon River, the same which Lewis and Clark desended to the Columbia." Ogden had a slightly different opinion of how the Corps marched over the Continental Divide. He recorded,

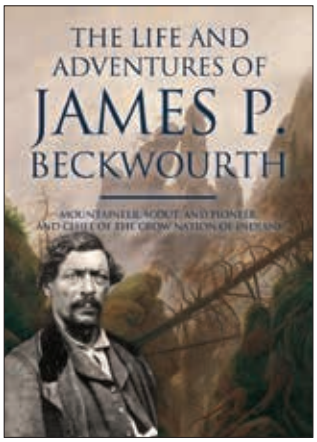
> here we are now on the Waters of the Columbia Commonly Called Salmon River but it is merely a Small Fork of the South Branch of the Columbia & it was I am of the opinion this Fork that Capts. Louis & Clarke followed when they crossed over from the Missouri on their way to the Columbia.[98]

All the while, more and more American mountaineers entered the country once explored by the Corps of Discovery. Jim Beckwourth, a trapper whose account is often questioned, made several references to Lewis and Clark, none of which is conclusive as to whether he had read the journals, or as time went on, heard about aspects of the Expedition. Beckwourth related an incident that happened in 1825, highlighting the "Red-haired Chief" – a direct reference to William Clark. Beckwourth concluded his retelling of this episode:

> The reader who has perused "Lewis and Clarke's Travels" will please to understand that the "Red-haired Chief"

Charles M. Russell, Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross' Hole, 1912*, Mural in the Montana State House, Helena, Montana. One probably has to be standing in the State House chamber to make out the skull within the couds in the painting's upper lefthand corner. Courtesy of montana.gov.*

spoken of above was none other than Mr. Clarke, whom the Crows almost worshiped while he was among them, and who yet hold his name in the highest veneration. He was considered by them to be a great "medicine man," and they supposed him lord over the whole white race.[99]



James P. Beckwourth narrated his life story to Thomas D. Bonner, an itinerant justice of the peace. The book was published in New York and London in 1856 and a translation was published in France in 1860.

Since Beckwourth dictated his memoirs in the 1850s, it is impossible to say how much he knew about Clark's nickname in 1825. Yet, his reminiscences made several references to Clark's identification as the red-haired chief. In describing the death of Crow headman, A-ra-poo-ash, for example, Beckwourth said the dying chief told him, "Take this shield and this medal; they both belong to you. The medal was brought from our great white father many winters ago by the red-headed chief. When you die, it belongs to him who succeeds you."[100]

As Lewis and Clark devotees will rapidly point out, the Expedition did not see any Crow people during their journey of Discovery. Corps members heard tales of the Absarokas, or Crows, and anticipated meeting them; Clark even prepared a speech expressly for them. But ultimately, the only chance encounter may have come on July 19, 1806, when Charbonneau spotted a lone, mounted Indian on the opposite side of the Yellowstone River from which Clark's party had camped.[101]

Jim Beckwourth's tales, though replete with inaccuracy, highlight the impact of William Clark, the Red-Headed Chief, among Indians of the Rocky Mountains as both an explorer and Superintendent of Indian Affairs. This illuminates how trappers like Beckwourth (or their editors anyway) recognized the importance to their readership of underlining Clark's role in the mountain men's ability to find beaver in the transmontane West.[102]

Scottish botanist David Douglas traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest in 1825, basing his work out of HBC's Fort Vancouver. His diary frequently mentioned the Expedition's names for landmarks and discussed aspects of his observations compared to those of Lewis and Clark. For example, in describing *Phalangium quamash* (camas), Douglas wrote, "Lewis observes that when eaten in a large quantity they occasion bowel complaints. This I am not aware of, but assuredly they produce flatulence: when in the Indian hut I was almost blown out by strength of wind." Douglas'

diary, replete with phrases like "Lewis and Clark says," or "as termed by Lewis," also mentioned his "opportunity of seeing the whole animals collected during their expedition (now in Philadelphia Museum)."[103]

By this time, cartographer David Thompson had retired but continued to create masterful maps of the regions he explored during his remarkable career. In 1826, his "Map of North America from 84° West," a lavishly drawn, detailed chart containing numerous notes by Thompson, was finished. At the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake rivers, he inserted, "Here Captns Lewis and Clarke made Canoes and went to the Sea."[104]

The Ebbing of the Fur Trade's Golden Age

Historian Dale Morgan called the decade of the 1820s a "golden age in the history of the West."[105] But the early 1830s saw a noticeable downturn. In 1832, while visiting Paris, John Jacob Astor observed silk top hats were becoming popular, rather than those made from beaver.[106] William Drummond Stewart, an adventurous Scottish nobleman, spent several seasons with fur brigades in the mountains, attending every rendezvous from 1833 to 1838. In his experience, 1833's event was "the last great rendezvous," because the following year "the country was invaded by the pedlar and the idler of the East, and the missionary."[107] Yet, the 1830s still saw their share of new recruits who were coming to the Rocky Mountain West.

One such newcomer was Warren Ferris, employed as a surveyor before and after his time in the fur trade. A member of his 1831 brigade was Jean Baptiste Charboneau, whom Ferris described as "the infant who, together with his mother, was saved from a sudden flood near the Falls of the Missouri, by Capt. Lewis, [of] Lewis and Clark's Expedition."[108] While Ferris got his heroes mixed up, such detail for a colleague's introduction showed appreciation for the Corps of Discovery narrative. This rescue is well-known today even though it occurred on June 19, 1805.[109] It was York who did the saving that day.

While visiting a Salish village, Ferris reported, "Many anecdotes of Messrs. Lewis and Clark, who were the first white men they ever saw, are related by the Flatheads, and some of the old men in the village now with us, were present at their first interview."[110] As his party traveled through present-day Montana in late September 1831, it struck the junction of Horse Prairie and Red Rock creeks, forming the Beaverhead River. Ferris was quick to point out these were "the forks where Lewis and Clark left their canoes."

David Douglas, *c. 1834,* Curtis's Botanical Magazine. *Wikimedia Commons.*

He went on to say he cached some goods prior to heading for Lemhi Pass, then "crossed the mountains westward to the east fork of Salmon River, following the same trail that guided Lewis and Clark there so many years before Us."[111]

Returning to those same caches a year later, Ferris described the "Gates of the Mountains" as

> A high rocky conical elevation attached to a plain jutting into the bottom on one side of the river precisely opposite to the bluff rocky termination of a plain of considerable height, on the other side, but three or four hundred yards asunder; which gives to them the appearance of formidable gates, and they were thus named by Lewis and Clark.[112]

A "Map of the Northwest Fur Country," drawn by Ferris in 1836, included the Gates, along with a vast amount of geographical data he learned during his more than five years in the Rockies.

Nathaniel Wyeth, a New England ice merchant, started for Oregon country in 1832. He was inspired by Hall J. Kelly, a chief supporter of American settlement in the Pacific Northwest, often referred to as the "Father of Oregon." Wyeth read Kelly's publication, *A Geographical Sketch of the Part of North America Called Oregon*.[113] The opening paragraph acknowledged,

Alfred Jacob Miller, Rendezvous *(1858-1860). Miller traveled west in 1837 and was the only artist to document the annual fur-traders' gatherings in the Green River Valley in present-day western Wyoming. Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.*

"The geographical character of the Oregon Territory was unknown … till the exploration of Lewis and Clarke. Information derived from their account … contributes chiefly to the following sketch."[114] Kelly cited information from those journals extensively in the next fifty pages. He pirated cherry-picked sentences throughout his work, as well as an entire paragraph from Biddle's 1814 published version, favorably describing the "fertile and delightful" Multnomah valley.[115] His section on insects unabashedly plagiarized Biddle. Kelly admitted, "This entire account of the insects, and many other important facts concerning the animal kingdom, were derived from Lewis and Clarke's journal."[116]

Kelly's efforts, slow to stir settlers, fired Wyeth's entrepreneurial spirit. He organized the Pacific Trading Company (PTC) and set out for Oregon in the spring. He was the first known American to travel from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific coast in a single calendar year.[117] His preparation must have included perusing Corps journals because he regularly mentioned them. He often confirmed his perspective by citing intelligence gained from that review. For example, while on the Columbia River, Wyeth determined, "the country is so rough … but the soil is good and the timber is heavy and thick and almost impenetrable from underbrush and fallen trees the description of Mess[.] Lewis & Clark and others is fully borne out as to size and more".[118]

Wyeth tended to think himself smarter than peers as demonstrated in a dispute with botanist David Douglas about a species of grouse. The nature of that argument is not clear but it resulted in Wyeth's providing a painstaking description of a bird he had hunted that included counting and measuring feathers, reporting their coloration, a discussion of the bird's toes, its weight, and the like.[119] That same cockiness came through in his description of Beacon Rock "rising perpendicular from the bed of the river as I should think 400 feet high Lewis & Clark call it I think 700 feet." In fact, Clark had concluded the landmark's height to be 800 feet.[120] That Wyeth guessed about Clark's figure suggests he did not have the journals in his immediate possession or did not bother to pull them from his pack as he wrote in his diary.

Accompanying Wyeth on this 1832 trek was John Ball, a former attorney from New Hampshire. Ball's childhood neighbor was Expedition veteran John Ordway, so exciting tales of the Corps' adventures were undoubtedly heard around the family hearth. Ball would later write his parents to say,

Warren Ferris, Map of the Northwest Fur Country, 1836. *Ferris was one of the fur trappers or mountain men who traveled through the northern and central Rocky Mountains in the 1820s and 1830s in search of beaver and other fur-bearing animals. The map includes the area from the eastern slopes of the Colorado Rockies to the junctin of the Snake and Salmon rivers (present-day Idaho) and from the upper Missouri River down to the Grand Canyon area. Ferris' map is the only existing map from the fur-trade era! Courtesy of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.*

Beacon Rock on the Columbia River. A landmark described by Lewis and Clark in the Journals. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

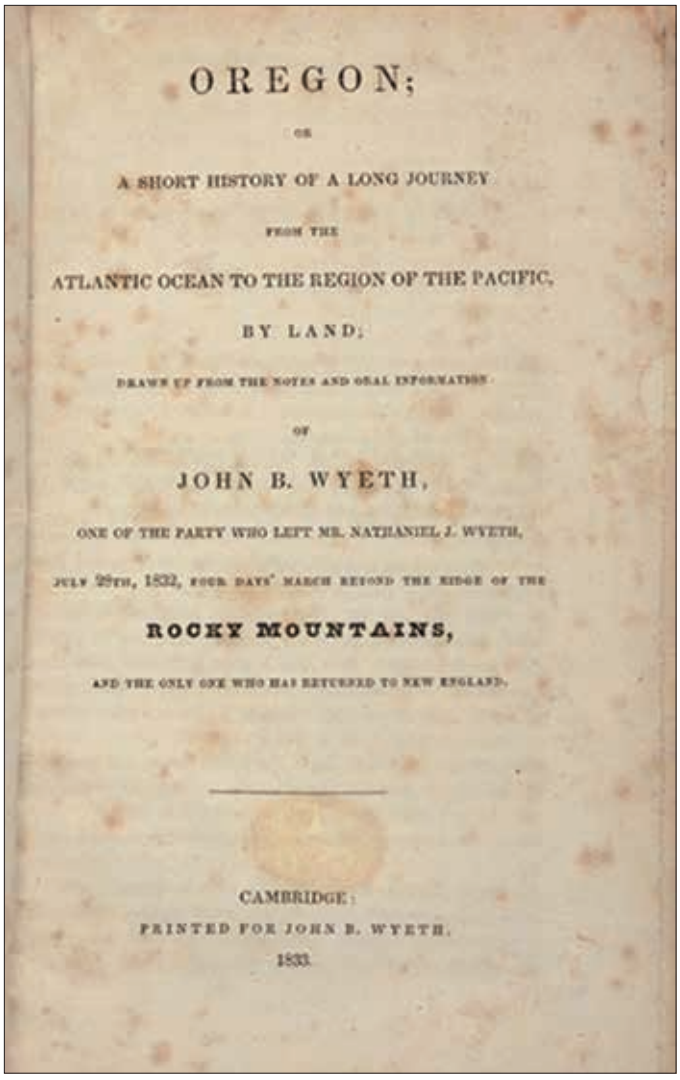
"I have seen the country the description of which John Ordway gave you so interestingly when he returned from his tour with Lewis and Clark in 1806."[121] Born in 1794, Ball was twelve years old when Ordway came home – plenty old enough to remember those stories.

Ball was clearly familiar with the journals published in 1814. For instance, when descending the Columbia, he described basaltic columns and announced that "Lewis and Clark called them 'high black rocks.'" This probably referenced Clark's October 22, 1805, entry speaking of "a high black rock, which, rising perpendicularly from the right shore, seems to run wholly across the river."[122] Ball also informed readers that the name of South Pass stemmed from "Lewis and Clark and other early travelers always keeping on the main Missouri which led them to a crossing far north and more difficult."[123]

Nathaniel Wyeth's cousin John was also a PTC member, though his experience in the West was not to his liking. The eighteen-year-old abandoned the party while at the 1832 fur trade rendezvous held in Pierre's Hole, today's Teton Valley, Idaho. Actually, more than half the party walked out on their leader, primarily due to his overbearing nature. Once John returned to Boston, he published a scathing account of his perceived sufferings, painting his older cousin in a horrible light. The book, published in 1833, was ghost-written by the staunchly anti-Oregon Harvard professor, Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse. The book, *Oregon; or a Short History of a Long Journey from the Atlantic Ocean to the Region of the Pacific by Land, Drawn Up from the Notes and Oral Information of John B. Wyeth*, made numerous references to information gleaned from Lewis and Clark's journals.[124]

In their introduction, the collaborating duo applauded the arduous task "undertaken by Captain M. Lewis and Lieutenant W. Clarke of the first regiment of infantry."[125] (Interestingly, only one officer was identified as a captain.) The PTC breakup was described as having occurred "within about four hundred miles of the mouth of the Columbia, *alias* Oregon river, where it pours into the *boisterous* Pacific Ocean, for such Lewis and Clarke found it to their cost." This may refer to Biddle's portrayal of how "the ocean, which breaks with fury on the coast, from rocks of cape Disappointment as far as the eye can see," is a "boisterous scene."[126]

In his denigration of Nathaniel Wyeth, John criticized prices he paid for supplies. Concerning tobacco, the younger Wyeth pronounced it



OREGON;

OR

A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG JOURNEY

FROM THE

ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE REGION OF THE PACIFIC,

BY LAND;

DRAWN UP FROM THE NOTES AND ORAL INFORMATION

OF

JOHN B. WYETH,

ONE OF THE PARTY WHO LEFT MR. NATHANIEL J. WYETH,

JULY 29TH, 1832, FOUR DAYS' MARCH BEYOND THE RIDGE OF THE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS,

AND THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS RETURNED TO NEW ENGLAND.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR JOHN B. WYETH.

1833.

Title page of the book by John B. Wyeth: Oregon; Or A Short History of A Long Journey From The Atlantic Ocean To The Region Of The Pacific. By Land... *(Cambridge: Printed for John B. Wyeth, 1833).*

> a luxury more coveted by men in our situation, anxious and fatigued as we were, than whisky or brandy. This was the case under Lewis and Clarke. When deprived of tobacco, they cut up the old handles of tomahawks, which had been used as pipes, and chewed the wood for the sake of its smell and smack.[127]

Fortunately, John Wyeth's book was printed in a small quantity, so beyond some intra-familial conflict, there was little damage to Nathaniel's reputation.

During his return from the mountains in 1833, the former ice vender struck a deal to supply the Rocky Mountain Fur Company with needed equipment and merchandise at its 1834 rendezvous. Yet another excursion, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of Fort Hall, organized by the Bostonian, set out in spring of 1834. On that trip was ornithologist John Townsend. The naturalist had evident knowledge of the Corps of Discovery; traveling down the Columbia River, he wrote

> This, then, was the great Oregon, the first appearance of which gave Lewis and Clark so many emotions of joy and pleasure, and on this stream our indefatigable countrymen wintered, after the toils and privations of a long, and protracted journey through the wilderness.[128]

Townsend related a compelling story of his own discovery:

> I walked to-day around the beach to the foot of Young's bay, a distance of about ten miles, to see the remains of the house in which Lewis and Clark's party resided during the winter which they spent here. The logs of which it is composed, are still perfect, but the roof of bark has disappeared, and the whole vicinity is overgrown with thorn and wild currant bushes.
>
> One of Mr. Birnie's children found, a few days since, a large silver medal, which had been brought here by Lewis and Clark, and had probably been presented to some chief, who lost it. On one side was a head, with the name "Th. Jefferson, President of the United States, 1801." On the other, two hands interlocked, surmounted by a pipe and tomahawk; and above the words, "Peace and Friendship."[129]

Further indication of Hudson's Bay Company's awareness of Lewis and Clark appeared in the 1832 log of trader John Work. Camped on the Salmon River, Work dispatched a trapping party of four men in a skin canoe. As they descended the stream, the HBC leader anticipated a successful hunt since that part of the river was not known to have ever been trapped. He concluded the day's entry with, "Lewis and Clark passed down this in canoes."[130] This seems to come somewhat out of the blue since it was the only mention of the Expedition in the twelve months of Work's travelogue.

While traveling throughout the West in the early 1830s, artist George Catlin had some interesting experiences relating to Lewis and Clark. The artist, hosted by the AFC, spent several days at a variety of Company posts. Of his several mentions of the explorers, one is particularly informative. While visiting the Minataree (Hidatsa) in 1832, he was introduced to Black Moccasin,

Indian peace medal with Thomas Jefferson by John Reich, United States Mint, Philadelphia, c. 1801. Wikimedia Commons.

Artist Karl Bodmer (here in 1877) accompanied Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied to the Upper Missouri in 1832-1834 and documented their adventures in a series of watercolors he later rendered as color lithographs. Wikimedia Commons.

whom the explorers had met in October 1804. "The man has many distinct recollections of Lewis and Clarke," Catlin wrote, remembering it had been "thirty years ago." He continued,

> It will be seen by reference to their very interesting history of their tour, that they were treated with great kindness by this man; and that they in consequence constituted him chief of the tribe, with the consent of his people; and he has remained their chief ever since. He enquired very earnestly for "Red Hair" and "Long Knife" (as he had ever since termed Lewis and Clarke), from the fact, that one had red hair (an unexampled thing in his country), and the other wore a broad sword which gained for him the appellation of "Long Knife". I have told him that "Long Knife" has been many years dead; and that "Red Hair" is yet living in St. Louis, and no doubt, would be glad to hear of him; at which he seemed much pleased, and has signified to me that he will make me bearer of some peculiar dispatches to him.[131]

About a year later, while in St. Louis, Catlin happened to see William Clark. He passed along Black Moccasin's greeting and showed Clark his portrait of the elderly chieftain. Clark instantly recognized the aged Minataree, drolly adding, "they had considered the Black Moccasin quite an old man when they appointed him chief thirty-two years ago."[132]

Several European noblemen adventured in the Rocky Mountain West throughout this decade. William Drummond Stewart, mentioned earlier, attended half-a-dozen fur trade rendezvous during his exploits. Another westbound aristocrat was Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied. This high-born German arrived in St. Louis in March of 1833, Swiss artist Karl Bodmer in tow. The pair called on William Clark who provided them with a passport to legally enter Indian Country and suggested they make travel arrangements with an American Fur Company vessel about to steam its way up the Missouri.[133] Traveling under an alias, "Baron Braunsberg" traversed the West for more than two years.

In Maximilian's library for the journey was the British edition of Nicolas Biddle's *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*. The first specific mention of this volume came in recognition of "a special variety of tobacco, which is mentioned in Lewis and Clark's *Journey*."[134] Throughout Maximilian's diary, there were many "according to Lewis and Clark," type statements and variations on "called by Lewis and Clark," in identifying landmarks. Maximilian had a set of thirty-four maps, detailing the Missouri River to near modern-day Great Falls, Montana, as well as the area near Three Forks. These had been copied from William Clark's 1804–1806 route maps.[135] The prince noted several places along the Missouri River that differed

after nearly thirty years from when the Corps first ascended its current. Having Clark-drawn maps in hand, the prince continually compared changes and similarities in the river's course.

Once they reached AFC's Fort Union, at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, the European travelers transferred to a keelboat and continued upstream. Near the mouth of the Milk River, Maximilian noted the stream was muddy and mixed with sand. He determined it was this river, not the Marias, that "thickens the Missouri," for the Marias then "had a beautiful light green color, and its water was almost completely bright and clear. This is proof that Lewis and Clark are in error when they say the Marias River gives the Missouri its dirty color."[136]

Several times, Maximilian copied entries directly from the Biddle edition into his own daily accounts, often including an appropriate citation. The story of a Mandan man who sacrificed seventeen horses to his "medicine" that, per Biddle, was recorded on December 4, 1804, is a good example.[137] Overall, the prince mentioned Lewis and Clark during his travels more than any other contemporary account that was examined in this research.

In 1836, Washington Irving published *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains*.[138] Irving, a prolific writer of the era and author of such novels as *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*, was a friend of John Jacob Astor. The fur magnate contracted Irving to tell the story of his Pacific Fur Company. Despite access to fur-trade journals and documents provided by Astor, he never traveled to the far western regions romanticized in *Astoria*.

Irving made an interesting confession in his introduction to *Astoria*. Corporate diaries, he declared, were kept by businessmen with little experience of topics outside their direct interests. Since these logs were often meager in detail, being written in times of fatigue or in the circumstances of a wilderness camp, they furnished hints that merely provoked intrigue rather than satisfying inquiry. Irving continued,

> I have, therefore, availed myself occasionally of collateral lights supplied by the published journals of other travellers who have visited the scenes described: such as Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, Bradbury, Breckenridge, Long, Franchere, and Ross Cox, and make a general acknowledgment of aid received from these quarters.[139]

That Irving's sources are also found in this current article is coincidental, but, after all, these were the men who wrote about their explorations and thus could illuminate Irving's narrative. It goes without saying that men who traveled routes reasonably similar to those of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, primarily on the Missouri or Columbia River, would be more apt to mention their predecessors' efforts. But, Edgley Todd, editor of what is undoubtedly the best edition of the Astorian saga, hit the nail on the head:

> As the list of sources previously cited indicates, Irving used more than he here acknowledges, and to say that he availed himself "Occasionally of collateral lights" is both misleading and inaccurate, for, as stated earlier, most of Astoria is actually composed from information derived from these "collateral lights."[140]

What the reader is left with is an embellished tale of what transpired according to PFC records, salted with a creative use of sources that make it appear the Astorians were more well-informed than perhaps they truly were. This is particularly evident in the number of times Irving cited Lewis and Clark. Irving often identified landmark names as "so called" by Lewis and Clark, or paraphrased descriptions of, say, "the Long Narrows" on the Columbia River, with only slight changes in verbiage, yet only once did he actually cite Lewis and Clark as a source. When depicting a Native process for drying and storing salmon, Irving quoted the Biddle edition of the *Journals*' entry for October 22, 1805, and marked the passage with an asterisk, footnoting the volume and page number of his informant.[141]

One enlightening anecdote Irving included was the overland Astorian party's hearing mysterious explosions northwest of the Black Hills of today's South Dakota. Sometimes referred to as Seneca Guns, Irving wrote that in mid-August 1811, "successive reports are now and then heard among these mountains, resembling the discharge of several pieces of artillery." Though Wilson Price Hunt's record never mentioned having heard the sounds, Irving summarized the Lewis and Clark narrative of "mountain artillery" in this region saying, "Similar reports were heard by Messrs. Lewis and Clark in the Rocky mountains, which they say, were attributed by the Indians to the bursting of rich mines of silver contained in the bosom of the mountains."[142]

More precisely, Biddle wrote:

> Since our arrival at the falls we have repeatedly heard a strange noise coming from the mountains in a direction a little to the north of west. It is heard at different periods of the day and night, sometimes when the air is perfectly still and without a cloud, and consists of one stroke only,

Rev. Father Pierre-Jean De Smet. Brady-Handy Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

> or of five or six discharges in in quick succession. It is loud and resembles precisely the sound of a six pound piece of ordnance at the distance of three miles.[143]

Biddle went on to relate Minataree (Hidatsa), Pawnee, and Arikara accounts of this "noise like thunder," ultimately pinning the source on the bursting of silver mines, just as Irving quoted.[144] The upshot is that Washington Irving inflated the Astorians' familiarity of intelligence contained within the Lewis and Clark journals. But that he did so is further evidence of how that the data gathered by the Corps of Discovery still served as a point of historical and geographical reference.

All Good Things Must Come to an End

The fur industry became bleaker as the value of beaver dropped and the rendezvous era drew to a close. Nevertheless, travelers, adventurers, and immigrants trickled into the mountains. About this time, pioneer Thomas Farnham met an elderly Shoshone man in Browns Hole who claimed to have been the first of his tribe to have seen Lewis and Clark's men more than three decades earlier. Farnham recounted the tale in his 1839 travelogue, saying the man

> had been galloping from place to place in the office of sentinel to the Shoshone camp, when he suddenly found himself in the very presence of the whites. Astonishment fixed him to the spot. Men with faces pale as ashes, had never been seen by himself or nation.[145]

Unfortunately, the tribal council found this report preposterous. He was not believed and was dismissed as an idle boaster until he showed them gifts the Americans gave him. Warriors were sent to find these pale men and bring them to the village, at which time the poor fellow's reliability was acknowledged. Students of the Lewis and Clark saga no doubt realize that this account, as relayed by Farnham, differs from what Meriwether Lewis recorded.

In these waning days of the annual saturnalia the rendezvous had once been, missionaries were advancing the gospel, entering into lands occupied by Indigenous peoples to spread the Good News. The first missionaries came in 1834. Nearly every year after that, more purveyors of Christianity took to the field. In 1840, the year of the final trapper gathering in the Rockies, Father Pierre Jean de Smet went west – and even he knew some Lewis and Clark exploits.

The Belgian Jesuit told the tale of four Indigenous hunters who successfully dispatched two grizzly bears. "Messrs. Lewis and Clarke," said the priest, "in their expedition to the sources of the Missouri, adduce a striking proof of the physical strength of this animal, which shows that he is a most formidable enemy."[146] De Smet then related the story found in Lewis and Clark's entry for May 14, 1805, in which six men attacked one grizzly in a dreadful episode of animal ferocity – it took eight bullets to bring that creature down.[147] But then, what good is a mountain man without a decent bear story to make greenhorns take notice, even if that mountaineer is a missionary?

Conclusion

The end of the rendezvous era in the Rocky Mountains came in 1840, but audacious tales of a bold and exciting past would forever prick the ears of a tenderfoot, regardless of who told the stories. Thirty-plus years after the return of the Corps of Discovery, people still recounted the daring heroism of some of the nation's earliest explorers – the intrepid men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

There was an expanding dissemination of Lewis and Clark information, starting with the excitement at the St. Louis landing in 1806, as the Corps came ashore after a twenty-eight-month absence. They were the only people who had been there and back. It advanced to campfire tales (survival seminars for budding mountaineers), to the letter

David Thompson obtained, to Patrick Gass' formal publication, on to that of Biddle's 1814 "official" edition of the captains' diaries. At that point, the published works became standard references for information and comparison.

Businessmen's anticipation followed, several taking quick action and financial risk based on what they learned directly or indirectly from Lewis and Clark. The ensuing written narratives increased availability to the point that published accounts of the Expedition became the go-to source for anyone planning to go west. And for decades after the Corps, their accounts were the point of comparison for the experiences of those who actually went.

For several decades, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was not just an expedition – it was THE expedition; and Corps realities were THE knowledge base against which new information was judged. This progressive change in knowledge transfer paralleled the rise of influence held by those data. Lewis and Clark's intelligence evolved from actionable information for people like Manuel Lisa and Wilson Price Hunt to basic reference and points of comparison for later travelers.

Meriwether Lewis proclaimed, "All other branches of the Missouri which penetrate the Rocky Mountains abound in fine beaver and Otter."[148] This rumored abundance of fur bearers in the Rockies drew many men seeking riches to the territory's icy streams. While Lewis may have been correct in 1805, it did not take long for the greed of hopeful capitalists to trap those creatures to near extinction. There were other factors contributing to the demise of the beaver trade, but the intelligence brought home by the Corps of Discovery helped bring about massive changes to the ecology, economy, and exploitation of the frontier. ∎

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Notes

1 The author acknowledges a discussion with historian Kerry Oman many years ago that sparked the idea for this current research. Also, many thanks go to Jay Buckley, Scott Walker, and Robert Rudd for their review and comments regarding this work.

2 See, for example, *The Republican Advocate* (Frederick, MD), July 5, 1805, reprint of an article from a Lexington, KY, newspaper. This same article was recently transcribed by Michael Carrick, "A Lewis and Clark Dispatch from Fort Mandan Made Its Way to Boston in 1805," *We Proceeded On* 36:2 (May 2010): 38-39. Jefferson's brief report to Congress was made on February 19, 1806.

3 One of the earliest newspapers to report this was *The Political Observatory* (Walpole, NH), January 10, 1806.

4 Elliot Coues, ed., *The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, Fur Trader for the Northwest Company, and of David Thompson, Official Cartographer and Explorer of the Same Company*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1965), 1:329. The medal was given to Black Cat on October 29, 1804. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), 3:209.

5 Coues, *Journals of Alexander Henry*, 1:398. The "Oreille Perce" is presumed to indicate the Nez Perce since neither Lewis nor Clark reported meeting any Pend d'Oreilles.

6 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:133-37.

7 John Mullanphy, *Connecticut Herald* (New Haven, CT), November 4, 1806, (reprinted from *The Palladium* [Frankfort, KY]). See also Thomas C. Danisi and John C. Jackson, "Homeward Bound," *We Proceeded On* 33:2 (May 2007): 16-19.

8 Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 1:321.

9 Letter, William Clark to [George Rogers Clark?], September 23, 1806, in Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:325-29.

10 *The Palladium* (Frankfort, KY), October 9, 1806. The first newspaper in St. Louis, *The Missouri Gazette*, was started by Joseph Charless on July 12, 1808.

11 *The Western World* (Frankfort, KY), October 11, 1806.

12 Frederic L. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days from 1804-1821* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 119, 196.

13 Letter, James Wilkinson to Zebulon Pike, August 6, 1806, in Donald Jackson, ed., *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 2:134.

14 Letter, Meriwether Lewis to Henry Dearborn, October 12, 1806, in Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:349.

15 James P. Ronda, "Wilson Price Hunt Reports on Lewis and Clark," *The Filson Club Quarterly* 62:2 (April 1988): 251- 59.

16 Thomas James, *Three Years among the Indians and the Mexicans*, Milo M. Quaife, ed. (New York: The Citadel Press, 1966), 5, 5 n.2, n.3. James published his reminisces in 1846 when in his mid-60s. Consequently, some of his dates are sometimes off, although events are described with clarity.

17 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:53-54.

18 Larry E. Morris, "'Natural Born Indian': The Apprenticeship of Edward Rose, 1807-1810," *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 16 (2022): 23-50.

19 The timing of this trapping jaunt has resulted in many historians' proclaiming Colter to be the first mountain man and certainly he was among the earliest. However, James Pursely trapped the Rockies of today's Colorado in the early fall of 1804, nearly two years before Colter's efforts. See Jim Hardee, "The First American Mountain Man," *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 16 (2022): 1-22.

20 For more on this expedition, see Larry E. Morris, *The Fate of the Corps – What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 30-48. The fort, named for Lisa's son, is often referred to as Fort Remon.

21 Morris, *The Fate of the Corps*, 30-48. See also Richard Edward Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 50-53.

22 Jim Hardee, "Moonlighting on the Lewis and Clark Expedition," *We Proceeded On* 34:4 (November 2008): 16-23.

23 David Thompson, *The Columbia Journals of David Thompson*, Barbara Belyea, ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 274.

24 Letter, Meriwether Lewis to Unknown Correspondent, October 14, 1806, in Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:335-43. Jackson's notes discuss to whom the letter may have been addressed. This letter, in Thompson's hand, is the only known copy in existence.

25 Jack Nisbet, *Sources of the River, Tracking David Thompson Across Western North America* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1994), 106.

26 The other two were kept by William Clark and John Ordway.

27 Patrick Gass, *The Journals of Patrick Gass, Member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Carol Lynn MacGregor, ed. (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1997), 18; *The United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), October 26, 1807.

28 The best, most detailed coverage of the trial is Melissa Tiffie, "The 1808 Murder Trial of George Drouillard," *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 9 (2015): 38-63.

29 A succinct account of Colter's run is found in Morris, *The Fate of the Corps*, 45-48. Colter does not always get the recognition he might otherwise deserve owing to a lack of firsthand accounts of his activities and distortions of his exploits in the existing accounts. Frankly, all of his post-Lewis and Clark adventures in the fur trade are second-hand histories. For more on problems with first-hand vs. second-hand history, see Mitchell Edward Pike, "George Drouillard and John Colter: Heroes of the American West," (2012), CMC Senior Theses, Paper 444. Found online at http://scholarship. claremont.edu/cmc_theses/444.

30 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:428.

31 Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 68-78.

32 This post, situated ten or twelve miles above the mouth of the Knife River, was called Fort Mandan, but should not to be confused with Lewis and Clark's Fort Mandan, which was downstream, seven or eight miles below the mouth of the Knife River.

33 Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 85-90.

34 James, *Three Years among the Indians*, 82-83.

35 Letter, William Clark to [George Rogers Clark?], September 23, 1806, first printed in *The Palladium* (Frankfort, KY), was reprinted across the nation, reaching *The New-York Evening Post* (New York, NY) on November 4, 1806.

36 Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *John Jacob Astor, Business Man*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1:164-69, 208 n. 1-8.

37 Jim Hardee, "The Story of Marie Dorion," *The Fur Trade & Rendezvous of the Green River Valley* (Pinedale, WY: Sublette County Historical Society, 2005), 16-17; Jim Hardee, "The Ordeal of Marie Dorion," *True West* 38:10 (October 1991): 46-49.

38 Letter, Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, August 16, 1809, cited in John Bradbury, "Travels in the Interior of America, 1809-1811," in *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 5:9-10.

39 John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America in the Years 1809, 1810 and 1811* (Liverpool: Sherwood, Nealy and Jones, 1817), 10, 17. Had Bradbury read the journal of Patrick Gass, he would have known that the entry for September 10, 1804, included "we found the skeleton or back bones of a fish, 45 feet long, and petrified." Gass, *Journals*, 30.

40 Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior*, 17-21.

41 Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior*, 255.

42 Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana* (Pittsburgh, PA: Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum, 1814), 72.

43 Thomas Jefferson, *Message from the President of the United States, Communicating Discoveries Made in Exploring the Missouri, Red River and Washita, by Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley, and Mr. Dunbar; with a Statistical Account of the Countries Adjacent. February 19, 1806*. (Washington City: A. & G. Way Printers, 1806), 5.

44 See, for example, *Relfs Philadelphia Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), February 7, 1806. The American Philosophical Society, based in Philadelphia, was founded in 1743.

45 See, for example, *Mississippi Herald & Natchez Gazette* (Natchez, MS), May 13, 1807.

46 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, 198, 265-268; Henry Marie Brackenridge, "Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri; Performed in Eighteen Hundred Eleven," in *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 6:164-166.

47 Coues, *Journals of Alexander Henry*, 2:591.

48 *Mississippi Herald & Natchez Gazette* (Natchez, MS), May 13, 1807.

49 Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 107-13.

50 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, 202.

51 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, 216-17.

52 George Sibley, *Seeking a Newer World: The Fort Osage Journals and Letters of George Sibley, 1808-1811*, Jeffery E. Smith, ed. (St. Charles, MO: The Lindenwood Press, 2003), 166 n.143.

53 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, 47, 55, 56; Gass, *Journals*, 82, 105.

54 Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior*, 79. Benjamin Jones and Alexander Carson, who had also been with Andrew Henry, had been picked up while descending the river on May 22.

55 Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior*, 138.

56 Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior*, 151-52.

57 Robert Stuart, *The Discovery of the Oregon Trail, Robert Stuart Narratives*, Philip Ashton Rollins, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 307.

58 Robert F. Jones, *Annals of Astoria, The Headquarters Log of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia River, 1811- 1813* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 15-16.

59 Alfred Seton, *Astorian Adventure, The Journal of Alfred Seton, 1811-1815*, Robert F. Jones, ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 102, 102 n. 56.

60 Seton, *Astorian Adventure*, 104; Gass, *Journals*, 137.

61 Gabriel Franchére, *Adventure at Astoria, 1810-1814*, Hoyt C. Franchére, ed., trans. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 58.

62 Jones, *Annals of Astoria*, 91.

63 Jones, *Annals of Astoria*, 204. The Astorians were the earliest fur traders in the Pacific Northwest to employ native Hawaiians, typically referred to as Kanakas. See, Keith "Moki" Hipol, "Hawaiians in the American Fur Trade," *Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 1 (2007): 75-84.

64 Jones, *Annals of Astoria*, 21, 136, 143, 145.

65 Stuart, *Discovery of the Oregon Trail*, 4.

66 Ross Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia, including the Narrative of a Residence of Six Years on the Western Side of the Rocky Mountains* (New York: J & J Harper, 1832), 71.

67 Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia*, 155-56. The section Cox copied, with only slight transcription errors, came from Nicholas Biddle, ed., *The Journals of the Expedition under the Command of Capts. Lewis and Clark*, 2 vols. (New York: Heritage Press, 1962), 2:365.

68 Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia*, 156-57. This section was taken from Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:362-63.

69 Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia*, 158; Biddle, *Journals*, 2:362.

70 Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia*, 190. Exactly where in the text "the editor" described these deer is less clear, but Cox likely refers to Biddle's comments on deer in the entry for November 19, 1805. Biddle, *Journals*, 2:333-34.

71 Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia*, 148, 225, 226.

72 David Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812*, Richard Glover, ed. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1962), 350.

73 Gass, *Journals*, 141.

74 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:301.

75 David Thompson, *David Thompson's Journal Relating to Montana and Adjacent Regions, 1808-1812*, M. Catherine White, ed. (Missoula: Montana State University Press, 1950), 203-6, 204 nn. 83-88, 206 n. 94. Thompson's editor noted there is no clear evidence Thompson had a copy of the Gass journal. Thompson's details are better described in the letter Lewis wrote from Cahokia (see Note #24 above), yet still lack specificity. White suggested if he did not have his own, he might have borrowed the copy belonging to Alexander Henry.

76 Jack Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye, David Thompson on the Columbia Plateau* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2005), 134-35.

77 Coues, *Journals of Alexander Henry*, 2:772.

78 Coues, *Journals of Alexander Henry*, 2:913-14.

79 Maurice S. Sullivan, *Jedediah Smith, Trader & Trailbreaker* (New York: Press of the Pioneers, 1936), 10.

80 Dale Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953), 25.

81 James C. Auld, "The Legend of Jedediah Smith: Fact, Fantasy and Opinion," *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 2 (2008): 1-13.

82 Maurice S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith* (Santa Ana, CA: The Fine Arts Press, 1934), 9.

83 Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1855), 1:175.

84 Edwin James, "Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains Performed in the Years 1819, 1820," in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1849*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 15:261.

85 James, "Account of an Expedition," 16:45.

86 Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:128.

87 James, "Account of an Expedition," 16:207.

88 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:72 n. 1, found online at: https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/ lc.jrn.1805-08- 11#lc.jrn.

89 Jay H. Buckley, *William Clark, Indian Diplomat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 146-47.

90 This company is too often referred to as The Rocky Mountain Fur Company

but it never went by that name. The partnership that formed in 1830 was "the only instance where any firm did business under this specific name." See Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1:294.

91 History is not clear when this post was built. It was either the fall/winter of 1821 or fall/winter of 1822. Either way, this establishment should not be confused with the Fort Benton built by the American Fur Company in 1846.

R.G. Robertson, *Competitive Struggle, America's Western Fur Trading Posts, 1764-1865* (Boise, ID: Tamarack Books, 1999), 65-66, 67, 269 n. 18.

92 *St. Louis Inquirer* (St. Louis, MO), October 12, 1822.

93 The letter which Immell gave to Iron Shirt is in the Edmonton Factory Journal, October 23, 1823, Post Journal, October 23, 1823, to March 16, 1824, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Manitoba.

94 One of the best accounts of the Immell and Jones affair is Clay J. Landry, "When Timely Apprised of His Danger, a Host Within Himself – Michael Immell, Fur Man," in *Selected Papers of the 2010 Fur Trade Symposium at the Three Forks* (Three Forks, MT: Three Forks Historical Society, 2011), 184-200.

95 Edmonton Factory Journal, October 23, 1823, Post Journal, October 23, 1823, to March 16, 1824, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Manitoba.

96 Ross, *Fur Hunters*, 2:53.

97 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:187-88.

98 Peter Skene Ogden, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26*, E. E. Rich, ed. (London, UK: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1950), 21, 217. Kittson's journal is included as an appendix in this volume. There is some doubt as to whether Ogden actually had the Lewis and Clark journals with him. He may have had the map published with the 1814 edition, or he may have had an Arrowsmith map that incorporated Lewis and Clark data. See the discussion in Peter Skene Ogden, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-1827*, K. G. Davies, ed. (London, UK: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961), xxvii.

99 James P. Beckwourth, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth as Told to Thomas D. Bonner*, Delmont R. Oswald, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 83-85.

100 Beckwourth, *Life and Adventures*, 264.

101 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:201, 206. Some historians suspects Crow raiders were responsible for running off with Expedition horses in the early morning hours of July 21, 1806. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:209-10.

102 See Jim Hardee, "The Influence of the Red-Headed Chief, William Clark's Post-Expedition Interactions with Indian Nations," *We Proceeded On* 40:2 (2014): 8-17.

103 David Douglas, *Journal Kept by David Douglas during His Travels in North America, 1823-1827* (London: William Wesley & Son, 1914), 106, 107, 108, 127, 137, 149, 172, 173.

104 Nisbet, *Mapmaker's Eye*, 126.

105 Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 7.

106 Letter, John Jacob Astor to Robert Stuart, October 7, 1832, in the George Franklin and Mary Stuart Turner Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

107 William Drummond Stewart, *Edward Warren* (London: G. Walker, 1854), 1-2.

108 Warren A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, Leroy R. Hafen, ed. (Denver: The Old West Publishing Company, 1983), 138.

109 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:340-43.

110 Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 163.

111 Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 192-93.

112 Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 247.

113 Hall J. Kelly, *A Geographical Sketch of that Part of North America Called Oregon* (Boston: J. Howe, 1830).

114 Kelly, *Geographical Sketch*, 3, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28.

115 Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:325. This description is from the entry for November 5, 1805.

116 Kelly, *Geographical Sketch*, 53. For comparison, see Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:463, entry for May 17, 1805.

117 Jim Hardee, *Obstinate Hope, The Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, Volume One, 1832-1833* (Pinedale, WY: Sublette County Historical Society and the Museum of the Mountain Man, 2013), xii.

118 Hardee, *Obstinate Hope*, 189. Wyeth seldom used punctuation.

119 Hardee, *Obstinate Hope*, 316.

120 Hardee, *Obstinate Hope*, 216; Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:362. The National Park Service measures Beacon Rock at 848 feet tall.

121 Hardee, *Obstinate Hope*, 189.

122 John Ball, *Born to Wander, The Autobiography of John Ball*, Kate Ball Powers, Flora Ball Hopkins, and Lucy Ball, comps. (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids Historical Commission, 1994), 57; Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:306.

123 Ball, *Born to Wander*, 46.

124 Jim Hardee, *Hope Maintains Her Throne, The Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, Volume Two, 1834- 1836* (Pinedale, WY: Sublette County Historical Society and the Museum of the Mountain Man, 2018), 9; John B. Wyeth, "Oregon; or a Short History of a Long Journey from the Atlantic Ocean to the Region of the Pacific by Land, Drawn Up from the Notes and Oral Information of John B. Wyeth," in *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 21:12-13, 16. Thwaites called Wyeth's 1833 book "the first American publication on the subject [of travel in the west], after the records of the initial exploration" of Lewis and Clark.

125 Wyeth, *Oregon*, 21.

126 Wyeth, *Oregon*, 68; Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:353-54. Wyeth used italics for boisterous, a word Biddle only used once. However, this could also be referring to a comment by Patrick Gass in his November 15, 1805, entry describing the ocean which was "at this time more raging than pacific," but there is no good evidence that Wyeth otherwise accessed Gass' journal. Gass, *Journals*, 150.

127 Wyeth, *Oregon*, 85. Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:508. See the entry for July 8, 1806.

128 John Kirk Townsend, "Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River," in *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 21:278.

129 Townsend, "Narrative," 21:362-63. James Birnie was the trader at HBC's Fort George, formerly known as Fort Astoria.

130 John Work, *The Journal of John Work*, William S. Lewis and Paul C. Phillips, eds. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1923), 140.

131 George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Traditions of the Indians of North America*, 2 vols. (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1842), 1:186-87. This quote is from Letter 23.

132 Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 1:187.

133 Prince Maximilian, *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Weid*, Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, eds., 3 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 1:xv, xxxix, xlii.

134 Maximilian, *Journals*, 1:321, 321 n. 263.

135 Maximilian, *Journals*, 1:385, 385 n. 149. These maps, which the prince borrowed from Benjamin O'Fallon, have been reproduced in Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 1: "Atlas."

136 Maximilian, *Journals*, 2:350.

137 Maximilian, *Journals*, 3:195; Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:138-39.

138 Washington Irving, *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1836).

139 Irving, *Astoria*, 1:5.

140 Washington Irving, *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains*, Edgeley W. Todd, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,1964), xxxii-xxxiii. Hereafter cited as "Todd, ed., *Astoria*" to differentiate.

141 Irving, *Astoria*, 2:10; Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 2:303. Editor Todd calls out Irving on his description of the Long Narrows in Todd, ed., *Astoria*, 103, 103 n. 25.

142 Irving, *Astoria*, 2:22. For more on this unique phenomenon, see Mike Bryant, "Distant Thunder; Ghost Artillery in the Early American West," in *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* 13 (2019): 1-14.

143 Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:179.

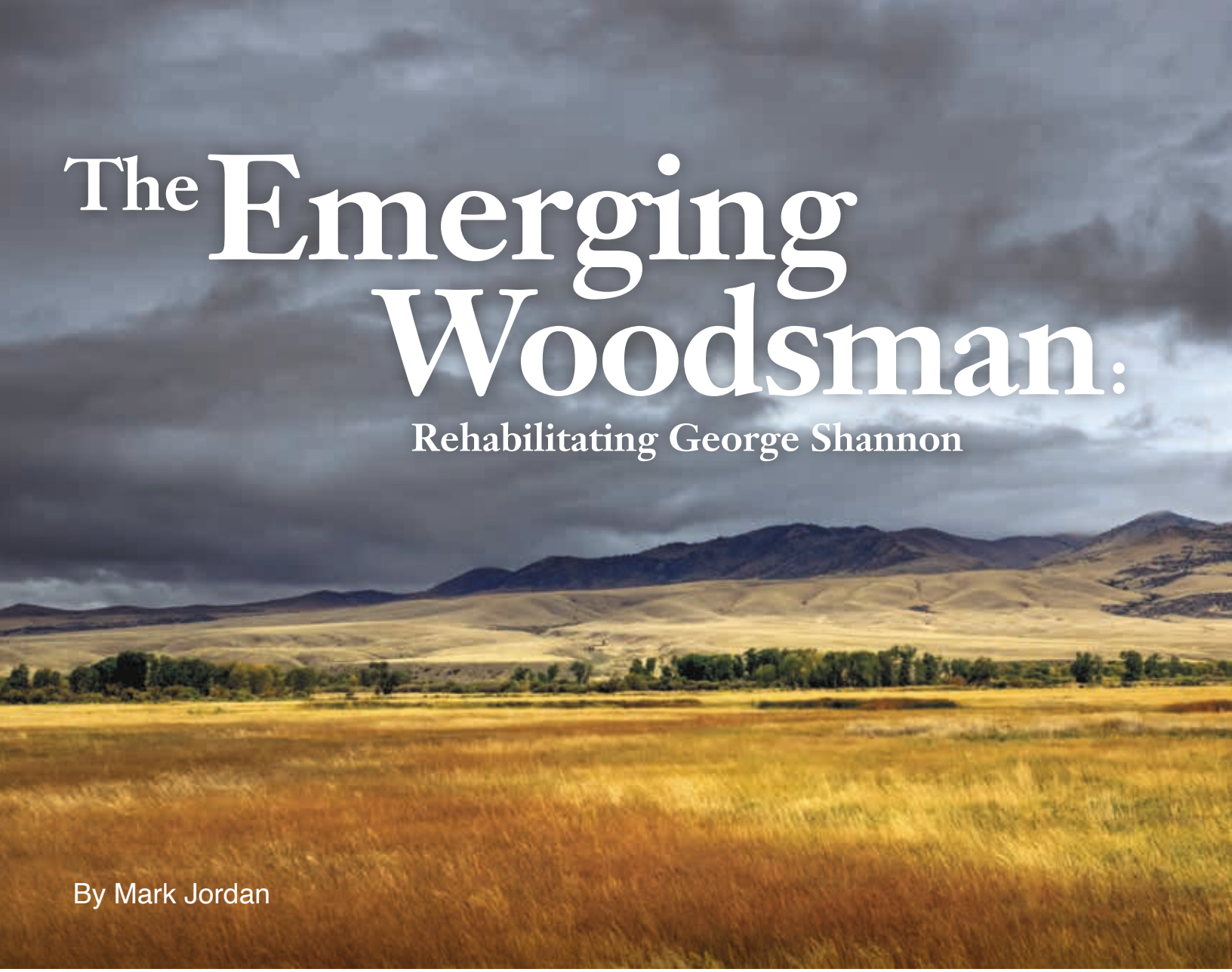
144 Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:179-80.

145 Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairie, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Territory*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1843), 2:44-47. For a thorough discussion of this initial meeting, see James P. Rhonda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 133-62.

146 Pierre Jean de Smet, "Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains," in *Early Western Travels 1748-1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 32 vols. (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 27:268-69.

147 Biddle, ed., *Journals*, 1:133.

148 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:277-78.



The Emerging Woodsman:

Rehabilitating George Shannon

By Mark Jordan

The Big Hole River, Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

The superlative experiences of George Shannon, the youngest recruit on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, have been overshadowed by his having gotten lost for sixteen days while the Expedition ascended the Missouri River in 1804. Shannon, sent out to hunt for horses on August 26, believed that Lewis, Clark, the men, and three boats had proceeded up the Missouri ahead of him. He therefore moved aggressively upriver, not realizing the Corps actually lagged behind.

After ten days, he ended his pursuit, having eaten little. He then waited several days, hoping for any boat to appear. Having eaten even less, he turned around and rode his one remaining horse downstream, where, on September 11, to his surprise, he encountered the Corps of Discovery's flotilla. He returned partially starved, overwhelmed and overjoyed to see his well-fed companions.

Clark expressed concern about Shannon as early as August 28, only two days after his disappearance, in a journal note that has plagued Shannon ever since.

> J. Shields & J. Fields who was Sent back to look for Shannon & the Horses joined us & informed that Shannon had the horses a head and that they Could not over take him *This man not being a first rate Hunter*, we deturmined to Send one man in pursute of him with Some Provisions.[1] [Italics added.]

Clark did not explain why he thought poorly of Shannon's hunting skills. Journal entries made prior to August 26, 1804, record that Shannon had brought in deer on several occasions. Three days before he went missing, he had shot an elk.

On yet another occasion, in August 1805, George disappeared for several days as the Expedition labored up the Beaverhead River.[2] His absence for these three days did not appear to give Lewis or Clark much concern, though as a consequence of this experience some historians have labeled George as having been "lost" again. In a famous passage on Expedition stereotyping, James Ronda spoke of "Shannon the forever lost."[3]

In studying the journals, one sees a different Shannon on this occasion from his fateful wander into near starvation the previous August. Here, Lewis, George Drouillard, and several others had gone in advance of Clark and the main body of men to search for the Shoshone, the Natives who would assist them in the portage from the Missouri watershed to that of the Columbia River. Clark's contingent of men had been pulling the several heavy, unwieldy canoes up the narrowing and shallowing Jefferson River. Lewis, on August 4, 1805, reached where the Jefferson River had been formed by the confluence of the Big Hole, Beaverhead, and Ruby[4] rivers. Lewis recorded:

> I wrote a note to Capt. Clark recommending his taking the middle fork provided he should arrive at this place before my return which I expect will be the day after tomorrow. the note I left on a pole at the forks of the river.[5]

Clark, arriving on August 5, never saw Lewis' note. The paper had been placed on a savory green pole that an industrious resident beaver could not pass up. Clark, almost certainly after a consultation with Sacagawea, proceeded up the Big Hole.

Clark sent Shannon, who, as we shall see, by now had become a "first rate Hunter," out to bring in some game while the men dragged the canoes up the narrowing, rocky Big Hole River. Hating every moment of this work, begging Clark to abandon the canoes – according to Joseph Whitehouse's journal entry of August 5, 1805, "we are of oppinion that there would not be water sufficient for our Canoes to proceed any futher"[6] – the grumbling men followed Clark. Ordway wrote:

> proceeded on up the right hand fork, which is amazeing rapid Some of which falls nearly 3 feet in the length of a canoe, but with hard labour we draged them over.
> we passed thro a channel which was filled with willows and young cotton wood & brush, Some of which was fell across by the beaver. the currents So rapid we were oblidged to hall by the bushes, and Some places be out in the water where we could Scarsely kick our feet for the rapidity of the current. . . . we could Scarsely croud the canoes through the bushes in Several places[7]

At some point, Lewis realized that Clark and the men had not continued on the Beaverhead, for he sent Drouillard back to find them. Intercepted by Drouillard on August 6, Clark halted his fruitless attempt to drag the canoes up the Big Hole River and returned with men and canoes to the Beaverhead.

Clark on August 6 noted succinctly, "one man *Shannon* did not return to night."[8] Ordway, also on August 6, recorded more:

> the man who left us this morning has not returned and we expect he is lost again. his name is george Shannon. we blew the horn and fired Several guns in hopes he would hear it.[9]

As I read Ordway's "lost again," I sensed that Ordway laughed as he wrote it, probably sharing the laugh among the men, possibly making this entry after the event. There could have been no reason for Ordway to conclude that George was lost, his having been gone only several hours.

Drouillard looked briefly for George, reporting to Lewis that he had scouted several miles up the Big Hole River but never saw Shannon. The next day, no Shannon. Clark, as he did the previous year,[10] sent out a Field – this time Reuben – to search for the wandering hunter.

Optimistically, Lewis stated on August 7: "we expect that he has pursued Wisdom[11] river upwards for som distance probably killed some heavy animal and is waiting our arrival."[12] At noon on August 8, as the party continued up the Beaverhead River, Reuben Field returned to report that he had seen nothing of Shannon. The next day, the Corps again pulled and shoved the canoes up the Beaverhead, expressing no real concern about George. They halted to eat breakfast (sometime after 8:00 am). Then, as Lewis recorded:

while we halted here Shannon arrived, and informed us that having missed the party the day on which he set out he had returned the next morning to the place from whence he had set out or furst left them and not finding that he had supposed that they wer above him; that he then set out and marched one day up wisdom river, by which time he was convinced that they were not above him as the river could not be navigated; he then returned to the forks and had pursued us up this river. he brought the skins of three deer which he had killed which he said were in good order. he had lived very plentifully this trip but looked a good deel "wearied"[13] with his march.[14]

Ordway and Whitehouse recorded that Shannon returned with some venison,[15] a substantially more successful outing than his excursion of the previous year, when he had to survive on grapes, plums, and one rabbit for twelve days.

Lewis guessed that George might have intuited that waiting for the rest of the team might resolve any dilemma of being "lost."[16] But George did even better than that. Given the barren nature of the countryside, George could not have climbed a tree to look for the missing party, nor could he see or be seen across the open rolling plain leading up the Big Hole River. He managed early on to deduce that the Big Hole was not navigable, and that the canoes had not been towed further upstream. Not seeing canoes, he realized Clark had not abandoned them, but must have turned around. George then followed the Big Hole to its junction with the Beaverhead River, looking for the canoes and men. Not seeing them, George headed upstream on the Beaverhead, where he expected to encounter the men towing the canoes up a barely – or completely – non-navigable river. George, making one correct choice after another, rejoined the men and the captains, self-assured, with ample provision for any circumstance. If one of the captains or a joker among the men had asked him how it felt to be lost again, we can only imagine the still- young but now-experienced George winking at him.

Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus). *Courtesy of Mark Jordan.*

As a result of Clark's comment about his hunting skills, his getting separated from the Corps in August 1804, and his being again separated from the Corps in 1805, George has been calumniated by some of the Expedition's historians. Richard Dillon stated, "Unfortunately, [George] was not well versed in woodcraft. He made up for this weakness in Lewis' estimation with his great courage, perseverance and loyalty."[17] Charles G. Clarke brands Shannon with the following assessment: "He frequently was lost, but always managed to get back to the main party."[18] I am not sure how Mr. Clarke defined "frequently." (Merriman-Webster defines it as "often repeated or occurring;" the number "two" would never qualify as "frequently" under this definition.) Dayton Duncan wrote, "George Shannon, the youngest member of the expedition, *the one who seemed to have the habit of getting lost all the time*, is her favorite."[19] David Lavender mischaracterizes Clark's concern about Shannon, stating "in Clark's opinion Shannon was a poor woodsman."[20] My reading of the journals indicates he was only lost once. By no stretch of the imagination could Shannon's single example of getting lost justify Charles Clarke's attribution or Duncan's silly pronouncement. He clearly did not get lost all the time.

And Clark never said he was a poor woodsman.

To counter these assessments of George Shannon, we must look at his accomplishments as they emerge from the journals. We will discover that the captains significantly increased his responsibilities in terns of hunting and performing other demanding activities.

Belt Creek where it empties into the Missouri River east of present-day Great Falls, Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan..

On June 19, 1805, at Great Falls of the Missouri, Lewis and Clark assigned most of the men to portage supplies, equipment, and the heavy dugout canoes over eighteen miles of prairie. But Lewis, needing skins to cover his "iron boat,"[21] designated three hunters to bring in elk and their skins. George Drouillard would of course be exempt from portage duty. That other excellent hunter, Reuben Field, joined Drouillard. The third hunter chosen – George Shannon.

> I also dispatched George Drewyer Reubin Fields and George Shannon on the North side of the Missouri with orders to proceed to the entrance of Medecine river and indeavour to kill some Elk in that neighbourhood. as there is more timber on that river than the Missouri I expect that the Elk are more plenty.[22]

The Medicine, or Sun, River tumbled into the north side of the Missouri several miles above the fifth of the Falls,[23] near where the Missouri took a decided turn to the south. Ordway and others apparently canoed the three men to the north side of the river.[24] Shannon, sent with the best and possibly second-best hunter for this errand, had become one of the Corps' premier hunters.

We hear nothing of the three men for several days. We have no idea how long it took any of them to reach the Medicine River, but since the distance was about sixteen miles, locating it would have been easy. They could have reached

Bison (Bison bison) *is the largest land mammal in North America. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.*

its mouth on June 19. They would have set up camp and proceeded to hunt. Except that Field and Drouillard did not go with Shannon to the Medicine River.

On June 23, Lewis took Joseph Field in one of the canoes that had been portaged to the Upper Portage Camp[25] downstream to the Medicine River to look for Joseph's brother, Drouillard, and Shannon, a trip of only a few miles. Lewis, concerned, noted of the three hunters, "we had not heard a sentence" for three days. Lewis recorded:

> I entered the mouth of medicine river and ascended it about half a mile when we landed and walked up the Stard. side. frequently hooping as we went on in order to find the hunters; at length after ascending the river about five miles we found Shannon who had passed the Medecin river & fixed his camp on the Lard. side, where he had killed seven deer and several buffaloe and dryed about 600 lbs. of buffaloe meat; but had killed no Elk.[26]

The young man whom Clark had described as not the best of hunters had been quite successful in his assigned killing excursions. As for woodsman's skills, Shannon had managed to cross the Medicine River by swimming or wading to set up his camp. Lewis had crossed the Medicine River on his search for Shannon by quickly constructing a raft.[27] When asked, George said he had no idea of Drouillard's and Reuben Field's whereabouts. He had not seen them for several days. Shannon had enough confidence in his skills that he could separate from the two older hunters as they passed one of the falls. Lewis decided to spend the night with Shannon.

Later that day, Reuben Field returned to the Lower Portage Camp.[28] Joseph Whitehouse recorded:

> In the afternoon, [Reuben Field] . . . informed us, that one of our Men by the name of Shannon had left them, the first day, after they had left this place; and had taken with him a small kettle & some parched Meal, which was intended for the hunters, and that the other two hunters had killed 16 Buffalo, & a few deer, but had seen no Elk.[29]

There must have been a chuckle amongst the men, joking that George had got himself lost again, not knowing he was with Lewis.

On June 24, Lewis sent Joseph Field on foot up the Medicine River to search for the other two hunters, but had

The Medicine River. Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

Shannon cross the river (presumably on the raft Lewis used to cross to Shannon the day before) to secure the canoe Lewis and Field used to ascend the Medicine River. Shannon then paddled the canoe the several miles up to Lewis, had him board and paddled Lewis down to and across the Missouri. Lewis instructed Shannon to paddle back up the Medicine River to find Joseph Field – and Drouillard and Reuben Field, if possible – and bring them to the Upper Portage Camp. By now, Shannon must have had developed excellent canoeing skills as he solo paddled one of the dugout canoes, not a particularly easy task. Shannon picked up Joseph Field but found neither of the absent hunters. The two men paddled the canoe to the Upper Portage Camp, bringing "3 buffalow 8 Deer & several antelopes"[30] that Shannon had killed.

Reuben Field arrived at the Upper Portage Camp with the men conducting the portage and described to Lewis where he and Drouillard had hunted. Looking over the assembled Corpsmen, Reuben saw George and most likely scratched his head. He might have thought "lost again," but more likely chided him for taking the kettle and parched corn, though it is doubtful that Field or Drouillard cared much about the parched corn, given their meat-heavy diet. Drouillard and Reuben had killed bison and deer and had an ample supply for themselves. Drouillard brought back over 800 pounds of dried meat the next day. George Shannon undoubtedly took some serious ribbing that night.

The next day George with Reuben Field returned to the Lower Portage Camp where Clark had spent the night. Shannon informed Clark that the Medicine River was 120 yards wide and about eight feet deep, demonstrating his descriptive capabilities. During the rest of the portage, Shannon worked with Clark and the others in moving the remaining supplies over that prickly pear-studded route. We do not encounter more of George's specific activities until he started wandering around the Big Hole River in search of the "lost" Corps.

When the Corps met with the Shoshone leader Cameahwait, Sacagawea's brother, he described the impassability of any local river as a conduit to the Columbia. Clark, sure that they could do what the Shoshone could not, set off with men to build the canoes that would take them down the Columbia to the ocean. Gass, master carpenter, went with Clark as he had been responsible for building the canoes they were about to cache at Camp Fortunate. John Colter, an indispensable member of the Corps, accompanied Clark. George Shannon, who had been one of the canoe builders at Fort Mandan,[31] also followed Clark in pursuit of the grail of the navigable Columbia. His experience building the canoes at Fort Mandan would have been invaluable. They set out on August 18, 1805, Lewis' birthday. By June 24, Clark had seen enough to know that the Shoshone's description of an impassable river was correct. He turned his group of men around to meet Lewis at the Shoshone camp. During this reconnaissance Clark sent out several hunters. Clark rarely identified Expedition hunters, but on August 25 Clark recorded that Shannon "came in with a beaver which the Party suped on Sumptiously."[32]

We find Shannon the hunter again in January, near the Salt Makers' camp on the Oregon coast. George Gibson and he brought down three elk. They met Clark on his return from visiting the carcass of a beached whale. Clark had the two men, with three others, carry the meat to the Salt Makers' Camp, then ordered them to return to Fort Clatsop. Leaving him to negotiate the woods back to Fort Clatsop, not always an easy journey, showed that Clark relied on George's wilderness skills. We may easily conclude that statements such as those by Dillion or Lavender demonstrate a failure to read the journals closely. Or to recognize Shannon's growth.

Lewis and Clark continued to rely on George as a hunter during the winter of 1805-1806. The captains sent out four men on January 19: Colter[33] and Willard by land over to Point Adams, and Labiche and Shannon by canoe up the Nutel (Lewis and Clark) River. On January 21, Lewis recorded:

> Two of the hunters Shannon & Labuish returned having killed three Elk. Ordered a party to go in quest of the meat early tomorrow morning and the hunters to return and continue the chase.[34]

Success breeds confidence. That Lewis continued to send Shannon out to hunt evidences his belief in Shannon's skills. On January 27 Shannon reappeared at Fort Clatsop. Lewis wrote:

> in the evening Shannon returned and reported that himself and party had killed ten Elk. he left Labuche and R. fields with the Elk. two of those Elk he informed us were at the distance of nine miles from this place near the top of a mountain, that the rout by which they

mus be brought was at least four miles by land through a country almost inaccessible from the fallen timber, brush and sink-holes, which were now disgused by the snow; we therefore concluded to relinquish those two Elk for the present, and ordered every man who could be speared from the fort to go early in the morning in surch of the other eight.[35]

Except for a brief return to Fort Clatsop to report his first kills, George had been away from the fort since the January 19. No one seemed to have been worried about his eight-day absence. During this time, terrible weather, cold and snow, challenged the men during their excursion in the woods, another indication of George's resilience. According to Sergeant Ordway, George had killed five of the ten elk. Fields killed three and Labiche two.[36] Shannon led a party to where the kills had been made, but snow had covered the elk to make them hard to find, and they were only able to bring back three, according to Private Whitehouse's January 28, 1806, entry.[37]

On January 31, Clark sent out a party of hunters, which included Sergeant Gass, in a canoe to search for the previously killed elk. While the journals do not name the other hunters, almost assuredly Lewis included George among this group, as one skilled with the canoe and knowing where the elk had been killed. The party had to turn around, as the frozen river made passage by canoe impossible. Ultimately, they were able to proceed up the river and by February 3 they had recovered more of the elk. Shannon remained out in the woods to continue hunting. Then on February 8:

late in the evening Sergt. Pryor returned with Shannon Labuish and his party down the Netul. they brought with them the flesh of 4 Elk which those two hunters had killed.[38]

On February 16, Shannon, Labiche, and Fraser were sent out to hunt along what is now Young's River. The next day, they returned with an elk – and a live condor, wounded by Labiche. Shannon apparently killed a golden eagle, which he gave to Lewis, then went out to hunt again. On February 19, Gass returned with elk taken down by Shannon and Labiche, but left them with one elk skin, to protect them from the wind, rain, cold, and sleet. Shannon and Labiche returned to Fort Clatsop on February 24 with news that Lewis was not particularly excited to hear.

they had killed no Elk and reported that they beleived the Elk have retired from their former haunts and gone further back in the country to a considerable distance from this place. this is very unwelcome information for poor and inferior as the flesh of this animal is it is our principal dependance for subsistence.[39]

Being able to ascertain the extent to which game roamed the area, and the extent to which it had wandered away, would have been another valuable wilderness skill, one which George seemed to have developed since being dismissed as a hunter by Clark. Interestingly, Ordway recorded: "the two hunters came to the Fort had killed only one Elk."[40] Whitehouse made an identical entry. [41]

Not to be deterred by Shannon's report, Clark sent George out with Joseph Field and John Shields to hunt more elk. On February 28, Lewis recorded:

Shields Jos. Fields and Shannon returned late this evening having killed five Elk tho' two of them ar on a mountain at a considerable distance. we ordered these hunters to return early in the morning and continue

Frosty Morning Elk *(Cervus canadensis). Courtesy of Gregory "Slobirdr" Smith, Wikimedia Commons.*

> their hunt, and Sergt. Gass to take a party and go in quest of the Elk which they had killed.[42]

Shannon followed up this report on March 5, as Clark wrote:

> late in the evening the Hunters returned from the *Kil-haw-a nackle-kle* River which discharges itself into the head of the Bay. They had neither killed nor Seen any Elk. they informed us that the Elk had all gorn off to the mountains a considerable distance from us. this is unwelcom information and reather alarming. we have only two days provisions on hand and that nearly Spoiled.[43]

The paradise of the south shore of the Columbia was in the process of change, to the disadvantage of the Corps. Shannon had been sent out hunting on February 14, returning on the 15th with no kills. Scarcity of game would impel the men to start advancing up the Columbia sooner than their planned April 1 departure. Shannon, his wilderness skills sharpened by his two years on the trail, readily recognized the situation, and was capable of communicating his concern.

Ascending the Columbia River, on April 4, 1806, Lewis desired to establish an upriver hunting camp.

> About noon we dispatched Gibson Shannon Howard and Wiser in one of the light canoes, with orders to proceed up the Columbia to a large bottom on the South side about six miles above us and to hunt untill our arrival.[44]

Of the four men, Shannon was probably the most skilled, as hunter and as canoe man. The four landed at an open area. Two days later, Lewis, Clark, and the others reached the bottom where Shannon, Gibson, Howard, and Wiser had settled in to hunt. Shannon had killed three elk and wounded two others. The captains ordered a halt so the meat could be jerked. Clark sent seven men to accompany Shannon to bring the meat back to the camp. By six that evening Shannon and his party had returned. They prepared the meat and smoked it on scaffolds over a fire.

They would continue to dry the meat over the next several days. On April 8, wind-bound on the banks of the Columbia, Clark sent four hunters out to search for more elk. In addition to the ever-reliable Drouillard, he sent Colter, Collins, and, of course, the now reliable George Shannon. By 1:00 pm, Colter, Collins, and Shannon had returned, empty handed. Drouillard returned only slightly later, with a solitary duck, hardly enough for thirty-two and a half appetites. Shannon reported and Drouillard confirmed that elk had vacated the area near the river.

We do not see any more of Shannon's activities until the Corps' reunion with the Nez Perce while waiting for the massive snow barrier in the Bitterroot Mountains to recede enough so the party could cross those tremendous mountains. While reasonably comfortably ensconced at their camps, looking with great concern at the nearly impassable mountains, the prime activity of the men, or a good portion of the men, involved hunting. Insatiable appetites had to be satisfied.

What of these hunters? Which men did the captains rely upon most to bring in the venison? No doubt, George Drouillard, Lewis' pre-eminent hunter, was among them. Lewis had lavished praise on Drouillard in the winter lull at Fort Clatsop:

> Sent out Drewyer and one man to hunt, they returned in the evening Drewyer haveing killed 7 Elk; I scercely know how we Should Subsist, I beleive but badly if it was not for the exertions of this excellent hunter.[45]

One is staggered by the amount of killing that Drouillard accomplished. We get the sense that Lewis trusted Joseph and Reuben Field next in this hierarchy. He demonstrated his faith in the brothers' skills by bringing them on the Marias River exploratory in late July 1806. The captains considered the two Johns, Colter and Shields, favorite hunters, with the latter being even more invaluable due to his skill in repairing the rifles and keeping them in working order. After that, it gets a bit trickier in making this assessment, but it appears from entries[46] dated between May 18 and May 24, the best hunters included LePage, Labiche, Collins, Cruzatte,[47] Gibson, and of course our young man, George Shannon, now blossomed into a marvelous hunter. The captains chose these men to do the bulk of the hunting during the period they camped below the Bitterroot Mountains.

Labiche and Shannon had been sent out on May 15 to create a hunting camp. Clark expected them to be absent for three days. However, the two men returned on May 16 with one deer Shannon had shot. Game had been scarce. They were forced to return to camp when they arrived at a swift, deep, rocky river that they could not cross.

On May 18, the hunters went out in twelve different directions. Shannon returned on the 20th with Colter. They

Bitterroot Mountains, Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan..

had wounded a bear and a deer the evening before. They pursued the wounded animals, but dusk prevented them from following the tracks. The next morning, they found that a nighttime spring snow had covered all evidence of each animal's tracks. The captains sent Colter and Shannon out on May 22, directing them toward the Bitterroots, in hope of finding more game at higher elevations. On May 23, Lewis recorded:

> at 1 P. M. Shannon, Colter, Labuish, Cruzatte, Collins and LaPage returned from hunting without having killed anything except a few pheasants of the dark brown kind, which they brought with them.– These hunters informed us that they had hunted the country deligently between the river and Creek for some distance above and below our camp and that there was no game to be found.[48]

The captains must have experienced a modicum of discomfort at this news. As he had in hunting the area surrounding Fort Clatsop, Shannon realized game had abandoned the immediate territory.

Undaunted, the captains continued to send out their hunters. On May 26, Shannon, Colter, and Collins headed further up the rising terrain until they reached Weippe Prairie, near the place where the Corps had emerged from the Bitterroot Mountains in September 1805. Clark recorded some good news on the May 28:

> in the evening Collins Shannon and Colter returned with eight deer. they had fortunately discovered a ford on Collin's Creek where they were enabled to pass it with their horses and had hunted at the quawmash ground where we first met with the Chopunnish last fall. deer were very abundant they informed us, but there were not many bear.[49]

The captains hoped for more successful hunts just prior to entering the mountains.

On May 30, Shannon, by now a more than proficient canoer, experienced a rather embarrassing accident. The captains sought to accumulate as much provision as they could before challenging the imposing mountains. They had scant little to offer, however, so any object worthy of trade was considered valuable. Many of the men made trips to the Nez Perce with their last bits of merchandise, seeking to exchange them for roots and bread. On May 30, Potts, Collins,

The Bitterroot River, Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan..

and George used the canoe the Corps had built[50] to cross the stream near which they have been camping. They carried whatever meagre valuables they could trade and shepherded several horses along with them. In the spring run-off, trees normally on the banks were inundated, a considerable current pounding them. Approaching the bank, with the men trying to control both horses and canoe, the canoe slammed into the bank and dangerously turned broadside to the current. The spring flood pushed them into a tree, and just as it hit, the canoe flipped over, spilling out its contents. Collins and Shannon managed to swim quickly to shore, holding the horses. Potts, a poor swimmer, struggled mightily, barely making it to solid ground. The canoe went under and stayed under. As Gass recorded, they lost:

> three blankets, a blanket-coat, and some articles of merchandize they had with them to exchange for roots. The loss of these blankets is the greatest which hath happened to any individuals since we began our voyage, as there are only three men in the party, who have more than a blanket a piece.[51]

The captains considered the loss serious, as the men's clothing had been reduced to a bare minimum. That Lewis and Clark entrusted Shannon with the canoe under difficult conditions demonstrated how much the captains appreciated his skills. They assigned no blame for the accident.

On June 2, Shannon, with Shields, Collins, and the Field brothers, went up to the quamash meadows to hunt. On June 5, returning with Reuben Field, Shannon brought in five deer and a bear.

On June 10, the Corps moved up to Weippe Prairie, and on the morning of June 11, the hunters were sent in pursuit of game. But only Shannon, who accompanied Labiche and Gibson, succeeded in bringing back meat. The hunters went out again on the June 12, but only Shields bagged anything – two deer. On June, George proved more successful, as Ordway recorded:

> our hunters all came in this afternoon and eight of them had killed each a deer Gibson Shileds Shannon Collins Jo. Fields Drewyer Labuche and [unnamed by Ordway but most likely Cruzatte].[52]

The men made their forced march into the daunting Bitterroot Mountains. Up they struggled, up, into rising, fearsome vistas, over difficult and dangerous creeks, through thick wood much obstructed by fallen timber, into snow twelve to fifteen feet deep. Drouillard – talented, sensible, knowledgeable Drouillard – told the impetuous Lewis that proceeding on under the conditions they had been encountering would be dangerous in the extreme. The captains agreed to halt and implemented a rearward march, waiting until several Nez Perce guides would take the Corps over the mountains to Travelers' Rest.

After crossing the Bitterroots, as Clark and Lewis separated on their different exploratories, we find more examples of Clark's reliance on George Shannon's skills. Clark and his contingent of twenty-one men, one teenaged mother and her infant, and forty-nine horses and one colt left Travelers' Rest, heading south, upstream, along the west side of a swollen Bitterroot River. They looked for ways to cross the Bitterroot River's various tributaries. On July 5, Clark recorded:

> in passing the 6th & last Chanel Colter horse Swam and with Some dificuelty he made the Opposite Shore, Shannon took a different derection from Colter rained his horse up the Stream and passed over very well I derected all to follow Shannon and pass quartering up the river which they done and passed over tolerably well the water running over the back of the 2 Smaller horses only.[53]

Again, we have a good demonstration of George's knowledge and skill.

That same day, Shannon, out hunting, killed a deer and brought it to camp. But alas, as he deposited the kill at the camp, George went to grab his tomahawk and realized he had left it at the site where he had killed the deer. Clark sent George back to secure the tomahawk. Shannon reappeared at camp at sunset.[54]

Two days later, on July 7, 1806, when the men awoke and sought to bring their scattered horses in, they returned with all but nine. Clark sent men out in multiple directions, but they returned without having found the horses. Clark opined that "I thought it probable that they might be stolen by Some Skulking Shoshones,"[55] an interesting choice of words to describe the tribe that had helped them so much on the outward-bound journey. And, as it turned out, his assessment was wrong. To pursue the horses, or the Shoshone, Clark put

The Beaverhead River, Montana. Courtesy of Mark Jordan..

Sergeant Ordway in charge of a detail of four men, one of whom was George Shannon, demonstrating yet more trust in the skills of this young man. Ordway and Labiche found the horses, then reunited with Shannon and the other two. They set out the following day with the recovered horses in pursuit of Clark, who had gone on towards Camp Fortunate with the guidance of Sacagawea. They covered forty miles, reaching Clark at Camp Fortunate on July 9 at ten in the morning. Ordway and one of the other men controlled the horses. The other three were sent forward to hunt, but Ordway unfortunately does not identify who did what. We wish we knew more.

After the men retrieved the canoes from the cache at Camp Fortunate and began their paddle down the Beaverhead River toward the Three Forks, we have little description of what each man did, as some paddled the canoes and some rode horses. Clark started out on horseback as did Sergeant Pryor. But Clark ultimately rode a canoe to the Three Forks. Given Shannon's demonstrated ability to handle canoes, I am reasonably certain that George was one of the men taking the canoes downstream on the Beaverhead and Jefferson rivers toward the Three Forks.

After reaching the Three Forks, Clark placed Sergeant Ordway in charge of the canoes with orders to take them to the Upper Portage Camp to meet the men left there by Captain Lewis. Having reached the Upper Portage Camp, Lewis had separated from these men to explore the Marias watershed with just three Corps members. From the Upper Portage Camp, a team of men under Sergeant Ordway would effect the portage to the Lower Portage Camp and ultimately proceed down the Missouri River to meet with Lewis, who would then meet the Clark contingent at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers in today's North Dakota. Clark would take the horses, follow the Gallatin River to the Yellowstone, and then proceed down the Yellowstone to the confluence. Clark took Shannon with him, employing many of George's hunting skills as they proceeded toward and reached the Yellowstone.[56]

Then on July 21, the men discovered a disconcerting fact:

> This morning I was informed that Half of our horses were absent. Sent out Shannon Bratten, and Shabono to hunt them. Shabono went up the river Shanon down and Bratten in the bottom near Camp, Shabono and

Pompeys Pillar on the Yellowstone River east of present-day Billings, Montana, where Clark famously carved "Wm Clark July 25th 1806." Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

> Bratten returned at 10 A M and informed me that they Saw no Signs of the horses. Shannon proceeded on down the river about 14 miles and did not return untill late in the evening, he was equally unsuckcessfull.[57]

Determined to seek recovery of the horses, on July 22, Clark:

> derected Segt. Pryor Shannon Shabono & Bratten to incircle the Camp at Some distance around and find the tracks of the horses and prosue them, they Serched for tracks all the evening without finding which Course the horses had taken, the plains being so remarkably hard and dry as to render it impossible to See a track of a horse passing through the hard parts of them. being to Suspect that they are taken by the Indians and taken over the hard plains to prevent our following them.[58]

Clark had no doubt that Shannon would be an effective tracker of the missing horses, horses probably silently taken by the unseen Crow tribe.

As they moved down the Yellowstone River, Clark assigned Shannon and Windsor to accompany Sergeant Pryor on a mission with the remaining horses, a mission that would again test George's skills and resourcefulness. Clark had two canoes built, each about "28 feet in length and about 16 or 18 inches deep and from 16 to 24 inches wide."[59] After leaving their camp, Clark and the canoes traveled about 51 miles down the Yellowstone to where he met Pryor and Shannon. They drove the horses from the north side of the Yellowstone to the south; then Clark took Pryor, Shannon, and Windsor across the river in the canoes. Non-swimmer Hugh Hall, probably apprehensive of heading down the Yellowstone in the two narrow dugout canoes, asked Clark if he could join the overland party and Clark agreed. Having just four men set out across unknown territory was quite risky, but Clark, with Pryor leading and Shannon assisting, felt they could succeed despite the significant risk.

The four men departed on July 24, 1806. They spent a day moving the horses and passed the night by a dry creek bed. Unknown to the sound sleepers, the silent, unseen Crows stole their horses. After a fruitless search in which they chased the fleeing horses and tribesmen on foot, Pryor led the men back toward the Yellowstone. They hoped to catch Clark on the river. When they reached Pompeys Pillar, Shannon, now hunter supreme, brought down a bison, then made two bull boats.

Bull Boat, a common Indian rivercraft copied, constructed, and utilized by members of the Corps of Discovery. Courtesy of Mark Jordan.

While Clark's August 8, 1806, journal entry noted only that "there they killed a Buffalow Bull and made a Canoe in the form and shape of the mandans & Ricares," Nicholas Biddle recorded the event as follows: "*Shannon killed Buf. & made Canoe*."[60] No doubt, Biddle obtained this information from George as Shannon had assisted him in the publication of the journals.

Being as fond of canoes as I am, I find the description by Clark, and Shannon's ingenuity, rather significant:

> 2 Sticks of 1¼ inch diameter is tied together So as to form a round hoop of the Size you wish the canoe, or as large as the Skin will allow to cover, two of those hoops are made one for the top or brim and the for the bottom the deabth you wish the Canoe, then Sticks of the Same Size are Crossed at right angles and fastened with a throng to each hoop and also where each Stick Crosses each other. then the Skin when green is drawn tight over this fraim and fastened with throngs to the brim or outer hoop So as to form a perfect bason. one of those Canoes will carry 6 or 8 Men and their load.[61]

The two boats Shannon fashioned were seven feet three inches across and sixteen inches deep. He inserted fifteen ribs in each. Quite an admirable build.

The Corps had seen their first bull boats at the Arikara villages in today's northern South Dakota in October 1804. They saw more in use at the Mandan villages in North Dakota. We can assume that the observant Shannon watched bull boats as they were being constructed or, having examined one or more of these craft, intuited how to make them. The two bull boats that Shannon constructed lasted several

hundred miles as the party of four chased after Clark, catching him on the Missouri on August 8. They continued to use the bull boats for several days after reuniting with Clark. Well done, young George, skilled woodsman!

But George's accomplishments as a hunter and a woodsman, his forays into history, seemed dwarfed by his instantaneous precision of the night of July 26, 1806, the night after the secretive Crows stole their horses. Sergeant Pryor and Privates Windsor, Hall, and Shannon, probably frustrated by having lost the horses and needing to carry their supplies on their backs, slept near the meandering Roche Jaune. In the darkness, a skulking wolf, sniffing out an aroma unfamiliar yet sufficiently familiar to be identified as flesh, approached stealthily enough so that the sleepers were not disturbed. First seeing Pryor's hand, the wolf delivered a sharp bite. Pryor screamed. The bold wolf then jumped toward Windsor, about to chomp on him.[62] But Pryor's scream awoke the sleeping Shannon, who with rifle by his side, in the instant, and it must have been an instant, saw the predator, grabbed his loaded rifle, and, with alacrity, shot the wolf, taking it down with the single bullet.

The man whom Clark had described as not being a first-rate hunter had become a first-rate shot.

I believe I have assembled enough facts to dispute any assertion about George's limited or non-existent wilderness skills.

Others misplaced tomahawks or other items of equipment. Others allowed their horses to wander off. Others spent days away from the body of men. None has had opprobrium heaped upon him. Negative comments about George Shannon's wilderness skills should be permanently expunged from the record. George became an outstanding hunter and woodsman, making Lewis and Clark's selection of the young man as a member of the Expedition an excellent decision. ∎

Mark Jordan has been a canoeing and kayaking aficionado for almost fifty years. He has canoed extensively in the United States and across Canada, all the way to Hudson Bay. He has also canoed and kayaked in Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Antarctica. His love of canoeing brought him to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which he has studied for the last forty years. He teaches and lectures on the Expedition and in 2020 received the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation's Meritorious Achievement Award for his teaching and lecturing.

Notes

1 Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979- 2001), 3:20.

2 The Beaverhead River is the middle of three north-flowing rivers that join near Twin Bridges, Madison County, Montana, which form the Jefferson River. The Jefferson River flows north from there to combine with the Madison and Gallatin rivers near Three Forks, Montana, to form the Missouri River.

3 James Ronda, "'A Most Perfect Harmony:' The Lewis and Clark Expedition as an Exploration Community," in Ronda, ed., *Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1998), 78.

4 Their current names. The captains named the eastern branch flowing into the Jefferson River the Philanthropy and the western branch the Wisdom. Moulton, ed., *Atlas of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), Map 65. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:43 n 1.

5 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:40.

6 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:256.

7 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:196. Ordway, August 5, 1805.

8 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:55.

9 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:197.

10 When Shannon was "lost" in August-September 1804, Clark had sent Joseph Field, Ruben Field's brother, in pursuit of Shannon. Moulton, ed. *Journals*, 3.16.

11 The Ccptains' name for the Big Hole River. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:43 n 1.

12 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:56.

13According to Gary E. Moulton, editor of the *Journals* from which I take the quoted material, while Lewis had written the word "worried," Nicholas Biddle inserted the word "wearied" on the sheet on which this entry occurred (See 5:63 n 2 for August 9, 1805). I take this to be the correct word, for while Shannon may have been somewhat worried, it seems, given the length of his walk, his carrying the extra weight, and his desire to catch up with the main party, he was more likely to be wearied. As Shannon worked with Biddle on the preparation of the manuscript for the published edition, it is very probable that George provided the word "wearied" to Biddle.

14 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:61.

15 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:199 (Ordway). Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:261 (Whitehouse). See each man's journal entry for August 9, 1805.

16 When "lost" in August-September 1804, Shannon kept moving upstream on the Missouri River, believing the Corps was ahead of him when in fact it was behind him. From this experience he probably learned that waiting was a good choice.

17 Richard Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965), 89. While we might be able to infer these qualities from a close reading of the *Journals*, no journal keeper makes any such statements.

18 Charles Clarke, *The Men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1970; reprinted 2001), 52.

19 Dayton Duncan, *Out West – An American Journey* (New York: Viking, 1987), 359. [Emphasis added.] Nor was George the youngest member of the Expedition.

20 David Lavender, *The Way to the Western Sea* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 124. Clark was a bit more specific: "This man not being a first rate *Hunter*, we deturmined to Send one man in pursute of him with Some Provisions." [Emphasis added.] Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 3:20.

21 For information on Lewis' "iron boat," see Mark W. Jordan, "Meriwether Lewis's Ingenious Iron Boat," *We Proceeded On* 29:2 (May 2003): 25-35.

22 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:309.

23 Black Eagle Falls, looking upstream from the place of first seeing the five Great Falls. For a map of the portage area, the location of the five falls, and where the Medicine River flows into the Missouri River, see Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:322.

24 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:170. Ordway, June 19, 1805.

25 The Upper Portage Camp was established opposite the White Bear Islands, approximately five miles above the most upstream of the Great Falls (Black Eagle Falls) and approximately two miles upstream of where the Medicine River emptied into the Missouri River. See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:322 (map).

26 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:327.

27 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:327. ("I passed the river on a raft which we soon constructed for the purpose.")

28 The Lower Portage Camp was set up near the mouth of Belt Creek from which the portage around the five Great Falls would be conducted. See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:299, 302 n 2. For a map of the site, see Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 4:322.

29 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:209. The second of Whitehouse's two entries for June 23, 1805.

30 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:210-11. Whitehouse, June 24, 1805.

31 Moulton, ed., *Journals* 3:309. "one man Shannon Cut his foot with the ads in working at a pirogue." Clark, March 6, 1805.

32 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 5:169.

33 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:221. Lewis' entry listed Collins as the hunter, but he was not present at Fort Clatsop. He was with the salt workers. See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, January 19, 1806, 6:223 n 1 and January 25, 1806, 6:235-36.

34 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:226.

35 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:239.

36 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:268.

37 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:416.

38 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:287.

39 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:342.

40 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:273. Ordway, February 23, 1806.

41 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 11:423. Whitehouse, February 24, 1806.

42 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:358.

43 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:382.

44 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:71.

45 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:199-200. Lewis, January 12, 1806.

46 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:271. See n 1 to Lewis' May 18 journal entry. Moulton noted: "Including Joseph and Ruben Field, Drouillard, Lepage, Shannon, Collins, Cruzatte, Shields, and Gibson." Although Moulton did not list Colter, it is certain that he was one of the hunters because on May 20, Lewis recorded that Shannon and Colter had returned from their hunt. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:273.

47 Does Cruzatte deserve bad marks because of his rather infamous wounding of Captain Lewis? Much fun seems to have been poked at this indispensable member of the Corps as a result of one strange shot on August 11, 1806, but throughout the journey, Cruzatte was a reliable hunter, as this example demonstrates.

48 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:281. Lewis, May 23, 1806.

49 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:299.

50 See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:275-76, regarding the plans to build a canoe for purposes of crossing the river to enable visits to the Nez Perce.

51 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 10:234.

52 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 9:322. For Cruzatte as the hunter see Clark's June 13, 1806, entry: "Labeech and P. Crusatt went out this morning killed a deer & reported that the buzzds. had eate up the deer in their absence after haveing butchered and hung it up." Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:23.

53 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:164.

54 This would not be the only time Shannon made a mistake of this nature. On August 11, 1806, he would again forget his tomahawk and be sent back to retrieve it. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:289. On September 13, he made an even graver mistake. He left his powder horn, pouch, and knife at the previous night's camp. By the time it dawned on the youngster, the Corps had gone eighteen miles down the wild Missouri, and it would have been nearly impossible for him to have retrieved them and returned to the men, as they were making swift down-river progress. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:359. What must have been going through his mind at this mishap? Having done so well, having proven himself so many times, he made a mistake not as dramatic as his escapade of August and September 1804, but certainly in many ways more significant. Fortunately, he remained with the men, so there would be no chance of starving on his own this time. But how often did he hang his head in sorrow at so great an error? How often did Drouillard look at him and shake his head, condemning George to an embarrassment from which he might not have recovered?

55 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:169.

56 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:182. July 14 – "Shannon … killed one which [was] very fat much more So than they are Commonly at this Season of the year." Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:190. July 16 – "saw a buffalow & Sent Shannon to kill it this buffalow provd. to be a very fat Bull." Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:195. July 17 – "Shannon killed one deer." Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:209. July 20 – "Shields killed a Deer & Buffalow & Shannon a faun and a Buffalow & York an Elk."

57 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:209.

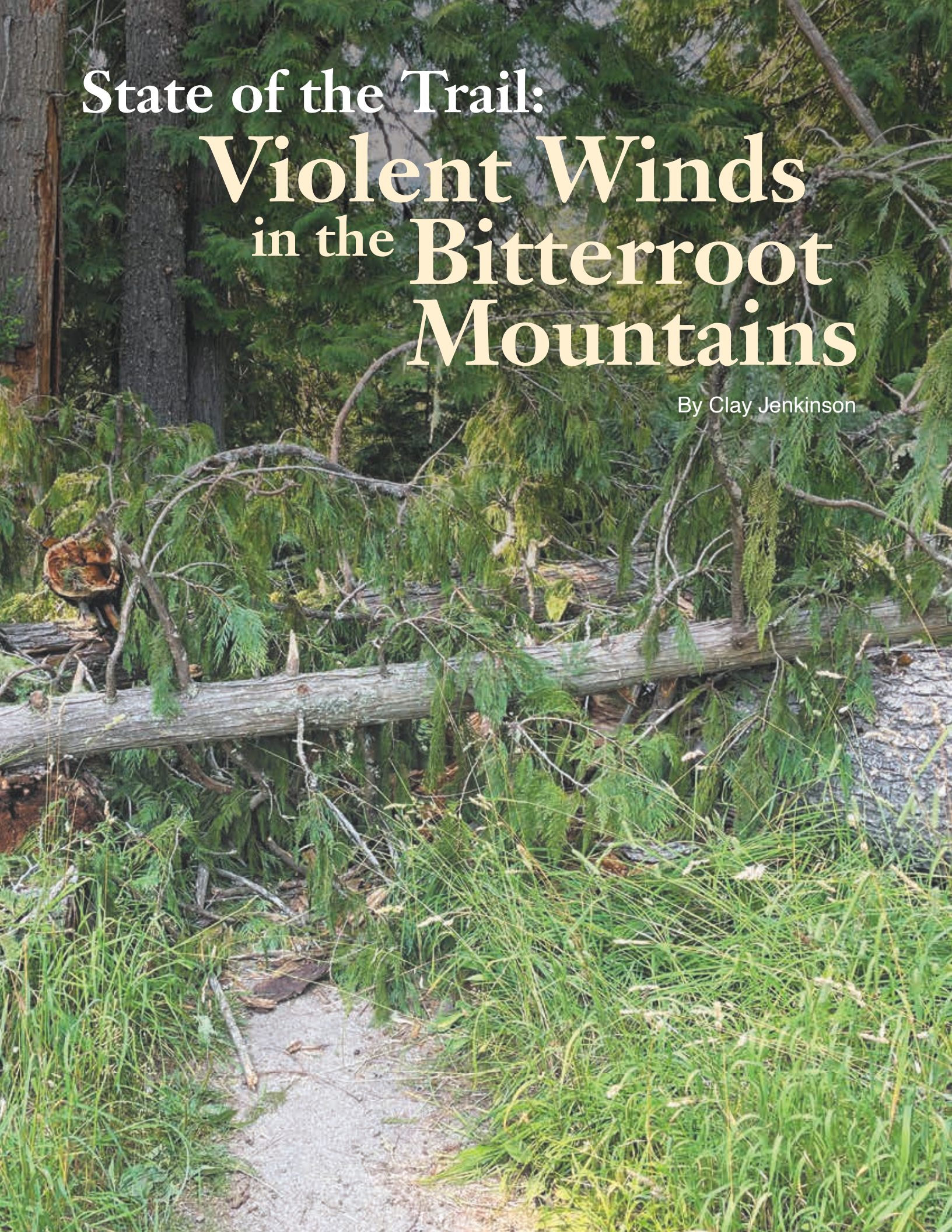
58 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:211.

59 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:209. In a subsequent entry, Clark refers to these as "small" canoes, which should probably give an idea of the relative sizes of the canoes built at Fort Mandan and some of the canoes used on the Columbia, which probably reached as much as forty feet in length. These two canoes were quite narrow, hence the need to lash them together and increase their stability. See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:217.

60 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:284. Biddle's note appears as an insertion on this *Journals* page.

61 Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:284.

62 Interestingly, this behavior would induce one to believe the wolf was rabid, but neither Pryor nor Windsor showed any adverse effects, other than Pryor's sore hand which readily healed. See Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 8:285 n 5 for August 8, 1806.



State of the Trail: Violent Winds in the Bitterroot Mountains

By Clay Jenkinson

Missoula – On July 24, 2024, a freak wind shear pummeled several long swaths of trees along the Lolo Trail, especially down near the Lochsa River. The storm was fierce but spotty, says Carol Hennessey, Trails Travel Management and Disbursed Recreation Program Manager for the Northern Region of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest.

Tens of thousands of trees were sheared off ten or twenty feet up or completely uprooted, their gigantic root balls sticking up as big as dump trucks. Idaho Department of Transportation workers were able to clear U.S. 12 in a single night of hard labor. But Wendover and Whitehouse campgrounds were so heavily damaged, with nearly every camping slot still a jumble of fallen timber and dozens of RVs destroyed where they were moored before the storm, that they are not likely to open until late next summer, *if then*. All the trails in the storm path need extensive (and expensive) clearing, including thousands of tons of slash. The cleanup is going to be a strain on the U,S. Forest Service, currently under-budgeted and under-staffed with a hiring freeze, according to Hennessey. She said the storm was not big enough to get them disaster funds, but too big for their budget.

"We have every intention of trying to maintain these forest trails," she declared. "We put a lot of time and effort into opening them during the Bicentennial. We'll work with anyone who wants to help keep this open."

The Damage to the Wendover Trail Hike

The legendary Wendover hike – from the Lochsa River to the top of the Lolo Trail just west of Lochsa Lodge, seven and a half miles more or less straight up – precisely tracks the ascent Lewis and Clark and their horses made on September 15, 1805, one of the most memorable days of the Expedition. Lewis realized, to his considerable consternation, that the Expedition needed to be up on the Lewis and Clark/Nez Perce (Lolo) Trail, and that their Shoshone guide "Old Toby" had led them to the bottom of the Lochsa River valley instead. So, impatient as always and intensely determined, Lewis decided to ascend the heights directly – straight up.

You know the details:

- a spring halfway up the mountain (still there);
- horses slipping and falling down the side of the mountain;
- Clark's portable writing desk shattered;
- no water when they finally reach the top (today's Dry Camp);
- dinner: the loathed portable soup, two "Phests," and part of a colt.

Climbing Wendover is one of the supreme pleasures on the entire Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Almost everyone who undertakes it gets to the top, if only because after the first forty minutes there is no turning back! Some individuals climb the mountain in three hours, some in ten. This includes people of all ages, including one man in his late eighties. When we finally limp into camp in the late afternoon, hors d'oeuvres and cold beer are waiting, and the tents are set up for those who wish to take a long nap. Between cramps and Bengay, everyone feels like a hero for the moment. Everyone has the satisfaction of having hiked in the certain footsteps of Lewis and Clark.

I've climbed the Wendover trail more than twenty times, always with Lewis and Clark Trail Adventures owner Wayne Fairchild's intrepid guide Chad Jones leading the way and doing comic shtick all the way up the mountain, while I usually take a break to cough up a lung after about an hour of exclusively uphill climbing. One of my tour clients ten years ago, just where the "horriable" final push comes into view, could be heard in three counties shouting, "Didn't Lewis understand the concept of the **!@#$%^&** switchback?"

The Wendover hike is not the most popular in the Lewis and Clark Bitterroots, but it is perhaps the most important from an "exact footsteps" point of view. It is currently impassable, probably, says Hennessey, for most or all of next year, but perhaps it is comforting to know that it was beset by fallen timber back then, too. On September 15, 1805, Clark writes:

> here the road leaves the river to the left and assends a mountain winding in every direction to get up the Steep assents & to pass the emence quantity of falling timber which had falling from dift. causes i e. fire & wind

The Aftermath of the July Storm

I witnessed the immediate aftermath of the storm. As my friend Russ Eagle and I approached Missoula on I-90, our friend and outfitter Wayne Fairchild sent us a text with gloomy news. Not only were there thousands of trees down in Missoula, but – worse for us – most of the Bitterroot trails were closed; Wayne's crew could not get tents and supplies up the mountain on the U.S. Forest Service roads. We might have to cancel the cultural tour (for the first time).

Had we been camping up at Dry Camp or Snow Camp on the Lewis and Clark/Nez Perce (Lolo) Trail that night with a group of twenty-four wilderness novices, we would have experienced one of the most intense nights of our life.

A large tree, blown over in the wind storm on Wendover Ridge, and others similarly affected, have made this stretch of the Lolo Trail virtually impassible. Courtesy of Clay Jenkinson.

The famous Wendover Trail was rendered inaccessible by a recent windstorm. Courtesy of Clay Jenkinson.

Turns out the ever-resourceful Wayne (whose response to any request no matter how weird or taxing is, "On it!") found alternative places to camp and alternative strenuous hikes to give us a sense of what Lewis and Clark were up against.

Russ and I drove over to a couple of the campgrounds on U.S. 12 to take a look. They were closed, with heavy gates barring the way. We climbed over the gates, of course, to investigate the carnage. According to Hennessey, the scale of the damage is unprecedented and, to use a Lewis and Clark term, *daunting*. The campground toilets survived because they are made of concrete, but their roofs were destroyed. They alone will require $30,000 each to rebuild. All the dead RVs in the campgrounds have now been extricated, but it will be a gargantuan project to clear the fallen timber and restore the campgrounds for use. Russ and I tried to hike up a bit of the Wendover Trail and though both of us have made the hike a dozen times, we soon were forced by the sheer tonnage of fallen trees to give up.

Why This is So Important

Preliminary clearing along the entire storm path has been aided by five saw crews from around the region and a dozen or more Job Corps volunteers from the Hamilton area. But much more help is needed.

I urged Wayne to apply for a Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance trail stewardship grant to help clear the Wendover Trail. He is eager to get the trail back open, or at least mostly open, by next July. He has the crew (mostly University of Montana full-time and occasional students) and the equipment. He was one of the handful of guides who wanted to develop the trail in preparation for the Bicentennial. I asked him why Wendover is so important to him. He wrote:

> For 35 years I have been outfitting on the Lewis & Clark Trail – Lolo Trail, and specifically the Wendover hiking trail. I have had hundreds of people reach out to us over the years about hiking the Lolo Trail. I tell people this section of trail is the real deal in the footsteps of the Expedition of September 15, 1805. I explain to potential clients that this hike is the only portion of the Lewis & Clark Trail that truly resembles the experience of the Expedition's struggles through the Bitterroot Mountains and it really hasn't changed much since they forged though the mountains in 1805 going west and again in 1806

The end of the trail for this RV. Wendover Campground one day after the wind shear in July 2024. Courtesy of Clay Jenkinson.

> homeward bound back to St. Louis and the States. We need to cut and maintain the trail from the last 20 years of downed trees and especially this past summer's enormous wind storm. If we don't, this portion of the last best trail section will be lost to future generations of Lewis & Clark hiking fans.

I asked Hennessey if there is any room for Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance volunteers in the ongoing cleanup effort. She said yes – and no. Yes, in safe and subordinate roles, but the Forest Service requires special trail-clearing training for anyone close to heavy equipment, including chain saws. "If they want to help, we will find plenty of meaningful work for them," Hennessey said. Those who might wish to volunteer may contact Wayne Fairchild (info@trailadventures.com or 406-728-7609) or Geoffrey Fast, U.S. Forest Service Recreation Wilderness Trails and Rivers Manager for the Central Zone of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, at geoffrey.fast@usda.gov.

Fortunately, nobody was killed in the storm, and only one individual was slightly hurt when his RV collapsed on him. The storm cut several narrow scorched-earth swaths between Missoula and Jerry Johnson Hot Springs, and in some cases even farther west, most of the bursts tracking the Lochsa River. Tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of trees were destroyed. It was all over in about half an hour. Hennessey said she has seen other intense wind storms in the Bitterroots, but this was the worst in her institutional memory. She's been at her job since 1994.

The Future of the American West

It would be easy enough to blame this on global climate change, and that is probably a factor, but wind shears of this sort are not that uncommon. Lewis and Clark themselves saw evidence of one on July 29, 1804, at White Catfish Camp north of the confluence of the Platte and the Missouri. Clark wrote,

> at the commencement of this course passed much fallen timber apparently the ravages of a dreadful haricane which had passed obliquely across the river from N. W. to S. E. about twelve months since. many trees were broken off near the ground the trunks of which were sound and four feet in diameter.

Or think of the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 24, 1794, in Ohio, where some tornadic event had left the ground strewn with fallen trees – an advantage and eventually a disadvantage to the Shawnee and Ottawa who were resisting American incursion into their homeland, called the Northwest Territories by the United States government.

Five of the last six cultural tours I have led on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in Montana and Idaho have been disrupted or diverted by earlier and earlier fires in the mountains of Idaho, and now by this awesome tornadic event. Meanwhile, unchecked by warmer winters, the Rocky Mountain pine beetle is decimating the forests of the American West.

Habitats and adventures we thought would never change are now going to have to accommodate themselves to the "new normal" on the Lewis and Clark Trail. ∎

Clay Jenkinson is the editor of We Proceeded On. *He is the author of more than a dozen books among them* The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer in the Wilderness. *His most recent book*, The Language of Cottonwoods: Essays on the Future of North Dakota, *includes significant commentary on Lewis and Clark. He has recently undertaken a ten-year initiative called* Listening to America *(ltamerica.org). He lives and writes in Bismarck, North Dakota.*

My story of the Wendover Trail and why it's important to me.

Six years ago I was introduced to the Wendover Trail from the Lochsa River to Snow Banks. Since that time I've guided several trips up it with hundreds of folks. It is one of the few tangible places left of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery journey that is close to the original descriptions in their journals. Over the last six years, I've also spent several hours with some individuals who do not understand the difficulty it can be to go up this trail, which means I get to put my life skills that I've developed together with a degree in health and safety from the University of Idaho into play. My personal wilderness adventures growing up and my coaching experiences all come together. It is a joy for me to have helped so many people up the trail over the years. The last couple of years with the trees down, it has been a big challenge for most climbers. After this last storm we had in July, most of the clients I've guided would not be able to do this challenge. This trail means so much to me. I get to use a wider than usual combination of my life skills. Personally, the Wendover hike has become life changing for me and most of the clients I lead for Wayne Fairchild. As the clients and I struggle up the ridge, it takes us back to the Lewis and Clark *Journals* and the difficulties they had.

In late July of this year, a fierce windstorm came through knocked down trees on the ridge and across the trail.

I could not recommend the current trail to 95% of the clients that I've taken up over the last six years. In August, I hiked halfway up the trail and had to scramble over 300 trees. I spent four hours on the trail reflecting back to my younger years.

I enjoyed reading and studying the Nez Perce. They often would light fires on ridges like this, to keep them clear so they could continue to fish and hunt and cross these mountains. We don't do that these days. It is sad that the trail is even more difficult than it used to be. I would love to clear this trail. I want to continue to guide it, and to listen to all the amazing stories from the clients as they struggle up it. Sometimes I wish I were a writer; the stories I've heard from the people I have helped up the trail would make some incredible material for a great book. When people struggle and you have to coach them up the trail, they go to some incredible "places." They tell things that they only would tell their counselor or someone close to them. I have shared laughter and tears with so many. I've been blessed to be able to witness this and it has enriched my life greatly. Whatever I can do to get this trail cleared of these trees I am willing to do and help.

This trail is an important part of history. It is important to me. People today can feel and go back in time and understand better what Lewis and Clark went through. They grow in their own lives. I am looking forward to passing on history in the future to those, so this experience isn't lost.

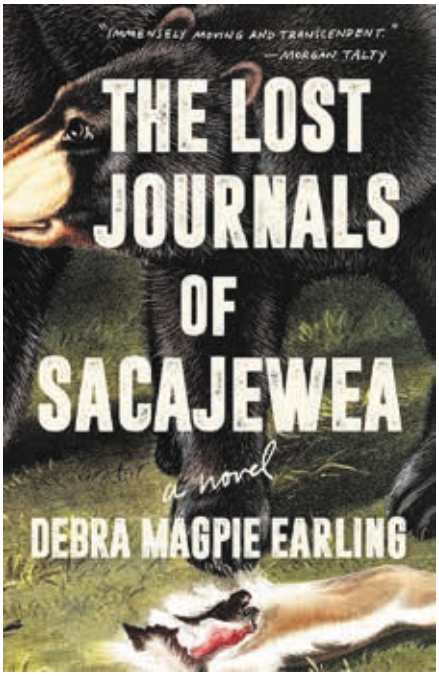
— *Kienan Slate*

Review

The Lost Journals of Sacajawea: A Novel

By Debra Magpie Earling
Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions,
2023, 244 pp, $18

Reviewed by David Nicandri



The Lost Journals of Sacajawea is classified by its sub-title as a novel, and the book's publication data catalogue lists it as a work of "fiction" and "Biographical fiction." Debra Magpie Earling (Bitterroot Salish), a retired professor at the University of Montana, wrote an earlier version of this text in poetic verse during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, and that literary style is still quite apparent in the new format.

One immediately recognizes that Earling chose the "Sacajawea" spelling for the subject character. This is a signal to readers. "Sacagawea" has come to be the conventional spelling in the post-Gary Moulton era. (Thus, when referring to the historical subject, as opposed to the fictional character, I will refer to her as such.) Accordingly, readers familiar with Lewis and Clark history will expect that the interpretive sweep of this fictional account will abide by the consensus view that the biographical arc is of a Shoshone girl who is stolen from her Rocky Mountain homeland by Hidatsa raiders from the plains, only to return to the place of her birth via the Expedition.

Sometimes it serves to be direct. I found this novel occasionally insightful, but its value is diminished by crude language that is ubiquitous. Some will probably consider this style "visceral" or "raw." To me, those parts of the novel were merely vulgar. The deliberately provocative characterizations of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, once it enters the fictional narrative, swamp the novel's feminist and Indigenous perspectives. Earling frequently misreads the known record; the text is marred by obvious anachronisms; and the melodrama is distracting. That's how a typical student of Lewis and Clark is likely to react, but then, this journal's readership is probably not her envisioned audience.

One of the author's objectives is to diminish any favorable impression a reader might bring to the Expedition, especially Meriwether Lewis. No one has tried harder than I have in my writing to "right-size" the Lewis and Clark Expedition within the context of Enlightenment-era exploration and demythologize the persona of Lewis. But the salacious characterizations of Lewis in this novel are an extreme form of ideological partisanship that comes across as an attempt at literary assassination. This goes beyond the mere nullification of statue-toppling.

E. P. Thompson, a historian of the English working class, famously warned against the "condescension of posterity." He was referring to the forgotten or underappreciated figures in the past who don't have their own "agency" and therefore a genuine history. Instead, they have an identity imposed on them by latter-day self-appointed apologists from the learned class. In the present case we have a Sacajawea cast as an early twenty-first century proto-feminist with an intersectional-oriented point of view.

This theoretically modern characterization echoes an old tradition founded by first-generation feminists more than a hundred years ago. They needed an action hero to help warrant the legitimacy of the women's right to vote campaign. Even the recent Sacagawea myth – the intertribal ambassador at large – was a function expropriated from other Indigenous figures and imposed on her. Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs once suggested Sacagawea "Deserves the Day Off." What she really needs is her own autonomy. It's time she transcended the role of being a pawn to be deployed in someone else's cultural power play.

How is this to be achieved on the basis of what *seems to be* such a limited documentary record? What prerogatives are available to the writer of "biographical fiction?" I am familiar with the concept of "counter-factual" history, a version of the past that is also "made up." It offers a fictive account of "what might have happened," as opposed to what actually happened. But one of its principal axioms is the "minimal re-write rule." That is, deviations from the known course of events should be small and plausible: *small in order to be plausible*. This creates a brake on overactive imaginations and excessive or frivolous restructurings

of the past. Should this rule apply to "historical fiction?"

There's a school of fiction theory that says *don't let the truth stand in the way of a good story*. It's fiction after all, and writers can roam as far from the known facts as they dare. Novelists, even "historical novelists," aren't writing as historians and are free to speculate on characters from the past as much as they want. Truth be told, historians speculate as well, but they provide informed speculation when their knowledge allows them to do so. Any inference a historian speculatively draws from the evidence must be plausible and identified as inference. For example, if Lewis were murdered, it would be preposterous for a historian or a novelist to suggest that William Clark was the perpetrator.

Two vehicles legitimately available to fiction writers but anathema to historians are invented dialogue and made-up characters. The narrative power of a plot-line can be moved along by bridging gaps in the known record. Earling often does this well. But the key consideration remains. The dialogue and some characters might be fictional, but the story arc should reflect what is generally assumed to have happened. There's a distinction between "filling-in-the-gaps" versus mischaracterizing recognized events. Creative license is one thing; outlandish fabrications are another. In movie-making, this is called "the willing suspension of disbelief." But when the fictions are so improbable that even the most credulous observers find them to be "too much," the story fails.

Earling succeeds within this framework in the creation of Sacajawea's family and tribal structure, Indigenous mythologies, and the details of everyday life in Native cultures. Where she fails is when she deals with the Expedition, the use of modern slang, and the imposition of modern values and polemical perspectives. For that reason, the novel loses much of the narrative power it might have had if she were more committed to historical authenticity and not to scoring points against her protagonist's antagonists, principally Lewis and Toussaint Charbonneau.

The Lost Journals of Sacajawea is broken into five sections of uneven length: "Days of Agai" covers Sacajawea's youth prior to the "Gather Days at Three Forks" and the longest is "Stolen[:] Three Forks to Mandan." These last two detail her capture by the Hidatsa and transport to the plains. The fourth, "Mandan Fort," is misleading in that it also includes Sacajawea's experiences on the expeditionary trail up to the point covered in the final and shortest segment, "Return," which centers on her homecoming. Each section has many short chapters of half a page to a page or two in length. This pace effectively moves the story forward.

"Gather Days" is the best-written section. Earling is able to convey some insights into what pre-contact Indigenous life was like. Sacajawea learns from her mother about what to expect relative to certain gender-specific aspects of tribal life. It's a helpful correction to the idealized concepts dominating popular culture. To wit: "Women carry Water pick berries dry berries collect help plants dig roots dig potatoes gather firewood snare game gut Deer gut Antelope gut Buffalo gut Bear pound meat & berries pound bones sew robes pound more meat . . . smoke Fish smoke meat store cache gather Lodge poles put up Lodges sweep Lodges brush Horses tan hides cook tend fires weave grass braid grass cut willows scrape willow sticks weave willow baskets . . . carry cooking rocks carry children carry old ones carry firewood carry Water carry meat carry sacks carry Lodge poles carry carry carry" (20). This is representative of the staccato pacing of Earling's text, which, combined with unorthodox punctuation, takes a couple dozen pages to become accustomed to.

The Hidatsa raid that disrupted the tribe's serenity and where we enter known history is graphically depicted: "Earth rumbled. My legs began to tremble, then shake . . . Not Buffalo Enemy. Men rode towards us from all sides" (55). The "Taken" are Sacajawea and seven others, including Otter Woman. Only a couple of the other boys and girls figure prominently in the story thereafter. One, Too Ott Lok, we learn in due course, is sexually binary. The term "berdache" is eventually introduced to describe that individual.

The "Enemy" are described as "dizzy with stolen children, drunk with rape, sweat like Women when they scrape-work Buffalo hides." Sacajawea records a distinction between "War Men" like her abductors and true Warriors. The former are "blind to Women and Children. War Men who only love the stink of each other's asses" (70).

Earling mocks French Canadian traders. Is it deserved? Vine Deloria, Jr. (Lakota) didn't think so. The famed author of *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) once wondered whether history might have turned out to be more conducive to North America's Indigenous inhabitants if the French alone had infiltrated North America. The only alternative Deloria could imagine was if French colonial policy had survived as the dominant system. As he explained, the French strategy encouraged racial intermarriage in order to create kinship bonds.

Children raised within this mixed Euro-Indian society, he maintained, treated the land's resources in a more ecologically sound manner, forging a hybrid society wherein people of different origins lived, worked, traveled, and shared technologies, foods, and world views.

After a few seasons pass, Sacajawea and the other captives grow stronger on a diet of Buffalo and dried berries. But in their revived health Sacajawea and Otter Woman are perceived as property "like fat Horses" and become stakes in a dice game, offered by one of their Hidatsa captors, the "Enemy Who Shits." Sacajawea and Otter Woman are "Gambled away" to the "White Man Goose" and taken to his lodge. This "Man-who-plagues-us" is pretty much the person we know from Meriwether Lewis' casting notes and (since historians always follow Lewis' lead) secondary accounts: a bumbler, coward, and a wife-beater. A few known characters appear for brief cameos, such as the chief with "One Eye," the famous Hidatsa head man Le Borgne. Sacajawea improbably states that the "White men call him Cyclops" (104). Not many of these frontiersmen read Homer.

In some good sleuthing, Earling resurrects "Pop Pank" from the obscurity of Moulton's foot-notes. A sister captive, she escapes at the spring break-up of the Missouri, dodging the ice flows to freedom like Eliza from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Sacagawea would in fact later reunite with Pop Pank in the Rocky Mountains in an emotional scene that attracted Lewis' attention. Stephen Ambrose once said that no novelist would dare invent the scene where Sacagawea meets up with Cameahwait. How less likely was Pop Pank's return to her homeland and subsequent reunion with Sacagawea? That story deserves a novel.

Sacajawea encounters a seer named "Old Woman" who tells her, before the explorers arrive: "when you go on the white man's long journey, they will see their safety as your only worth. They will catalog and collect" (151). Scientific collecting seems a rather detailed understanding of a foreign culture for which there would have been no precedent in the Hidatsa experience. This text also represents the shift in tone from a useful exposition on the Indigenous world view into a running polemic, often enough based on a misreading of the actual journals.

"He is woman" tells Sacajawea that one of these newcomers "hides his true self from others. He comes with shame. . . He comes with sodomy. This white man is not one with his own men. He is not one with his self." This is our introduction to Lewis, complete with an improbable invocation of biblical opprobrium. He has "come up River to claim. He is not interested in Beaver pelts or Women. In his eye, Everything he sees is already his" (157), lines that are poetic in their economy of Lewis' actual geo-strategic perspective.

A celebration features "a half-breed" (a term no non-Indigenous writer would dare use) who "shows off a small wood box he calls his fiddle" (161); Pierre Cruzatte, presumably. Clark adds to the festivity by presenting "a giant Man blacker than a smoked kettle." "Women cluster around" York, "sick with want." Extending the stereotype, the men of the tribe get close "to measure what he offers" (161, 164). Clark is jealous of all this sexualized attention.

This analogy of Sacajawea's youthfulness with Judith "Julia" Hancock is a key line of text. In some respects the whole narrative arc of this fictive account revolves around it. The author's theoretical premise is that historians have falsely aged the Sacagawea of history. In the preface Earling criticizes the "long hold notion that the expedition was wholesome" (iv). The implications for "succulent" Clark's reputation are as readily conceived as expressed. Notwithstanding that Julia was sixteen when she married him, the reader is encouraged to infer that Clark had an unwholesome interest in an extremely young girl the same age as Sacajawea when taken captive in the novel: nine.

Students of the Expedition are whipsawed between Sacajawea's astute observations ("When I pass Lewis and Clark Lodge they are hunched over reading," 186) and mistakes, such as the implication that the natural history collection assembled at the fort will be taken westward. "The white men are giddy to leave" (188). Certainly Lewis was. But on the next page (is this the next day?) the Expedition camps "near Water falls." Have we jumped from Fort Mandan to north-central Montana? This moment of confusion is followed by the best lines of text in the entire novel: "Surrounded by white men, my world becomes small. I have no stories to tell. My only story is survival" (190).

Earling obscures Sacagawea's role as the true guide of legend from the Judith River to the Rocky Mountain heartland of the Shoshone. For this stretch of the Expedition Sacagawea became as important to Lewis and Clark as any of the sergeants or the Expedition's best hunters. Indeed, we know *a lot* more about Sacagawea than *most* members of the Expedition. Contrary to Earling's assertion that Sacagawea labored in obscurity because she appears "only a

handful of times in the voluminous journals" [iv], for the most important part of the journey she dominates the story like no character other than the captains.

The dialogue between Sacajawea and York presents some interesting possibilities, including the plausible notion that York was deployed by Clark as a guard to make sure the men did not molest her. But the author undercuts this with the digression about York's wanting to have seen the circus when he was young. There were few circuses in the early national period (the first one toured during 1805-1806), but these were mostly equine affairs with a dash of gymnastics and fireworks. In these pages York waxes eloquent about wanting to see the "beautiful white women in glittering costumes spraying fire from their mouths," (194) an anachronistic reference to late nineteenth century circuses in the Barnum era.

The moment for which Sacagawea is best known – the canoe spill and her saving instruments and papers from loss – is under-treated in a half-page, but sufficient to mock Charbonneau who "splashes Water like a baby" (197). Clark is a more desirable man, seemingly, and perhaps the feeling is mutual. Dredging up the oldest romantic trope in Expedition-related fiction, he begins telling "dear Janey" about a forthcoming encounter with "the sea." Clark states, "I will take you to the oceanside." To verify these dreamy possibilities, he says, "I have fished the great waters" (206). Clark actually grew up in Tidewater Virginia, but not on tidewater. The Clark homestead of his youth was closer to Richmond than salt water. When he was fourteen years old, Clark's family left Virginia for the Ohio. He had a long life of interest in horses and rivers, not the sea.

Without question, the most tendentious chapter is "Days of York's enslavement." We read that "Clark leads York to Lewis and Lewis leads York into the shadow woods." To rape him. Repeatedly. In the novel's single most implausible line we're told that when this happens the men are ordered to "stay" in camp, like Lewis' dog. "They glint-eye each other, crack side-smiles" as York is handed-off in this manner. Yet "they grimace" when Lewis and York return (207)? Here Earling reaches for sensationalistic novelty. It's so embarrassing to write about this literary effluent that, to my knowledge, no other published review mentions it. This isn't story-telling, it's agitprop. It also displays a shocking lack of understanding about group dynamics within military units wherein good order and discipline rely upon two-way trust between leaders and those led. A commander may have to ask a soldier to do something that could be inimical to his fear factor and sense of survival. If detachments don't trust their leaders (who could conceivably trust the Lewis or Clark represented in this fiction?), they tend to self-correct. "Fragging," a term coined during the Vietnam War, has a long history back to antiquity.

This story of Sacagawea's illness looms large in the actual journals but only half a page in Earling's novel. So little, perhaps, because the captains doted over her for ten days? Was it in their self-interest to do so, because of the forthcoming need for interpretive services? They said as much. But, their expressions about the poignancy of the situation, not merely her physical condition but the complication of carrying a babe in arms, and the thoughtful experimentation in her medical treatment, show genuine concern.

Contrast this with the corresponding scene in the novel where Sacajawea hears them outside her tent getting so drunk "their voices slur and become loud" (223). Wait! What?! Students of the Expedition know Sacagwea's illness in June 1805 was when the last few ounces of grog were husbanded to lift the crew's spirits, to incentivize their labors while towing the craft on the stretch of the Missouri below the Great Falls and later portaging around them. The captains wouldn't have wasted this resource on themselves. Clark directed that Sacagawea be given her share because she was in recovery mode. The last of the alcohol was expended on July 4th.

The concluding section, "Return" (to Shoshone homelands) is the shortest. The scene, as Sacajawea approaches the Continental Divide, is well scripted: "I know every step . . . that rise . . . this Tree . . . That bush." The

smells of home make her legs "wobble like Jean-Baptiste's" (233). Dramatically, "someone in the distance rides toward us . . . My people. I run toward them and stop to run back to Charbonneau. Why do I run to you? I ask" (233). Good question, unanswered in the moment.

Blue Elk, whom she had coveted, spurns Sacajawea's overture. He tells her, "I will not be with a Woman who has had a white man's child" (237), an interpretation borne out by the journals. In a long ethnographic essay anticipated by his instructions to study the manners of Indigenous people, Lewis explored the marriage customs of the Lemhi Shoshone. (This work could only have been conducted in the detail he provides with Sacagawea's assistance.) In her society, we learn, fathers contracted their daughters to other men, or to their sons, the dowry coming in the form of horses. But this does not happen until girls reach puberty, about thirteen or fourteen. This, Lewis writes, is what had happened to Sacagawea; that is, she was not to be married off until she was that old.

Earling makes clear that Sacajawea doesn't want to stay in the mountains with her ex-husband anyway. Ironically, she has become fascinated by the white man's enthusiasm for exploration for its own sake. Mounting a horse with Jean Baptiste on her lap she exclaims: "They will not remove me. I am going. I am going to the sea. I will see the Whales." In language the novelist borrowed from the journals written during the ensuing winter at the Pacific Sacajawea states: "I have traveled all this way. If I have to tell them in English, I will tell them. I go with them. They cannot stop me" (239). Now *this* is the Sacagawea we know from history. Determined, fearless.

The novel then skips to the Pacific, intermittently problematic to the end. Sacajawea takes in a view of "the great blue Waters and the light is so bright it burns" (240). The actual event involving the whale took place in gloomy January when the ocean and sky are a dark slate gray. But, maybe I've taken the novel too literally as a shadow of history and not an act of pure imagination. Indeed, the last few lines are a kind of dream sequence, which read like the concluding scene of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Sacajawea melds with "Woman Who Always Lived," sees great sights and wonders, including, in the end, "myself" (242).

David Lowenthal, in *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1996), helps bridge the fiction/non-fiction divide that this novel presents. He makes a distinction between heritage and history. Both are representations of the past; they are not the past itself. They overlap each other to a degree, but have different purposes. History struggles with the past's complexity and meaning, admits its limitations, and even revises or contradicts itself through the contest of perspectives.

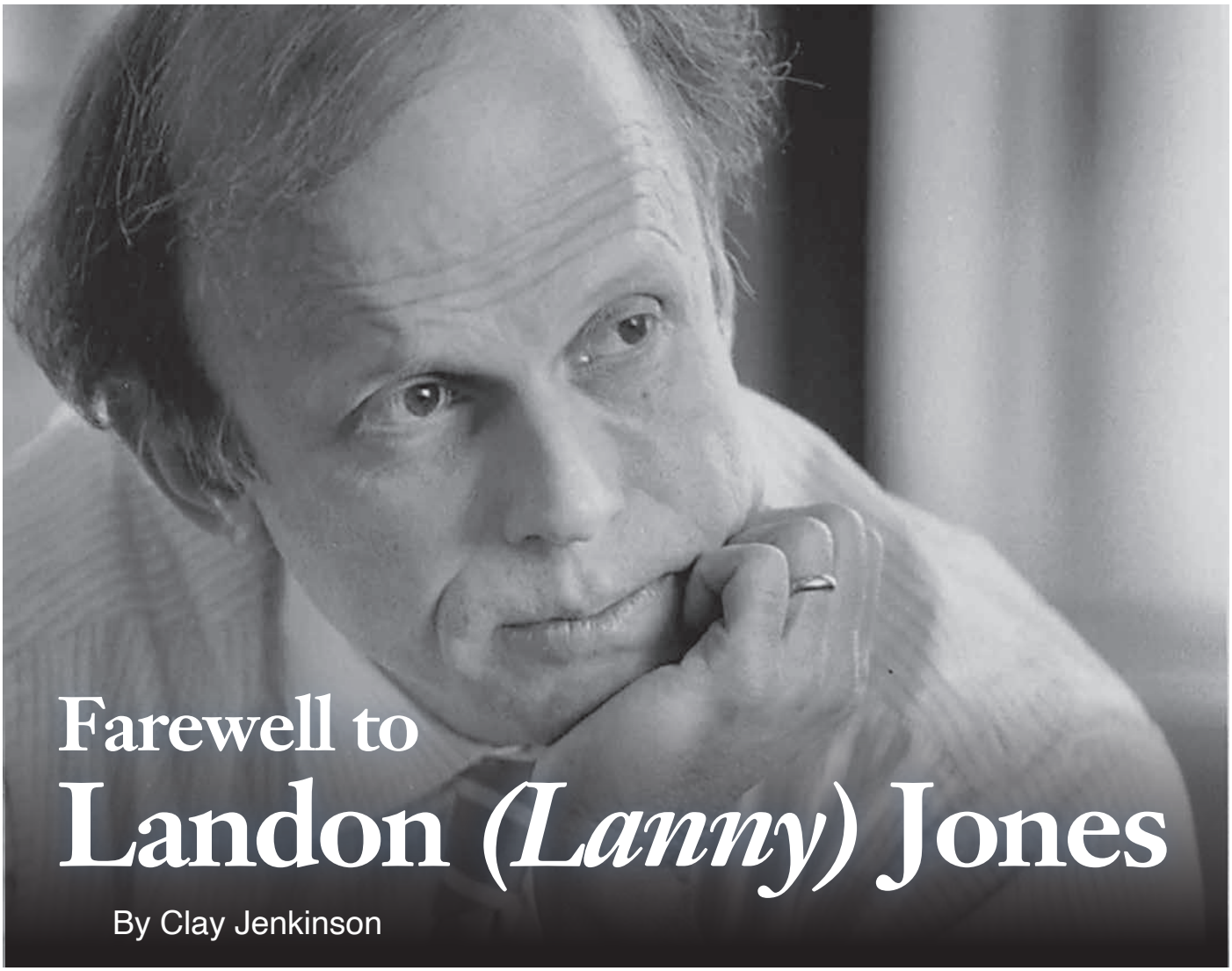
As opposed to history's nuanced view of a dim past, heritage simplifies the past, reducing its understandings to a creedal belief in the tenets of some present-day in-group cause that wishes to build community identity and political momentum. In history, we see difficult to understand people, living in a foreign place and distant time. In the affirming realm of heritage, we encounter familiarity, people modern in values and world view.

In this sense, then, *The Lost Journals of Sacajawea* can be defined not only in its professed terms as fiction, but as a form of heritage writing. What then, is the present-day aim accomplished by the manipulation of Sacagawea into Earling's Sacajawea? The novel is dedicated to "the stolen sisters of all Native Nations" [iii]. Sacajawea is thus posed as the first of the many young girls who have disappeared from their homes on reserves and in urban centers in the United States and Canada over the last few decades. This phenomenon has been highlighted by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls movement (MMIW), whose tag line is "No More Stolen Sisters." According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there are over 4,200 unsolved missing and murder cases in the United States. Montana, not coincidentally Earling's home state, is one of the hardest-hit jurisdictions.

Sacagawea was a vital member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition whose contributions were exceeded by few. If that venture was, as Momaday suggested, the white man's version of a vision quest then, it's also true, as he once wrote, that she was the woman of that quest. The great value of literary fiction and non-fiction alike is the prospect of diverse perspectives. In this regard, it's worth remembering the sage advice that the novel's "Old Woman" bestows on Sacajawea:

"Do not trust anyone who tells you there is only one story. If there were only one story, or one way of seeing things all stories would die" (225). ∎

David Nicandri is the former director of the Washington State Historical Society. He is the author of two books about Captain James Cook and two about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, including River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia. *Nicandri is a frequent contributor to WPO.*



Farewell to Landon (*Lanny*) Jones

By Clay Jenkinson

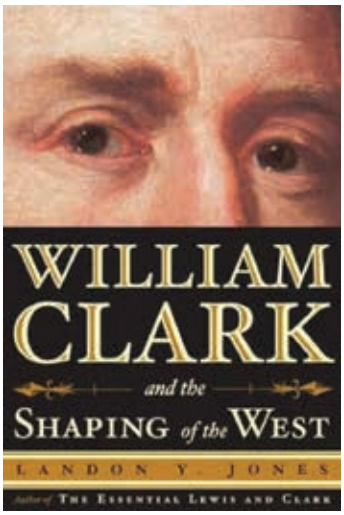
Landon Y. Jones. Courtesy Jones Family,

We will miss our friend Landon Jones (1943-2024), the former editor of *People* and *Money* magazines and, during the Bicentennial, a frequent participant in Lewis and Clark-related activities throughout the United States.

Lanny died on August 17 at Plainsboro, New Jersey, at the age of 80.

He was born in Rome, Georgia, in 1943. He grew up in St. Louis. He suffered significant hearing loss as a child and learned to read lips at the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis. He had a speech impediment throughout his life, but he determined early on not to let it get in the way. He attended Princeton where he found his written voice working on the *Daily Princetonian*. Princeton (university and town) were the source of some of his greatest satisfactions.

Lanny had a very long association with the Time-Life brand in the final great age of the American magazine. He wrote for *Time* from 1966-1971, then, after a three-year hiatus, began work at *People* in 1974. Although many in the magazine industry, including at Time-Life, decried the idea of a magazine devoted to celebrity journalism, and reckoned *People* would have a short life, Jones was one of its most enthusiastic champions. He once quipped that *People* was devoted to the three Ds: Britain's Princess Diana; Diet; and Death. From 1984-1989 he was the managing editor of *Money*. Under his management *Money* won three consecutive National Magazine Awards. In 1989 he became the managing editor of *People*, a position he kept until his



retirement in 1997, just in time for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

Lanny was a man of great energy and cheerfulness, seemingly always in a good mood, never self-important. As one of Time-Life's luminaries, he mastered the art of clear, straightforward prose. His biography of William Clark (2004) was not as scholarly as the work of William Foley and our own Jay Buckley, but it was eminently sensible, thoughtful, accurate, and readable, and it helped to flesh out the life and character of the man who had long been the junior partner in the Lewis and Clark story. Jones attended a number of the Bicentennial signature events, including the kickoff at Monticello on January 14-15, 2003, where he was seen fleeing one of the more ponderous speeches in search of a warming tent and hot chocolate. His often-puckish humor – about such things – was wry and slightly wicked.

In 1980, Jones published *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation*. In his exploration of the 75 million Americans born between the end of World War II and 1964, Jones helped to popularize the term "baby boomers." His book was one of the first attempts to make sense of the baby-boom phenomenon.

He is best known in our circles for his two Lewis and Clark-related books: *The Essential Lewis and Clark* (2000) and the more important *William Clark and the Shaping of the West* (2004). Lanny had fallen in love with the Lewis and Clark story because of his long association with Montana, where he and his family maintained a second home near Bozeman.

His last book, *Celebrity Nation: How America Evolved into a Nation of Fans and Followers* (2023), reflected on America's obsession with celebrities (Angelina and Brad, the Kardashians, Jennifer Aniston) and his own role in the creation of that multi-billion-dollar phenomenon. He differentiated between celebrities and heroes, with the suggestion that the American people re-orient so as not to forget the latter in their adoration of the former.

Our friend Landon Jones is survived by his wife of fifty-four years, Sarah Brown Jones, and their three children Rebecca, Landon III, and Catherine. ∎

Landon Jones: *William Clark and the Shaping of the West*

"As they headed west from Fort Mandan in April 1805 into uncharted territory, Lewis and Clark sought to subdue their unspoken fears about these strange new lands by measuring them and by naming them. Indian names vanished, to be replaced by features named for domestic plants (Onion Creek), people (Shabano's Creek), events (Goose Egg Lake), and the days of the week (Sunday Island).

There were some peculiarities. On April 29, 1805, Clark walked three miles up a gentle stream meandering through a "butifull & exensive vallie." In his journal entry for that day he noted, "We call this river Martheys river in honor to the Selebrated M.F."

Who was "the Selebrated M.F."? She was the first woman whose name the two bachelor officers had seen fit to place on the land. She was most likely a woman Clark knew: Martha Fontaine, one of nine daughters of Colonel Aaron Fontaine, a Virginia planter who had migrated to Louisville and operated "Fontaine's Ferry" there. The Fontaine daughters were widely known for their beauty, and Marthey would have been eighteen when William left Louisville. One of her older sisters may have been the "Miss F____ is Cruel" about whom William had written to Fanny from Fort Greenville in 1795. The two families were certainly close. Marthey's nephew William Fontaine Bullock later married into Jonathan Clark's family.

On May 29, 1805, exactly one month after naming Marthey's River, the captains walked up the opposite bank of a "handsome river" flowing into the Missouri in today's Chouteau County. "Capt. Clark… has thought proper to call it Big Horn River," Lewis originally wrote. But at some unknown time later Lewis erased "Big Horn" and substituted "Judieths" River. In his remaining references to the river for that date, however, Lewis left "Big Horn" unchanged, as did Clark, both in his journal and on his route map. In fact, the name of the "Judith" River does not appear on any map at all until 1810. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Clark named it not in 1805 for Judith Hancock of Fincastle, whom he had last seen when she was nine, but some time afterward when she had become his wife, Judith ("Julia") Hancock Clark of St. Louis."

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continued from inside front cover

Now that Gary Moulton's magisterial edition of the journals is available to everyone (free on the internet), I sometimes fantasize that we'd all be zapped by that *tabula rasa* gizmo in the *Men in Black* movies, and every book ever before written about the Expedition would be sequestered for a generation in a vault, so that each of us would have to read the journals (in their totality) for the first time, without preconceptions, with fresh eyes untouched by the filters of Bernard DeVoto, David Lavender, or Stephen Ambrose. I believe the result would be game-changing.

Second, how reliable are the Expedition's journal keepers – Lewis, Clark, Ordway, Gass, Whitehouse, and Floyd? If Lewis reports that Sacagawea was born Shoshone, captured in her late childhood at the Three Forks, carried away to the earthlodges of the Hidatsa, acculturated into the Hidatsa world, and married off to Toussaint Charbonneau, how much historical weight should we give his report? Is it possible that he got the story wrong? Even if he got it right, we need to remember that Lewis was a White American army officer, a scion of the Virginia gentry raised on a tobacco plantation operated by slaves, a member of the American Philosophical Society, and protégé to President Jefferson. He was carrying some typical white American baggage: Indians are childlike, capricious, and superstitious: "as sirly as so many imps of satturn." If you let down your guard they might try to hurt or kill you (see Lewis, February 21, 1806). Native women are "drudges" who do all the scutwork of the Indigenous world while their men smoke, confer, and go on raids. A native woman can nonchalantly give birth by the side of the trail and resume her portage work shortly thereafter.

Lewis' cultural baggage: Patriarchy. A society that defended and perpetuated slavery. A military background and disposition. A condescending, stereotyping, and partly mythological view of Indians. A man who seemingly had no close encounters with women even in his own culture. An explorer whose patience and curiosity ran dry on the return journey somewhere west of the Bitterroot Mountains. A typical skeptic of the Enlightenment – probably a deist like his great patron.

Even if Lewis reported accurately the main lines of the pre-Expedition biography of Sacagawea in the summer of 1805, he couldn't know anything about her inner life, assuming he had the slightest interest in her beyond her instrumental usefulness to the Expedition. He's the one who wrote, "I cannot discover that she shews any immotion of sorrow in recollecting this events [her capture by the Hidatsa], or of joy in being again restored to her native country; if she has enough to eat and a few trinkets to wear I believe she would be perfectly content anywhere" (July 28, 1805). Lewis spoke English, perhaps a few words of French, and he seems to have learned some rudiments of Native sign language. Sacagawea spoke Hidatsa, at least some Shoshone, perhaps a bit of French, and it seems likely that she picked up some bits of English by hanging out for two years with several dozen Anglo-Americans. Did Lewis and Sacagawea ever have a one-to-one conversation? Not very likely. What was her interior life? We cannot possibly know. Was she Toussaint Charbonneau's grateful or grudging wife or some of each? What did she really think of these bearded White aliens? What did she think of stern and self-contained Meriwether Lewis? We don't know.

So we need always to remember that when we are combing the journals for information or insights about Sacagawea, whatever we read has been filtered through the minds and pens of her temporary White associates. Shouldn't we always bring an awareness of the overt and at times inadvertent biases that Lewis bought to his remarkable journal entries? When an anthropologist tries to make sense of a culture she or he has only a passing acquaintance with and without the necessary linguistic skills to enter their cultural cosmos, some misunderstandings and misinterpretations are sure to follow.

Third, if we agree that the conquest of the Western Hemisphere, the displacement and peonization of Indigenous people, is a deeply troubling, if understandable, event of the last five centuries, how much responsibility (blame) should we assign to the men in the vanguard: Columbus, Raleigh, Drake, Cortez, Magellan, Hudson, Cook, and Lewis and Clark (to name a few)? The conventional wisdom has been that Lewis and Clark were, on the whole, relatively innocent agents of empire, basically generous towards the Indigenous peoples they briefly encountered, and that their complicity in the *great dispossession* is lightened because they were exemplars of science and the Enlightenment, following a

playbook crafted by America's brainy, cosmopolitan, and high-minded President, Thomas Jefferson. Is this right? There is a tendency now to condemn Lewis and Clark in the same way the left is condemning James Cook and Columbus. Determining how to weigh this issue – how to measure Lewis and Clark's complicity in the tragedy of the nineteenth century in America without conceding too much or too little – is a matter of the greatest importance. Now that Native Americans are at the table (one of the triumphs of the Bicentennial) and their voices and traditions are taken fully seriously, the Lewis and Clark story can never be told in a mostly Eurocentric way again. This is a great (but at times complicating) development in the historiography.

Fourth, how should the Lewis and Clark community respond to the rising tide of Native oral tradition that sees the Expedition in ways that don't always conform to the story as told in the Journals? Piegan accounts of the "incident at Two Medicine Creek" do not square with Lewis' "high noon" self-defense narrative (July 26-28, 1806), one of the most carefully crafted in the journals. The Hidatsa narrative of Sacagawea (Sakakawea) regards Lewis' biographical sketch as simply erroneous. In Hidatsa tradition Sacagawea was always Hidatsa (or Crow), captured by the Shoshone, and eventually reunited with her birth people. Meanwhile, the Shoshone narrative of Sacagawea (Sacajawea) conforms more closely to Lewis' understanding, but disputes some of Lewis' assertions and judgments. Who gets to decide? Can there be more than one "truth" about Sacagawea? Can she be both primarily Shoshone and primarily Hidatsa? The time when we would simply embrace a White army officer's view of this remarkable and enigmatic Native woman, and discount other views, has ended. This is good news for a richer, more nuanced, less tidy understanding of the Lewis and Clark story, but it also raises some issues that are very difficult to unpack.

Then there is the problem of names. We have long since graduated from further use of the five-letter s-word for a Native woman, and terms that were widely current a quarter century ago – buck, brave, redskin, hostile – have thankfully disappeared from the narrative. *Lakota* has begun to displace Sioux (an enemy's name for the Dakotah/Nakota/Lakota people). *Salish* is making inroads against the misleading Flathead. *Nimiipuu* is having a somewhat harder time against Nez Perce. The Crow

prefer to be called *Absaroka*. The Arikara prefer *Sahnish* and *Ree* is now confined to mention of Custer's "Ree scouts." And so on. We all understand that a people is entitled to be called by the group name it prefers, but it is hard to break old habits of nomenclature. Today *Indigenous* and *Native American* are preferred terms, though many Native individuals will say, "Just call us Indians. We're used to it, it's easier, and it's ok."

I admit to having a very hard time letting go of the phrase "Indian summer" because it is so deeply ingrained in the American English language, and that period of time after the first frosts but before winter blows onto the northern Great Plains is in some respects my happiest time of the year. But it has to go. If you think about it for a moment, the term evokes the "doomed and vanishing Indian" trope that White people have been embracing for more than a century now. "Indian summer" signifies that last brief flourishing of summer before winter blows in. The lovely phrase is the linguistic equivalent of the James Earl Frazer's famous "End of the Trail" sculpture – beautiful, compelling, but misleading.

The great question is how can we all rise to a higher level of sensitivity and enlightenment and work hard *always* to include Native American perspectives, traditions, challenges, and concerns in the Lewis and Clark discourse? This is the challenge of the twenty-first century, the post-Bicentennial era of the Lewis and Clark story. There are ample reasons to make these essential adjustments, however difficult and at times frustrating. If we want this great story to remain relevant and to attract a new generation of readers, explorers, and adventurers, we have to embrace the cultural developments that make the Lewis and Clark story more generously inclusive. ▮

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