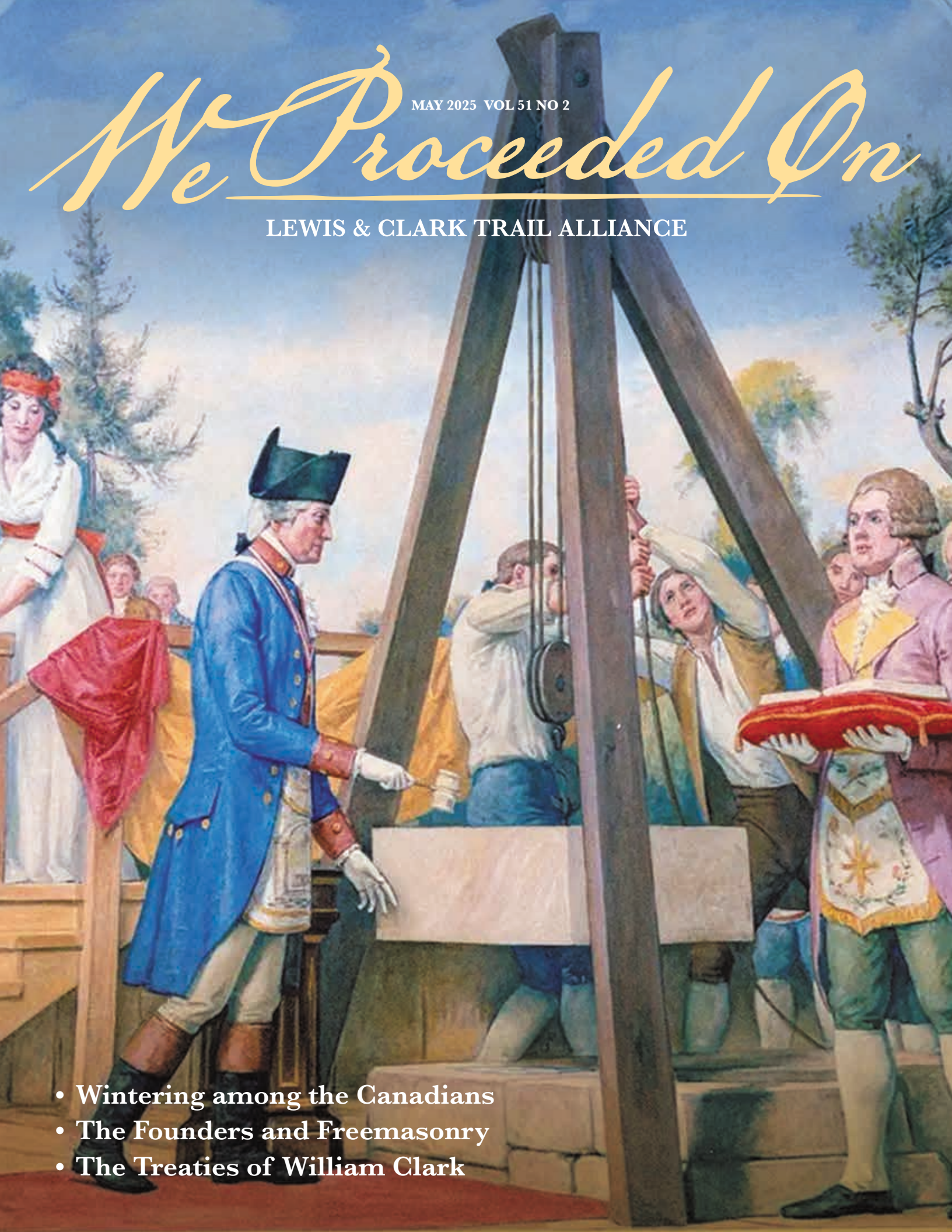


MAY 2025 VOL 51 NO 2

We Proceeded On

LEWIS & CLARK TRAIL ALLIANCE



- Wintering among the Canadians
- The Founders and Freemasonry
- The Treaties of William Clark

The Lewis and Clark Story: The Unfinished Journey

The Lewis and Clark Expedition occupies a paradoxical place in American memory in the third decade of the twenty-first century. It remains far and away America's favorite story of exploration, eclipsing the expeditions of Zebulon Pike, Stephen Long, John C. Fremont, John Wesley Powell, and even John Glenn and Neil Armstrong. James Ronda rightly called it "America's first great road story." And yet the Expedition is not now receiving the public or scholarly attention it deserves. It has not found its way into a blockbuster film or internet subscription series. Our membership in the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is declining in an alarming way. Young people are not gravitating to this adventure. We need to ask why.

And yet our story has everything. You don't have to strain to see it as a perfect multicultural adventure. It was indeed a transcontinental epic when, for many, the West was a kind of second Garden of Eden. So much the story contains: Army officers and enlisted men; an African American slave; a Shoshone-Hidatsa Indigenous woman; a wide-eyed child; encounters with more than 50 sovereign tribes; seven of America's great rivers; French and French Canadian voyageurs; edgy Spanish officials; skeptical British nationals at Fort Mandan; mixed-blood interpreters; the most intellectually gifted and far-seeing President of the United States; a lovable dog that exhibited "segacity" at every turn.

Nobody can seriously encounter the Lewis and Clark Expedition without being drawn into its drama, its rich, delightful, and intriguing documents base, the "discovery" of the American West by purposeful men of the Enlightenment who had the capacity to express their sense of wonder at seeing a small clutch of pronghorn antelope gallop madly over the short-grass plains, or who took time to measure the wingspan of the mighty condor. You cannot listen to Meriwether Lewis rhapsodize on May 31, 1805, over "senes of visionary inchantment" and not want to see the White Cliffs yourself, or to venture into Montana to decide if you agree that the industrially-compromised great falls are still a "truly magnificent and sublimely grand object" of nature.



The Lewis and Clark Monument, 2003 by Pat Kennedy in St. Charles, Missouri, features Lewis' Newfoundland dog Seaman. Courtesy Dr. David Goodrich, NOAA (ret.), Wikimedia Commons.

Best of all, after more than 230 years, we still don't know all we want to know about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The mysteries of the Expedition can keep you up late into the night.

- We don't know what happened to the iron boat, the "Experiment." After they dug it up with other cached items on the return journey, did they rebury it? Did they toss it with friendly exasperation into the Missouri River? Or did they carry it with them down river, knowing that Natives were iron-starved people who would trade useful things to get their hands on some of it?

- We don't know what happened to Seaman the Newfoundland dog. Seaman disappears from the journals in July

1806, never to be mentioned again by the "writingest explorers of their time." Did Seaman die in Montana? Did the dog get left behind during those chaotic days in the summer of 1806? Or did it survive the journey, but the busy diarists never had reason to mention it again?

- We don't know when Sacagawea died or where? Was it at Fort Manuel Lisa on the North Dakota-South Dakota border in December 1812? Was it decades later at the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming? Is she buried under that stone monument at Fort Washakie, Wyoming, or on the bluffs overlooking the Missouri River near the mouth of the Grand River? Or somewhere else?

- We don't know definitively whether Meriwether Lewis was murdered on the Natchez Trace in October 1809 or died by his own hand. And if he did die by suicide, we don't have a satisfactory understanding of why.

- We don't know whether we have all the journals and field notes of the Expedition. Lewis is silent for 441 days, a full 51% of the time. Were some of his or other men's journals and notes lost or destroyed on the journey? Are there journals sitting in attics in St. Paul or Louisville,

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Front: *George Washington, dressed in his Masonic apron, lays the
cornerstone of the Capitol on September 18, 1793*. Mural in the
Capitol by Allyn Cox, 1974.

Back: *Lewis in His Masonic Apron* by Tom Saubert. Courtesy
Montana Masonic Foundation.

We Proceeded On welcomes submissions of articles, proposals, inquiries, and letters. Writers' 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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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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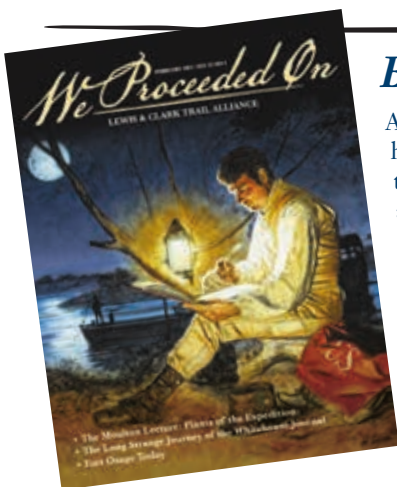
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A Message from the President



LCTA President Bill Bronson

There were many times in my career as a trial attorney that I needed to quickly “change horses in the middle of a stream,” so to speak. A groundbreaking new court decision required a complete rewrite of a legal brief. An unexpected change of direction in a witness’ testimony during trial compelled quick reconsideration of the substance and tone of my direct or cross examination. A last-minute change in key facts mandated careful consideration of a settlement offer previously rejected. One does not learn these skills in law school. One learns them through frequent, and sometimes painful, experience.

So it is with the preparation of the “President’s Message” for this issue of WPO. My well-laid plans to write further about membership growth and development, as well as fundraising, have been laid aside to address a new issue engaging much of our membership. The issue is the new presidential administration’s actions with respect to federal employment and federal agency practices, and in some instances, the continued existence of an agency. It is a topic worth shifting gears and addressing, as it is

likely something we will be living with for some time.

This past month, leadership received a thoughtful e-mail from a longtime Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance member, raising concerns about challenges to federal funding and federal employment, especially as they might affect our longtime partners in the National Park Service and the Forest Service, as well as other agencies. We were reminded that, in the past, our friends at the Park Service especially stood by us when this organization went through what were described by the writer as “some very dark times.” The question put to us was: what could the Alliance do now to help our friends in the various federal agencies?

The question is a fair one, and it deserves a response. Framing that response is not particularly easy. Ours is a very diverse organization when it comes to the political views of its membership, and that fact alone gives leadership pause in deciding how it might speak for the membership, if at all. Likewise, the battlelines are not always clear – a decision affecting an agency one day is reversed by a court a few days later, or even by the administration itself, which makes commenting in a timely fashion very problematic.

We must also be mindful of particular rules of engagement imposed by federal law on organizations like the Alliance. Non-profit corporations are not “tree-house clubs.” We don’t get to make up the rules as we go along just to suit our fancy.

This inquiry from the member led me after much thinking to share some

thoughts that might guide us in moving forward:

- The Alliance is a 501(c)(3) organization under Internal Revenue Service regulations. This requires us to adhere to certain rules and guidelines as to how we conduct ourselves in the public arena. Without citing chapter and verse of federal statute and regulation, suffice it to say that no organization that qualifies for 501(c)(3) status can get directly involved in political campaigns. “Lobbying” (which has a particular meaning to the IRS) cannot constitute a “substantial part” (another IRS magic word!) of our activities. Crossing the line risks the loss of our tax-exempt status.
- The IRS has a different perspective when it comes to “advocacy.” (Still another magic word!) For example, if we engage in efforts to ask an administrative agency to change its policies, or to adopt new ones, such is not considered lobbying. We can even target political officials with messages so long as the message is not intended to promote or discourage a vote on legislation. We can develop general policy positions on issues as long as the issues have not been reduced to a specific legislative proposal. We can also certainly advocate on our behalf if certain governmental actions are intended to impact on us.

The foregoing are not intended as a laundry list of the things that we can or cannot do, but they do offer a guide for

A Message from the President

how we will address the particular issues of concern raised by our member:

- Since the onset of various efforts to enhance the efficiency of federal agencies and terminate federal employees, the Alliance has been working quietly behind the scenes to determine how any of those changes might impact the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, as well as our key federal partners that work with us in our mission to promote the Lewis and Clark story. Our Chief Operating Officer, Richard Hunt, has been in frequent communication with our National Park Service partners in Omaha. The message we are hearing so far from the Superintendent and others is that, other than staff reductions that may impact operations, there is no indication as yet that the mission of supporting the Trail and working with private support organizations (e.g., the Alliance) will change.
- Your Board of Directors met with the Trail Superintendent and his

staff in late April to talk about the future of the Trail and what we as an organization can do to assist in promoting and protecting it. We will publicly support our partners in the agency (and others) in those efforts. Of course, we will keep you further advised in subsequent communications about the results of that meeting.

- While the situation with our Forest Service partners here in Montana, particularly at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, is not yet entirely clear, we are not letting this dust gather under our feet. We know the Forest Service itself has been charged by the new administration with concentrating more on what the administration believes are “core functions,” which relate primarily to timber and other resource management. Programs such as conservation and interpretation – i.e., operation of the Interpretive Center, which also houses the Alliance national headquarters

office and the William P. Sherman Library and Archive – may not be so important in the future. Local Lewis and Clark enthusiasts as well as Alliance representatives are already pursuing conversations with appropriate officials to identify alternatives for continuing to operate the Interpretive Center in the future, should our Forest Service partners be more limited in their ability to conduct that function.

- Events associated with federal job cutbacks and building and program closures are happening so fast that it is simply not possible for us to know every potential change that may impact an interpretive site or program related to the Lewis and Clark experience. If you know of some proposed action impacting a facility or project in your area, please let Richard Hunt (director@lewisandclark.org) or me know immediately. Leadership is here to assist you in determining the best ways that you as a supporter of the Alliance and

JOIN US in Shaping the Future of LCTA!

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is embarking on an exciting journey toward a sustainable and vibrant future, and we need your help! Be a part of our vision by joining one of our five dynamic Work Groups dedicated to planning and activating our path forward.

COMMUNICATIONS

Calling all writers and historians who are passionate about sharing our stories with the world!

BRANDING

Creative thinkers wanted! Influence selecting a new position statement that reflects our mission and values.

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Help us promote dynamic and compelling activities to attract and engage new members.

FUNDRAISING

Share your ideas on which initiatives we should fund and how we can best support them.

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Lights, camera, action! Join our video production team and help us create captivating movies that tell the inspiring stories of Lewis and Clark.

Contact Richard Hunt, Chief Executive Officer of LCTA, to learn more and discover where you fit in to shaping the future of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

Email: director@lewisandclark.org

Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference!

Join us today.

the Lewis and Clark story can respond appropriately to that change.

- It's certainly acceptable within the constraints outlined above for our members to stay in contact *individually* with their local Member of Congress or United States Senators, simply to express your ongoing support for programs and projects supporting the Lewis and Clark story. You should point out that several directives coming out of the current administration at least imply support for the mission of this organization. Programs and themes based on the Lewis and Clark story are in perfect accord with the administration's desire to promote what it occasionally describes as a "positive" interpretation of American history. A recent directive from the White House em-

phasizes the need to promote public celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence next year. The Lewis and Clark story definitely has positive ties to that historical event, and so what we promote as an organization has much more popularity than many other historical events. For background, see the Executive Order on Education issued by the White House on January 29, 2025, especially Sections 4 and 5.

In response to another email I received in recent weeks on developments at the federal level, I urged a "keep our powder dry" approach to these matters as far as they pertain to the Alliance. I certainly have lots of opinions about what is happening right now, but what I do as President of the Alliance and

what the rest of the leadership team will do will be based on what is best for the organization and its mission. I urge our members to follow a similar course.

Of course, if you ever want to know a personal opinion of mine as to what is happening nationally, I'm more than willing to share it with you over a beer or a cup of coffee (no fancy lattes, please!) Trust me – I do not lack for opinions. In addition to having been an attorney most of my life, I've also been (and still am) an elected public official – and that is a story to be woven into another President's Message, sometime during travels along the Trail. ■

*Until next time,
Bill Bronson
President, Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance
Great Falls, Montana*

We Proceeded On *The Journal of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance*

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William Clark's Treaties with Indian Nations: A Brief Overview

By Jay H. Buckley

Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, 1905, by Francis Davis Millet based on sketches by Frank Blackwell Mayer. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society, Wikimedia Commons.

Born the ninth of ten children to John and Ann (Rogers) Clark on August 1, 1770, on a plantation in Caroline County, Virginia, William Clark led a full life as a soldier, explorer, Indian agent, Missouri territorial governor, and superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis. While a teenager, his family relocated to a new plantation called “Mulberry Hill” near present-day Louisville, Kentucky. Clark joined the Kentucky militia, and then in 1792 President George Washington commissioned Clark a lieutenant of infantry. During General Anthony Wayne’s Ohio River Indian campaigns, Clark fought at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. He resigned his commission shortly after the Treaty of Greenville (1795) to return home and care for his parents and the family estate.

In 1803 Clark agreed to co-command an expedition with Meriwether Lewis to explore the Louisiana Purchase

and establish a commercial route to the Pacific. Lewis and Clark met with Native leaders, distributed trade goods, delivered speeches, solicited Indian delegations to travel to Washington, and conducted negotiations for peace, friendship, and trade. They announced American sovereignty and left calling cards of empire (medals, flags, certificates). Clark gained an appreciation for the tremendous diversity of Indian cultures and was the more skillful diplomat.

After the Expedition’s return, President Thomas Jefferson appointed Clark as an Indian agent. From 1807 to 1838, Clark served as the federal government’s representative to the Indian nations in the West, personally signing 37 treaties (one-tenth of all ratified Indian treaties in American history). Clark’s first treaty occurred at the newly constructed Fort Osage in present-day Sibley, Missouri. On September



Clark Family Home: Mulberry Hill is situated on a 256-acre tract along the South Fork of Beargrass Creek in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Photo taken by Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston ca. 1890. Courtesy The Filson Historical Society.



Osages, Peuplade Sauvage de L'Amérique Setentrionale, Dans l'état de Missouri, 1827 by Louis Bailey.



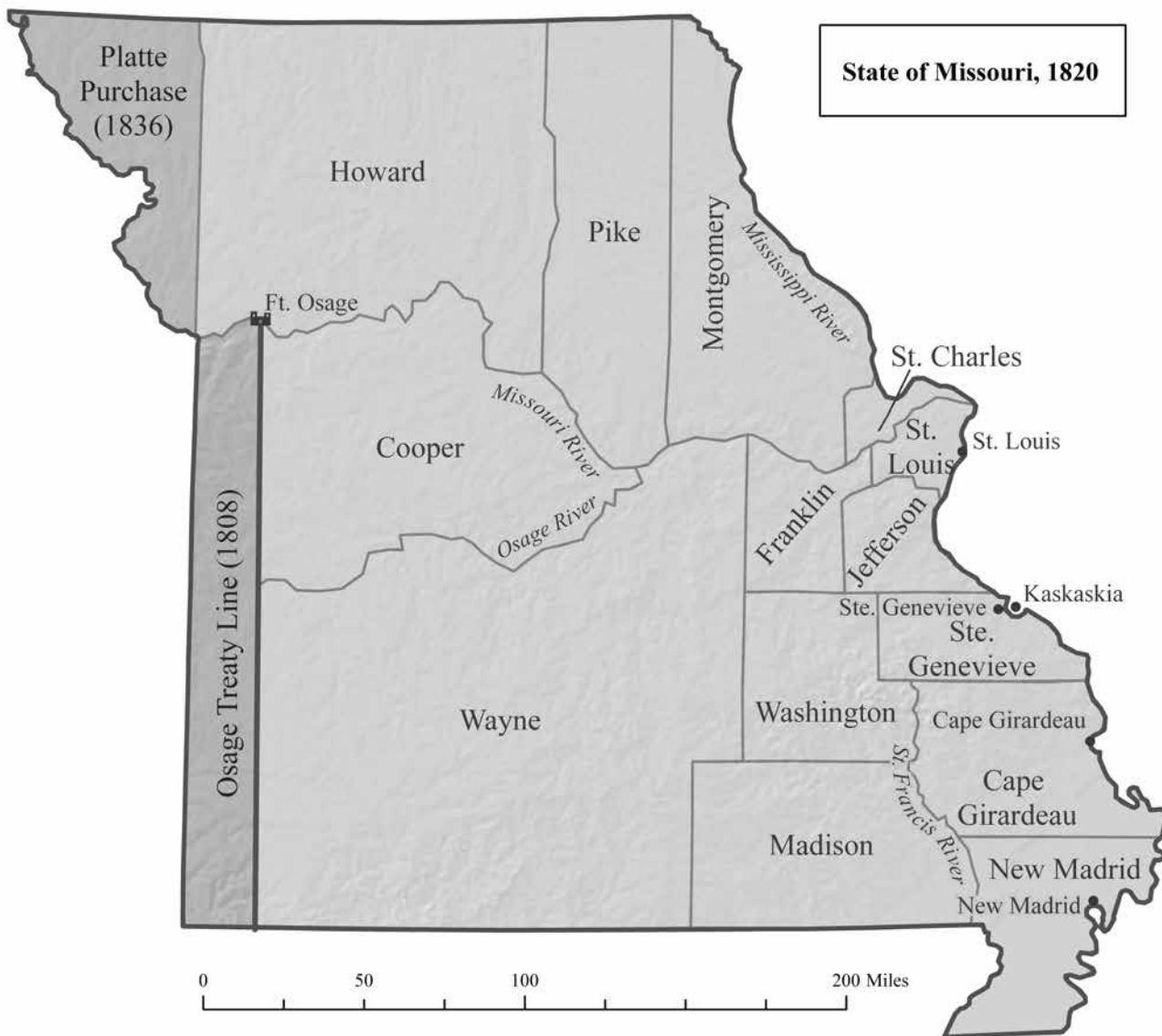
Osage Delegation Member, circa 1807 by Charles Balthazar Julien Févret de Saint-Mémin. Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

14, 1808, upon the arrival of the chiefs of the two major divisions of the Osages – the Great Osage and Little Osage bands – Indian Agent Clark drew up his first formal Indian treaty. Overanxious to demonstrate his abilities as an agent to the government, Clark pressed Chiefs White Hair (Paw-Hiu-Skah or Pawhuska) and Walking Rain (Nichenmanee) and the Osage nation to agree to his terms. The Osage leaders apparently welcomed American promises of protection against their enemies, looked forward to a trading post on the Missouri, and may have thought they were only exchanging their rights to hunt on the land east of Fort Osage, which had villages of Quapaws, Cherokees, and French settlers anyway. To the Osages, sharing their hunting lands east of Fire Prairie seemed a fair exchange for peaceful United States relations and a new trading fort.¹

Clark took advantage of the situation to wrest from the Osages all their land claims east of a line extending south from Fort Osage to the Arkansas River (half of present-day Missouri and Arkansas) and south of a line between Fort Osage and Fort Madison in present-day Iowa. He extorted this cession from Chief White Hair and a group of the most

loyal Osages. His thinly veiled threats to punish them for the bad behavior of some of their band toward Whites in the past was offset by his rhetoric that the United States wished peaceful trade and friendship with the Osages and promised “to protect all orderly friendly & well disposed Indians . . . who will Strictly attend to and preserve the counsels of the President of the U. States through his Agents.”²

According to Clark’s records, the U.S. government and the Osages entered into a treaty in which the Osages did “cede, Convey & Relinquish all the land east of a line South . . . amounting to near Thirty Milion of acres of excellent country.” In return, the Great Osages were promised \$1,000 annually, the Little Osages \$500, as well as the benefits of a blacksmith, a mill, some plows, a house for the two main chiefs, use of the government trading house, and cancellation of a few minor debts held against the tribe by certain traders. Most important, they maintained the right to hunt on the ceded land. Finally, the Indians gained the benefit of a fort offering both military protection and an Indian factory for trading purposes. Clark had the treaty read and interpreted twice and sealed the negotiations with a distribution



State of Missouri, 1820 by Megan Rytting, Brigham Young University Cartography.

of \$317.74 worth of gifts, including two rifles to Chiefs White Hair and Walking Rain, 100 pounds of powder, 200 pounds of lead, 14 twists of tobacco, as well as knives, paint, blankets, and other sundry articles. For about ten cents per square mile, Clark dispossessed the Osages of 50,000 square miles of land that the government could turn around and sell for \$1.25 to \$2.50 an acre.³

Leaving Fort Osage in the able hands of George Sibley and Indian Subagent Reuben Lewis, the governor's brother, Clark returned to St. Louis with the treaty. Seventy Osages who had been in St. Louis during his absence refused to accept its meager terms. They demanded that the treaty be modified and then they also accepted it.⁴ Clark defended his actions to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn: "no unfair

means had been taken on my part to induce the Osage to secede to the United States such an extensive Country for what is conceived here to be so small a Compensation, when in reality their Compensation when taken into proper view is fully adequate." Even if the cost of constructing the fort, the provisions of the treaty, and the actual compensation for lands are added together, the Osages received inadequate compensation.⁵ Indian Agent Clark had fulfilled the objectives and desires of his superiors by clearing Indian title to lands as cheaply for the government as possible, even when it meant offering an unfair settlement to the tribes involved.

At the time, Clark boasted to his brother Jonathan that he had extinguished the Osages' right of occupancy to 300 miles of Missouri "fer a verry Small Sum."⁶ Later, after years

of experience as an Indian diplomat, a wiser and more reflective Clark apologetically told Ethan Allen Hitchcock, who was serving as a temporary aide in his St. Louis office, that the Osage treaty “was the hardest treaty on the Indians he ever made and that if he was to be damned hereafter it would be for making that treaty. It really seemed to weigh upon his conscience and he was the kindest man in the world to any Osages who might visit St. Louis, but then he was kind to everybody.”⁷⁷ Perhaps Clark “had reason to fear a tenure in hell, because he admitted to complicity in political manipulations that contributed to the exaggerated accusations of Osage ‘depredations’ to advance American interests.”⁷⁸ In addition, the Osage bands on the Arkansas scoffed at White Hair’s agreement, thinking him a pawn of the Americans, which further undermined his credibility among the dissidents.

Governor Lewis took the treaty that Clark had drawn up, modified a few of the articles, added an annuity, and sent it back with agent Pierre Chouteau for tribal approval.⁹ On November 10, 1808, Chouteau presented the substance of the new treaty penned by Lewis – basically the same one outlined by Clark, but with an additional mention of Osage lands held north of the Missouri River – to the Osages gathered at Fort Osage. Lewis had instructed Chouteau to inform the Osages that they must sign and obey the treaty’s stipulations if they wished to remain friends and allies of the United States. If they did not, they would be at the mercy of warring tribes, and all traders would be forbidden to exchange merchandise with them. Held hostage by threats of an embargo and the barely veiled threat of war, many of the tribe reluctantly agreed to the terms, and representatives came forward to place their mark on the treaty by dipping a goose quill in ink. The last Osage signers finally gave their consent on August 31, 1809. Writing to Secretary of War William Eustis, Clark commented that the treaty, when



Chouteau's Treaty with the Osages, 1924 by Walter Ufer, at the Missouri State Capitol.



William Clark, 1820 by Chester Harding. Collections of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. Gift of the St. Louis County Court.

confirmed, “will extinguish the Indian title to more than two hundred miles square of the finest country in Louisiana, for which they have received merchandise to the amount of about \$2,500, taken from the Indian fund.” Congress ratified this treaty, which ceded Indian lands representing nearly the entire state of Missouri to the United States on April 28, 1810.¹⁰

During the War of 1812, President James Madison commissioned Clark as Missouri’s first territorial governor, a position Clark occupied from 1813 to 1820. Clark also acted as an *ex-officio* superintendent of Indian affairs. To keep Missouri’s frontier settlements safe, he authorized a string of frontier blockhouses and mounted ranger patrols. He also took the offensive against British forces and their allies at Prairie du Chien. The Treaty of Ghent (December 24, 1814) established peace with Britain but not with their Native allies. Clark presided at the Portage des Sioux peace council in 1815 and within a year had negotiated peace and friendship treaties with the Iowa, Kansa, Kickapoo, Omaha, Osage, Piankashaw, Potawatomi, Sac and Fox, Sioux, and Winnebago tribes.



Pencil sketch of General William Clark's farmhouse and 1,200-acre country estate Marias Castor (Beaver Marsh and Castor Hill) outside St. Louis. Public domain.

Governor Clark conducted treaties of trade and friendship for tribes furthest from settlement and treaties calling for land cessions and removal for those located within the Missouri and Arkansas territorial boundaries. Whether conducted at his council house in St. Louis – with the Kansas, Kickapoos, Osages, Otos, Poncas, Pawnees, Quapaws – or at Washington – with the Iowas, Sac and Foxes – Clark comported himself as a competent diplomat at councils and supervised Indian agents including Pierre Chouteau, Nicholas Boilvin, Lawrence Taliaferro, and Thomas Forsyth. Yet, he also tried to protect Native land rights and issued unpopular edicts to evict American squatters on Indian lands. This proved unpopular in Missouri, and the populace voted for the man at the land office who provided them land rather than the territorial governor who tried to prevent them from claiming it until Native title had been extinguished. Many Missourians viewed Clark as overly sympathetic to Natives

during his years as agent and territorial governor. Clark recognized this shift in popular opinion and reluctantly compromised his views.¹¹

After Alexander McNair defeated Clark in Missouri's inaugural gubernatorial election (Clark had been *appointed* as territorial governor), President James Monroe appointed Clark superintendent of Indian affairs in 1822, headquartered at St. Louis. Most treaties before 1820 sought peace and friendship to undermine European rivals or trading relationships to promote the fur trade and provide manufactured goods. Those during the 1820s and 1830s often involved land cessions and removal. In June 1825, Clark met with Osage and Kansa representatives at Castor Hill on his Marias Castor (Beaver Pond) ranch on the outskirts of St. Louis and enacted a treaty that divested those nations of much of the territory encompassing Kansas and parts of Oklahoma.

Clark exercised jurisdiction over the removal of western tribes and eastern nations to west of the Mississippi River. He expressed great sympathy for those removed tribes and promoted their interests as he understood them. On March 1, 1826, a more thoughtful and compassionate Clark wrote to Secretary of War James Barbour,

The events of the last two or three wars . . . have entirely changed our position with regard to the Indians. Before those events, the tribes nearest our settlements were a formidable and terrible enemy.... Since then, their power has been broken, their warlike spirit subdued, and themselves sunk into objects of pity and commiseration. While strong and hostile, it has been our obvious policy to weaken them; now that they are weak and harmless, and most of their lands fallen into our hands, justice and humanity require us to cherish and befriend them.¹²

Nevertheless, Clark cannot be absolved of his complicity in helping implement the Indian removal policies of his era. His ethnocentrism caused him to preclude the notion that Natives could maintain their identity and culture within the advancing American frontier. As superintendent, Clark

negotiated 12 treaties at places like Fort Atkinson, Fort Leavenworth, Prairie du Chien, St. Louis, and Washington. Most of these treaties involved land cessions by tribes including the Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Kickapoo, Osage, Piankashaw, Sac and Fox, and Shawnee. When not involved in treaties, Clark issued trading licenses and aided eastern tribes undergoing removal. He presided at the peace treaty at Prairie du Chien in 1825 and negotiated with Black Hawk and Keokuk during and after the Black Hawk War.

Perhaps it was in the realm of policy-making that Clark made his greatest contributions. He was the most experienced and knowledgeable government official in the trans-Mississippi West. From the government's perspective, Clark served as an able administrator of federal policy who offered helpful suggestions in fine-tuning it to match frontier realities. In a time of expanding bureaucratic control, he helped modify the Indian Civilization Act of 1819. Clark and Michigan Territorial Governor Lewis Cass filed a report in 1829 that changed the laws and regulations governing Indian affairs, contributed to the Indian Removal Act of 1830, revised the Trade and Intercourse Laws, and culminated in the reorganization of the entire Indian Bureau in 1834. Clark retained his influential position in St. Louis despite being 68 before passing away on September 1, 1838.

Upon Clark's return from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the U.S. government called upon Clark to occupy St. Louis, its most distant and vulnerable outpost. From 1807 to 1838, he served as the most important representative of the federal government to the Indian nations in the West. Clark was perhaps the most seasoned and accomplished person ever to serve in this position, personally signing one-tenth of all treaties ratified between Indians and the United States. The initial treaties negotiated under Clark's leadership sought to establish peace and friendship, while later treaties usually involved land cessions. In a few of them, such as the Osage Treaty, he obtained land cessions by threat of force and improper pressure, and the Indians did not receive adequate compensation. Clark was not alone in his actions. The government's payment for Indian lands can be summarized as woefully inadequate, even downright beggarly. The government acquired half of the country for less than 75 cents an acre (often significantly less) and seized a billion more acres without offering any compensation at all. At least Clark recognized Native rights, and his treaties offered some, albeit meager (and many would now say unconscionable), compensation.



Indian Superintendent William Clark, 1832 by George Catlin. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

In assessing Clark's accomplishments as an Indian agent and superintendent of Indian affairs, it is clear that he was the most influential federal field agent during the removal

period. His diplomatic career spanned more than 30 years, and he earned the approbation, confidence, and patronage of the nation's first eight presidents from Washington to

“The events of the last two or three wars . . . have entirely changed our position with regard to the Indians. Before those events, the tribes nearest our settlements were a formidable and terrible enemy.... Since then, their power has been broken, their warlike spirit subdued, and themselves sunk into objects of pity and commiseration. While strong and hostile, it has been our obvious policy to weaken them; now that they are weak and harmless, and most of their lands fallen into our hands, justice and humanity require us to cherish and befriend them.”

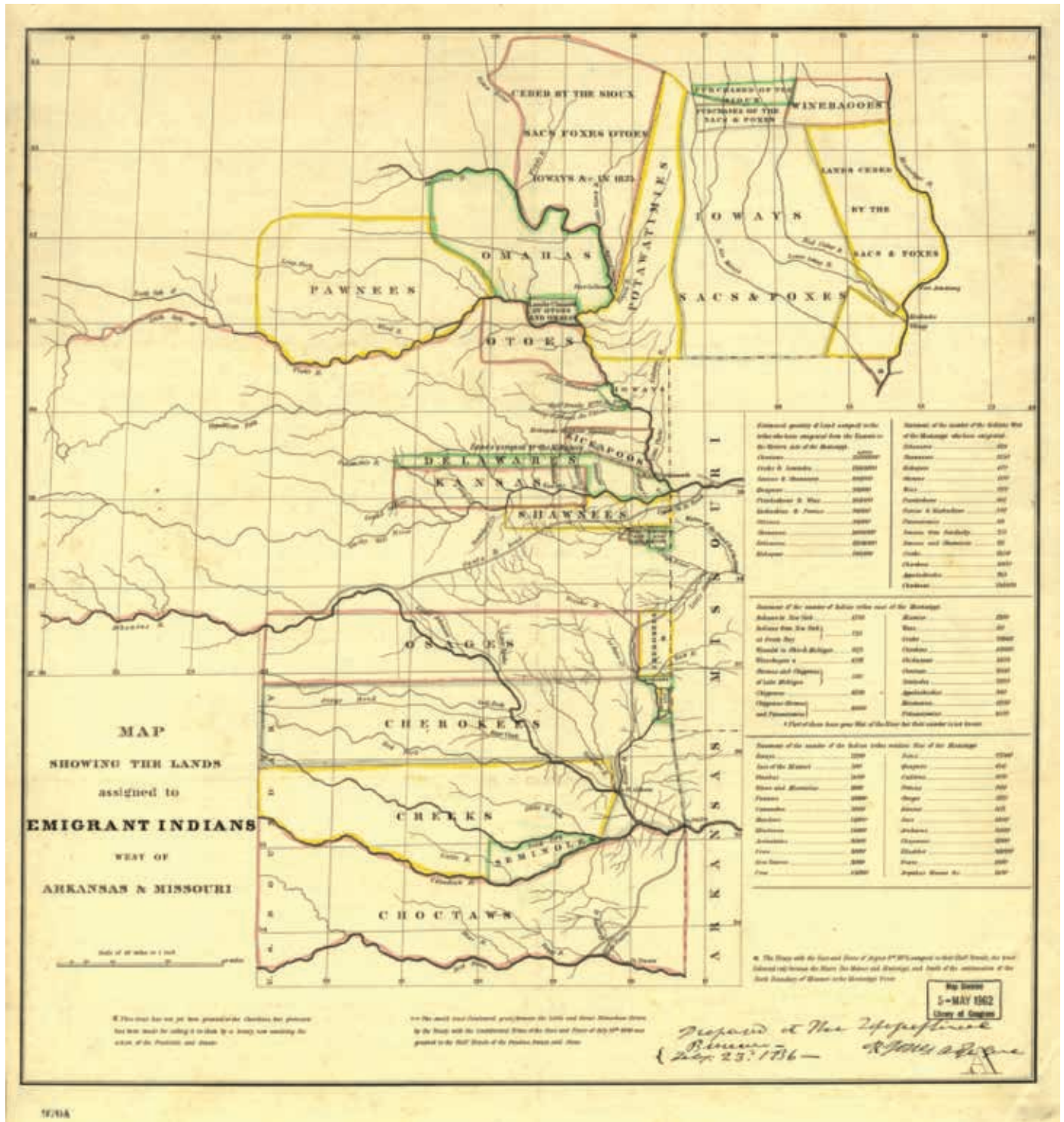
William Clark to James Barbour
March 1, 1826



Pawnee Indians Migrating, circa 1860 by Alfred Jacob Miller. Walters Art Museum , Baltimore, Maryland.

Van Buren. Clark operated as the key federal representative over the largest geographical area and the greatest number of Indian nations. He ably carried out his obligations to clear Native title to western lands (probably too well), opening them up for White settlement and providing room for eastern tribes undergoing removal.¹³

In the controversial and often repulsive area of Indian removal, Clark was more involved than history has credited him with being. A Jeffersonian man in a Jacksonian world, he thought it best to congregate tribes to minimize Indian-White conflict. He even hinted that it might – after years of intertribal marriage – create one Indian race and culture that would

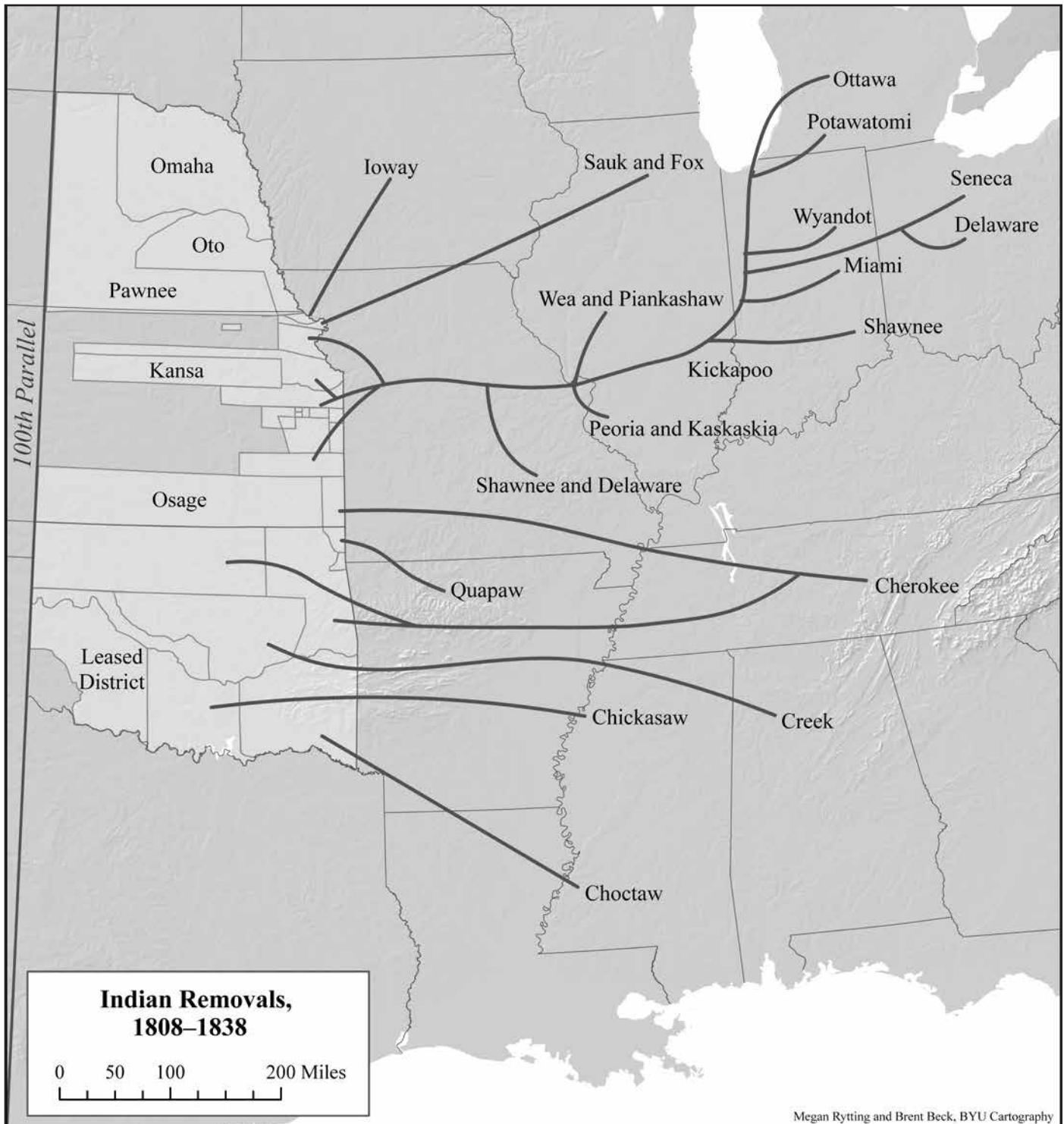


Map Showing The Lands assigned to Emigrant Indians West of Arkansas & Missouri, 1836. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

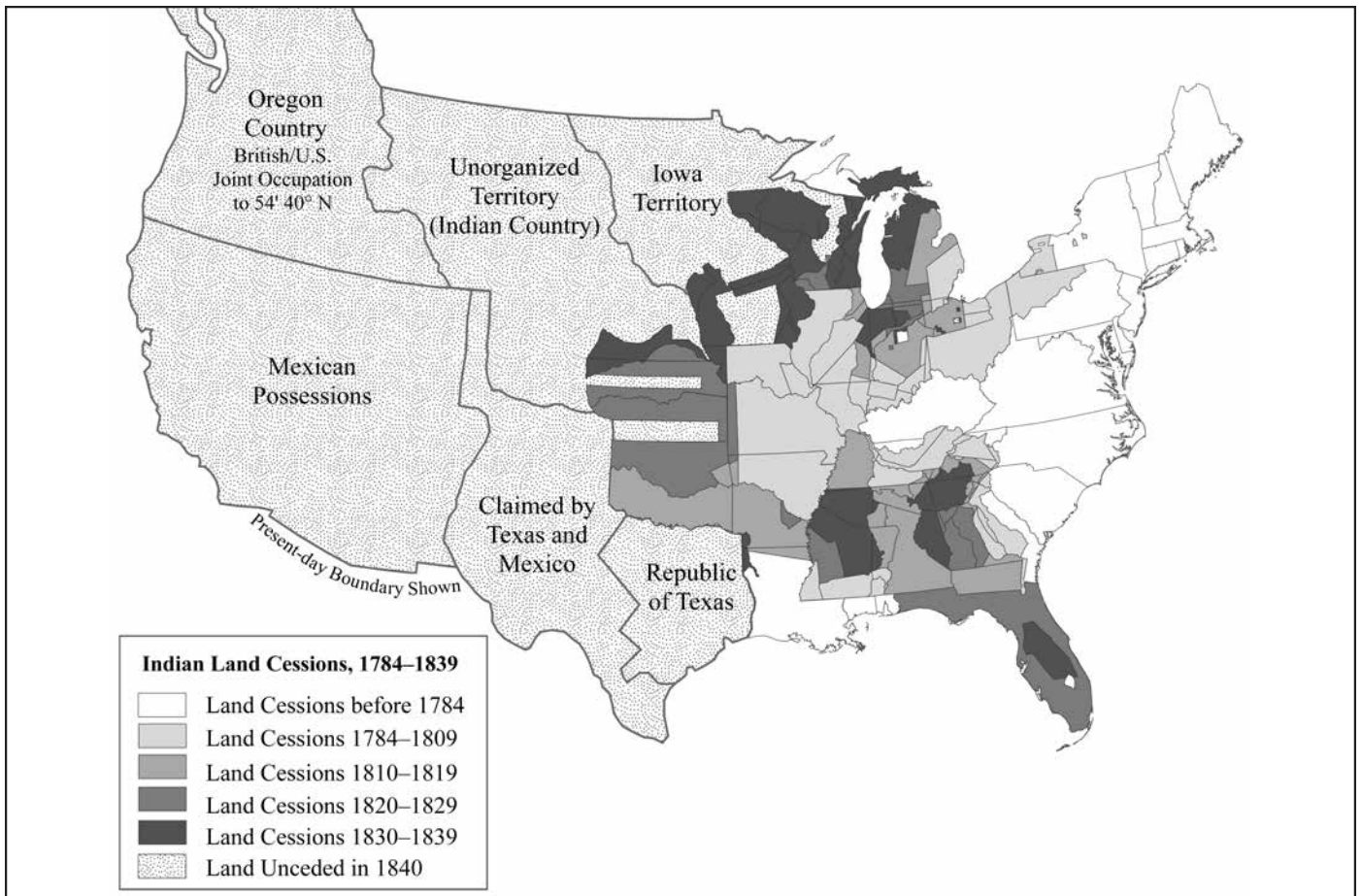
supersede and end tribal distinction. Relocating the Indians away from White settlements, he believed, helped to prevent the evil influences of White society from overwhelming them before they had a chance to accommodate and acculturate to Euro-American ways. Clark tried to enforce the trade and intercourse laws to protect the tribes from the detriments of

alcohol and dishonest traders. He sought to evict squatters and keep settlers from rushing pell-mell onto Native lands by insisting that the government purchase the lands first.

More often than not, the government sent Clark to negotiate a purchase. Over the course of his career, Clark transferred millions of acres from Indian to White



Indian Removals, 1808-1839 by Megan Rytting and Brent Beck, Brigham Young University Cartography.



Indian Land Cessions, 1784-1839 by Megan Rytting and Brent Beck, Brigham Young University Cartography.



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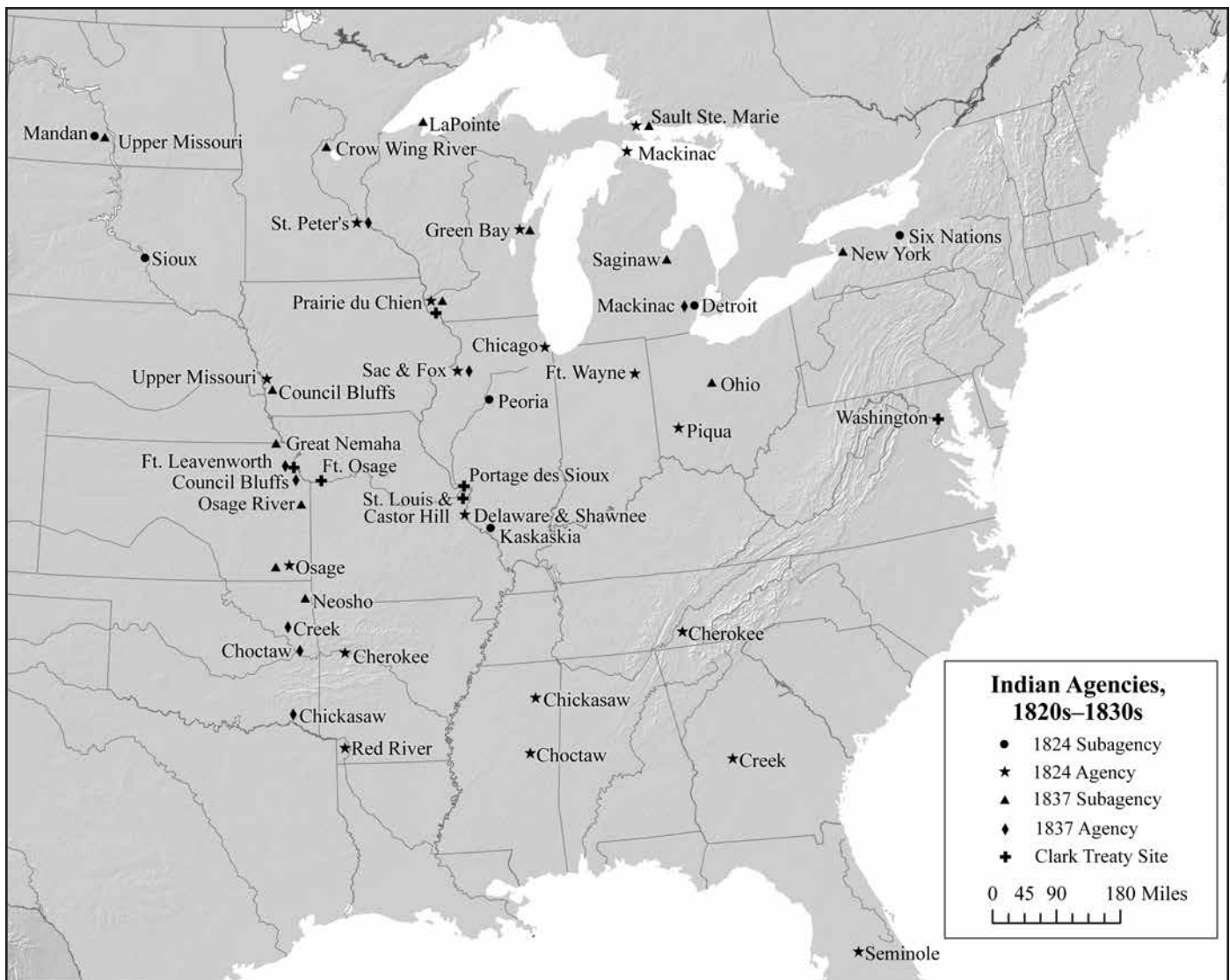


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Indian Agencies, 1820s-1830s by Megan Rytting and Brent Beck, Brigham Young University Cartography.

ownership by his own hand. His first treaty was perhaps his worst, clearing Osage title to much of Missouri. His last treaty, the Platte Purchase, completed the removal of the remaining Native bands from within Missouri's borders. During his lifetime, Clark's treaties cleared Indian title to portions of Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Natives never received adequate compensation or fair market value for their lands, yet they were not passive victims; they were vigorous historical actors who made decisions and helped to shape their own destinies. Whether the government acquired Indian lands by treaty or by war, the results were often similar. Occasionally Clark used threats to accomplish government goals and negotiated treaties for the government at the least possible expense. He contributed to the dispossession

and suffering of thousands of Indians. Yet he delayed removal as long as he could for tribes following Keokuk, Kennekuk, and other Indian leaders whom he admired and trusted. To his credit, and despite his governmental affiliation, many Natives still regarded Clark as their friend and advocate. In return, he made the bitter pill of removal somewhat easier to swallow by undertaking significant humanitarian efforts to improve their conditions during and after their removals, including the ability to take their Black slaves with them, and wresting from the government the maximum they were willing to pay at that time.¹⁴

In the twentieth century, Clark's treaties were some of the best documents supporting Indian claims and Indian rights. With respect to the Indian Claims Commission

A newspaper account acknowledged Clark's death with this notice: "No man has ever possessed as much influence with the Northwestern Indians, by whom he was universally respected and confided in. In his death the Indian Department has sustained a loss which can scarcely be repaired, and with him perished a fund of information, in regard to our relations with the aborigines, which can never be supplied from any other source."¹⁶ In addition to his contributions as co-leader of America's most famous exploratory expedition, Clark's tenure as Indian agent and superintendent of Indian affairs created his legacy as antebellum America's most important and influential Indian diplomat. ■

Jay H. Buckley, associate professor of history at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, is a past president of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance and a frequent contributor to WPO. He is the author or co-author of 12 books, including William Clark: Indian Diplomat; By His Own Hand: The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis; Zebulon Pike, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West; and, most recently, Great Plains Forts.



2025 Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Photo Contest

Celebrate the beauty and history of the Lewis and Clark Trail by sharing your unique perspective through photography! The contest is open from now through August 30, 2025.

The contest is open to both members and non-members. Detailed instructions are available by following the link below.

Winning images will be featured in the 2026 LCTA Calendar.

lewisandclark.org/photo-contest/

Notes

1. For a discussion of Osage motivations for signing the treaty, see Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 200-205.
2. William Clark to Henry Dearborn, 23 September 1808, Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, vol. 14, *The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri, 1806-1814* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1949), 14:224-28; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 271.
3. Kate L. Gregg, *Westward with Dragoons: The Journal of William Clark on His Expedition to Establish Fort Osage, August 25 to September 22, 1808* (Fulton, MO: Ovid Bell Press, 1937), 40-41, 59-60, 64-68.
4. Jay H. Buckley, *William Clark: Indian Diplomat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 75-78.
5. Clark to Dearborn, 28 September 1808, Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, 14:227.
6. Clark to Jonathan Clark, 5 October 1808, James J. Holmberg, ed., *Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 154.
7. Grant Foreman, ed., *A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Late Major-General in the United States Army* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Torch Press, 1930), 56.
8. J. Frederick Fausz, "Becoming 'a Nation of Quakers': The Removal of the Osage Indians from Missouri." *Gateway Heritage* 21:1 (Summer 2000): 28-39 (esp. 37).
9. Meriwether Lewis to Pierre Chouteau, 3 October 1808, Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, 14:229-31.
10. Clark to Dearborn, 2 December 1808, Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, 14:242-44.
11. William E. Foley, "After the Applause: William Clark's Failed 1820 Gubernatorial Campaign," *Gateway Heritage* 24:2 and 3 (Fall 2003-Winter 2004): 104-11 (esp. 105).
12. Clark to James Barbour, 1 March 1826, *New American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 2:683-87.
13. Buckley, *William Clark*, 238-39.
14. Buckley, *William Clark*, 239-40.
15. Buckley, *William Clark*, 240-41.
16. *Daily Commercial Bulletin* on the death of William Clark, September 28, 1838.
17. Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 3 vols. vol. 2, *Treaties*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904-1913), 2:305-19.

A treaty signed by William Clark is the "gold standard" documentation necessary for federal recognition as an Indian Nation.

The following pages show a list of the ratified Indian treaties negotiated by William Clark or his agents...

Ratified Indian Treaties Negotiated by Clark or His Agents ¹⁷

Number and Date	Tribes	Place	Commissioners	Citations
45 [55]. Nov. 10, 1808;	Osage	Fort Clark	Peter Chouteau	Kappler, 95-99; 7 Stat. 107-11
52 [62]. July 18, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Potawatomi	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 110-11; 7 Stat. 123
53 [63]. July 18, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Piankashaw	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 111-12; 7 Stat. 124
54 [64]. July 19, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Teton	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 112-13; 7 Stat. 125
55 [65]. July 19, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Sioux of the Lakes	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 113; 7 Stat. 126
56 [66]. July 19, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Sioux of St. Peter's River	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards;	Kappler, 114; 7 Stat. 127
57 [67]. July 19, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Yankton Sioux	Portage des Sioux	Auguste Chouteau William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 115; 7 Stat. 128
58 [68]. July 20, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Omaha	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 115-16; 7 Stat. 129
59 [69]. Sept. 2, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Kickapoo	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 116-17; 7 Stat. 130
61 [71]. Sept. 12, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Osage	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 119-20; 7 Stat. 133-34
62 [72]. Sept. 13, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Sac	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 120-21; 7 Stat. 134-35
63 [73]. Sept. 14, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Fox	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 121-22; 7 Stat. 135-36
64 [74]. Sept. 16, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Iowa	Portage des Sioux	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 122-23; 7 Stat. 136-37
65 [75]. Oct. 28, 1815; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1815	Kansa	St. Louis	Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 123-24; 7 Stat. 137-38
68 [78]. May 13, 1816; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1816	Sac of Rock River	St. Louis	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 126-28; 7 Stat. 141-42
69 [79]. June 1, 1816; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1816	Sioux	St. Louis	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 128-30; 7 Stat. 143-44
70 [80]. June 3, 1816; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1816	Winnebago	St. Louis	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 130-31; 7 Stat. 144-45

Number and Date	Tribes	Place	Commissioners	Citations
72 [82]. Aug. 24, 1816; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1816	Ottawa; Chippewa; Potawatomi	St. Louis	Ninian Edwards; William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 132-33; 7 Stat. 146 -48
76 [86]. Mar. 30, 1817; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1817	Menominee	St. Louis	William Clark; Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 138; 7 Stat. 153-54
77 [87]. June 24, 1817; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1817	Oto	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 139; 7 Stat. 154-55
78 [88]. June 25, 1817; proclaimed Dec. 26, 1817	Ponca	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 140; 7 Stat. 155 -56
82 [92]. June 18, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1819	Grand Pawnee	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 156-57; 7 Stat. 172-73
83 [93]. June 19, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1819	Noisy Pawnee	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 157-58; 7 Stat. 173-74
84 [94]. June 20, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1819	Pawnee Republic	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 158-59; 7 Stat. 174-75
85 [95]. June 22, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 5, 1819	Pawnee Marhar	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 159; 7 Stat. 175 -76
86 [96]. Aug. 24, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 5, 1819	Quapaw	St. Louis	William Clark; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 160-61; 7 Stat. 176-78
89 [99]. Sept. 25, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 5, 1819	Peoria; Kaskaskia; Michigamea, Cahokia; Tamaroa	Edwardsville	Ninian Edwards; Auguste Chouteau	Kappler, 165-66; 7 Stat. 181-83
90 [100]. Sept. 25, 1818; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1819	Osage	St. Louis	William Clark	Kappler, 167-68; 7 Stat. 183-84
97 [107]. July 30, 1819; proclaimed Jan. 13, 1821	Kickapoo	Edwardsville	Auguste Chouteau; Benjamin Stephenson	Kappler, 182-83; 7 Stat. 200-202
102 [112]. July 19, 1820; proclaimed Jan. 13, 1821	Kickapoo	St. Louis	Auguste Chouteau; Benjamin Stephenson	Kappler, 189-90; 7 Stat. 208-209
108 [118]. Aug. 31, 1822; proclaimed Feb. 13, 1823	Osage	Marias des Cygnes Factory	Richard Graham	Kappler, 201-202; 7 Stat. 222
109 [119]. Sept. 3, 1822; proclaimed Feb. 13, 1823	Sac and Fox	Fort Armstrong	Thomas Forsyth	Kappler, 202-203; 7 Stat. 223
111 [12 1]. Aug. 4, 1824; proclaimed Jan. 18, 1825	Sac and Fox	Washington	William Clark	Kappler, 207-208; 7 Stat. 229-30
112 [122]. Aug. 4, 1824; proclaimed Jan. 18, 1825	Iowa	Washington	William Clark	Kappler, 208-209; 7 Stat. 231-32
116 [1261]. June 2, 1825; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1825	Osage	St. Louis	William Clark	Kappler, 217-21; 7 Stat. 240-44
117 [127]. June 3, 1825; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1825	Kansa	St. Louis	William Clark	Kappler, 222-25; 7 Stat. 244-47
118 [128]. June 9, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Ponca	Ponca Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 225-27; 7 Stat. 247-49
119 [129]. June 22, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Sioux: Teton, Yankton, Yanktonai	Fort Lookout	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 227-30; 7 Stat. 250-52

continued...

William Clark and His Treaties with Indian Nations: A Brief Overview

Number and Date	Tribes	Place	Commissioners	Citations
120 [130]. July 5, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Sioux: Sioune, Oglala	Teton River	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 230-32; 7 Stat. 252-54
121 [131]. July 6, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Cheyenne	Teton River	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 232-34-1; 7 Stat. 255-57
122 [132]. July 16, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Hunkpapa Sioux	Arikara Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 235-36; 7 Stat. 257-59
123 [133]. July 18, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Arikara	Arikara Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 237-39; 7 Stat. 259-61
124 [134]. July 30, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Minitari	Lower Mandan Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 239-41; 7 Stat. 261-63
125 [135]. July 30, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Mandan	Mandan Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 242-44; 7 Stat. 264-66
126 [136]. Aug. 4, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Crow	Mandan Village	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 244-46; 7 Stat. 266-68
127 [137]. Aug. 10, 1825; proclaimed May 3, 1826	Osage	Council Grove	Benjamin H. Reeves; George C. Sibley; Thomas Mather	Kappler, 246-48; 7 Stat. 268-70
128 [138]. Aug. 16, 1825; proclaimed May 3, 1826	Kansa	Sora Kansas Creek	Benjamin H. Reeves; George C. Sibley; Thomas Mather	Kappler, 248-50; 7 Stat. 270-72
129 [139]. Aug. 19, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Sioux; Chippewa; Sac and Fox; Menominee; Iowa; Winnebago; Ottawa; Potawatomi	Prairie du Chien	William Clark; Lewis Cass	Kappler 250-55; 7 Stat. 272-77
130 [140]. Sept. 26, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Oto and Missouri	Fort Atkinson	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 256-58; 7 Stat. 277-79
131 [141]. Sept. 30, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Pawnee	Fort Atkinson	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 258-60; 7 Stat. 279-81
132 [142]. Oct. 6, 1825; proclaimed Feb. 6, 1826	Maha (Omaha)	Fort Atkinson	Henry Atkinson; Benjamin O'Fallon	Kappler, 260-62; 7 Stat. 282-84
133 [143]. Nov. 7, 1825; proclaimed Dec. 30, 1825	Shawnee	St. Louis	William Clark	Kappler, 262-64; 7 Stat. 284-86
143 [153]. Aug. 25, 1828; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1829	Winnebago; United tribes: Potawatomi, Chippewa, Ottawa	Green Bay	Lewis Cass; Pierre Menard	Kappler, 292-94; 7 Stat. 315-17
144 [154]. Sept. 20, 1828; proclaimed Jan. 7, 1829	Potawatomi	St. Joseph River	Lewis Cass; Pierre Menard	Kappler, 294-97; 7 Stat. 317-20
145 [155]. July 29, 1829; proclaimed Jan. 2, 1830	United tribes: Potawatomi, Ottawa, Chippewa	Prairie du Chien	John McNeil; Pierre Menard; Caleb Atwater	Kappler, 297-300; 7 Stat. 320-22
146 [156]. Aug. 1, 1829; proclaimed Jan. 2, 1830	Winnebago	Prairie du Chien	John McNeil; Pierre Menard; Caleb Atwater	Kappler, 300-303; 7 Stat. 323-25

Number and Date	Tribes	Place	Commissioners	Citations
149 [159]. July 15, 1830; proclaimed Feb. 24, 1831 Assent to treaty by Yankton and Santee Sioux at St. Louis, Oct. 13, 1830	Sac and Fox; Sioux: Mdewakanton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Sisseton; Omaha; Iowa; Oto and Missouri	Prairie du Chien	William Clark; Willoughby Morgan	Kappler, 305-10; 7 Stat. 328-32
164 [174]. Oct. 24, 1832; proclaimed Feb. 13, 1833	Kickapoo	Castor Hill	William Clark; Frank J. Allen; Nathan Kouns	Kappler, 365-67; 7 Stat. 391-93
Supplementary article Nov. 26, 1832		Fort Leavenworth		Kappler, 367; 7 Stat. 393-94
166 [176]. Oct. 26, 1832; proclaimed Feb. 12, 1833	Shawnee; Delaware	Castor Hill	William Clark; Frank J. Allen; Nathan Kouns	Kappler, 370-72; 7 Stat. 397-99
168 [178]. Oct. 27, 1832; proclaimed Feb. 12, 1833	Kaskaskia; Peoria; Michigamea; Cahokia; Tamaroa	Castor Hill	William Clark; Frank J. Allen; Nathan Kouns	Kappler, 376-77; 7 Stat. 403-5
170 [180]. Oct. 29, 1832; proclaimed Feb. 12, 1833	Piankashaw; Wea	Castor Hill	William Clark; Frank J. Allen; Nathan Kouns	Kappler, 382-83; 7 Stat. 410-11
201 [211]. Sept. 17, 1836; proclaimed Feb. 15, 1837	Iowa; Sac and Fox of the Missouri	Fort Leavenworth	William Clark	Kappler, 468-70; 7 Stat. 511-13
207 [217]. Oct. 15, 1836; proclaimed Feb. 15, 1837	Oto; Missouri; Omaha; Sioux: Yankton, Santee	Bellevue	John Dougherty; Joshua Pilcher	Kappler, 479-81, 7 Stat. 524-26
208 [218]. Nov. 30, 1836; proclaimed Feb. 18, 1837	Sioux: Wahpekute, Sisseton, Mdewakanton	St. Peter's	Lawrence Taliaferro	Kappler, 481-82; 7 Stat. 527-28
224 [233]. Oct. 19, 1838; proclaimed Mar 2, 1839	Iowa	Great Nemaha Subagency	John Dougherty	Kappler, 518-19; 7 Stat. 568-69

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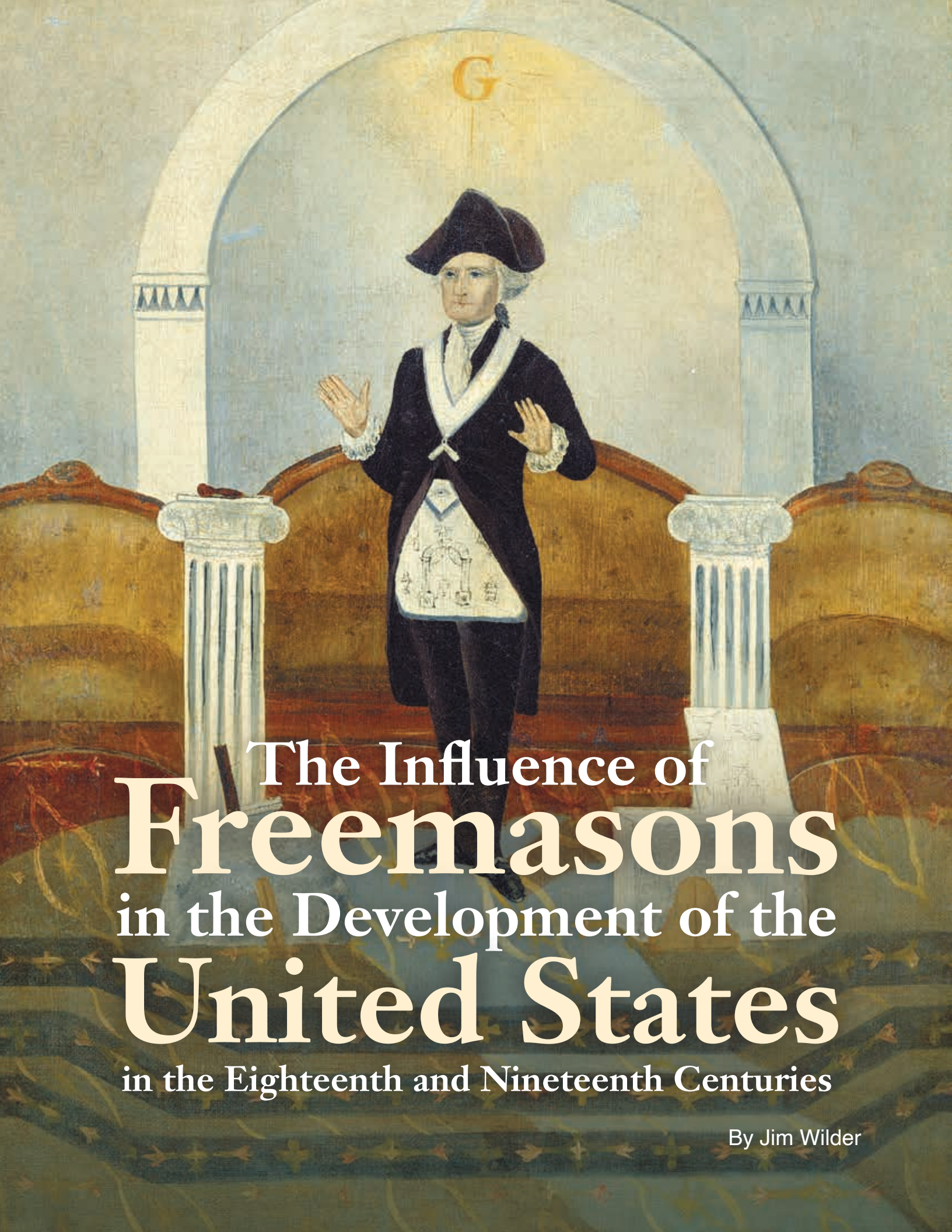
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The Influence of
Freemasons
in the Development of the
United States
in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

By Jim Wilder

Introduction and Historical Context

At William Clark's gravesite memorial in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri, engraved on his tomb's tall obelisk are a square and compass – the Freemasons' symbol. In Lewis and Clark's era, the Freemasons were a well-regarded fraternal organization. Many principal figures in early American history were Freemasons, including Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Rufus King, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Andrew Jackson. At least nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons,¹ and perhaps 13 of the 39 delegates to the Continental Congress who signed the draft of the Constitution in 1787 were Freemasons.² This article discusses why Freemasonry may have appealed to these men (Freemasons are exclusively male) and the role of the Freemasonry movement in the development of the United States.

The Origins of Freemasonry in Europe

The fraternal organization of Freemasonry evolved from the guilds of stonemasons and cathedral builders of the Middle Ages and was influenced by their legends, imagery, and customs. The term "Freemason" developed to distinguish the fraternal order from stonemasons who plied their craft. "Free and Accepted Masons," seen on lodge signs as F&AM, refers to the fact that Freemasonry is distinct from the actual craft.³ Freemasonry emerged from new market pressures in England and Scotland which by the 1720s had caused the demise of the craft guilds and led to the establishment of the first Grand Lodge in 1717 in London and publication of its first rulebook, *The Constitution of the Free-Masons*, in 1723. The Constitution's Enlightenment principles provide the philosophical foundations of modern Freemasonry alongside the guiding principles of Integrity, Respect, Friendship, and Service combined with religious tolerance and civic virtue.^{4, 5}

Supplanting the guilds as a form of sociability suited to the new politics and economics, Freemasonry proved to be appealing in other European countries and the American Colonies.⁶ Just as lodges of some working masons accepted honorary members to bolster their membership, the symbols and customs of the stonemason guilds were combined with the rites and vestments of ancient religious orders and chivalric brotherhoods to create the "Freemasons." In the early 1700s in Scotland, upper-class men were attracted



Meriwether Lewis in His Masonic Apron by Tom Saubert. Courtesy Montana Masonic Foundation, Inc.



William Clark's grave, Bellefontaine Cemetery, 4947 W. Florissant Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. Courtesy Nathan Brown, Google Maps.

At left, Washington, the Mason, circa 1868 by unknown artist. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Wikimedia Commons.

to the lodges' customs, secrecy, and friendships among members. By this time there were also Dutch and French lodges of Freemasons.

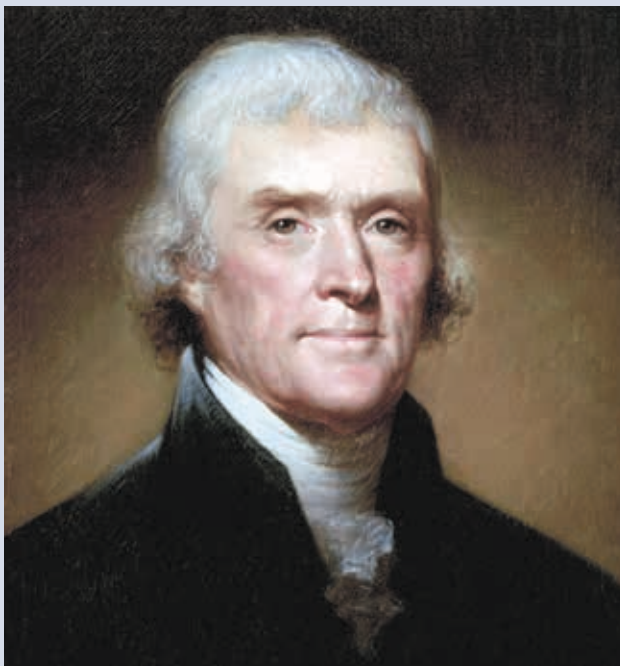
From its inception, Freemasonry was both secular and secret. This trait of secrecy separated the early lodges from other social clubs and drinking societies of their time. That merit and not birth constitutes the foundation for social and political order was a key tenet. The early Masons enjoyed "merry assemblies" in the context of having a "jolly good time" at dinner tables but were mindful that Freemasons did not embarrass the craft by being inebriated in public. Eighteenth-century Europe is sometimes known as the age of the voluntary association⁷ as in France where the "salon culture" was associated with the Enlightenment. Freemasonry was a social association that arose in that tradition, matching the popularity in England of discussing political matters in coffee houses, reading clubs, musical societies, and bars. In the early 1700s in Scotland, upper-class men were attracted to the lodges' customs, intriguing secrecy, and friendships among members. It was through these kinds of social venues that Freemasonry spread rapidly across Europe. In the 1720s and 1730s, new lodges were formed throughout the Continent from Sweden to Italy, including Madrid and Rotterdam which

were major Masonic hubs. By the late 1700s most significant towns hosted a Freemason lodge. France had more than 700 lodges in 1789 with a total membership of at least 50,000.⁸ Freemasonry spread around the world with the advance of the British Empire including by 1730 to the American Colonies.^{9, 10}

There is no religious requirement to be a Mason. Freemasonry is open to adult males who believe in a Supreme Being. Although neither a version of Christianity nor any other religion, Freemasonry does contain rituals, and its teachings encourage morality, charity, and engagement with the state. All lodges in the U.S. have three degrees: apprentice, fellow craft, and master. Freemasons in European countries have additional degrees stemming from these three major degrees, but Freemasons promulgate neither central authority nor standard organizational model.^{11, 12}

The Enlightenment Heritage of Freemasonry

Freemasonry began during the Age of Enlightenment – roughly 1690 to 1790 – and continued to spread during the American Revolutionary War, 1775-1783, and the French Revolution, 1789-1802. Both Freemasonry and the U.S. government are products of the Enlightenment and its unexpected aftermath, political revolution.



Official Presidential Portrait of Thomas Jefferson, 1800 by Rembrandt Peale.

Why Not Jefferson?

Thomas Jefferson admired the Freemasonry movement and especially his friends who were Freemasons, but he never joined the organization himself. Like most Freemasons, Jefferson was a deist and a rationalist. A deist believes that a Supreme Being created the universe, spun the planets, created life (along a carefully calibrated Chain of Being), and then stood back to let his Creation unfold according to Natural Law mechanics and principles. Jefferson was essentially a Unitarian.

In a letter of June 26, 1822, Jefferson wrote: "I rejoice that in this blessed country of free inquiry and belief, which has surrendered its creed and conscience to neither kings nor priests, the genuine doctrine of one only God is reviving, and I trust that there is not a young man now living in the United States who will not die an Unitarian." This is one of those instances in which Jefferson could not have been more wrong.

Freemasons in Britain and France in the late 1700s believed their society provided a set of distinctive values by which people could organize their lives in accordance with Enlightenment principles.¹³ The education and personal virtues prized by Freemasons were associated with the ideals of Enlightenment ethics and personal and social improvement. The key to this, they believed, lay in establishing order and harmony. The Masons, owing to their heritage as craftsmen, were concerned with both. As maintaining order in an organization requires authority and governance, each lodge developed its own governance and policies, but no lodge attempted to gain state political power or protection. Masonic lodge records are clear on eschewing involvement in the politics of the day.¹⁴

Freemasons advocated the personal virtues they believed to be applicable to governance, social order, and harmony. According to historian Margaret Jacob:

“The lodges sought to civilize, to teach manners and decorum, to augment the order and harmony of civil society. They taught men to speak in public, to keep records, to pay ‘taxes,’ to be tolerant, to debate freely, to vote, to moderate their feasting, and to give lifelong devotion to the other citizens of their order.”¹⁵ Furthermore, “...the new freemasonry, as it spread from London... came to embody a variety

of ethical prescriptions for living in this world, a stance that was secular and philosophical as distinct from religious and doctrinal... More so than any of the other forms of private sociability, freemasonry wove enlightened ideas into a tapestry of rituals and oaths, rules of conduct intended to induce loyalty and civility, in short into a way of life for its most resolute followers. There is an all-pervasive religiosity about masonic sociability. In it we may find that ‘heavenly city’ offered by the new secular philosophies of the 18th century to their worldly and cosmopolitan followers.”¹⁶

On the eve of the French Revolution, French Freemasons expressed anxiety about the moral corruption that was plaguing the country. They believed friendship, civic virtue, and morality could be restored within society one man at a time by identifying men who were judged outstanding for their virtue and morality and then bringing them into the brotherhood. In so doing, Freemasonry promulgated civil discourse and friendships that would influence the entire political system. There were dissenters, however, who viewed Masonic lodges as dangerous to political order, as a rival set of allegiances echoing the *ancien regime*, the political system in France preceding the French Revolution. During the Reign of Terror, the Committee of Public Safety closed all Masonic lodges in one French city under the suspicion they

Jefferson was a small-r republican. He sought to create as much of an egalitarian society as possible. He famously warned George Washington to hold the new Society of the Cincinnati at arm’s length, both because he was not in favor of exclusive organizations and because he feared that the Cincinnati might morph into a hereditary military aristocracy – anathema to a republic where the military was subordinated to civil authority. Washington listened, and though he was a member of the Society, he resisted some of its more high-toned notions.

Inspired by the early phases of the French Revolution – a bit of which he observed at first hand in Paris – Jefferson even envisioned a time when such titles as Mr., Mrs., Dr., and Esq. would be retired in favor of the more egalitarian Citizen.

Fifteen American presidents have been Freemasons, but Jefferson is not numbered among them. Two of his fellow presidents in the founding generation were Masons: Washington and James Monroe. And of course

Meriwether Lewis was a Freemason. Lewis’ Masonic apron, now a treasure of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Montana headquarters in Helena, Montana, is one of the few material items we can be sure Lewis held in his hands.

Jefferson’s son-in-law Thomas Mann Randolph and his grandson Thomas Jefferson Randolph were Freemasons.

The one fraternal organization Jefferson joined was what is known as the Flat Hat Club at the College of William and Mary. That, at least, is the name by which it is known, but its initials FHC may have stood for less frivolous Latin words. The Flat Hat Club is regarded as the first college fraternity in the United States.

Jefferson’s decision not to join a Masonic Lodge does not in any way imply a rejection of the Freemasons’ principles or purposes. He just wasn’t much of a joiner, and certainly not a joiner of exclusive or secret societies.

Clay Jenkinson

were conspiring to assume arms. Revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic recognized the potential power and possibility of Masonic brotherhood.¹⁷

Freemasonry and the Founders

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Freemasonry found a niche that attracted many of the Constitutional framers and early citizens of this country. A number of the Founding Fathers were familiar with Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke (1632-1704) and Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755). Indeed, America's system of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government can be traced to Montesquieu. Montesquieu wrote in *The Spirit of Laws* (1748): "...virtue may be defined as the love of the laws and of our country. As such love requires a constant preference of public to private interest, it is the source of all private virtues; ...This love is peculiar to democracies... Now, a government is like everything else: to preserve it we must love it."¹⁸ The ideals of Freemasons fit well with this idea of virtue and emphasis on public interest.

Though notable Freemasons like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and the Marquis de Lafayette participated in revolutions, most Enlightenment-era Freemasons

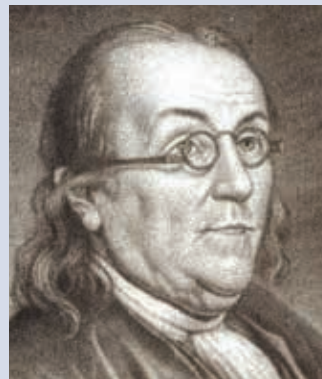
were deferential to existing political regimes and both absolutist and constitutional forms of monarchy. In a symbolic act demonstrating the significance for George Washington of the role of Freemasons in the new United States, he wore his own Masonic apron when he presided over the laying of the cornerstone at the U.S. Capitol in 1793 – an unambiguous public message that Freemasonry was a cornerstone of the new republic. Washington stressed that it taught "the duties of men and citizens" and represented a "lodge for the virtues."¹⁹ Freemasonry's emphasis on fostering civic virtue and engagement with government among brethren remains a key tenet of the Freemasons.

The essential conditions that attracted many men in the American Colonies to Freemasonry were: 1) a booming economy that favored the merchants in port cities; 2) the autonomy of businesses in America vis-a-vis the Crown; 3) the growing ranks of carpenters, masons, and other craftsmen; 4) the influx of Europeans, many of whom would have known about Freemasonry and been cognizant of its value in the developing Colonies; 5) the necessity of accommodating an increasing plethora of Christian denominations and the secular yet also ecumenical nature of the Freemason brotherhood; 6) the upward mobility that joining the Freemasons might offer; and 7) a common tie to the organizations, values, and customs of Europe.

The last time I saw Mr. Whitefield was in London, when he consulted me about his Orphan House Concern, and his Purpose of appropriating it to the Establishment of a College.

He had a loud and clear Voice, and articulated his Words and Sentences so perfectly that he might be heard and understood at a great Distance, especially as his Auditors, however numerous, observ'd the most exact Silence. He preach'd one Evening from the Top of the Court House Steps, which are in the middle of Market Street, and on the West Side of Second Street which crosses it at right angles. Both Streets were fill'd with his Hearers to a considerable Distance. Being among the hindmost in Market Street, I had the Curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backwards down the Street towards the River; and I found his Voice distinct till I came near Front Street, when some Noise in that Street, obscur'd it. Imagining then a Semicircle, of

which my Distance should be the Radius, and that it were fill'd with Auditors, to each of whom I allow'd two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than Thirty Thousand. This reconcil'd me to the Newspaper Accounts of his having preach'd to 25,000 People in the Fields, and to the ancient Histories of Generals haranguing whole Armies, of which I had sometimes doubted.



The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.

Written between 1771 and 1790, the first accurate English edition was published by John Bigelow in 1868.

Benjamin Franklin, 1787 designed and engraved by Charles Willson Peale. Bequest of Charles Allen Munn, 1924, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

America was founded upon Enlightenment concepts, but in America the influence of religion often conflicted with those concepts. Though the Constitution defined a secular federal government, the framers included the religion clause of the First Amendment – “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” – to enable all religions to flourish. There were even some tax-supported churches in New England.²⁰ Thus, the early republic was not a “Christian nation,” but it was not entirely secular either. Harvard and Yale were initially divinity schools. In the mid-nineteenth century, many state universities required chapel attendance and had clergy as presidents. The United States was shaped by often-conflicting Enlightenment and Protestant religious tenets.

Freemasons embodied then, as they do to this day, a middle way between the secular and religious trends, between individualism and governmental order. They have consistently embraced the ideal of religious tolerance, a sentiment also expressed by Enlightenment figures including Thomas Jefferson in his 1786 Virginia Statue for Religious Freedom.

Economics and Religion in the Colonies and the United States

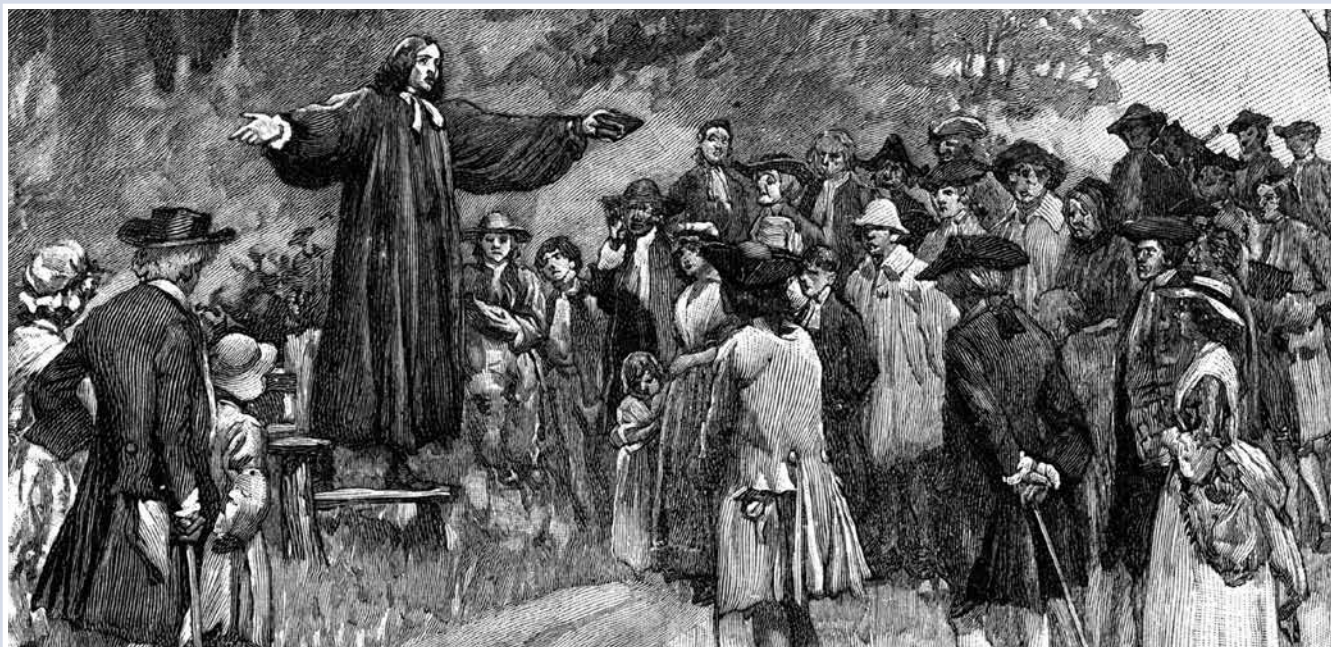
After 1700, the populations of the American Colonies

and their economies grew very quickly. The colonial economy expanded from 4% of England’s GDP in 1700 to 40% in 1770. The American markets were critical to the growth of British manufacturing.²¹ During the 1700s, the Colonies also brought 1.5 million slaves to work on plantations in the South, raising crops and tobacco for European markets.²²

The relationships between slavery and the Freemasons is complex and would take more space than available to describe here, but the story of an African-American named Prince Hall (c. 1735-1807) of Boston highlights the ecumenical bent of the Masons. Prince Hall worked with the Freemasons to establish a place for New York’s free and enslaved Blacks and formed the African Grand Lodge in 1784.²³ Unique among the associations, Freemasonry offered a way of bridging cultural and racial differences.

Religious Movements in the Colonies and the New United States

Smaller and localized church revivals in the 1730s had expanded owing to reports from New England that were first published in London and then back in the Colonies. By the mid-1700s, widespread religious revivals reflected the growing cultural integration of the Colonies in America. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had instigated religious revivals



George Whitefield preaches to a crowd. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Great-Awakening#/media/1/242887/243286>.

in the Connecticut Valley, and he was widely read in Britain and the Colonies. He described how preaching and conversions might guide subsequent revivals as confirmations of God's power and influence.²⁴

George Whitefield (1714-1770), a young Anglican minister and enthusiastic itinerant evangelist, found inspiration in the writings of Jonathan Edwards. The marketing for his tour of Britain included advance men, handbills, and newspaper notices to build interest and draw his audiences which numbered in the thousands. From 1739-1741, Whitefield toured the Colonies from New England to Georgia, attracting huge crowds and publishing his message. In Philadelphia, he became friends with Benjamin Franklin, the most prominent publisher and social reformer in the Colonies. Franklin admired Whitefield as an entrepreneur and speaker, but did not share his views. Other colonists in America did, though, and fomented several local revivals, collectively known as the "Great Awakenings."²⁵

The period of the Great Awakenings involved not only religion but also politics and society. Religion was a dominant concern as churches were among the most important

social institutions. Theology became a language of controversy, highlighting tensions and conflict arising from socio-economic issues and class differences between merchants and farmers. Itinerant preachers proclaimed their word was as good as that of educated clergy and upper-class ministers. The social unrest was directed away from the upper-class merchants to the powerful church establishment and the Bostonian tradition of unemotional religious practice.²⁶ The influence of older Protestant groups, such as the New England Congregationalists, declined due to the Great Awakening. Masons embraced deistic principles, the belief that personal morality and an individual's values led to good works and actions, and were more important than church doctrines. Inevitably, the Masons were viewed with suspicion by both established and evangelical Protestant Christians.

The Second Great Awakening

During the first 50 years of the U.S., an average of five million immigrants arrived each decade, and the nation's frontier pushed westward. Revivals became a primary means of Christianizing the growing population. The Second Great Awakening spawned new Bible colleges, seminaries, and mission-society organizations that had lasting effects. The Awakenings furthered divisions within denominations, however, as itinerant preaching weakened the parish system and contributed to the evangelical movement in the United States.²⁷

The general adherence to faith, rather than reason, and the anti-intellectual tenor of the Great Awakenings had the effect of turning back the influences of Enlightenment rationalism in the Colonies. A new literary era that valued romanticism over rationality foreshadowed the replacement of the Enlightenment in the early 1800s. Romantics admired emotion, instinctive reaction, sensory stimulation, and imagination. They praised intuition and mysticism as superior to rationality and objectivity. With this shift came a profound reversal in attitudes towards Locke, Montesquieu, deism, and even the writings of the Greeks and Romans.²⁸ In addition, the French Revolution in the last decades of the eighteenth century and the Napoleonic wars were cited as examples of what Enlightenment ideals had brought about. Even after George Washington wrote a letter to address the conspiracy threat in 1798, suspicions about Freemasonry led to the formation of the first major third U.S. political party, the Anti-Masonic Party, in 1828.²⁹



George Whitefield, *circa 1745* by Joseph Badger.

Presidents (with Benjamin Franklin) who were Freemasons in order from left to right, top to bottom.



George Washington (1st President, 1789-1797), 1803 by Gilbert Stuart. Benjamin Franklin, circa 1785 by Joseph Siffrein Duplessis, National Portrait Gallery. James Monroe (5th President, 1817-1825), 1816 by John Vanderlyn. Andrew Jackson (7th President, 1829-1837), 1819 by John Wesley Jarvis. James K. Polk (11th President, 1845-1849), 1846 by George P.A. Healy. James Buchanan (15th President, 1857-1861), 1859 by George P.A. Healy. Andrew Johnson (17th President, 1865-1869), circa 1870 by Mathew Brady, Library of Congress. William McKinley (25th President, 1897-1901), Library of Congress. Theodore Roosevelt (26th President, 1901-1909), 1904 by Pach Brothers, Library of Congress. All images in the public domain.

This was the dynamic socio-economic context in which Freemasons in the new republic of the United States found themselves. They had to adapt to the changing intellectual outlook between 1731, when Freemason “brethren” (as they prefer to call themselves) met in Philadelphia and started keeping records,³⁰ and the anti-Enlightenment sentiments in the U.S. that culminated in the election of Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) in 1820. Freemasonry was and remains a uniquely adaptable association because it emphasizes the individual. It also meshes with the Enlightenment ideals that rejected religious dogma and elevated scientific inquiry and reason, even though Freemasonry encourages its members to believe in a Supreme Being and so is compatible with most religions. Freemasonry’s perceived religious basis was embodied in the lore and symbols of the Freemasons and by Masonic degrees as measures of one’s progress in ethics and virtue as determined by one’s brethren.

Notable Freemasons in the Colonies and Early Republic

Benjamin Franklin

In February 1730, Benjamin Franklin was made a Mason in Philadelphia and became a Grand Master June 27, 1734, at the Grand Lodge meeting at the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, though he had been appointed “Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Pennsylvania” February 21, 1734.³¹

Franklin made it part of his life’s mission to encourage social mobility upward from the trades, and joining the Freemasons was one of his first steps. A faithful Freemason, Franklin helped to draft the bylaws of the Philadelphia lodge in 1732 and, as noted above, became its Grand Master.³² Later, as the American diplomat in France, he joined a Masonic lodge in Paris with the aged Voltaire in April 1778. Freemasonry in France was then part of the *philosophe* movement of the Enlightenment. Franklin took part in the memorial service for Voltaire, after Voltaire had infamously



Washington as Master Mason, 1870 by James Fuller Queen. He is shown here presiding over a meeting of the Masonic Lodge in Alexandria, Virginia, at which they discussed the laying of the Capitol cornerstone on September 18, 1793. Part of the inscription below the image states that the apron was made for him by the Marchioness de Lafayette, wife of Marquis de Lafayette.

waved off priests who wished to give him last rights, an act which angered Louis XVI.³³

George Washington

In September 1752, a new Masonic lodge was convened in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and two months later Washington was inducted as one of its first apprentices at age 20, along with a number of influential Virginians. Within a year he had progressed swiftly through the ranks to become a Master Mason, the first master of the Masonic Lodge chartered in Alexandria, Virginia, at the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783. Washington believed devoutly in the group's high-minded values. He attended the lodge meetings sporadically, came to own two Masonic aprons, walked in Masonic processions, and was even painted in full Masonic regalia during his second term as president. Repeatedly throughout his career, he paid tribute to the movement. "So far as I am acquainted with the principles and doctrines of Free Masonry," he said toward the end of his life, "I conceive it to be founded in benevolence and to be exercised only for the good of Mankind." On another occasion, he stated that the purpose of Freemasonry was to "enlarge the sphere of social happiness" and "to promote the happiness of the human race." Whatever credence he gave to Masonic ideals, the young George Washington, a born joiner, was also likely drawn to the group as a convivial place to hobnob and expand his social contacts.³⁴

George Washington was a Freemason while president of the United States, and he took the oath of office in New York City using a leather-bound Bible provided by a local Masonic Lodge. Washington seldom missed a chance to salute Masonic Lodges. The group's soaring language, universal optimism, and good fellowship appealed to him. He spoke of the American Revolution in Masonic concepts, praising "the Grand Architect of the Universe, who did not see fit to suffer his superstructures and justice to be subjected to the ambition of the princes of this world."³⁵

After Rhode Island finally ratified the Constitution in 1790, Washington traveled with Jefferson and George Clinton to Newport. There a Jewish merchant and fellow Mason, Moses Seixas (1744-1809), greeted the party, and reminded them the Jewish congregation there had once been deprived of rights as citizens. Washington wrote a letter to the Hebrew Congregation that is notable for its religious toleration and expressed intent that there was no notion of foisting a Christian state on the nation. The letter of August 19, 1790, "To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island" begins:

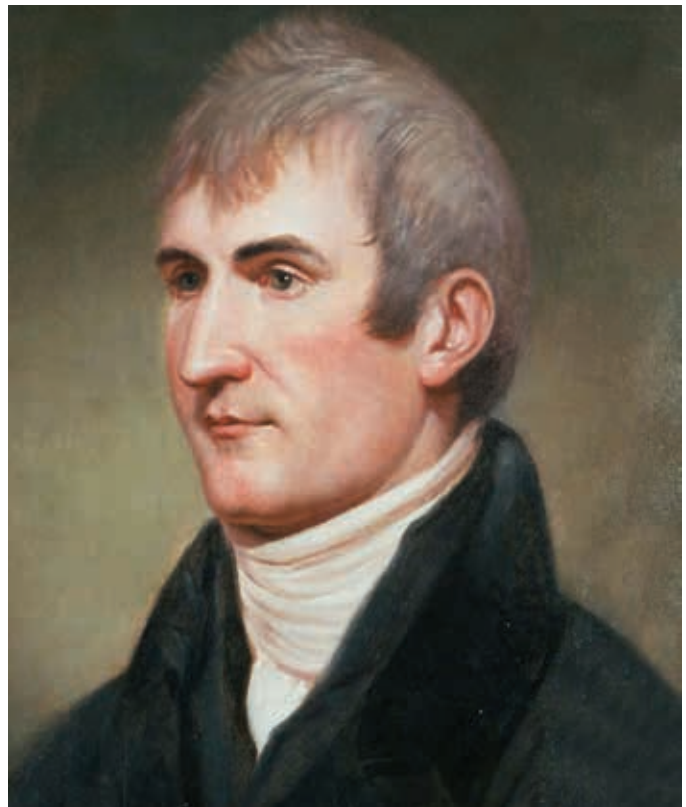
"All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship...the government of the United States...gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens..."³⁶

On September 18, 1793, Washington presided over the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol dressed in a Masonic apron that had been a gift from Lafayette's wife. Chernow writes, "To the sharp report of cannon, Washington stepped into a trench, hoisted a trowel, and spread cement on the cornerstone before pouring oil, corn, and wine over it as spectators offered up Masonic chants. Incorporated into this southeast corner of the Capitol was a silver plate engraved with the words, 'the year of Masonry 5793.'"

Washington believed that "the grand object of Masonry" was "to promote the happiness of the human race," and that nobody could possibly object to such an inarguable, community-minded goal. Five of the six pallbearers of Washington's casket were Masons.³⁷

Meriwether Lewis

Lewis joined the Virtue Lodge No. 44 of Albemarle County, Virginia, on January 28, 1797, as an apprentice



Meriwether Lewis, circa 1807 by Charles Willson Peale. Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



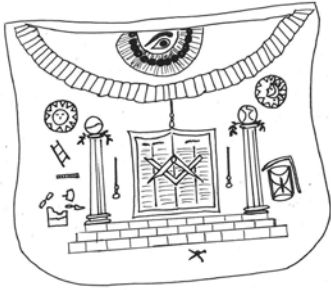
Meriwether Lewis' Masonic apron. Courtesy Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Montana, Helena, Montana.

and was quickly promoted. Such recognition is a sign the most prominent men of Albemarle County thought that the 23-year-old Lewis was competent and indeed destined for moral, civic, and political leadership. On October 31, 1799, Lewis was promoted to Master Mason and given a Masonic apron (measuring 14.5" x 16.5"³⁸). In 1801, Lewis, already a captain, became the secretary to President Jefferson and in June 1803 received orders to be the commander of what became known as the Lewis and Clark Expedition to explore the recently acquired Louisiana Territory. If Lewis carried his Masonic apron throughout the Expedition to the Pacific, there are no records in the Journals, though the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted

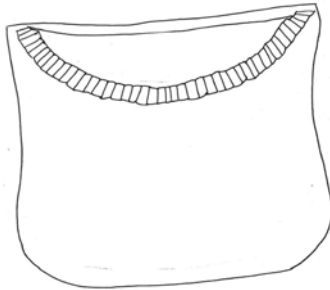
Masons in Helena, Montana, has a Masonic apron reliably demonstrated to have been owned by Meriwether Lewis.³⁹ This apron was passed to Lewis' family and a relative and then to the Grand Master of Missouri, who donated it to the Grand Lodge of Montana in March of 1960. The Montana Masonic Museum has notarized affidavits attesting to the apron's provenance.

After the return of the Corps of Discovery to St. Louis, Lewis became governor of Louisiana Territory. He created the first Masonic Lodge west of the Mississippi River in 1808 and was installed as the lodge's first Master on September 16, 1808. The great public quarrel between Lewis and Frederick Bates occurred at a Masonic ball on June 24,

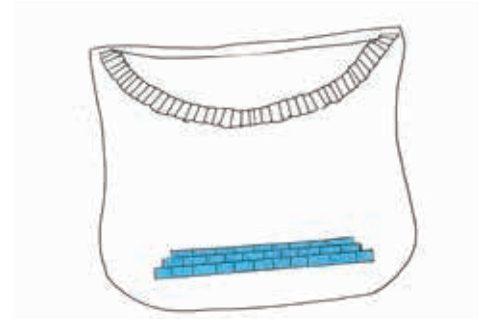
The Symbolism Explained



The Lambskin Apron



The Three Steps



The Three Great Lights



The Three Lesser Lights



The Brazen Pillars



The Sun, Moon, and Stars



The Working Tools



The Rough and Perfect Ashlars



The Hourglass and Scythe



Emblem of Mortality



The All-Seeing Eye



Symbolism of the Masonic Apron Explained. *Courtesy Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Montana, Helena, Montana.*

1809, in celebration of the Festival of St. John the Baptist, though in September he relinquished his leadership position (though not his degree of Master Mason) to Frederick Bates, the secretary of the Territory and acting governor for Lewis. Lewis left St. Louis on September 4, 1809, on his final journey, and was dead by October 11, 1809.⁴⁰

William Clark and George Rogers Clark

William Clark (1770-1838) was the ninth of ten children and raised in the Anglican church in pre-statehood Kentucky with five older brothers, all of whom fought in Virginia units during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Clark joined Lewis' lodge in St. Louis on September 18, 1809, after Lewis had departed.

Mussulman speculates that Lewis may have been attempting to persuade Clark to join the Masons during the early months of the Expedition.⁴¹ In late January 1804, Clark recorded a definition of the five senses from Owen's Dictionary, which the Corps had carried along for reference. The subject was out of context with other events of the Expedition, and Mussulman writes, "The paragraph reads like

a precis of a catechism for an Entered Apprentice."⁴²

Certainly, Virginia-born military men like Clark would have looked to emulate George Washington for his model of leadership.⁴³ William Clark's funeral service at Bellefontaine Cemetery in north St. Louis on September 1, 1838, opened with the full Masonic burial rite.⁴⁴

William Clark's older brother George Rogers Clark (1752-1818), the highest-ranking military officer on the frontier during the American Revolution, also became a Freemason. In 1809 at age 57, he suffered a stroke, fell into a fireplace, and burned his leg so badly that it had to be amputated. The Master of the Abraham Lodge in Louisville performed the amputation.⁴⁵

Freemasonry and the Westward Movement

As the country expanded westward, the Freemasons were quietly effective at the leading edge of the movement. As territorial governor, Lewis founded the first Freemason lodge west of the Mississippi in 1808, and William Clark joined his lodge a year later. The popularity of Freemasonry reached its apex in the United States, as a percentage of the population,



George Rogers Clark, circa 1830 by James Barton Longacre after John Wesley Jarvis. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



William Clark, circa 1810 by Charles Willson Peale. Courtesy Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

between 1790 and 1830,⁴⁶ just as the new nation was growing rapidly, and many important elected officials were also Masons. Between the first decade of the nineteenth century and the election of Andrew Jackson in 1829, the young U.S. experienced its most rapid rate of growth: the U.S. population increased from 5.3 million to 12.9 million in 1830.⁴⁷

Hyrum Smith (1800-1844) and other Latter-day Saints belonged to Masonic lodges in the 1820s, and in December 1841 Hyrum's younger brother Joseph Smith (1805-1844) joined other Latter-day Saint Masons in forming a lodge in Nauvoo, Illinois. It is likely they appreciated Masonry's emphasis on loyalty and confidentiality, though they may have also joined to gain a support network in the event of persecution; regardless, all Masons must vow to gain knowledge and be of service to others. The Nauvoo Lodge soon grew to be the largest in Illinois. Perhaps suspicious that LDS members might come to dominate the Masons in the state, the state's Grand Lodge eventually severed all ties with the Nauvoo Lodge. In June of 1844, Hyrum and Joseph Smith were murdered in Carthage, near Nauvoo. The LDS Masons there continued to operate independently until 1846,

when they left Illinois altogether for Utah. Though they did not establish new Masonic lodges there,⁴⁸ many have noted similarities between Masonic rituals and LDS practices.

During the California Gold Rush years between 1848 and 1855, miners and merchants formed communities in the far West. As the Civil War waged "back in the States," there was another gold rush in the expansionist territories of Idaho and Montana, and camps sprang up in places previously used by Native Americans. As these new villages adopted the practices of their home states, the first formal ceremonies were often funerals. Daniel Gardiner describes how Freemasonry "stabilized mining communities through funeral ceremonies, and by introducing the comfort of institutional or perceived cultural norms."⁴⁹

Nearly all frontiersmen, miners, and merchants were men who were travelling alone, whether or not they had a family back home. Gardiner explains that because such men realized they might die alone and far from home, conducting proper funeral rites became particularly important to them. Often it was the Masons in each community who performed the ceremony.



Hyrum Smith by Del Parson. Courtesy Del Parson Fine Art Studio.



Joseph Smith by David Lindsley. Courtesy David Lindsley Studio.



Nauvoo Masonic Hall, now a Cultural Hall in Nauvoo, Illinois.

“ . . . How one died thus epitomized a life already led and predicated the quality of life everlasting. The *homo mori*, the hour of death, had therefore to be witnessed, scrutinized, interpreted, narrated – not to mention carefully prepared for by any sinner who sought to be worthy of salvation.”

The close ties of the men who called themselves family – brothers – were especially apparent during funeral ceremonies. The Masons saw to it that each other’s remains and records of life were properly attended to and preserved. That Masons shared close connections with each other was obvious to non-Masons.⁵⁰

Throughout the western frontier, most of the customs of civilization developed after the organization of communities. Those who came to the West were forced to be largely self-reliant, and this idea of rugged individualism has become part of the American mythos, to the degree that most Americans today retain a strong individualistic bent. Yet there is also an

historical counterforce of association.⁵¹ Thomas Jefferson, encompassing both forces, believed in individualist values. Among these was the Enlightenment ideal that humans are by nature inclined to be good; they do not need much from government as they can accomplish a lot through natural cooperation. Jefferson’s idea of an “empire of liberty” began with the idea that westward expansion would create new opportunities for self-governing republics. Though Jefferson was never a Freemason, his ideas mirror those of the Masonry, which arose during the early Enlightenment and believed then as now in the good nature of people as cultivated through association to help foster cooperation and social development.

The view of many in the U.S. and Europe changed from embracing Enlightenment values and societal projects, which assume a belief in the goodness of man, toward individualistic, libertarian, and evangelical Protestant views, which often emphasized the inherent corruption of human nature. There has always been in the United States, more so than in any other western country, this tension between individualism and association. The Freemasons, as well as other organizations such as the Sons of Cincinnatus, the Elks, and the Rotary Clubs, exemplify the force of association. Tocqueville wrote about the large number and importance of associations in America of the 1830s.⁵² Freemasons have adapted to societal changes in ways the Enlightenment, religion, and westward expansion movements in the U.S. have not.

Conclusion

Jefferson wanted to expand the United States to implement his idea of an “empire of liberty.” The purchase of the Louisiana Territory advanced his vision for the country as an agrarian republic in which yeoman farmers worked the land, utilizing rivers to transfer their produce to ports. Jefferson’s purpose in sending the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the western waters was to discover the commercial possibilities of the newly acquired land and identify potential trade routes and Native partners.

While Jefferson’s vision of an agrarian republic has not been realized, Lewis and Clark fulfilled their mission in mapping river routes between the Missouri and the Pacific Ocean. Within six decades, the railroad and telegraph would open the West to further development and trade, enabling Jefferson’s ultimate purpose of expanding commerce. Together Washington, Oregon, and California now account for nearly 20% of the U.S. GDP and 15% of the U.S. population.^{53 54}

Whether or not ranchers and cowboys are the embodiment of true American virtue, cities in the western regions of the U.S. are currently densely populated and deal with extremes of weather, limited water supplies, natural disasters, crime, and pollution. Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis – that the western frontier influenced democracy and the American character – may no longer be valid as there is no longer a western frontier, but Americans still value the qualities of independence and agency while recognizing the importance of community.

Jefferson's vision of Enlightenment ideals as informing the "empire of liberty" has not come about. The Great Awakenings had the effect of countering a secular and reason-based worldview in favor of a romantic vision of America. Though the religious revivals led people at the time to question the wisdom of the Western classical tradition and harbor suspicions about the deistic Enlightenment philosophers, the U.S. did not become a republic based on religion. Public controversy, however, impedes addressing the question of religious pluralism in public life,⁵⁵ and the general trend is for Americans to abandon organized religion. Most Americans today are more united in their passions for sports, entertainment, and the pursuits of enterprise, commerce, and wealth than in philosophical and religious concerns. Throughout this societal transformation, Freemasons continue to endorse personal virtue, avoid dogmatic controversies, and uphold key aspects of Enlightenment ideals.

The cohesive power in U.S. society today is embodied in the spirit of camaraderie and shared enterprise through work, military experiences, or shared interests in a "brotherhood" of sociability that disregards religious and political views. Freemasons believe friendly relations among people strengthen the body politic; they therefore seek to unite men outside their family orbits into the realm of social and civic life. Throughout their 306-year history, Freemasons have advocated for self-determination, freedom, and peaceful assembly in private over patronage and aristocracy. Sociability within Masonic lodges provides the model for how society can "cement together the whole brotherhood of men and build them up into an edifice of affection and love." The goal of Freemasons is to work for the benefit of all of society by networking with others to secure the blessings of liberty.

Freemasons have accommodated to major shifts in societal values, always emphasizing ethics, virtue, and cooperation in large-scale endeavors. They embrace enduring principles that have not changed with cultural trends, technology, and

market forces. Washington, Franklin, the Freemasons who signed the Declaration and the Constitution, and Lewis and Clark likely joined the Freemasons because they wanted to work with others to advance this country. Despite political differences, the collective history of U.S. social and civic institutions will always unite this country. Predicated on fraternity, camaraderie, and shared enterprise without regard for religion or party politics, Freemasonry has consistently encouraged individuals to engage together in achieving common goals among them the support of charities and causes beyond Freemasonry. Freemasons helped develop and expand the country west across the prairies and the mountains, and they remain influential today. ■

Jim Wilder joined LCTA in 2013. He has been an aerospace engineer with Boeing since 1990 and is currently working on the Artemis program to return humans to the moon. A resident of Castle Rock, Colorado, Jim enjoys bicycling, hiking, reading, heritage travel, attending LCTA meetings, and spending time with his two daughters and their families.

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My Lewis and Clark Trail Travel Plans and My Request for Your Help

My friends,

Beginning about May 1, 2025, I will be following the entire Lewis and Clark Trail from Monticello in Virginia to Astoria in Oregon, and back again, at least as far as Lewis' grave in Hohenwald, Tennessee. I'll be pulling a twenty-three-foot Airstream trailer. My plan is to be on the road through the entire summer. This is part of a five-year initiative I've undertaken for Listening to America (LTAmerica.org).

My journey is a personal quest, not funded in any way by the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance. Although I have canoed parts of the trail, flown over several states' segments in Cessna airplanes, viewed the White Cliffs from a helicopter, hiked through the Bitterroots, ridden horse three times in the Bitterroots, and driven from St. Louis to Astoria several times along the Trail, I have never driven (as Stephen Ambrose put it and Kathrine Lee Bates before him) from "sea to shining sea." I could not be more excited!

I need and want your help. My plan is to visit every Lewis and Clark interpretive center from Charlottesville to Fort Clatsop, and every more general museum or interpretive center with significant Lewis and Clark exhibits. Ideally, I would give talks at as many of them as would wish for that.

I want to visit every possible Lewis and Clark site in all the states along the way. I don't know where they all are: houses, taverns, reconstructed forts, campsites, etc. This includes Blennerhassett Island and Big Bone Lick on the Ohio River; the Illinois forts from which the captains recruited their men; a myriad of sites up and down the Missouri River; ditto on the Lochsa, Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia rivers.

My plan is to take many thousands of photographs along the way. Among other things I am wanting to build up an archive of high-resolution Expedition-related photographs for WPO, so that we always have images for any article we may publish. I need your help in determining the best places to photograph.

And I want to interview (on audio and video) Lewis and Clark scholars, artists, experts, and adventurers along the way. Your suggestions will be much appreciated.

Many of you know semi-hidden places and sites related to the Expedition. If possible, I would very gladly meet you to explore these places.

I plan to get "on the water" on each of the major rivers, perhaps for only an afternoon or a full day: the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri of course, the Clearwater, the Snake, the Columbia; and then the Marias and the Yellowstone on the return journey. Perhaps you have suggestions about that.

If my journey interests and you want to help make it successful, I will be most grateful. You can write to me at clayjenkinson2010@gmail.com. Please put "YOUR JOURNEY" in the subject line so that I don't accidentally miss your email.

The journey will culminate in several major writing projects and – no doubt – articles in WPO.

Clay Jenkinson

Clay Jenkinson



Lewis and Clark among the Canadians



By Shannon Kelly

Hidatsa Village, Earth-covered Lodges, on the Knife River, 1810 Miles above St. Louis, 1832 by George Catlin. Smithsonian American Art Museum.

In 1535, explorer Jacques Cartier asked two youths for some directions. In Huron-Iroquois, they offered to guide him to their home “kanata” or village. “Kanata” or Canada became used by Cartier and explorers after him to define a larger region. While the area that would become part of the modern nation of Canada was home to numerous Indigenous groups, it would change hands between colonial rule by the French government and Britain in the eighteenth century while what was known of the West by Europeans was managed by fur-trade business interests. Nonetheless, the name Canada was in use as a geopolitical term over three centuries before the modern Canadian Confederation came into being.¹ The Treaty of Paris in 1783 not only recognized a new nation but also established a border with settlers on both sides who had long looked to the West

for exploration, expansion, and riches. Some viewed the people on the other side as friends, family, and neighbors. Others gazed north or south across the line with suspicion: looking south, a rabble of ingrates or, pointing fingers to the north, sellouts and underachievers with a mix of Catholic French. Scotsman Alexander Mackenzie’s published account of his journeys across present-day Canada to the Arctic and to the Pacific provided further proof to Thomas Jefferson that the race to claim interior space in North America had intensified. The Lewis and Clark Expedition participated in that competition during their journey.

Much of Lewis and Clark’s prior knowledge regarding the Mandans and Hidatsas came from fur traders’ information gathered while wintering at Camp Dubois and St. Louis. They also reviewed documentation and maps from



Explorer Jacques Cartier, circa 1844 by Theophile Hamel based on an 1839 painting, since destroyed, by Francois Riss. Courtesy Library and Archives Canada.

the previous century of interactions up north experienced by explorers from Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Verendrye to Peter Pond to Jacques D'Eglise to James Mackay and John Evans.² Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and Northwest Company (NWCo) employees made seasonal overland journeys to and from the Mandan and Hidatsa villages from trade posts on the Assiniboine and Red rivers, Lake Winnipeg, and the Great Lakes. The land outside of the Mississippi-Missouri watershed in the area, or anything within the Hudson Bay watershed, was claimed by the HBC, which had operated under a British royal charter since 1670. Company employees and free traders alike chuckled that HBC stood for "Here Before Christ" in reference to the company's entrenchment.³ By Lewis and Clark's time, British and French traders frequently completed travels to the earth-lodge villages in present-day North Dakota from bases over 200 miles away in two weeks.⁴ NWCo trader, surveyor, and explorer David Thompson documented the villages with more than his words in 1798. He also took measurements of longitude and latitude during his stay. He estimated

the total population at the time among the five villages (three Hidatsa, two Mandan) to be around 2,900 people.⁵ Thompson had been educated in the use of navigational instruments and navigation as a boy, destined for service in the British Royal Navy. Instead, the young man found better fortune and adventure in the fur trade of British Canada, much of which at the time belonged to the HBC as Prince Rupert's Land. The HBC, established by two Frenchmen with a charter from the British crown in 1670, expanded roughly west and south toward the Missouri watershed. In addition to firearms, metal goods, and fabrics, in the late eighteenth century the company began official production of their famed wool point blankets in various colors in England. The multi-stripe pattern with green, red, yellow and indigo, also known as Queen Anne's colors, would become their most iconic look with a long-lasting legacy. The rival NWCo, founded in 1779, would be their biggest competitor until the two companies merged in 1821.

Lewis and Clark looked to fur traders living among the Mandans and Hidatsas for interpretation services while wintering nearby in 1804-1805. On October 27, 1804, the captains hired René Jusseume as their primary interpreter for the Mandan language. Jusseume had arrived in the area at least a decade earlier. He established a small NWCo



At the Portage: Hudson's Bay Company Employees on their annual expedition, 1882 by Henry Alexander Ogden. Indians trade 90-pound packs of furs at a Hudson's Bay Company trading post in the 1800's. Wikimedia Commons.



Landscape with Herd of Buffalo on the Upper Missouri, 1833 by Karl Bodmer. *Wikimedia Commons*.

trade post between Mitutanka and Mawawha sometime in the summer or fall of 1794. It was referred to as Jusseume's Post. Jusseume left the following year, likely taking pelts back to a NWC Co establishment in today's Manitoba. While he was away, his small stockade was taken over by John Evans, a Welsh adventurer traveling under a Spanish license, and renamed Fort Mackay. Spain had zero tolerance for British companies that established permanent structures within what they regarded as their colonial holdings. The Spanish were, however, as poorly equipped to support Evans' trade post as they were to administer Louisiana, and Jusseume's old post was soon abandoned. When the NWC Co Canadians returned in 1797, Jusseume was with them, and he was furious. He found Evans in one of the Mandan villages and tried to kill him. Evans credited his Native interpreter with saving his life. After promising his Mandan friends that he would be back, Evans and his party departed down the Missouri in May 1797. He never did return, much to the chagrin of Mandan leaders – as Clark would learn during the Expedition's winter in North Dakota.⁶

Jusseume married at least one Mandan woman, had children, and lived at Ruptaré.⁷ When the interpreters' room was completed in Fort Mandan, Jusseume and his family appear to have shuttled back and forth between the Americans' encampment and a home in their village. The name of Jusseume's wife was never given even though her husband's connections and elevated status with the Mandans derived in large part from their marriage. Jusseume was branded a necessary rascal like many men of his trade but was nonetheless trusted enough by the Mandans to have apparently been included in sacred ceremonies. He could make a deal that benefited himself and was not afraid to cross other Europeans in the process. Alexander Henry among others complained that he was not great at interpreting Mandan, yet they frequently turned to him. This provides important insight into the imperfect world of interpretation in the fur trade.

Jusseume's apparent embrace of Mandan culture, including elements of their religion, further contributed to other Europeans' low opinion of him. Alexander Henry the Younger considered him "possessed of every superstition

natural to those people, nor is he different in every mean, dirty trick they have acquired from intercourse with the set of scoundrels who visit these parts.”⁸ Clark admitted, “the impression thais man makes on me is a Cunin artfull an insoncear [insincere]— he tels me he was once empld. by my brother in the Illinois & of his description I conceive as a Spye upon the British of Michillinicknac & St Joseph.”⁹ What Jusseume left to be desired in character or personal polish he made up for in his valuable knowledge of Mandan language (if imperfect), customs, governance, and politics. He supplied the captains with reliable lists of village leaders’ names and positions.¹⁰ As their inside source on Mandan leadership and ways of doing business, Jusseume deserves slightly more credit for facilitating the seeds of positive interactions between the Expedition and the Mandans than he has been given for the past two centuries.

Sacagawea’s husband, who would be the Expedition’s primary Hidatsa interpreter, was as colorful a character as René Jusseume. Toussaint Charbonneau was born in Quebec somewhere between 1758 and 1768 outside Montreal in or near the village of Ville-Marie. As a young man, he followed in the footsteps of generations of men in his family, some of whom had lived into their seventies, by entering the fur trade. Charbonneau started with the NWCo and worked as a laborer before moving his way up to trader. By 1793, he was at Fort des Épinettes (Pine Fort) in present-day southern Manitoba and then had relocated to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages by the year 1797. Importantly, for much of that time out West, Charbonneau was a free trader though he often worked for and between the HBC and the NWCo, reflecting prosperity as well as a strong streak of individualism.¹¹ Much of his time was spent with the Hidatsas, and over time he developed a knowledge of their language. As Charbonneau would later attest, he never became perfectly fluent in Hidatsa. He was regarded by his fellow traders as something of a braggart and a cheat, hardly unusual labels in his chosen field of endeavor. Even factoring in the slippery ethics of men like Jusseume and Charbonneau of that time and place, Charbonneau’s reputation in historical memory is a rough one. Some of that is warranted, but much had been generated by late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars’ anti-French and anti-Catholic bias.

Charles McKenzie (1778-1855) and Antoine Larocque (1784-1869) offer valuable contemporaneous perspectives on Fort Mandan’s inhabitants. The two men were traders working for the Northwest Company who, like Charbonneau



Lewis and Clark Expedition 150 Stamp, 1954 designed by Charles Chickering. U.S. Post Office, Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

and Jusseume, moved between the Mandan and Hidatsa villages and NWCo trade posts back in Rupert’s Land, even throughout the winter of 1804-1805. Their *derouines* or fur trade expeditions and winter stays with Indigenous communities brought trade to their customers and augmented their own knowledge. McKenzie was a young man, originally from Scotland, and still early in his career. Later, the stern HBC Governor George Simpson would derisively note in 1832 that McKenzie was dramatically prosy and longwinded and took immense pride in his lineage, including his family tie to the historically dubious yet fabled poet Ossian. Lewis, who had character traits similar to McKenzie’s but also some of Simpson’s as well, did not leave any such recollections in his own journal nor did he maintain his journal assiduously during the winter of 1804-1805.¹² Larocque and McKenzie, on the other hand, left written accounts of their interactions with Lewis and Clark and their men. As Clay Jenkinson points out in *The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer in the Wilderness*, Larocque and McKenzie recorded their insights about the Expedition that readers will not find in the explorers’ own writings. The Canadians offer remarkable impressions of the very human side of Lewis, Clark, and their men. The traders’ journals also contain valuable and amusing Hidatsa perspectives on the Americans during their stay.

Lewis and Clark made their debut in Larocque’s records on November 24, 1804, when he reported being informed by a HBC trader that Charbonneau “was with some Americans, below the Mandan villages to whom he was Engaged.”¹³ The following day Larocque “met with Captain Lewis, Chief of the American party (with Jusseum & Charbonneaux)” on his way to Ruptäre. They “had about a quarter of an hour Conversation with him, during which he Invited me to his



The Travellers Meeting with Minatarre Indians. Near Fort Clark, 1840-1844 by Karl Bodmer. Courtesy Wikiart.org.

house & appeared very friendly.” This was a positive first interaction between Lewis and Larocque. Charbonneau, splitting his duties between his fur trade companions and the American Expedition, quickly became a talking point with both groups. While Larocque was staying with Black Cat on November 27,

“Cap’t. Lewis Return’d from above & stopp’d at the Lodge. Spoke to Charbonneau about helping, as Interpreter in the trade to the big Bellies, he told me that being Engaged to the Americans, he Could not Come without leave from Capt. Lewis & desired me to speak to him—which I did. Capt. Lewis told me that as he had no business for Charbonneau, but at times during the winter, he had no objection to his helping me, upon Certain Conditions, which agreeing to, Charbonneau promised me, that he would Come next morning.”¹⁴

The captains laid down ground rules with Larocque and McKenzie just as they did for Charbonneau. All three men were citizens of other nations. Larocque and McKenzie, in many ways, were representatives of a nation leaning toward the side of enmity with the United States. Larocque had hoped to meet with Charbonneau at Ruptäre, but when Charbonneau did not show up, Larocque ventured to Fort Mandan. He was

“very politely Received, by Capts. Lewis & Clarke & pass’d the night with them. Just as I arrived, they were dispatching a man for me, having heard that I Intended giving Flags & medals to the Indians which they forbid me from giving in the name of the United States, saying

that Government, look’d upon those things, as the Sacred Emblem of the attachment of the Indians to their Country. But as I had neither Flags, nor medals, I Ran no Risk of disobeying those orders, of which I assured them.”¹⁵

Their directive to Charbonneau while working with fur traders, according to Larocque, was to “not to utter a word, which might any way be prejudicial to the United States or any of its Citizens, to the Indians, although I should order him to do so, which (say they), turning to me, we are very far from thinking you would.” Clark also wrote on November 29 that “Mr. La Rock and one of his men Came to visit us we informed him what we had herd of his intentions of makeing Chiefs &c. and forbid him to give meadels or flags to the Indians, he Denied haveing any Such intention, we agreed that one of our interpeters Should Speak for him on Conditions he did not Say any thing more than what tended to trade alone— he gave fair promises &.”¹⁶

Larocque wrote lengthy observations of the nature of the Americans’ venture:

Their party Consists of 40 odd men besides themselves, & are sent by Government for the purpose of Exploring the N.W. Countries, to the Pacific Ocean so as to settle the Boundary Line between, the British & the American territories. Likewise to make it known to the Indians, on the Missouri, & the adjacent Countries that they are under, the Government of the big Knives, who will protect them & supply them with all their wants, as long as they shall behave as dutifull Children to their Great Father the President of the United States &c (which has been the Continued subject of their Harangues to the Indians, throughout the Winter).

They showed me their passports & Letters of Recommendation from the french, Spanish & British Ministers at the City of Washington, which say the object of their voyage is purely scientific & Literary, & no ways Concerning, trade, desiring all persons under their Respective Governments, to aid & assist, that party as much as in their power lies, in Case they should be in want of any thing in the Course of their Voyage. They have likewise Letters of Credit from the American Government for the payment of and draughts, they should draw upon it.

Larocque summarized the progress made by the Expedition in 1803 and 1804 as told to him by Lewis and Clark:



Interior of the Hut of a Mandan Chief by Karl Bodmer from his travel to the Mandans 1833-1834. Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

They left Philadelphia in the spring 1803. Came down the Ohio & pass'd the winter at the mouth of the Missouri at St. Lewis in the Illinois Country. It took them the whole summer to Come to the Mandans, at which place they arrived in October last. They made treaties of peace with all the Indian Nations they saw on their Road, excepting the Sioux's, with whom they were very near Coming to an Engagement. They made presents of a Flag, Medal, Chiefs Cloathing, tobacco, knives, Beads & other trinkets, to Every Chief of the Indian nations, which they saw, but have not given a single shot of ammunition.

Trade and commerce would have been unavoidable topics of conversation between them. The captains were sure to allay any fears Larocque, Charles McKenzie, and their counterparts may have had concerning American occupation and licenses for non-Americans:

They told me that it was not the policy of the United States to Restrain Commerce & fetter it, as was the

Case when Louisiana belonged to the Spanish, that we & all persons who should Come on their territories, for trade or for any other purpose, will never be molested by an American Officer or Commandant, unless his behaviour was such as would subject An American Citizen himself to punishment. Nor will any trader be obliged to pay for permission to trade, as was formerly the Case under the Spanish, as no Exclusive privilege will be granted. Every one shall be free to trade after his own manner. One thing that Government may do, as it has already done about Detroit & other places, where opposition trade Ran high, is to be open'd to the Indians, only when the traders, in opposition Run to too Excessive lengths; for the purpose of under selling them, & by that means, keep them quiet. No Derouines to take place, no Liquor to be sold (that is, of a Spirituous kind) &c &c. In short, during the time I was there, a very Grand Plan was schemed, but its taking place is more than I can tell although the Captains say they are well assured it will.¹⁷



The reconstruction of Fort Mandan in winter where the Lewis and Clark Expedition spent the winter of 1804-1805 near present-day Washburn, North Dakota. *Gooseterrain2; Wikimedia Commons.*

Finally, after a few days, Larocque wrote, “Charbonneau got Ready to Come with me, but just as he Was setting off, he Received orders to follow Capt. Clarke who was going, with 25 men, to join a party of Mandans, & Repulse a some Siouxs, who kill’d a Mandan yesterday & were supposed to be in the neighbourhood.”¹⁸ The following day “Capt. Clarkes Expedition did not succeed” and Charbonneau and Larocque were finally able to get underway.¹⁹ After a few days of work Larocque “Wrote to Captains Lewis & Clarke, thanking them for their kindness in sending Charb. With me & Requesting more of his time, now & then If he Can be Spared.”²⁰

Larocque documents this important intersection of national cultures, writing back forth with Lewis on other occasions, discussing the state of trade and Indian relations by letter and during visits. He also gave the only description of Fort Mandan by a non-Expedition member.²¹ Whatever anti-British sentiment may have been sensed, that failed to deter Larocque from several times requesting that the captains let him join their Expedition. Lewis and Clark respectfully declined. They could not have a British subject

as participant in a United States government-funded military expedition.

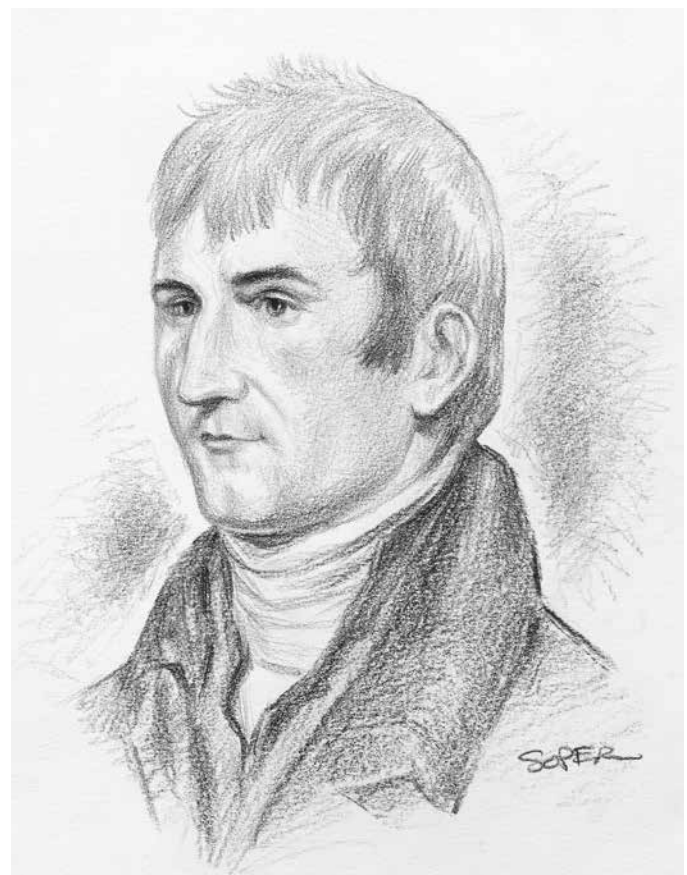
Larocque’s substantive description of Fort Mandan included details omitted from the explorers’ own journals:

Arrived at Fort Mandan being the name the Americans give to their Fort, which is Constructed in a triangular form. Ranges of houses making two sides, & a Range of amazing large pickets [in] the front. The whole is made so strong as to be almost, Cannon Ball proof. The two Range of houses, do not join one another, but are join’d by a piece of fortification made in the form of a demi Circle, that Can defend to sides of the Fort, on the top of which they keep a sentry all night, & the lower part of that building serves as a store. A Centinel is likewise kept all day, walking in the Fort.²²

Charles McKenzie documented his encounters with the “party of forty Americans under the command of Captains Lewis and Clark” in his own recollections. He stated that “they came up the River in a Boat of twenty oars accompanied by two *Peroques*.” By the time McKenzie had arrived at the



William Clark. Pencil drawing by Kerry D. Soper. Courtesy Jay H. Buckley.



Meriwether Lewis. Pencil drawing by Kerry D. Soper. Courtesy Jay H. Buckley.

Mandan villages from the Winnipeg area, “Their fortifications for winter Quarters were already complete—they had held a council with the Mandanes, and distributed many presents; but most of the Chiefs did not accept any thing from them.”²³ He also overheard a Hidatsa conversation that “there are only two sensible men among them—the worker of Iron, and the mender of Guns.”²⁴ McKenzie’s NWCo colleague Larocque likewise noticed: “They have a very Expert smith, who is always Employed in making dift. Things & working for the Indians, who are grown very fond of them although they disliked them at first.”²⁵ The blacksmiths represented frontline American diplomacy and economic opportunities for many ordinary Mandan and Hidatsa people.

McKenzie gave his first impression of Meriwether Lewis: Some time after Captain Lewis with three Interpreters paid a visit to the Gros Ventres Village, and went directly to the Serprents Lodge where he passed the night; next morning he came to the village where I was—and observed to me that he was not very graciously received at the upper Village. “I sent a word, said he, to inform Le Blet qui porte les cornes [“The large one who wears

horns’] that I intended to take up my Quarters at his Lodge—he returned for answer that he was not a[t] home; this conduct surprised me, it being common only among your English Lords not to be at home, when they did not wish to see strangers. But as I had felt no inclination of entering any house after being told the Landlord would not be at home, I looked out for another lodging which I readily found.”²⁶

Lewis was referencing the classic English trope that “great men are never at home.” Perhaps he thought McKenzie, as a Scot, would find humor in his joke or that any British person might recognize it as an inside joke. McKenzie, for his part, was skeptical of the Americans’ goal of promoting peace among the tribes, noting that within weeks of the Expedition’s spring 1805 departure all the same old conflicts continued.²⁷ McKenzie and Larocque frequently encountered Expedition members at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages and paid visits to Fort Mandan. McKenzie recollected, “we lived contentedly and became intimate with the Gentlemen of the American expedition; who on all

occasions seemed happy to see us, and always treated us with civility and kindness.”²⁸ Whatever the tensions between the governments and militaries of the United States and Great Britain, none of that seemed to have mattered between some British fur traders and the American enlisted men who met in an arena far from their home communities. Although separate nations for nearly three decades, the two countries nonetheless shared a common language as well as a popular culture with literature, theater, sports, sense of fashion, and colonial roots in common. For Lewis and Clark’s men this would be their last chance until August 1806 to interact with people whose conversation did not require an interpreter, with men who knew exactly what they were talking about. Interactions were easy-going and popular.

It was an entirely different matter with Captains Lewis and Clark. McKenzie’s writings provide historians with one of the few accounts comparing the two captains’ demeanors at the time of the Expedition. McKenzie wrote, “It is true Captain Lewis could not make himself agreeable to us—he could speak fluently and learnedly on all subjects, but his inveterate disposition against the British stained, at least in our eyes, all his eloquence. Captain Clark was equally well informed, but his conversation was always pleasant, for he seemed to dislike giving offence unnecessarily.” This is a remarkable snapshot of Lewis and Clark as individuals. The enlisted men who kept journals would not have dared to write such observations, and such details might not have been as noticed by the soldiers as by outside visitors working for a company based in Britain’s Canadian colonies. As far as Lewis was concerned, the Expedition carried out the destiny of a nation more on the right side of history than any European power, a young republic poised to spread an empire of liberty across a continent. Clark generally shared those sentiments, as did most of the men under their command, but with an understanding that there was a time and place for certain conversations or statements.²⁹

Nonetheless, Larocque and McKenzie remained frequent guests and correspondents. Seeing whether Lewis would initiate a political debate may have become a source of entertainment. Lewis and Clark both acquiesced to the traders’ requests to borrow their books. Their traveling library was the closest opportunity to find English-language print material for many hundreds of miles. The mixture of books on science, history, and geography clearly appealed to Larocque and McKenzie.³⁰ Clark also offered protection for Larocque and his compatriots’ horses in the fort’s parade ground for a few nights, a service for which the NWCo men were grateful.³¹ Lewis also

spent a day in January fixing Larocque’s compass after its needle quit pointing north. “Cap’t. Lewis fix’d my Compass, very well, in doing of which he Employed the whole day, Cleaning it &c.” While he worked, Larocque, Clark, and Lewis discussed the surrounding geography and routes they planned to follow west. Larocque found much to be curious about, and likely heard statements he would have liked to laugh at. According to Larocque, the captains had already heard of tribes along the river to the Pacific called “Snake Indians & Flat Heads” who “live Entirely Upon fish.” Larocque, however, reported that the Americans believed those distant peoples lived a mere four days’ march from the Missouri River’s headwaters on a calm river. The captains claimed their longitude readings from Fort Mandan, some of which Larocque was present for, were more accurate than those taken in the vicinity by the more formally trained David Thompson seven years earlier. Their latitude readings were the same. Lewis likely thought he had found something to gloat about to his guests. Little did they know that the intrepid Thompson had been the correct one all along.³²

Geography has never been apolitical. A bemused Larocque also wrote that the Americans believed the land due to the U.S. by the Louisiana Purchase stretched further north than Larocque expected. “They Include in their territory as far North as River qui’Appelle [Qu’Appelle], for as it was Impossible for a Line, drawn west, from the west End of Lake des Bois [Lake of the Woods] to strike the Mississipi, they make it Run, till it strikes its tributary waters that is the northern Branches of the Missouri, & from thence to the Pacific, which Could not have been done while Louisiana belonged to the French or Spanish, as those powers would not have suffered England to give a Country which did not belong to it & of Course the Line drawn west, would have stopp’d, when it struck, the Spanish or French territory.”³³ Rising from the pothole lake-dotted prairies of Saskatchewan, the Qu’Appelle River flows into the Assiniboine River and then into the Red River, its waters destined for the polar bears and belugas of Hudson Bay. This river and its watershed existed well outside the boundaries of the young republic’s latest real estate transaction. Lewis and Clark might have wished the Missouri provided tendrils into the rich “Saskatchewan Country,” but geology and its divides rarely accommodate geopolitics. In 1818, the border between their two nations would be set roughly 200 miles south of the Qu’Appelle’s west-east course.³⁴

Larocque and McKenzie also recorded excellent insights into Mandan and Hidatsa perspectives on Lewis and Clark during their winter stay. McKenzie noted that many of the tribes’ leaders were reluctant to accept gifts from the



The partially-reconstructed Mandan village On-a-Slant at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park in Mandan, North Dakota, across the Missouri River from Bismarck, capital of North Dakota. General Custer rode out from Fort Abraham Lincoln to the Battle of Little Big Horn. *Gooseterrain2; Wikimedia Commons.*

Americans. He also wrote, “After haranguing the Indians and explaining to them the purpose of his [Lewis’] expedition to the Westward, several of them accepted clothing—but notwithstanding they could not be reconciled to *like* these strangers as they called them:--”³⁵ McKenzie recorded the closest thing to direct quotes from Mandan and Hidatsa people of the time. “Had these Whites come amongst us,’ Said the Chiefs, ‘with charitable views they would have loaded their Great Boat with necessaries. It is true they have ammunition but they prefer throwing it away idly than sparing a shot of it to a poor Mandane.”

Le Borgne, the fierce headman from Big Hidatsa village at Knife River, found it foolish in general that men were willing to cross oceans and continents just to trade for beaver pelts, as if they had no real homes or families who wished to see them. He also lamented that people were becoming materialistic and forming bad habits introduced by traders like the consumption and abuse of alcohol.³⁶ To people who valued ammunition for its use in hunting, defense, and

warfare, the Corps’ military salutes were a disturbing waste of vital resources. Some apparently also wished the Americans had brought practical items for gifts rather than medals, flags, and novelties.

Uncertainty about the Americans lingered around the villages, especially among the Hidatsas. McKenzie said that the tribes, for example, admired the ingenuity and power of Lewis’ air rifle, “but they dreaded the magic of the owners.” In short, McKenzie did not believe the Expedition’s neighbors – the Hidatsas in particular – were overly impressed with these newcomers. “Had I these White warriors in the upper plains, said the *Gros Ventres* Chief, my young men on horseback would soon do for them, as they would do for so many wolves—for, continued he, there are only two sensible men among them—the worker of Iron, and the mender of Guns.”³⁷ Larocque also noted that the locals had “grown very fond of them although they disliked them at first.”³⁸ Nonetheless, as Jenkinson put it, “...Lewis and Clark tended to regard themselves as the heroes of their own narrative; to

invest themselves with purely admirable motives and ideals; and to see every story through their own—and America’s—perspective and to their own advantage.”³⁹ An alternative to that version was documented right there at the same time.

In one last interaction, Clark wrote on March 4, 1805, “an Engage of the N W Co. Came for a horse, and requested in the name of the woman of the principal of his Department Some Silk of three Colours, which we furnished.”⁴⁰ That man’s identity is unknown. Detailing the Expedition’s April 1805 departure, McKenzie mentioned Sacagawea, although not by name, and her role in the interpretation scheme. “—the woman who answered the purpose of wife to Charbonneau was of the Serpent Nation, and lately taken prisoner by a war party:-- She understood a little Gros Ventre, in which she had to converse with her husband, who was a Canadian, and who did not understand English—A Mulatto who spoke bad French and worse English served as Interpreter to the Captains.” The “Mulatto,” if referring to someone of European and Native American parentage, may have been Francois Labiche or perhaps even Pierre Cruzatte. Charbonneau’s French or Quebecois would have been the cleanest dialect compared to the localized dialects spoken by Labiche, Drouillard, or Cruzatte. In any case, McKenzie claimed, “The two Frenchmen who happened to be the medium of information had warm disputes upon the meaning of every word that was taken down by the expedition.” In many ways this tension between French interpreters, whoever they were, over interpretation is not surprising. The French-speaking Expedition members living at Fort Mandan expressed themselves in the variety of dialects spoken within North America. Drouillard, Cruzatte, Labiche, and Lepage would have spoken some form of “Paw Paw” French common to the Illinois and Missouri country, perhaps with inflections from their mothers’ Indigenous languages Shawnee or Omaha. Charbonneau hailed from just outside Montreal, Quebec. Differences in vocabulary, conjugations, and pronunciations combined with accents would have made some sentences completely unintelligible to one another, even within the same French language. McKenzie concluded, “as the Indians could not well comprehend the intention of recording their words, they concluded that the Americans had a wicked design upon their Country.”⁴¹

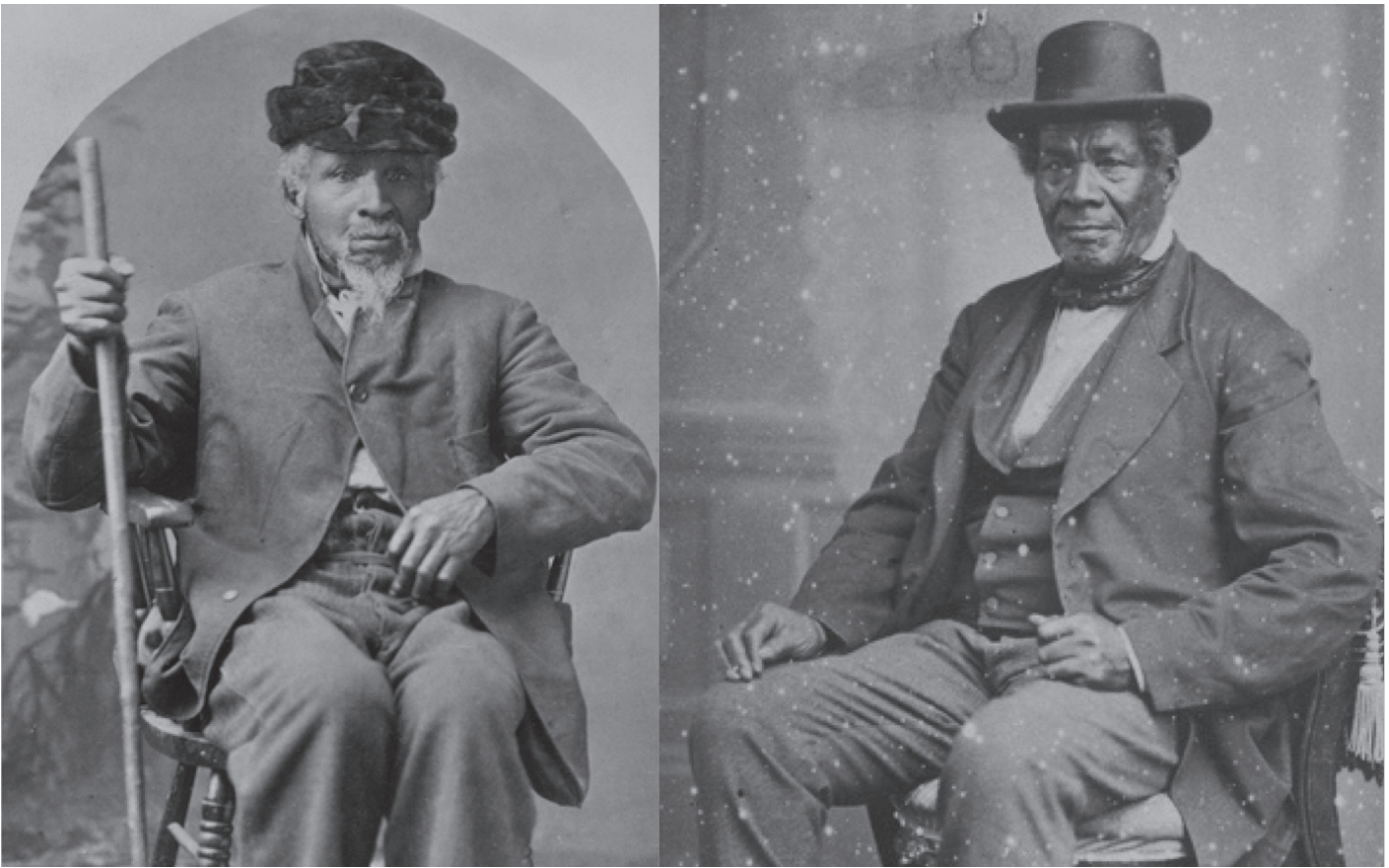
For most of the winter the Mandans were closer to the Lewis and Clark Expedition than were the Hidatsas. That was due partially to geography and partially to the Hidatsas’ having less to lose than the Mandans. However, on January 16, 1805, an amusing incident revealed a deeper cause for few Hidatsa visitors to Fort Mandan. Clark wrote, “about thirty Mandans Came to the fort



York (Detail), 1908 by Charles M. Russell depicts members of the Hidatsa tribe’s meeting Captain William Clark’s slave York. Hidatsa Chief Le Borgne thought York was only painted black and, as show in the painting, tried to rub the paint off his skin. Courtesy Montana Historical Society.

to day, 6 Chiefs. Those Me ne ta rees [Hidatsas] told them they were liars, had told them if they came to the fort the whites men would kill them, they had been with them all night, Smoked in the pipe and have been treated well and the whites had danced for them, observing the Mandans were bad and ought to hide themselves—.”⁴² With misunderstandings brushed aside, Clark was more than happy to host Hidatsa visitors. He continued, “one of the 1st War Chiefs of the big belles nation Came to See us to day with one man and his Squar [NB: (his wife handsome)] to wate on him [NB: requested that she might be used for the night] we Shot the Air gun, and gave two Shots with the Cannon which pleased them verry much, the little Crow 2d Chf of the lower village came & brought us Corn &.”⁴³

Afterward, Hidatsa leaders paid more visits to Fort Mandan. Le Borgnemade his first visit to the Americans’ fort on March 9, 1805. Writers from the fur trade like Alexander Henry the Younger, a NWCo trader based at Pembina on the Red River of the North at the time, noted his reputation as a respected leader.⁴⁴ In 1806 Henry would describe Le Borgne as being around 45 years



Brothers Stephen Bonga (left, circa 1880) and George Bonga (right, circa 1870). *Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

of age, “upwards of six feet high and stout in proportion...What ever he says is law, and upon many occasions he has displayed his own personal bravery in civil quarrels and disturbances among his own Tribe, and the Mandanes in every one of which he has always had the advantage and succeeded in adopting his own plans...”⁴⁵ While Le Borgne was on his way to Fort Mandan on that March day he crossed paths with Clark, who was on his way to the Expedition’s new canoe camp. “[O]n my way up I met The [NB: *The Borgne*] Main Chief of the Manitarres with four Indians on Thier way to...See us, I requested him to proceed on to the fort where he would find Capt. Lewis I should be there my Self in corse of a fiew hours, Sent the interpeter back with him and proceeded on my Self to the Canoes found them nearly finished, the timber verry bad...”⁴⁶ Lewis showed off the usual technological wonders. Ordway wrote that Lewis “Shewed them the air Gun quadron [quadrant] & Spy Glass &C. which they thought was Great Medicines.”⁴⁷ After a visit to Ruptäre, Clark began walking back to Fort Mandan. “[O]n my return found the Manitarree Chief about Setting out on his return to his village, having recieved of Captain M. Lewis a medel Gorget armbans, a Flag Shirt, Scarlet &c. &c. &c. for which he was much pleased

Those Things were given in place of Sundery articles Sent to him which he Sais he did not receive 2 guns were fired for this Great man.”⁴⁸

Absent from journal entries’ specifics for the day but included in Nicholas Biddle’s narrative was Le Borgne’s reaction to York. During that visit Le Borgne mentioned that foolish young men he considered rumor mongers had claimed there was a man with the Expedition “who was quite black, and he wished to know if it could be true.” York was sent for and the Hidatsa leader was quite amazed. He spit on his finger and tried to rub what he thought was paint off York’s skin. Then York removed his hat to show Le Borgne his short curly hair, which confirmed to their guest that he was not painted and, in Le Borgne’s worldview, also confirmed the great spiritual power York must have possessed.⁴⁹

York was not the first African American in what would become the state of North Dakota. Alexander Henry the Younger hired Pierre Chimakadewiash Bonga. The last name was sometimes spelled “Bonza.” Pierre came from a black family enslaved by British colonists who freed him and his family when the master moved to Montreal. Bonga married an Ojibwe



Blackfoot Camp Scene by Edwin Willard Deming. Courtesy Smithsonian American Art Museum.

woman and became deeply connected to his wife's people. A strong man who stood over six feet tall and could reportedly carry five loaded sacks at once, Bonga was a respected trapper, trader, hunter, interpreter, and diplomat. Bonga's descendants would become successful traders, interpreters, diplomats, and hunters. On March 13, 1802, the Bongas welcomed an infant girl into the world. That child has been referred to as the first non-Native American born in North Dakota. When Henry left on a long absence in 1803, he left Bonga as one of two men in charge of the Pembina fur-trade post. After a trader threatened to kill Bonga during that time "... he [the trader] did not escape without a sound beating," as a satisfied Henry learned.⁵⁰ Pierre Bonga also appears to have been an interpreter by 1804. While neither the journals nor Clark and Shannon's remembrances with Biddle demonstrate knowledge of Pierre Bonga. Bonga likely learned of York's existence in the months or years after the Expedition continued westward. Henry himself documented intelligence on the Americans received through Native Americans and fellow NWCo men. Only 220 miles as the crow flies separated York from Pierre Bonga and his family for just under six months. Not only were the Bongas the only people for possibly hundreds of miles who would have looked like York, but they were also individuals who could relate to his circumstances in life: capable of so much yet another man's legal property based on their skin color, but revered by Indigenous peoples for the exact same abilities. Unfortunately, nothing has been handed down from Pierre Bonga's perspective or from his wife's.

While moving westward up the Missouri River in 1805 through what is now western North Dakota and Montana, the captains were well aware that they were within range of

terrain worked by HBC and NWCo affiliates. The Missouri-Mississippi watershed determined a large portion of the Louisiana Purchase's boundaries, yet there was hope a tributary might bring American landholding close to the fur-rich Saskatchewan River drainage in Rupert's Land (present-day Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba). Sure enough, trading posts dating from the late eighteenth century, like Rocky Mountain House established in 1799 by the NWCo, were located along the Rocky Mountain front in the vicinity of present-day Calgary and Edmonton. Lewis and Clark were aware of their existence to a degree from information gained during their first two winters from fur traders and Indigenous peoples as well as from existing literature, maps, and correspondence. Rocky Mountain House was a frequent base of David Thompson's activity. It was also well documented that the Blackfoot nation, rivals with Expedition allies like the Nez Perces and Shoshones, participated in a mostly positive trade relationship with Canada-based British fur traders.

The reality of this trade relationship affected the Expedition during the return journey in July 1806. Lewis, Drouillard, and the Field brothers ventured off on horseback to survey the Marias River drainage. Lewis as well as Clark hoped that its headwaters would be far north enough to give Americans access to the beaver-rich trapping country near the Saskatchewan River. They were to meet up with the party – Ordway and Gass' men combined – downriver from the falls. The goal was to ride up, survey, and get back to the others without running into anyone from the Blackfoot Confederacy.

The Blackfeet are traditionally a confederation of inter-related groups along the Rocky Mountain front and onto



Blackfoot Warrior on Horseback, 1840-1843 by Karl Bodmer.

the plains in present-day Montana and Alberta. Blackfoot is the federal designation in the U.S. while Blackfoot is officially used by Canada. The nations that are part of the confederacy are Siksika (Blackfoot proper), Kainah (Blood), Aapátóhsipikáni (Northern Piegan), and Aamsskáápipikani (Southern Piegan) as well as Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) and A'a Ni Nin (Gros Ventre/Atsina). The confederacy was allied through trade with the British and, well-armed, were enemies of tribes like the Shoshone, Nez Perce, and Salish. Lewis did not wish to be outnumbered in meeting with a nation that might not be receptive to the Expedition's aims. If that happened, at least Drouillard's Indian sign language could express the main talking points. Lewis instructed the main party to expect to meet him, Drouillard, and the Fields at the mouth of the Marias River on August 5, 1806, and to wait up to September 1 before moving on to join Clark at the Yellowstone without them.⁵¹

By July 25, it became clear that the Marias River and its headwaters, Cut Bank Creek and Two Medicine River, originated too close to the northwest from nearby mountains for them to offer any linkage to the Saskatchewan country. Lewis hoped for a way for the Americans to compete with British interests in one of their most profitable trapping and trade areas. Indeed, the sources of many of the small streams that feed into the Marias are located inside what is now Glacier National Park. When Lewis sought to take the longitude and latitude at a campsite with a view of the Rocky Mountain front, first his chronometer stopped and then the clouds that night or early morning prevented him from taking any meaningful bearings. He named that location Camp Disappointment,

the northernmost point visited by a contingent of the Expedition during the 28-month journey. Chief Mountain is visible from the site on a clear day as well as from southern Alberta. The feature was labeled "King's Mountain" on Peter Fiddler's 1792 map.⁵² On July 26, Lewis noticed some young Blackfoot men in the distance. The young men were southern Piegans. He knew it was too late to get away without being noticed because he saw through his spyglass that those men were watching Drouillard. Lewis wrote,

I told the two men with me that I apprehended that these were the Minnetares of Fort de Prarie [Blackfoot/Southern Piegan] and from their known character I expected that we were to have some difficulty with them; that if they thought themselves sufficiently strong I was convinced they would attempt to rob us in which case be their numbers what they would I should resist to the last extremity preferring death to that of being deprived of my papers instruments and gun and desired that they would form the same resolution and be allert and on their guard.⁵³



Francis "Boo Boo" Bird ranches on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation just east of Chief Mountain. Blackfoot Indian Reservation, Glacier County, Montana, June 2017. Courtesy USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Browning, Montana. *Courtesy Murray Foubister, Wikimedia Commons.*

Both groups awkwardly approached each other and met. Lewis wrote that he signed to them that Drouillard had the Expedition's peace pipe, suggesting that by this point Lewis had picked up enough Indian sign language to make basic introductions and just get by. Once Drouillard joined them they were able to communicate better thanks to his superior interpretation skills, and they could smoke. Lewis noted that the young Piegan Blackfeet men were quite fond of smoking. Through Drouillard's sign language they conversed with each other, and Lewis learned that these young men's people frequently traveled north a few days to a British trade post – possibly to the NWCo's Rocky Mountain House or the HBC's Edmonton House, all near present-day Edmonton, Alberta. Lewis explained his mission and his hopes for peace between the tribes and for trade between the United States and all of them. He noted in his journal that they seemed receptive to the idea and pointed out that many in the group had cut their hair in mourning for family or friends recently killed in an altercation with members of the Salish. He proposed that they go fetch others from their tribe along with one of the British

fur traders as an interpreter and meet him and his party at the mouth of the Marias River. There was uneasiness all around. They camped together that night.⁵⁴

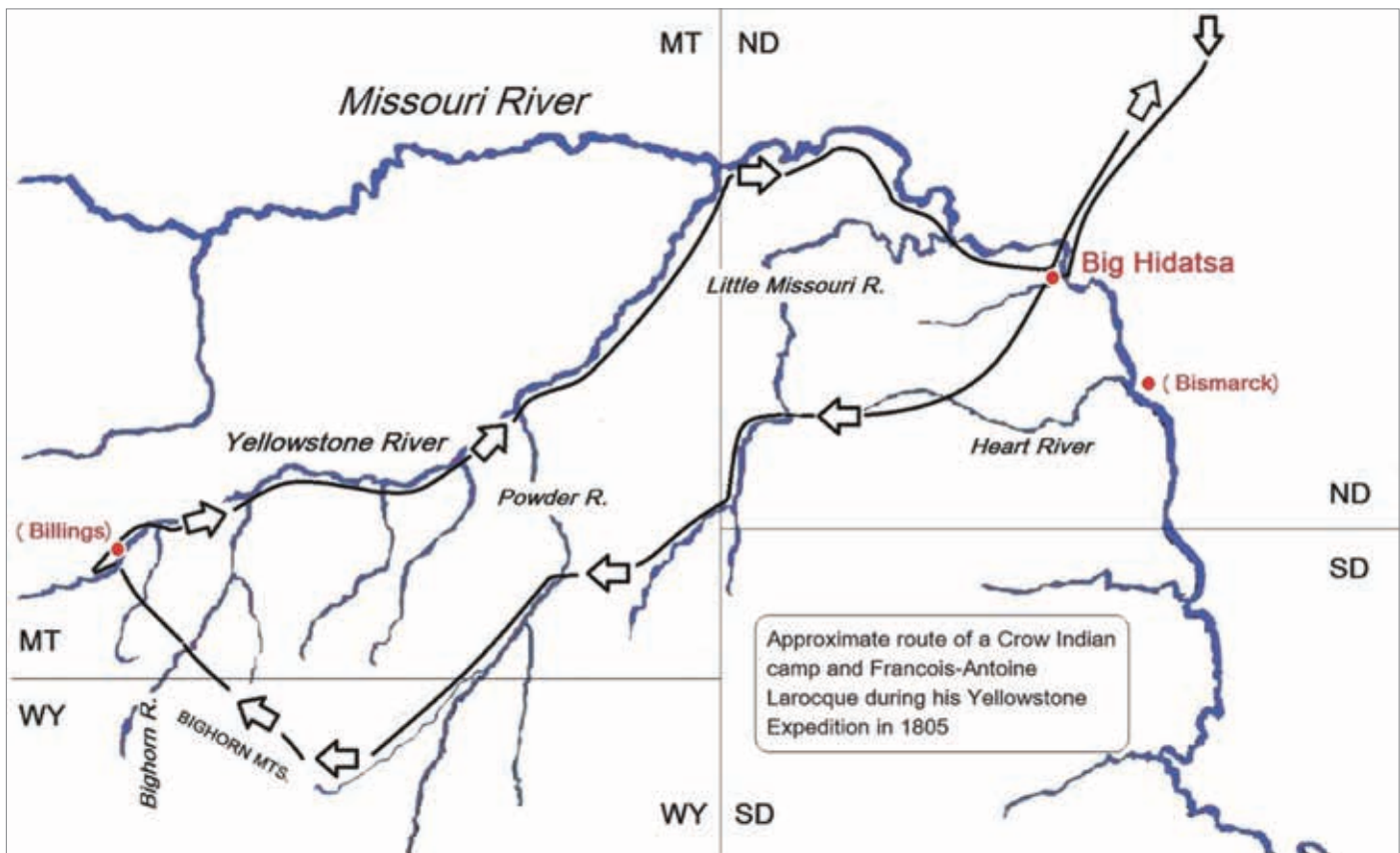
The ultimate result was the “fight” that broke out the following morning and awoke Lewis. One young Blackfeet man was stabbed to death by Joseph Field in retrieving his stolen gun, and another was shot by Lewis after Lewis felt the Blackfeet's bullet whistle through his hair. The location has come to be called the Fight Site, as well as “Murder Site” and “Kill Site” by the Blackfeet. The Expedition took one of the guns that had been left by the fleeing Piegans and Lewis wrote, “I also retook the flag but left the medal about the neck of the dead man that they might be informed who we were.” This was probably a George Washington season medal since the Expedition had distributed their final Jefferson medals to Nez Perce friends in May 1806.⁵⁵ Even though Lewis had not planned on meeting anyone from the Blackfeet tribe, once the occasion arose, he tried to lay the foundations for a plan to pull them away from the British toward American traders and encourage them to trade rather than raid their neighbors.

Through circumstances that have been blamed on both sides by differing historians, it all ended in violence. The result partially sowed the seeds for future violence against American traders, which would be intensified by actions by American trappers who came to the area in subsequent years. Such conflicted goals claimed the lives of at least two Expedition veterans and nearly killed another less than a decade later.⁵⁶

The narrative structure of Lewis' entries for July 26-28 demonstrates that his remarks were written after the fact, once he and the others were safe with the rest of his return party. Lewis' group fled to the southeast and reunited with others of their contingent on the Missouri River. At the mouth of the Marias River, Lewis' half of the Expedition found that the cache had partially caved in and damaged or destroyed many items. Those included Lewis' two very large bear skins that he unhappily accepted as total losses. The red pirogue, which had rotted from moisture while hidden there, proved unsalvageable. The men quickly removed the nails, oar sockets, and other metal features and proceeded on.⁵⁷ Lewis' return party, fully reunited, continued down the river, paddling as fast as they could. They wanted to put distance between them and the

Piegans and to ensure they could still meet Clark's other half of the Expedition at or near the confluence with the Yellowstone River by September at the latest. The incident did indeed draw other Blackfeet down to the Missouri River to find and punish whomever killed their two young men. David Thompson noted that this "murder," as he called it, made it easier for him to move through the northern reach of their territory in Saskatchewan and cross the Rockies to the Columbia to establish a NWCo trade post because the Blackfeet spent more time hunting down American fur trappers than making sure goods were not transported to rival tribes. It also enhanced the advantage British Canadians would enjoy trading with the Blackfoot Confederacy members for generations.⁵⁸

Larocque had stopped by a major Expedition site over a year before Clark did. In the late afternoon on July 25, 1806, Clark's main party arrived at what he called "a remarkable rock" in the bottom on the south side of the river. "[T]his rock I ascended and from it's top had a most extensive view in every direction." He named it Pompy's Tower in honor of Sacagawea and Charbonneau's son Jean Baptiste, using one of the variations of the boy's nickname Pomp or Pompy, derived



Map showing the route traveled by a Crow Indian camp and Canadian fur trader Antoine Larocque in 1805 from the Hidatsa village Big Hidatsa to the Yellowstone River. Wikimedia Commons.



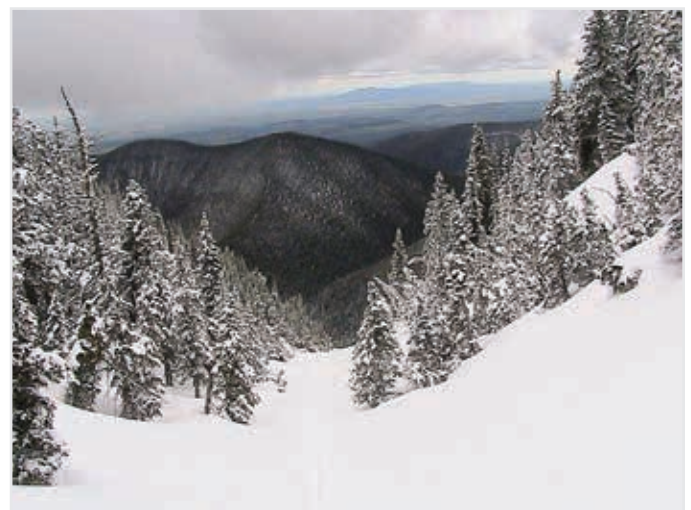
James Madison, 1816 by James Vanderlyn. Madison was one of the authors of the *Federalist Papers* and fourth President of the United States, 1809-1817. Courtesy White House Historical Association.

from Clark's reference to the toddler as his "pompous little dancing boy." He famously carved his name and the date into the formation. To the Apsáalookes, the sandstone formation's name is *Iisbiiammaache*, meaning "The mountain lion's lodge." Nicholas Biddle would modify the title to Pompey's Pillar, referencing the monument from Roman Antiquity.⁵⁹ Clark's group is only the second documented group of Euro-Americans or non-Indigenous majority visitors to the site. Antoine Larocque and accompanying trappers traveled the lower and middle Yellowstone River in 1805 and stopped by the site.⁶⁰ Larocque noted while in the vicinity on September 8 that according to his Crow guides, the mountains to the northwest were "in a direct line to the Missouri Falls and not far from it." Those were the Big Snowy Mountains, an island range visible on clear days from higher points like Pompey's Pillar or Four Dances at Billings.⁶¹ Larocque's journal provides details on the region Clark's does not as, unlike the Americans, he traveled largely with local inhabitants.

The intersection of the Expedition's aftermath and evolving geopolitical relations to the north can be found in the War of 1812. The conflict, referred to by some proponents

as "President Madison's War," was largely unpopular in the Northeast although a handful of Expedition veterans served in the U.S. Army. James Madison's motivations were to end the British practice of forcing American citizens born before 1776 to be inducted into the British Navy and to capture Canada. Jefferson wrote to William Duane in support: "The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching; & will give us experience for the attack of Halifax the next, & the final expulsion of England from the American continent."⁶² The true outcome would be a stalemate in which British soldiers, Canadian militiamen, and their Indigenous allies nearly took back land south of the Great Lakes.

The conflict was not limited to the primary theaters of war in the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake. During the War of 1812, tensions between the Mandans and Hidatsas had emerged from beneath the surface of their long alliance. While their relationship always had some ups and downs, the conflict between a young United States and Britain demanded that Indigenous peoples even on the farthest of peripheries of the war choose a side however little it mattered to the primary participants. The Mandans had found in the young republic an ally that offered to provide much-needed military protection against powerful enemies like the Lakota. The Americans promised traders who came not from across the sea but from the same continent. The Mandan leader Shehéke-shote had visited the heart of the Americans' home front and seen for himself the assets the Americans possessed – and perhaps the danger of entering an impasse as the Lakota had. The Hidatsas, on the other hand, were not as ready to fully embrace the



Big Snowy Mountains in central Montana, 2009. Courtesy Forest Service Northern Region, Missoula, Montana.

Americans' hegemony and abandon their British fur-trade allies who had been relatively reliable and never made overtures about supposed military supremacy and the eventual movement of American pioneers to their homeland. Instead, those British traders from the HBC and NWCo brought quality goods from Britain, the burgeoning manufacturing powerhouse of the industrializing world. Hidatsa people did not mind the Americans, per se, especially individuals. When it came down to it, however, they remained steadfastly aligned with the British. The War of 1812 had no formal battlefield combat on the Northern Plains, but for the Mandan and Hidatsa nations it caused a rift that resulted in the killing of American-allied Shehéke-shote. Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara oral histories and written accounts by fur traders disagree on the tribal identity of the killer. Depending on the narrative, he was Hidatsa, Arikara, or Lakota.⁶³ Fissures mostly healed after the end of the war. The Americans maintained possession of land from the Louisiana Purchase south of the 49th parallel but lost a small portion of the Louisiana Purchase territory north of that line along the Milk River. This had significance for bureaucrats and diplomats in the eastern U.S. and western Europe; yet its consequences for the people already living there would be dramatic.

There is a Canadian fur-trade link to the aftermath of the Expedition's third winter. Fort Clatsop had been constructed on Clatsop land in what was likely a clearing already utilized by the tribe. The captains' gifting of the fort to Coboway in March 1806 was a good gesture. In 1811, John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company established Fort Astoria on the south side of the Columbia River near its mouth. The War of 1812's effects were felt keenly even in the Columbia estuary. To avoid having their fort captured by the British without a profit, the Astorians sold the establishment to the NWCo in 1813. The British Naval vessel *HMS Raccoon* took possession of Fort Astoria, which became Fort George under the NWCo. It remained so after the NWCo/HBC merger in 1821, was abandoned from 1825-1829 as interests moved upriver, but was used sometimes from 1830 to 1848 during salmon season. Some NWCo traders inspected the Fort Clatsop site on December 14, 1813: "At noon we entered the river and proceeded up to Fort Clatsop. There we found two houses of Clatsops, busily employed making mats and straw hats; they had an extraordinary number of children...we walked up to see the old American winter quarters of Captains destroyed by the Indians...Having examined this spot, we returned to our horses, which are left in the care of the Indians..."⁶⁴ Alexander Henry



Mandan Chief Shahaka [Sheheke-shote or Big White Coyote], Chief of the Mandans, 1807 by Charles Balthazar Julien Fervet de Saint-Memin. Courtesy New-York Historical Society, New York, New York.

the Younger, whose journals documented life around the periphery of Lewis and Clark's experiences, found himself at Fort George. He drowned in the Columbia Estuary May 22, 1814, when the boat he and another trader were riding in to visit the *HMS Isaac Todd* overturned in the treacherous waves.

Surgeons and the "bourgeois" at the later forts actively sought out skulls, flattened by loving mothers when the deceased was an infant but in death viewed as curiosities by European collectors and scientists to the point of robbing graves and publishing photographs in the twentieth century. Such practices are disrespectful to those interred and their living families. Chinook leader Comcomly, who graciously welcomed Lewis and Clark as well as sailors and traders before and after, would suffer the pilfering of his own grave five years after his 1830 death. Dr. Meredith Gairdner, an HBC physician at Fort Vancouver, stole the man's skull from his grave in 1835. After being sent to Britain, Comcomly's skull was returned to Oregon in the twentieth century and displayed in the Clatsop County Historical Society and the Smithsonian Institution before receiving a respectful reburial by the Chinook nation.⁶⁵

In the following decades, British traders retired to old Oregon in numbers superior to Americans, especially north of the Columbia River in the future state of Washington. However, the signing of the 1846 Oregon Treaty continued what the Treaty of 1818 established and determined that the 49th parallel would be extended as the dividing line between the United States and British Canada all the way through the Strait of Georgia. Canadian ambitions south of the 49th parallel and the Great Lakes ended four decades after Lewis and Clark's Expedition departed the Northwest and as a direct result of it. This partition and the increase in an American presence thanks to the Oregon Trail led to Oregon's own statehood in 1859. Lewis and Clark's story was not at the forefront of many pioneers' minds, but as American explorers, their winter stay over would come to be a great point of pride for Oregonians as would the fur-trade communities inhabited by Indigenous peoples.⁶⁷

On July 1, 1867, the Canadian Confederation combined the British provinces of Canada (Ontario and Quebec), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia into the Dominion of Canada. Canada remained a member of the British Commonwealth with the British monarch as the head of state. Prince Edward Island procrastinated until 1873, and Newfoundland and Labrador would not join the Confederation until 1949. Hudson's Bay Company's Rupert's Land was sold to the Canadian government in 1869. Indigenous peoples had no voice



Stum-Ma-Nu, a Flat-head boy, circa 1838 by J.T. Bowen, T.L. McKenney, and J. Hall, drawn, printed & coloured at J.T. Bowen's Lithographic Establishment No. 94 Walnut St. [Philadelphia: Published by F.W. Greenough]. Courtesy Library of Congress, Wikimedia Commons.

Comcomly (ca. 1765-1830), a Chinook leader on the



lower Columbia, long welcomed European and Euro-American visitors to his homeland on the edge of the continent. He became famous for his generosity and hospitality to newcomers including George Vancouver, Robert Grey, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Astorians, and other later fur traders. In 1830, Comcomly died during a malaria outbreak on the lower Columbia that killed an estimated 150,000 Indigenous people in the area between 1829 and 1833. Initially, Comcomly received a traditional canoe interment in the community burial ground. Hudson's Bay Company physician Dr. Meredith Gairdner robbed

Comcomly's grave in 1835. Gairdner and other Europeans viewed head-flattening practices among tribes like the Chinook and Clatsop with great curiosity and stole skulls from graves to sell to scientists in the eastern U.S. and Europe. Gairdner sent Comcomly's skull to be studied in Scotland before being put on display in England. Nearly a century later, Comcomly's skull experienced slight damage during the German Blitz in London in World War II. In 1953, the skull was returned to the U.S. and exhibited at the Clatsop County Historical Society in Astoria, Oregon, and then by the Smithsonian Institute. Finally, Comcomly's skull was repatriated to the Chinook people in 1972 after a long legal fight, and he was put to final rest near Ilwaco, Washington. The passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 and similar regulations has since prohibited such disrespectful handling. Chinook people, including Comcomly's descendants, have long been dismayed by not only the ghoulish grave robbery but also the way in which a part of his remains went on public display well into the twentieth century and still appears on the pages of books published as recently as 1999.⁶⁶

Portrait of Chief Comcomly, between 1811 and 1813 by unknown artist. Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wikimedia Commons.

in the matter, resulting in acts of resistance such as the Red River Rebellion in 1869-1870 and the Northwest Rebellion in 1885. Manitoba was established as a Canadian province in 1870. The drafting of the “Medicine Line” (at the 49th parallel) divided groups like the Blackfeet/Blackfoot and completely displaced others, like bands of Chippewa Cree.⁶⁸ Canada and the U.S. continue to be interlinked through diplomacy, economics, and kinship. Larocque and McKenzie witnessed the coming of the Americans and gave us valuable contemporaneous insight into the characters of Lewis and Clark and how they were perceived by their Mandan and Hidatsa neighbors during the winter of 1804-1805. The Corps of Discovery did not explore an empty West. They entered the homelands of Indigenous peoples, learned from them, were helped by them, and initiated a period of comity, albeit short-lived. ■

Shannon Kelly, an associate editor for the Montana Historical Society's Montana: The Magazine of Western History and Montana Historical Society Press, currently serves on the LCTA Board of Directors. She has worked at the North Dakota Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center/Fort Mandan State Historic Site and Pompeys Pillar National Monument and continues to deliver interpretive presentations, the next one scheduled during the Lewis & Clark Festival in Great Falls, Montana, June 20-21, 2025. This article is adapted from her forthcoming book on the winters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Notes

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3. Hudson's Bay Company has contracted majorly in the start of its 355th year. HBC adopted the department-store retail model in 1881 and in 2008 was acquired by U.S.-based NRDC Equity Partners. In spring 2025, all HBC's department stores are being liquidated and closed as Canadian consumers flock to grab one last wool point striped blanket or iconic striped hat, a sign of changing times propelled by shoppers who are now price-conscious, convenience-driven, digitally engaged, and locally focused.
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18. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 140, Larocque, November 30, 1804.
19. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 140, Larocque, December 1, 1804.
20. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 141, Larocque, December 6, 1804.
21. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 142-43, Larocque, December 14, 1804, and December 16, 1804.
22. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 143, Larocque, December 16, 1804.
23. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 232, Charles McKenzie.
24. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 232-33, McKenzie.
25. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 149, Larocque, January 20, 1805.
26. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 232, McKenzie.
27. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 233, McKenzie.
28. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 238, McKenzie.
29. Wood and Thiessen, eds., *Early Fur Trade*, 238, McKenzie.
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55. Lewis wrote on May 10, 1806, that they "...gave Tinnachemootoolt [Broken Arm] and Hohastillpilp [Hohots Ilppilp (Red Grizzly Bear or Bleeding Grizzly)] each a medal; the former one of the small size with the likeness of Mr. Jefferson and the latter one of the sewing [sowing] medals struck in the presidency of Washington, we explained to them the design and the importance of medals in the estimation of the whites as well as the red men who had been taught their value." The "sewing" or sowing medal from the Washington presidency was one of the Washington "Season" medals. That medal depicted a spring planting scene. Hohots Ilppilp's sister is believed by many to have become pregnant with Clark's child during the Expedition's spring 1806 interlude. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 7:238, Lewis, May 10, 1806.
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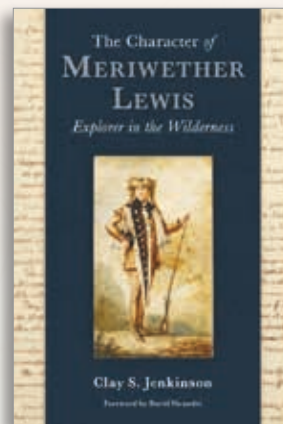
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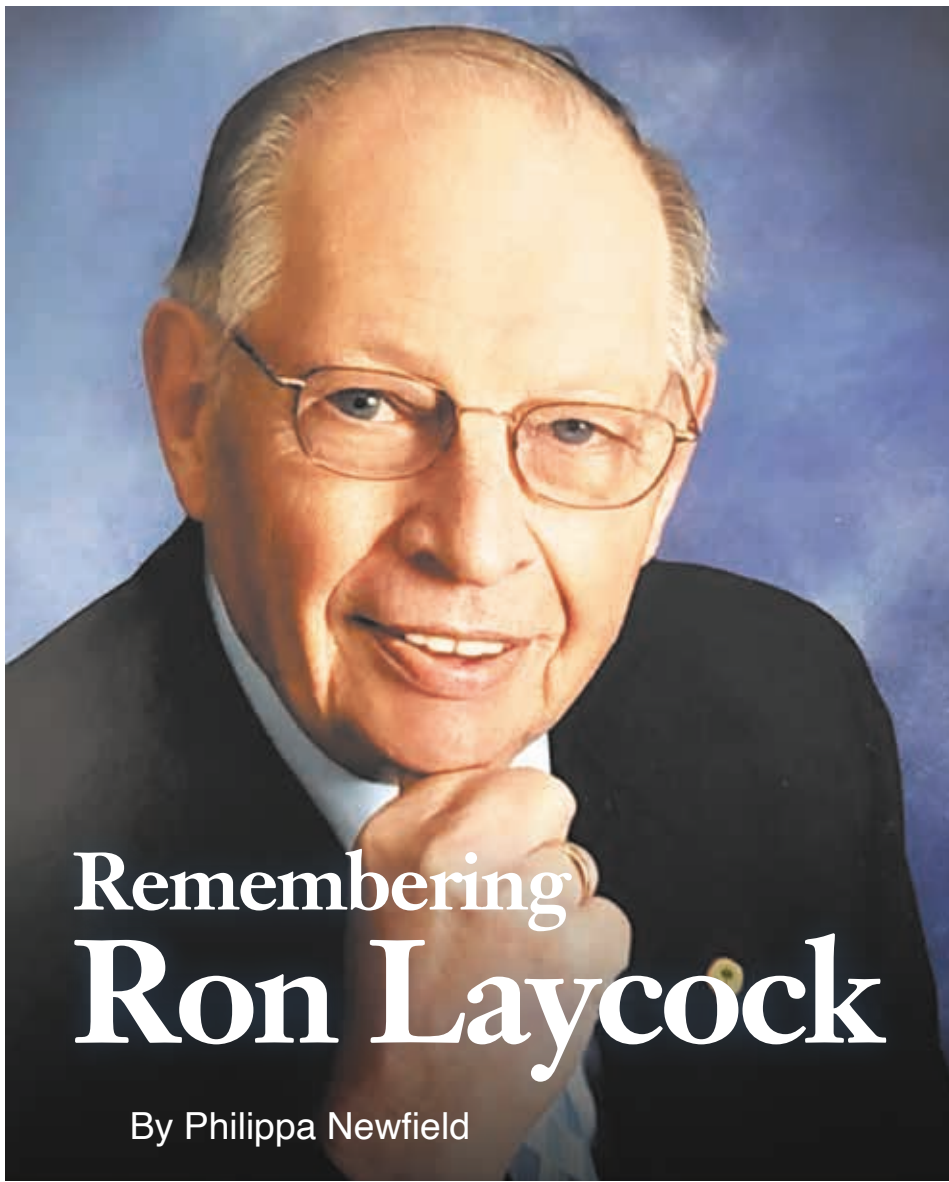


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Remembering Ron Laycock

By Philippa Newfield

Ronald George Laycock

It is with great sadness that the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance marks the passing of longtime member and past president Ronald George Laycock, aged 90, of Benson, Minnesota, on March 17, 2025. He was laid to rest on March 21 in the Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Benson.

Ron Laycock was born April 15, 1934, in Madrid, Iowa, the son of George Ross and Edna Marguerite (Simonson) Laycock. He was graduated from Madrid High School and received a bachelor's degree from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ron worked as the Director

of Human Services for Swift County, Minnesota, and held many leadership roles in his church and the wider community, serving on committees, councils, and the boards of Project Turnabout, the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance/Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Swift County Hospital, and Scofield Place.

One of Ron's lasting contributions was the donation of his extraordinary collection of Lewis and Clark books and materials to the Jefferson Library through the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia, the fruits of his collecting interests over the course of more than two decades. His initial gift in 2003 of more than 700 books and other items related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition is referred to at the Jefferson Library as the "Ron Laycock Collection of Lewis and Clark Literature."

"After 2003, Ron continued to donate items to the Jefferson Library on a yearly basis right up to 2017," according to Endrina Tay, Fiske and Marie Kimball Librarian at the Jefferson Library. "Today, we have amassed over a thousand items in the collection that encompass

many core book publications, works of fiction, children's titles, scholarly articles, programs, pamphlets, maps, catalogs, newspapers, journals, periodicals, play and film scripts, exhibition and event literature, and audiovisual materials, many rare and unique items among them. Ron's is one of the largest collections of material related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the United States."

In the words of Jack Robertson, Library Director Emeritus at the Jefferson Library, "It is a most remarkable gift... and it will make the Jefferson Library's holdings extraordinarily rich for scholars, teachers, International Center for

Jefferson Studies fellows, and Foundation staff members.” Jack made his remarks at the Jefferson Library’s reception in honor of Ron and his extended family in 2007. Joining them was Kat Imhoff, former Vice President at Monticello, who had met Ron while planning for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial from 2003-2006.

The collection includes copies of all the standard nineteenth- and twentieth-century publications about Lewis and Clark plus books about other early explorers of the West, the fur trade, the Louisiana Purchase, and Native Americans. Among the books are an 1807 edition of Lewis and Clark Expedition member Patrick Gass’ *A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery*; an 1842 edition of *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark* edited by Nicholas Biddle and Paul Allen; an 1849 edition of Washington Irving’s *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprize Beyond the Rocky Mountains*; and a 1904 edition of Ripley Hitchcock’s *The Louisiana Purchase and the Exploration, Early History, and Building of the West*.

Ron enjoyed traveling with his wife Ione, woodworking, coin collecting, hunting, and fishing. His children, grandsons, and great-grandchildren brought him much joy and occasioned many smiles. Ron is survived by his wife of 60 years, Ione Laycock of Benson, Minnesota; three children:

Becky (Don) Holland of New London, Minnesota, Mike (Diane) Laycock of Brandon, South Dakota, and LeAnn (Ron) Roth of Mapleton, North Dakota; nine grandchildren: Matthew (Ellen) Holland, Benjamin Holland, Philip (Stephanie) Holland, Andrew (Brooke) Laycock, Luke (Kayla) Laycock, Noah (Amber Thompson) Laycock, Brady (Mackenzie) Dokkebakken, Nathan (Ashley Tesch) Dokkebakken, and Samuel Ross; seven great-grandchildren: Owen Holland, Brynn Holland, Chase Laycock, Emma Laycock, Cameron Dokkebakken, Natalie Dokkebakken, and Reed Gonzalez; and many other relatives and friends. May they take comfort in their memories of Ron and may Ron’s memory be for a blessing for us all.

The author wishes to express appreciation to Endrina Tay, Fiske and Marie Kimball Librarian at the Jefferson Library, who aided considerably in the preparation of this commemoration. ■

Philippa Newfield, past president of LCTA and co-editor of LCTA’s newsletter The Orderly Report, has traveled the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail from Pittsburgh to the Pacific and encourages people to, in the words of James Ronda, “get out of the river” and explore all that the Trail has to offer us.

One of Ron’s lasting contributions was the donation of his extraordinary collection of Lewis and Clark books and materials to the Jefferson Library through the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia, the fruits of his collecting interests over the course of more than two decades.

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Donations to the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance to honor individuals, activities, or the memory of a friend, family member, or colleague are deeply appreciated, and may be designated for the alliance’s general fund or earmarked for a particular purpose.

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

Reviews

Explorers: A New History

by Matthew Lockwood

New York: W. W. Norton, 2024.

164 pp., photographs, notes on sources, index. Hardcover, \$22.00.

The Explorers: A New History of America in Ten Expeditions

by Amanda Bellows

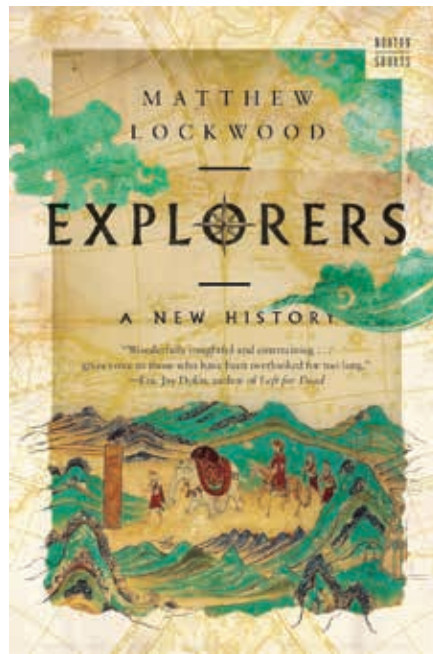
New York: William Morrow, 2024.

368 pp., photographs, map, notes, index. Hardcover, \$32.50

Reviewed by David L. Nicandri

Exploration history is a popular literary genre. Nearly 30 years after it was first published, Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage* (1996) can be found in almost every downtown or airport bookstore. It has sold many millions of copies. When Steve was still alive he humbly confessed that the book had made him a rich man.

In the years since, Nathaniel Philbrick has filled the shelves of bookstores and home libraries with a raft of nautical adventures on such subjects as the *Mayflower* colonists in New England, Pacific whalers, and Antarctic and Pacific Northwest explorer Charles Wilkes. Accounts of Sir Ernest Shackleton have enthralled readers for over a century, including Caroline Alexander's *The Endurance* (1998). Candice Millard's *River of the Gods* (2022) about the search for the source of the Nile was widely read. Laurence Bergreen attracted many readers to his accounts of Magellan and Marco Polo. Most recently, Hampton Sides captivated audiences with his new synthesis of Captain Cook's third and final voyage. His *The Wide Wide Sea* (2024) was on *The New York Times* best-seller list for eight weeks, topping out at Number 3. It's gone through multiple hardback printings, with foreign



rights sold to about a dozen countries.

Appearing in print in 2024 as well are two anthologies of exploratory ventures also trying to capitalize on this recurring interest: *Explorers: A New History* by Matthew Lockwood (W. W. Norton) and *The Explorers: A New History of America in Ten Expeditions* by Amanda Bellows (William Morrow). Neither author has written about the history of discovery before (which shows from time to time), but that two major publishers would commit to these writing projects speaks to the attractiveness of exploration narratives.

That both of these volumes are subtitled as “new histories” is an unmistakable indicator that we are about to encounter revisionist interpretations. Nothing wrong with that. Unless new documentary evidence is uncovered, one of the other major reasons for writing about any particular subject is to offer a new interpretation. Both argue for a reconsideration of “what it means to be an explorer and what qualifies as discovery,” as Lockwood phrases it (2). The question is: How well does their argumentation hold up?

Lockwood's *Explorers* covers a greater span of time and geography than the book by Bellows though it is half its size. He offers an almost obligatory nod to “the stories of famed explorers . . . whose voyages of discovery helped shape how we understand our world,” but his interest lies in “a new cast of adventurers every bit as daring and adventurous as the more familiar figures of old” (3). Lockwood's thesis is that “discovery is not unidirectional and never belongs to a single group of people” (5). This is true of course, as Felipe Fernández-Armesto pointed out in great detail in his *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration* (2006), one of the best general histories of discovery ever published. Though Lockwood's effort is intended, to use a phrase popular in academia, to decenter the great explorers in Euro-American lore, he does introduce some interesting new figures even if on occasion we have to strain to think of them as explorers in the conventional meaning of the term.

Among these figures is Gudrud Far-Traveler who as young woman accompanied her father on Eric the Red's voyage from Iceland to Greenland in the last century of the first millennium. Her brother-in-law was none other than Leif Erikson, and eventually she became a founding member of the Viking settlement in Newfoundland. In this she was joined by Freydis Eiríksdóttir, Erikson's sister, who, Lockwood tells us, was “the undisputed leader of a party of more than thirty men” (17).

In the Western canon, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (ca. 1300) is a foundational text in the genre of travel literature. Lockwood recounts the story of Rabban Bar Sauma, born of Uyghur ancestry in Beijing, an approximate contemporary of Polo, who traveled in the opposite direction of his Italian counterpart. We are also introduced to the young African companion of two Jesuit

missionaries to Japan in 1581.

One can't read Lockwood's account of this "first known African visitor in Japanese history" (41) without recalling the story of York. We know him only by the name the Japanese gave him, Yasuke, "perhaps a translation of the name Isaac or a reflection of his origins among the Yao people of East Africa" (43) as Lockwood tells us. Yasuke created a sensation because of the color of his skin. Perhaps like York an enslaved person, or taken on as a personal assistant by one of the missionaries in Mozambique, Yasuke's size was a fascination. His skin was rubbed to make sure its color was natural and not an affectation of some sort. Yasuke's story is only one more piece of evidence that many of the best-known episodes in the Lewis and Clark story aren't as unique as is commonly supposed.

One legitimate commonality, Lockwood points out, is that "every explorer relies on local knowledge and expertise" (55). Lewis and Clark had several "conductors" (as Alexander Mackenzie called them), most famously Twisted Hair and Tetoharsky of the Nez Perce. In the case of Captain Cook, the key figure was Tupaia, a Tahitian whose language skills and geographic understanding of Polynesian islands were impressive. Here, however, Lockwood gets into a little trouble, arguing that on Cook's first voyage "Tupaia directed the *Endeavour* to New Zealand, Australia, and numerous islands in between" (59).

My dictionary defines the transitive form of "direct" as meaning "to manage the affairs, course, or action of." As helpful as Tupaia was (I would argue more as an interpreter than geographer, and his principal role in Tahitian society was priest not pilot), Cook's course was set even before he left England. His instructions from the Admiralty advised that after observing

the Transit of Venus in Tahiti in June 1769, he was indeed to investigate the ephemeral sighting of Abel Tasman's New Zealand. The goal was to determine if it were a prospective projection of the supposed *Terra Australis Incognita* filling out the Pacific Ocean's mid-to-high latitudes. But first, Cook was to head much further to the south looking for the unknown continent. On this leg Tupaia was able to forecast the appearance of many of Tahiti's neighboring islands which lent credence to his abilities as a navigator. After vacating the oceanic district south of Tahiti as a continental prospect, Cook turned northwest to New Zealand, establishing its insularity cartographically. Here Tupaia was a very effective interpreter with the Maōri, though he seems to have had a more critical opinion of those people than the ship's commander did. Nevertheless, this linguistic revelation became a formative aspect of Cook's most brilliant ethnographic deduction. The so-called Polynesian Triangle running to Easter Island in the east, to Hawaii in the north, and thence back to New Zealand would not be fully discerned until Cook's third voyage to the Pacific. Cook thought the Indigenous people who settled those vast distances were the greatest navigators in history.

The decision to survey the east coast of Australia was all Cook's. One of the geographic puzzles of that era, left murky after the period of Spanish and Dutch exploration in the southwest Pacific, was whether "New Holland" (Tasman's name for the continent) and New Guinea were a connected piece of land. Cook removed all doubt of that by transiting the Torres Strait that separates the two landforms.

Lockwood's coverage of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is even more problematic. Much of what he narrates is wrong, which has the effect of casting doubt on the veracity of his account of

other, lesser known, characters in the book. We see in these pages that President Jefferson dispatched Meriwether Lewis in "the political interest of territorial control" in 1800, a year before actually taking office. Then we have this internally inconsistent passage about Sacagawea: "Born in 1800 into the Lemhi Shoshone tribe . . . [and] taken captive by a band of Hidatsa raiders at the age of twelve" (72). We know that Sacagawea was born about the time the U.S. Constitution was crafted in 1787. Mistakes creep into every manuscript and a remarkable number find themselves in print, but elemental facts like basic chronology matter, and these errors by Lockwood and his copy editor are egregious – and discrediting.

If possible, the blunders get worse. According to Lockwood, Lewis and Clark spent their winter at Fort Mandan recruiting "trappers with experience in the territory [to the west] and knowledge of the Indigenous languages they would encounter along the way." It's puzzling to contemplate how Lockwood arrived at this notion, unless it's an overly generous characterization of Charbonneau and Baptiste Lepage. The author rescues himself, temporarily, by quickly interjecting Sacagawea's linguistic skill in "Hidatsa as well as her native Shoshone." But then he takes two steps back with this: "In April 1805, the corps left Fort Mandan and headed northwest [?] with Sacagawea, by then heavily pregnant [!], helping to guide the way" (73). Lockwood leaves the unmistakable impression with the reader that she gave birth on the trail west.

Lockwood throws in a few other hoary misconceptions, like Sacagawea's saving the Expedition from starvation, but his basic difficulty is a lack of understanding of trail geography. On the famous occasion of her indomitable determination to see the whale at Ecola Beach, Lockwood states "it took three

days to descend the Columbia to the coast” to see the specimen (75).

If Lockwood’s “New History” is amiss relative to Polynesia and the American West, his book becomes much stronger when he turns to Africa. The English explorer Mungo Park is not quite the hidden, unsung, or unorthodox explorer whom the author seems to want to focus on. Richard Van Orman covered Park extensively in his *The Explorers* (1984). Still, Lockwood does offer a few new insights. In 1794 Park offered his services as an explorer to what Lockwood refers to in shorthand as the “African Association” (87). The full name of this organization was the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. It was founded in 1788 by Joseph Banks, Cook’s first voyage naturalist and patron of British exploration for the balance of his life, principally from his presidency of the Royal Society which had been Cook’s sponsor. The first explorer this organization sponsored was John Ledyard, who, as an American, is intertwined with the origins of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Ledyard died in Egypt before he could make it to the headwaters of the Niger, which he hoped would take him to the Atlantic Ocean. Park was, in a sense, Ledyard’s successor, though with a different itinerary. Both represented the shift of exploration, from the outline of continental land masses and oceanic expanses (work that Cook essentially completed) to the exploration of continental interiors. Ledyard and Park, therefore, were the African analogues to Peter Pond, Alexander Mackenzie, and Lewis. But from Lockwood we learn that there was an “overlap between the membership of the African Association and London’s increasingly active antislavery societies.” Determined by Lockwood not a coincidence but rather “considerable and intentional” (88),

this opens up a whole new window of insight into the motives of late Enlightenment exploration. The social justice impulse may have had its roots in the shocks to the European sense of cultural superiority brought about by Cook’s accounts of the autonomous value of Indigenous societies in Polynesia, Australia, North America, and even the far eastern present-day Cape Dezhnyov off the coast of Siberia.

Unfortunately, Lockwood starts the section on Park with the “Dark Continent” of Africa trope (87). This phrase was not in popular usage until the British explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley used it in the title to his book *Through the Dark Continent* (1878). The term was subsequently amplified and has achieved enduring utility in modern literary currency as a function of its association with Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, published (1899) more than a century after Park first explored Africa. Conrad’s novel was a response to the European imperial carving up/conquest of Africa during the era of Stanley, David Livingstone, and Richard Francis Burton. The burdensome durability of Conrad as an interpreter of Enlightenment-era exploration among writers who should know better is astonishing. In the present instance, it shifts attention away from Lockwood’s key point, which is worth quoting in full:

“Ignorance about African society had allowed slavery’s apologists to present Africans as unfeeling, unthinking savages, natural slaves who were better off in bondage, encouraging the wider white populace to fool itself into believing that the enslavement of Africans was benign. The African Association realized that the only way to explode these pernicious stereotypes was to travel to the continent’s interior and gather evidence of how Africans lived

outside of slavery: to recognize them as full human beings” (88).

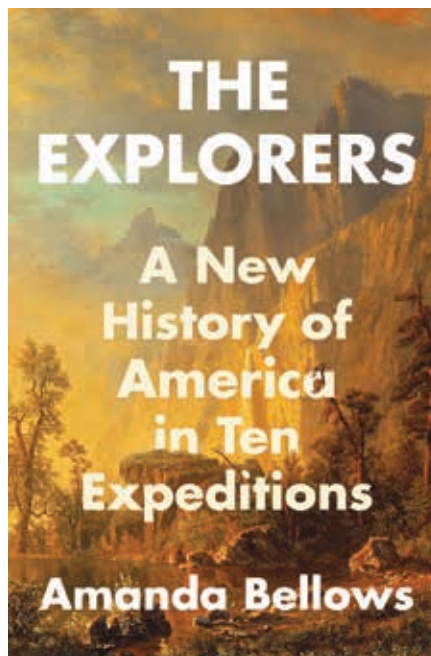
In the event, Park started up the Gambia River in June 1795, making him a contemporary with Mackenzie, North America’s leading river-source hunter. He returned to England two years later, became a celebrity of Cookian proportions, which contributed to the great literary success of his *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799). Like Cook, Ledyard, and Lewis, Park died relatively young (in 1806), on a return trip to Africa. The Niger, that had been Ledyard’s goal, was the target this time. Like Ledyard, indeed as Lockwood asserts, like “all explorers,” Park’s motives were an admixture of a quest for knowledge and the desire for “fame and fortune.” Nevertheless, Park’s account allowed his readers to “reimagine Africa and Africans.” The latter were no longer “stock characters or props” (89).

Lockwood follows with an equally compelling account of an African-American traveler to Northern Africa, David Dorr. Born into enslavement in 1827, Dorr was manumitted in 1851 by his so-called owner in exchange for service as a valet during “an extended tour of Europe and the Holy Land” (92). In one of the best sections of the book, we read about Dorr’s absorbing what England and continental Europe had to offer culturally, but his account of travels in *A Colored Man Round the World* (1858) came alive when he began to describe “the ruins of the ancestors of which he [was] the posterity,” meaning the great pyramids of Egypt. Indeed, Lockwood states, “on the plains of Giza, Dorr constructed an alternate genealogy of civilization, one that centered on Africa and Africans.” Writing principally for an African-American audience back home, he argued, for example, that “Moses obtained his fundamental rules of governing nations” in Egypt (95).

Unfortunately, Lockwood's treatment of Dorr is less than it could have been. I had to investigate separately the name of his account (which is not even referenced in the book's notes on sources). Lockwood also fails to note that Dorr's so-called master backed out of the promised manumission agreement, forcing the author to escape into freedom, and that Dorr later fought with the 7th Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War.

David Dorr's story is compelling travel literature, but is it really exploration history? Dorr says that "at their core, explorers are interpreters. They not only discover, but also explain and interpret distant lands and peoples for their countrymen" (96). One of America's greatest historians of exploration separated the explorer from the interpreter. James Ronda, in a compelling essay in his *Voyages of Discovery* (1998), said that when Lewis and Clark began to shape their experiences into history they entered the territory of storytelling and commentary. At those junctures, he argued, the captains were no longer explorers but explainers. By this, Ronda meant that when the captains polished their more reflective narratives (as opposed to experiential field notes), Lewis (principally) and Clark began fashioning not only a description of the west but its meaning.

Ronda's critique becomes all the more compelling relative to one of Lockwood's concluding chapters, "Migration" (124-134). Herein the author recounts the experience of European immigrants to the United States near the turn of the twentieth century and in the aftermath of World War II, and more recently from Mexico. These people, Lockwood avers, also discovered new places, new languages, etc. He states it's not his intention to romanticize migration but that's exactly what he's doing. By his standard, my



trip from western New York to Idaho to attend graduate school in the 1970s was an act of discovery. In the personal sense, yes of course it was, but driving a car across the northern West doesn't make me William Clark. To pose economic migrants, or even adventurous hikers and canoeists in modern times, as explorers strips the word of its purposeful meaning. Travel, even exotic travel, is not the same thing as conducting an expedition that yields fundamental insight into geographic comprehension, the traditional definition of what exploration and discovery are all about.

Amanda Bellows' *The Explorers* is a larger book than Lockwood's but not necessarily a better one. Its subtitle *A New History of America in Ten Expeditions* draws on the common idiom of "listicles," an epidemic in internet news feeds that are intended to sell digital advertising. Like Lockwood, she is bothered by convention's "limited definition of exploration," looking instead for "the contributions of a broader group of explorers," such as Native Americans (4). Part 1 discusses "five intrepid men and women who crisscrossed the

western frontier during the nineteenth century." Using the now traditional post-modern framework, her candidates for inclusion come "from diverse backgrounds, escaping from lives circumscribed by racism, sexism, poverty or discrimination" (6).

Bellows covers some of the same subjects that Lockwood does, starting with Sacagawea. Apparently Bellows considers it novel to conceive of Sacagawea as an explorer, whereas that would be an axiomatic understanding of every reader of this journal. Unlike Lockwood, her general chronology of the Expedition's context and conduct is accurate, though she does have Vancouver complete his epic survey of the Pacific Coast in one year, 1792, not the three different seasons of exploration that it actually took to conduct it. Bellows refers to Nicholas King's map (though not by name) and makes passing mention of the largely discredited idea that Meriwether Lewis "may have contracted syphilis during the journey, a pervasive infection that may have contributed to his death by suicide years later" (25). Young Jean Baptiste Charbonneau's nickname, Pomp, is, paradoxically, lent by Clark, yet in this account the term is rendered as meaning "firstborn" in the Shoshone language" (26). If so, I yield to others to explain.

On the other hand, Bellows misses Sacagawea's well-documented contributions to the Expedition as field archaeologist/ethnologist. For weeks she sifted through abandoned campsites along the Missouri River in present-day Montana trying to identify tribal material culture that could be translated into geographic insight about the party's westward progress.

Inevitably, Beaverhead Rock comes into view. Bellows provides a good line here: "Sacagawea's knowledge galvanized Lewis, who sprang into action and left the following day with a small party of men" (32). True, but this is

followed by garbled text that reads: “Lewis and his men crossed the Continental Divide for the first time via Lemhi Pass and found the headwaters of the Missouri River, a moment that helped confirm no Northwest Passage existed” (32). This last notion (what I have separately called the Lemhi Disappointment trope) seems to have been extracted by the author from popular accounts and film documentaries. It telescopes several weeks’ worth of geographic discernment. Besides which, that important geographic work was principally conducted by Clark and not Lewis. This is followed by another bit of trail mythology: the Expedition supposedly “teetering on the edge of starvation” (35) in the Bitterroot Mountains.

When Bellows isn’t being snared by simplistic trail lore, she’s wrong. She has William Clark naming Cape Disappointment (it had been denominated by maritime fur trader John Meares in 1788), which error is compounded by her attempt to make sense of Clark’s supposed usage. To wit: when the Expedition took in an expansive view of the ocean in November 1805, they “confirm[ed] for President Jefferson that no Northwest Passage existed” (36). We know that Meriwether Lewis gamely attempted to suggest to Jefferson that such a passage did exist, but that finding was contained in correspondence he sent to the nation’s capital in September of 1806.

By the time a reader enters into the next chapter’s discussion of the mountain man James Beckwourth, it’s clear that Bellows’ strategy is to offer a discursive summary of the broad pattern of American history with a seasoning of exploration history to add flavor. But the narrative naiveté is constant. She has the Santa Fe Trail being “constructed” (48) when *established* is certainly the appropriate usage. But speaking of roads, Bellows’ account of how Beckwourth

discovered and then touted the eponymous pass through the Sierra that, as he predicted, would become “the best wagon-road” (58) into the Sacramento River basin, is well told.

We reach the outer limits of plausibility when Bellows turns to the juvenile fiction writer Laura Ingalls Wilder. Of course, the “Little House” series of children’s books is a hallmark in American literature, but here Bellows expands the bounds of travel and exploration narrative beyond normative conception. To Bellows, Wilder is “a new type of explorer” not intending to “survey the landscape or chart a route, but to reside – to build a home and cultivate the earth” (70). Sorry, young Laura Ingalls and her family on the Northern Plains were settlers, not explorers. Indeed, to use trendy modern terminology, they were colonists, displacing Indigenous people. If everyone is an explorer, no one is.

And so it goes with John Muir, a back-country excursionist turned landscape preservationist. Or, Florence Merriam Bailey, an accomplished ornithologist who was desperate to save several species of birds from extinction during a late nineteenth-century millinery craze. Even when Merriam Bailey escapes her usual urban haunts in the Northeast for a western tour (by train), Bellows has her subject “immers[ed] in the Utah wilderness,” operating out of “a boarding-house set among fragrant lilacs and rosebushes” (127).

Oddly enough, when, in Part II, Bellows moves out of the nineteenth century (an era commonly associated with exploration history) into the twentieth (which does not necessarily have that associative value), the quality of the book improves. This may be because, for the typical reader, the author moves into more distant places. In this regard, we learn first of William Sheppard, an African-American Presbyterian missionary to the Belgian Congo. Though

Sheppard was following the relatively well-known route established by the earlier Stanley and Livingstone generation, he made such significant contributions to ethnological descriptions of African people that he was recognized by Britain’s Royal Geographical Society. He also uncovered shocking atrocities that had been perpetrated in the Belgian colony.

The now suddenly topical Panama Canal Zone is addressed in the story of Harriet Chalmers Adams, whose accomplishments, like Sheppard’s, lay in taking on the role of ethnographer, not exploration per se. For Bellows it’s a revelation to finally find an explorer who’s willing to call “attention to how colonialism had harmed Indigenous peoples” (173). She might be surprised to learn that in his second voyage journal, James Cook criticized the destruction of the tranquility the Maōri of New Zealand had suffered from their various encounters with European explorers, including himself. He advised his prospective readers that if any of them doubted the truth of his assertion to consider what the Native people of North America had gained by their commerce with Europeans. His journal text was so “progressive” for its time that the Admiralty’s editor excised it from the published account that appeared in 1775. In the end, Adams might be best thought of as an adventurous travel writer, as opposed to an explorer, though an accomplished one nonetheless. She was one of *National Geographic*’s first female contributors.

The book concludes with its three strongest chapters. Lockwood briefly mentioned Arctic polar explorer, Matthew Henson, Robert Peary’s African-American counterpart, but Bellows devotes an entire chapter to this accomplished explorer. He fairly comes across in her pages in relation to Peary as Clark does to Lewis; that is, as the under-appreciated

“second.” In this story Bellows effectively captures the evolution of exploration from the late Enlightenment period familiar to readers of *WPO*, to the more Romantic construct of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century where discovery is often “personal,” though nonetheless construed as a “national triumph” (184). Nevertheless, her general lack of familiarity with exploration context confounds. Bellows has the British explorer, William Parry, trying to voyage to the North Pole in 1827. He was actually resuming the quest for the Northwest Passage, thought to exist in the latitudes on either side of the Arctic Circle (66° 33' N) north of Canada proper, a search left off by Cook in the 1770s.

Intriguingly, Bellows argues that the reason the fame-hungry Peary chose Henson “over a white partner [is] because he wanted all the accolades. Jim Crow America would be less likely to bestow such recognition on Henson” (192). Companions have always been a problem for explorers, especially for those who have an eye on the prospect of published accounts and book royalties. No figure was more vexed in this regard than Meriwether Lewis, who continually sought for ways in his journal to elevate his role and accomplishments at the expense of his co-captain’s. Bellows notes that for over a century historians have debated whether Henson or Peary got to the North Pole first in 1909, but she gives short shrift to the question as to whether anyone actually reached the actual apex of the globe, or merely approximated it.

Without question, the best chapter in either of these books is Bellows’ treatment of the famed aviator Amelia Earhart. The author provides a great synthesis of early mechanical flight, including insight into Earhart’s rapid rise in the field of long-distance aerial expeditions. Bellows asserts that “little

about her childhood in a small Kansas town foreshadowed her career as a fearless explorer of the skies” (213). Born in 1897, Earhart grew up on the Lewis and Clark Trail. She spent many summers at her maternal grandparents’ home in Atchison, “perched high on a grassy hill” facing east and the verdant vegetation of the Missouri River Valley far below (213). Visiting this site two decades ago with my then colleague from the Washington State Historical Society, Redmond Barnett, he quipped, “I can see how living on this bluff created the sensation of flying and how that might enchant a young girl.”

In a way, Earhart’s most ambitious venture evoked the appeal of global circumnavigation, popularized in the eighteenth century by such seafarers as Bougainville, Cook, and Vancouver, or the land-based attempt by Jefferson’s correspondent Ledyard, later effected by Sir George Simpson of the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1841-1842. “No person had ever succeeded” with an aerial attempt (230). In 1937 Earhart embarked on a multi-stage flight around the world, beginning in Oakland and traveling eastward. Ledyard made it 95% of the way across the Eurasian land mass in 1787 (exactly 150 years earlier). Earhart made it 75% of the way. She and her navigator, Fred Noonan, disappeared near Howland Island, “an atoll set in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean” (231).

The search for the specific whereabouts of her Lockheed Electra holds the same fascination for researchers and salvage archaeologists that has gripped imaginations relative to Sir John Franklin’s ships in the Arctic, Cook’s *Endeavour* and *Resolution* in the harbor of Newport, Rhode Island, or Shackleton’s *Endurance*. When your craft is in the company of that group, there’s no question you are an explorer. John Glenn is known to have searched

through a list of famous expeditions to find a fitting name for his Mercury era multi-orbit circumnavigation of the world in 1962. He called that mission “Friendship 7.” I suspect his unstated inspiration was the *Friendship*, the name of the Fokker aircraft that flew across the Atlantic in 1928 with Earhart as a junior member of the three-person crew, which made her the first woman to cross an ocean by air.

One of Glenn’s successors, Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, fills out the anthology. Bellows tells her story within the larger context of Soviet vs. U.S. competition. The author persuasively finds the roots of JFK’s famous commitment “of sending American astronauts to the moon” (241) not in the shock of Yuri Gagarin’s inaugural space flight in 1961, three months into his administration, but rather in candidate Kennedy’s acceptance speech in Los Angeles the previous summer. Therein he spoke of “uncharted areas of science and space.” This was one of several facets of his so-called “New Frontier,” which was conceived (in the days before post-colonialism became the dominant historiographical paradigm) as an evocation of the “pioneers of old” who, Kennedy continued, relinquished “their safety, their comfort, and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West.” Per Bellows, “the time had come to take on new challenges” (241). In the long tradition of travel and exploratory literature, Ride’s ride in June 1983 was likened to earlier efforts, in her case to Amelia Earhart.

As intimated several times heretofore, the principal challenge in reviewing these books is definitional. Let me pick up that thread again with Lockwood’s chapter on “Migration” in mind, by offering a personal example. All four of my grandparents were

immigrants from Italy. Leaving their home country with little money, venturing across the Atlantic in steerage, and possessing no understanding of the English language that was dominant in their new destination, took courage, to use a term that is resonant in the study of Lewis and Clark. I have tremendous admiration for their bravery. Yet, I don't really think of them as explorers. There were scouts from their villages in the old country who had already ventured to America, with promises of jobs and clannish neighborhoods to envelop them upon their arrival.

A better word for my ancestors, indeed one that is even more expansive than "explorer," is that they were "seekers." Many of the figures in the Lockwood and Bellows books fall into this category, whether they were seeking social justice, a better way of life, preservation of landscape and species, or simple adventure. All of these individuals also displayed either moral or physical courage, but the means by which they accomplished that was travel, not exploration.

Ian MacLaren, best known as the great Canadian historian of the frontier artist Paul Kane, has written extensively over the past few decades about the dynamics of travel literature. He stated recently that perhaps greater distinction needs to be given to the differences between the traveler and the explorer. The way I understand his argument, every explorer is a traveler, but not every traveler is an explorer. To take a nautical example, travelers and explorers can both experience poor diet and sickness at sea. But as Hampton Sides observes, the distinguishing feature between these two types is that only one of them is venturing into the relative or complete unknown, and explorers do so, by and large, for purposes

that transcend mere personal interest. Exploring in the pursuit of geographic comprehension or scientific endeavor is not necessarily a more noble calling than seeking economic security or social justice; it's just a different one.

This digression into typology is not meant to dismiss the works under question, because I think they provide a valuable service. The devoted student of Lewis and Clark, or Cook, is not likely to find much of value in Lockwood and Bellows, and not just because those three captains aren't narrative centerpieces. The side glances and their expeditions simply don't provide any new insights and much of the information rendered is, in fact, wrong.

But the members of study societies, like the one that sponsors this journal, are like graduate students homing in on a reading or research interest. The existential question facing this organization

is where are its future members going to come from? Whereas I can't recommend these books for the specialist's bookshelf, either would be well received by young people graduating from high school who are beginning to venture into the world themselves for the first time. One might say, exploring their own future. ■

David L. Nicandri, a frequent contributor to We Proceeded On, is the author of River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia (2009), Captain Cook Rediscovered: Voyaging to the Icy Latitudes (2020), and more recently, Discovering Nothing: In Pursuit of an Elusive Northwest Passage (2024).

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waiting to be discovered when some household is broken up? Are there journals and other documents that have been mis-filed in archives or museums? How much more is out there?

- What happened to La Liberté after he deserted on August 3, 1804? For what unnamed offense did the captains rebuke George Drouillard in Iowa on the upbound journey? Did John Newman act entirely alone when he uttered “mutinous expressions” near the mouth of the Grand River in October 1804, and were there other seriously disaffected men at the end of the first year’s journey? What had Baptiste Lepage been doing in the “Black Hills” before he ventured down the Little Missouri River in the fall of 1804 to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages, where he was immediately hired by Lewis and Clark? Did the captains have a captains’ supply of whiskey that was not shared with the enlisted men? How much English did Sacajawea learn in the course of the journey and did she ever have direct conversations with Clark or Lewis? What exactly happened to the ruins of Fort Mandan? Were they swept away by the river or were they inundated by silt during a big water year? Why did one of the men throw sand into the eyes of York on June 20, 1804?

The list goes on . . . and on. Some of these mysteries will never be solved. Some are capable of being solved, but it is going to take deep commitment, great resourcefulness, and perseverance to break through. And luck.

During the course of the Bicentennial, the outstanding University of Montana historian Harry Fritz declared that there was probably not much more to learn about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This is one of the few instances in which he was wrong.

I’ve been saying for several years that now that we have Gary Moulton’s outstanding gathering of all the journals, properly transcribed and annotated, under one roof (University of Nebraska Press) and available free (and searchable!) online, we need a bold new generation of Lewis and Clark authors and books, based on a new very close reading of the texts and a much more inclusive set of lenses about their encounters with new lands, new peoples, the limits of language, and the far boundaries of self. We all need to commend Jay Buckley for working with his students at Brigham Young University to start them down the path of fresh scholarship and their first publication in learned journals, including in *We Proceeded On*.

Along the lines of James Ronda’s pathbreaking *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (1984), we need more particularist books on Lewis and Clark among specific Native communities. We already have *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce* (2013) by Allen Pinkham and Steven Evans. We need Lewis and Clark among the Mandans and Hidatsas, Lewis and Clark among

the Lakotas, Lewis and Clark among the Clatsops, Lewis and Clark among the Shoshones, etc.

The Bicentennial (2003-2009) came and went, with its fabulous flowering of national interest in the adventures of the Corps of Discovery. The 250th birthday of the Expedition won’t come until 2054. It’s hard to imagine the kind of national enthusiasm that the Bicentennial generated would occur again in the lifetime of anyone reading this. The 1955 Hollywood film *The Far Horizons* is a hilariously inept treatment of the Expedition, starring Fred MacMurray, Charlton Heston, and Donna Reed (as Sacajawea). Ken Burns’ outstanding 1997 documentary, *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, is a generation old by now and much has changed. National Geographic’s *Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West* (2005) was heroic, but not very revealing. Alas that HBO’s ambitious six-part miniseries collapsed on set near Calgary, Alberta, a decade ago. We all hoped it would be revived.

The best thing that could happen to the Lewis and Clark story now is that a serious film director would take it on with a great cast, great sets, plenty of money, and deep historical authenticity – like HBO’s superb John Adams miniseries. The kind of streaming series on which we now routinely fixate – *Yellowstone, 1923*, or Kevin Costner’s *Horizon: An American Saga* – could do wonders for the ongoing place of the Expedition in American memory or a Doris Kearns Goodwin docudrama on the History Channel.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition is a nearly perfect introductory window into what might be called the *Europeanization of North America*. It was the relatively benign first episode in what was later called America’s “manifest destiny” beyond the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. The Lewis and Clark story contains the seeds of all the geopolitical, environmental, and cross-cultural tensions that would follow. Its two leaders are worthy of endless investigation, particularly the mercurial, gifted, and often profound Meriwether Lewis.

There is so much more to do. As Winston Churchill said in another context, “We must not flag or fail.” Or as the poet John Milton put it at the end of his Christian epic, *Paradise Lost*:

The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

The next great phase of the Lewis and Clark story is all before us. ■

Clay Jenkinson



Lewis & Clark
TRAIL ALLIANCE



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