The purpose of the Lewis and Clark Foundation is broad and diverse, and includes involvement in pursuits which, in the judgment of the directors, are of historical worth or contemporary social value, and commensurate with the legacy of Lewis and Clark. The activities of the Foundation are intended to complement and supplement those of state and local Lewis and Clark Interest groups. The Foundation may appropriately recognize and honor individuals or groups for activities which enhance the understanding and appreciation of the Lewis and Clark story.

The meeting of the Foundation is traditionally held during August, the birth month of both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The meeting place is rotated among the states, and tours generally are arranged to visit sites in the area of the annual meeting which have historic associations with the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GEORGE

It is early April, about the time that the Lewis and Clark Expedition was (as Lewis wrote) "about to penetrate a country at least two thousand miles in width, on which the foot of civilized man had never trod." In many ways, when we think about the activities of our Foundation to stimulate interest in and knowledge of the Lewis and Clark Expedition we are also embarking on new adventures and could also say with Lewis—"we have formed a darling project." There are so many exciting and interesting activities that we should all take credit for and delight in.

Bob Doerk reports that in the Great Falls area in the next few months there will be a festival, several float trips—one down the Marias River—at least a week of archaeological digging at the Lower Portage Camp, a lecture by member Harry Fritz on April 24, a seminar by Jim Ronda in late June and the bus trip out of St. Louis will arrive to enjoy a visit to the Ulm Pishkun (a major Indian buffalo jump).

In Louisville James Holmberg, the curator of manuscripts at the Filson Club, will conduct a Lewis and Clark Expedition Seminar with emphasis on...

(Continued on page 31)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. is open to the general public. Information and an application are available by sending a request to: Membership Secretary; Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.; P.O. Box 3434; Great Falls, MT 59403.

We Proceeded On, the quarterly magazine of the Foundation, is mailed to current members during the months of February, May, August, and November.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES*

General: $20.00 (3 years: $55.00)
Sustaining: $30.00
Supporting: $60.00
Contributing: $150.00

* For foreign memberships add: $5/year in Canada; $10/year in Europe; and $15/year in Asia, Australia and New Zealand.
From the Editor’s Desk

Winnie George talks about the increased nationwide interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition in her column on the opposite page. A great example of that interest occurred at 7:30 p.m., February 27, 1992 in Salem, Oregon in the third floor spinning room at the Mission Mill Village. Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation member Bob Holcomb gave a talk on the Expedition (see article below). A note from Bob says they “expected 75 people to pay $3.00 apiece for my lecture—and had nearly 500! I have now talked about Lewis & Clark to over 7500-8000 people!” That exclamation point is well earned, Bob. He adds that he expects to carry the message to over 10,000 people by the end of the year. Bob has an article on “Meriwether Lewis and His Cedar Tree” somewhere in this issue.

Incidentally, the six session, 12 hour seminar on Lewis and Clark I mentioned I was going to attend in Great Falls had an average of over 100 people in attendance at each session. The seminar was taped for showing on the local public television channel so who knows how many people in and around Great Falls know a little bit or a great deal more about our two travelers. It [the seminar] also featured wonderful cookies during the coffee breaks and, basically, I pigged out.

Winnie has a line or two about Jim Holmberg’s Lewis & Clark seminar at the Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky. Part of the five week seminar will be a slide presentation. The slides were furnished by Don Nell of the Headwaters Chapter in Bozeman, Montana. Don has more Lewis & Clark slides than you can shake a stick at.

The supplemental publication on the “Nine Young Men from Kentucky,” who were members of the Expedition, comes to you courtesy of leftover funds from the 23rd Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation annual meeting. There is some question in Carolyn Denton’s article on George Shannon as to whether or not he was born in Kentucky, but through the years he has been listed with the other eight since he joined the Expedition in Kentucky.

Enjoy!

Exploring the West

BY RON COWAN
Thursday, February 27, 1992—The Statesman Journal—Salem, Oregon

Christopher Columbus has become persona non grata among some historians, but history buff Dr. Robert Holcomb is more charitable toward the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

Holcomb, a retired Corvallis optometrist with a longtime interest in the United States’ pioneer past, will take an upbeat tone when he comes to Salem’s Mission Mill Village for the talk “Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery: Legacy or Meltdown.”

“I’m proud of what my parents and grandparents did in the winning of the West,” he said.

And the Lewis & Clark Expedition, which opened this country’s eyes to the riches of what now is the western United States, is ranked among the top three journeys of discovery in our history, according to Holcomb.

(Continued on page 30)

ON THE COVER—
Beacon Rock on the Columbia River. For William Clark’s description of the rock see the back cover of this WPO. Photo by Steve Wang courtesy of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.
THE BLOOD MEAL
MOSQUITOES AND AGUES ON THE LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITION

BY ROBERT R. HUNT

PART I

To really appreciate the rigors endured by Lewis and Clark, it is not necessary to read through their journals, nor re-enact scenes of their journey, nor visit one of their campsites. You have only to spot yourself somewhere along the Trail, preferably in July or August, take off your shirt and hat, expose the bare skin of your arms and back, and wait. In a few seconds, you will be struck; you will have offered blood, blood given in the same way as that of the Corps of Discovery in 1804/6.

The messengers mediating this blood sacrifice are mosquitoes of the species Aedes vexans. It is the females of the species which do the honors. They require a special supplement of protein in order to mature their eggs; this they "derive from a blood meal." The blood protein for the swarms of these insects which helped perpetuate them on the Missouri and Columbia river systems almost 200 years ago was furnished in part by the men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The mosquitoes, who suck your blood in the same areas today, are in direct line from those who gorged on those men—making you thus a blood cousin of the Expedition. If you stand around long enough you can really begin to identify with them. You will suffer the same massive welts which plagued the party on most of their days in transit across the continent.

TROUBLE ON THE MARCH

These mosquitoes are not to be taken lightly or considered as a mere nuisance by any follower of the Expedition. They affected the journey profoundly in many ways—the health and morale of the party, the daily schedule of travel, the choice of campsites, delays and foul-ups in rendezvous, to name but a few. As threats to the orderly progress of march, they were perhaps as formidable as hostile Indians, grizzlies, and uncertainty of food sources. The Corps was at least able to cope with these latter challenges, but never satisfactorily with the constant torture of "our old companions," as Lewis called these creatures. They are foremost in his "trio of pests" which "invade and obstruct us on all occasions"—"the Mosquitoes eye knats and prickly pears, equal to any three curses that ever poor Egypt laboured under, except the Mahomaten yoke."

Hardly a week passes when the party is on the move that the Captains do not mention these blood suckers in their journals. During the months of July and August there are almost daily complaints. Words are not equal to their torments: In spring and early summer, the mosquitoes are described as "bad," then "very bad" or "troublesome;" farther on, the pests become "extremely troublesome," "uncommonly troublesome," "excessively troublesome," "emencely numerous and troublesome." Clark is beside himself in the summer of 1804. On August 3 he says they are "more numerous than I ever saw them." Four days later, on the 7th, they are "more troublesome than I ever saw them;" on the 9th, "worse than I have seen them," and more than a month later, on September 13th, they are "worse than I have seen them." Clark has run out of superlatives. The reader feels the worst was still to come. And indeed it was, in 1805 in the Great Falls area. But the absolute worst must have been the summer
of 1806 on the return journey. The swarms then were "verry troublesome indeed much worse than they were last year:"

July 2, 1806: "... so troublesome day and night since our arrival in this valley that we are tormented very much by them and cant write except under our Bears [i.e., biers]."

July 3, 1806, near the main ridge of the Rockies: "... so excessively troublesome this evening"—the insects torture the horses "in such manner ... that I really thought they would become frantic."

It is here that the Corps divides into two separate parties. Lewis leading one along the upper reaches of the Missouri, while Clark heads the other party southerly for the Yellowstone—contemplating later rendezvous with Lewis at the junction with the Missouri. Neither party escapes the "plague:"

With Lewis:
July 13, 1806: "without the protection of my musquetoe bier I should have found it impossible to wright a moment."

July 15, 1806: as part of the "certain fatality attached to the neighborhood" [i.e., of the Great Falls] the pests "continue to infest us in such manner that we can scarcely exist ... my dog even howls with the torture he experiences from them, they are almost insupportable, they are so numerous that we frequently get them in our throats as we breathe."

August 8, 1806: since leaving the west side of the Rocky Mountains the men "have not had leisure ... to dress any skins or make themselves clothes and most of them are extremely bare ..."—no wonder they "found the musquetoes extremely troublesome ...!" Lewis halts the party for repairs and to permit his men to "dress skins and make themselves the necessary clothing," observing in the same breath that the mosquitoes will permit "but little choice of camps from hence down to St. Louis." At least with some clothing, the men will not be completely "bare" bait for the blood meal.

With Clark:
Meanwhile along the Yellowstone, Clark's party fares no better. His men are bare also, "having no tent and no covering but a buffalo skin." (July 17, 1806) [Question: What happened to the tents?]

August 3, 1806: "last night the Musquetors was so troublesome that no one of the party Slept half the night, for my part I did not sleep one hour ... those tormenting insects found their way into my beare and tormented me the whole night. they are not less troublesome this morn­ing."

Here Clark's men unload their canoes only to find everything wet and spoiled, including "Several skins ... which is a loss, as they are our principal dependance for clothes to last us to our homes ..."

August 4, 1806: near the mouth of the Yellowstone: The party is in as great agony as Lewis's. Clark is driven by the mosquitoes to abandon the site chosen for the rendezvous with Lewis's party. Lewis had said on the upper Missouri that he could "scarcely exist" while Clark here exclaims that the pests are "almost unendurable." His entry this date journalizes a near breaking point:

"Musquetors excessively troublesome so much so that the men complained that they could not work at their Skins for those troublesome insects, and I find it entirely impossible to hunt in the bottoms, those insects being so numerous and tormenting as to render it impossible for a man to continue in the timbered lands and our best retreat from those insects is on the Sand bars in the river ... the evening nights and mornings they are almost unendurable. The torments of those Musquetors and the want of a Suf­face[n]cy of Buffalow meat to dry ... in­duce me to determin to proceed on to a more eligable Spot on the Missouri below at which place the Musquetors will be less troublesome ... wrote a note to Capt. Lewis informing him of my intentions and tied it to a pole which I had stuck up in the point ... proceeded on down to the 2d point ... on this point the Musquetors were so abundant that we were tormented much worst than at the point. The child of Shabono has been so much bitten by the musquetors that his face is much puffed up & Swelled ..."

No blood creature is safe from the devils—not Sacagawea's child, not the bareskinned men, nor their horses, not Lewis's dog Seaman, howling in pain—not even game animals which the Corps depends for its food. Of eleven deer killed on August 6 Clark observes that "only 2 ... were fat owing as I suppose to the musquetors which are so numerous and troublesome to them that they cannot feed except under the torment of millions of those Musquetors." Nevertheless some game animals did escape from the hunters, courtesy of the mosquitoes—Clark, for example lost his chance.
Anopheles quadrimaculatus, female. This species is the most important transmitter of malaria in North America. to take a big horn ram specimen on August 5: "the Musquetors was so numerous that I could not keep them off my gun long enough to take sight and by that means missed." 

The relentless attack continues downriver as the party grows "extremely anxious ... to get to their country and friends." The men abide in their campsites no longer than absolutely necessary, almost every stop being a den of misery. They set out at dawn and keep moving as much as possible. It is not until September 11, 1806, only a few days from home that Clark can report (at Nodaway Island in present day northwest Missouri) that "the mosquitoes are no longer troublesome on the river, from what cause they are numerous above and not so on this part of the river I cannot account." Could he not have known that the "mosquito months" were coming to a close just as the voyage was ending?

**ETYMOLOGY OF THE ENTOMOLOGY**

The above entry may have been the last use of one of the most recurring adjectives in the journals—"troublesome." Repeated use of this word puts the journalists curiously in tune with the scientific community at the time—for we learn that the generic name, Aedes, applied to the Lewis and Clark mosquitoes (when the genus designation was first established) is a Greek word meaning "troublesome." The common word "mosquito" by itself carries its own share of "trouble" too, at least for Captain Clark's spellings. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word appears in many accounts of travelers in the New World, dating back to the late sixteenth century, and is probably of Spanish or Portuguese origin. The earliest variant was "musketa" which, as reported by Alexander von Humboldt, meant "little fly." The French version of the word became "moustique," an example of metathesis, i.e., where letters or syllables get transposed in usage (as in "butterfly" for "flutterby"). Thus:

- Spanish: musketa = mus ke ta (syllables: musketa)
- French: moustique = mous ti que (syllables: moustique)

All of which illustrates how troublesome on all levels these pests proved to be, even linguistically. The confusion was compounded or-
thographically in the journals. Clark is at wit’s end when he tries to spell the word. There are at least 19 variations, which he creates during the journey. Here is testimony to the confusion which bugged him:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clark’s Spelling</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mesquentors</td>
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<td>Misquentors</td>
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<td>Musquitoes</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Musquiers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musqutors</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lewis is nowhere near as inventive. He spells the word consistently as “musquetoe” at least 25 times, a rendering which Clark seems never to have achieved.

LITERARY WARNINGS

Lewis’s spelling, and mosquito consciousness in general, may have benefited from the “homework” reading and study which he must have done, preparing himself for the journey west. He was probably familiar with the frontier travel literature of the era. Though these writings would not necessarily have helped his spelling, they would have alerted him to the mosquito trouble ahead. For example, he probably knew from his days as a young Army officer in the Ohio Valley during the 1790s, of the account of an earlier Army officer, Captain J. Carver, writing on the northwest trade of 1766/8. Carver provided a warning for the future commander of the Corps of Discovery: “All the wilderness,” says Carver, “between the Mississippi and Lake Superior is called by the Indians the Moschettoo country, and I thought it most justly named; for it being then their season, I never saw or felt so many of those insects in my life.” For further reading, Lewis as a Virginian, and protege of Thomas Jefferson, would also have known of the writings of Colonel William Byrd (1674-1744), said to have been “the best educated man of his time and place.” Byrd’s “History” would have provided direct guidance for Lewis’s journey. On the raw frontier of Virginia and the Carolinas in the early 18th Century, Byrd’s expeditions seem to be a veritable prototype for Lewis and Clark—complete with hostile and friendly natives, blue beads, difficult river crossings, bears, hunger, narrow escapes, and MOSQUITOES!

Lewis’s phrase about the “plagues of Egypt,” quoted earlier, sounds like an echo (or perhaps a direct borrowing) from a passage of Byrd’s on the insect pests: “These little vixens confine themselves chiefly to the woods, and are in most moist places ... this insect ... bites very smartly, darting its little proboscis into the skin the instant it lights upon it ... it is no wonder they were formerly employed for one of the plagues of Egypt.”

LEWIS’S MOSQUITO LOGISTICS

Thus, from his days in the mosquito-infested Ohio Valley, and from his time as a member of President Jefferson’s household (with its range of travel literature in the famed library) Lewis would have been well-conditioned to the traveler’s need for bug protection. His concern is evident in Philadelphia in the summer of 1803 preparing for the Expedition when he drew up a List of Requirements. This list and the related purchase bills include references to such basic material as tents, shelters, and specifically “muscatoe curtains.” In addition, he purchased “8 ps. cat gut for Mosquito Curt ...” Later, when completing supply arrangements in St. Louis, Lewis writes to Clark at Camp Dubois under date of May 6, 1804:

I send you by Colter and Reed 200 lbs of tallow which you will so good as to have melted with 50 lbs of hog’s lard, cooled in small vessels and put into some of those small keggs which were intended for whiskey. Not a kegg can be obtained in St. Louis ...”

GREASE

This tallow was the initial provision of “voyagers grease” for the journey—at least that is the index-heading for the above reference to tallow in Donald Jackson’s Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedi-
Presumptively the tallow (i.e. "voyagers grease") was in demand by frontier travelers for protection against insects. A month later, on June 12, after the party had left Camp Dubois, voyaging upstream, they met Pierre Dorion, Sr. (near the Grand River in present-day Missouri) escorting a shipment of furs and "voyagers grease" from the Sioux country to St. Louis. Clark records that they purchased from Dorion an additional "300 lb of Voyagers Grease @ 5$ [pr?] Hd." Editor Gary Moulton notes about this item that "Perhaps this was a base material for making pemmican." Was the grease, now 500 pounds of it, intended mainly for food and cooking purposes, or for skin protection? Perhaps both. Under an entry farther up the Missouri, where "the misquiter verry bad," Clark describes the men "Drying meat & greasing themselves ..." presumably because of mosquitoes. But tallow had other varied uses as well.

Lewis consumed several hundred pounds of it (with charcoal) as substitute tar for his ill-fated iron boat at the Great Falls; there are also journal references to the use of it for candles, for cooking, and for food. But the more common frontier expectation for tallow as "voyagers grease" seems to have been for insect protection. Editor Ernest Osgood notes that when "plastered on the exposed parts of the body [it] was some protection ..."\footnote{DR. BENJAMIN RUSH AND AGUE}

Back to Philadelphia: When Lewis was not busy with outfitting arrangements prior to his journey, most of his time was spent with the scientists and doctors at the University of Pennsylvania. As President Jefferson had planned, Lewis consulted there with the leading scholars of the day in astronomy, natural history, medicine, and other disciplines. Focusing here, for the purpose of this discussion on the particular subject of mosquitoes, it is of special interest to consider Lewis's sessions in Philadelphia with Dr. Benjamin Rush. The main product of those sessions was Rush's "Eleven Rules for preserving his (i.e. Lewis's) health."\footnote{8 WE PROCEEDED ON}

These rules principally had to do with "preventatives of disease"—nothing specifically about mundane afflictions such as insect bites. Beyond Rush's rules however, Lewis's purchases of medical supplies in Philadelphia must have been prompted by Rush's advice. Dr. Eldon Chuinard has provided the authoritative analysis of Lewis's "armamentarium" of medical treatment as related to Rush's. Chuinard points out that of Lewis's total expenses for medical supplies "one third ... was spent for fifteen pounds of Peruvian bark, indicating that the Captains anticipated that 'fevers' would be the main health concern of the Expedition."\footnote{DR. BENJAMIN RUSH AND AGUE} In the hind sight of history this proportionate expense is curiously prophetic, and coincidentally related to the mosquito aspects of the Expedition, for, as Dr. Chuinard observes, "powders and concoctions of Peruvian bark were used in the treatment of all sorts of fevers, most of which were ague, or malaria." To the modern world, since 1900, "malaria" is synonymous with "mosquito." Lewis's use of this bark with its quinine properties thus anticipated the later standard treatment for mosquito-induced malaria, and indeed, may even then have been used (though unknowingly) for illnesses on the Expedition which were actually malarial.

Both Rush and Lewis had had their own personal encounters with ague: Rush because of his near
martyr role in fighting the epidemics in Philadelphia in the 1790s, and Lewis because he himself appears to have carried the disease from at least several years before the Expedition until his death in 1809. Lewis would thus have paid special attention to a passage from Dr. Rush’s treatise on “Medicine Among the Indians of North America,” written in 1774:

“The intermitting fever [i.e., ague, malaria] is common in almost every corner of the globe; but a sovereign remedy for it has been discovered only in South America. The combination of bitter and astringent substances, which serve as a succedaneum to the Peruvian bark, is as much a preparation of art as calomel or tartar emetic.”

Lewis in Philadelphia had purchased not only this bark, but also calomel and tartar, probably inspired directly by Rush’s discussions and “armamentarium” as referenced above.

In those “corners of the globe” frequented by Meriwether Lewis from 1803 through 1806, the “intermittent fever” was omnipresent, as also were the mosquitoes. All the major personalities involved in the Expedition—President Jefferson himself, both Captains, probably most members of the party, and indeed, many persons encountered on the western frontier—were afflicted with this mosquito-driven disease—before, during and after the journey. The record of that journey provides a vivid documentary chapter in the ongoing story of “Man versus Mosquito” and how the Corps of Discovery, as will be seen later in this essay, tried to resist the damaging assaults of this ancient foe.

[Note: The author wishes to acknowledge and express his appreciation for suggestions of Michael Dotson, Crest Hill, Illinois, a director of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., in preparation of this article, particularly concerning references to Native American insect repellents which are noted as related to the Expedition in Part II of this essay, to appear later. See End Note 41, Part II.]

---NOTES---

“The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Gary E. Moulton, Editor. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, Vol. 2, p. 305 n. ... all quotations or references from the Journals noted herein prior to June 9, 1806 are from Moulton, by date stated in the text, unless otherwise indicated in these notes.


“The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway, Milo M. Quaife, Editor. Western Historical Collections, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison MCMLXV. cf. Editor’s note for Ordway’s Journal entry of July 19, 1806, p. 380 n.1: Quaife states that “the ferocity of the mosquitoes was almost as great as that of the grizzlies.”

“Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804-1806, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Editor. State Historical Society of Wisconsin and Dodd, Mead & Co., 1905, Vol. V, p. 132 (entry of June 12, 1806). All quotations or references from the Journals noted herein after date of June 9, 1806 are from Thwaites, by date stated in the text, unless otherwise indicated in these notes.

Moulton, 4:423 (July 24, 1805).

“Thwaites, 2:197 n. According to Thwaites, early forms of the English word ‘bier’ were “baera, bare, bear,” perhaps derived from the word “haine,” used by the French Jesuit missionary Poisson in 1727 to describe his defense against the torments of the mosquitoes on the lower Mississippi, i.e., “a large canvas, the ends of which we carefully fold beneath the mattress; in these toms stifling with heat, we are compelled to sleep.” Thwaites notes that by the time of Lewis and Clark, the canvas was replaced by gauze or net.

“Clark was not alone in this era in finding the mosquitoes a “heave counterpoise” to hunting. cf. Alexander Henry’s Travels and Adventures in the years 1760-1776, Milo Milton Quaife, Editor. The Lakeside Press, Chicago, R.R. Donnelly & Sons Company 1921, p. 238. While traveling in the Lake Winnepex region in the summer of 1775, Henry reported that “the mosquitoes were here in such clouds as to prevent us from taking aim at the ducks, of which we might else have shot many.”


“The author does not claim this survey to be an exhaustive, auditable count of every variation in Clark’s journalizing! It is merely an informal count of references noted in Moulton Volumes 2-7, and Thwaites for entries after June 9, 1806.

12 A Journey to the Land of Eden, and Other Papers, by William Byrd, Mark Van Doren, Editor. Macy-Masius, New York 1928, p. 6 (see also "History of the Dividing Line," p. 205 in this reference for Byrd's reference to "the plagues of Egypt").


14 Ibid, p. 95.


21 Chuinard, p. 176. See also Dr. Chuinard's articles beginning in We Proceeded On, Vol. 17, No. 3, August 1991 et seq. entitled "How Did Meriwether Lewis Die? It Was Murder" in which the case is made that Lewis's ague, rather than alcohol, may have contributed to the tragedy of his death on the Natchez Trace in 1809.


23 Chuinard, cf. numerous references to the omnipresence of ague on the frontier. For reference to Jefferson's "autumnal fever" see p. 401, citing also Jackson, pp. 319, 324.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR ... Foundation member Robert R. Hunt, who retired from Seattle Trust and Savings Bank in 1987, is no stranger to readers of WPO. His byline has appeared with several well-researched and intriguing articles relating to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Articles by Hunt have appeared in Vol. XIII, No. 2; Vol. XIV, No. 4; Vol. XV, No. 2; Vol. XVI, No. 1 and Vol. XVII, Nos. 1 and 2.

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PLANNED GIVING COMMITTEE PROGRESS NOTED

Ed Wang, Planned Giving Committee Chairman, reports continuing progress for the Foundation's funding appeal. Gifts of $1,000 or more designated for the "Fellow Giving" program now amount to $12,500. Additional gifts are in the process of being conveyed to the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. The primary purpose of "Fellow Giving" is to create a fund that will enable the Foundation to establish some kind of office in which to conduct its ever-growing services.

Gifts designated for other purposes have also been received since the Foundation's annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky last August: one in excess of $1,000 and several others of lesser amounts. Some donors wish to remain anonymous while others are willing to allow the fact and the amount of their gift to be made known to the Foundation membership.

Through the Planned Giving Committee, certain Foundation members have promised "Fellow" gifts to be made in the next several months. If you are among those who have made such a commitment for the Foundation, please make your gift soon or advise a member of the Planned Giving Committee when that "pledge" will mature.

Some Foundation members have yet to make a commitment to this important Foundation need. To you, please seriously consider now the amount that you will be able to give to help make a Foundation office a reality. What better way to make a contribution of lasting value to the history and heritage of our beloved country? You may never have a better opportunity to be a charter member of a giving group to make possible such an important undertaking on behalf of the Foundation.

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10 WE PROCEEDED ON MAY 1992
This supplementary publication is a collection of eight essays, each dealing with a unique subject related to some aspect of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. They are:

- "Dreams and Discoveries: Exploring the American West, 1780-1815"
- "The Writingest Explorers': The Lewis and Clark Expedition in American Historical Literature"
- "The Names of the Nations: Lewis and Clark as Ethnographers"
- "Lewis and Clark and Enlightenment Ethnography"
- "'A Chart In His Way': Indian Cartography and the Lewis and Clark Expedition"
- "A Most Perfect Harmony: Life at Fort Mandan"
- "Frazer's Razor - The Ethnohistory of a Common Object"
- "Wilson Price Hunt Reports on Lewis and Clark"

James P. Ronda has provided a great deal of literature related to the early history of the Nation's west. These contributions have been in the form of full length books, historical periodical monographs, and papers presented at historical meetings or symposia. His best selling book, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, published by the University of Nebraska Press in 1984, was nominated for many national awards including the Pulitzer Prize in American History.

*Westering Captains*, a one hundred twenty page bound publication is available for a post paid price of $10.95.

TO: Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 577 - WPO Publications
Bozeman, MT 59715

Please mail me ______ copies of *Westering Captains* (WPO Pub. No. 9) for the price per copy of $10.95 (post paid). My remittance of $__________ is enclosed.

MAIL TO:
his sounds familiar. A party of adventurers goes up the Missouri River in a keelboat, heading for the Rocky Mountains. They marvel at the landscape and gorge on game. One man owns a big Newfoundland dog. Another has brought along his slave.

The writer of the Expedition journal says the black man is an amazing novelty to Indians met along the way:

"At first they doubted the evidence of their own eyes, spitting upon their fingers and rubbing the skin of the negro to be sure that it was not painted."

It's a scene from the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806, right?

The quotation actually comes from The Journal of Julius Rodman—Being an Account of the First Passage Across the Rocky Mountains of North America Ever Achieved by Civilized Man, published in 1840. The author was Edgar Allan Poe, no less.

But the finger-rubbing incident did indeed occur during the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and so did many other parts of Poe's story. Poe's fictional account of the fictional Julius Rodman's fictional travels borrowed heavily from real events recorded or recalled by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, plus accounts of the western explorations of Alexander Mackenzie, Captain Benjamin Bonneville and Wilson Price Hunt.

All that literary shoplifting has embarrassed fans of one of America's greatest writers. Poe scholar Burton R. Pollin has observed that the Julius Rodman story "more nearly resembles a verbal collage than any other work by Poe."

Richard Van Orman in his 1984 book The Explorers: "Poe used more glue than ink in this work, and it may be the most plagiarized novel ever written by a major American author."

Some modern literary authorities offer less believable speculation that the Lewis and Clark adventure helped inspire other Poe fiction as well, even including such masterpieces as The Gold Bug. True or not, Poe wasn't the only 19th-century writer to employ Lewis and Clark material; James Fenimore Cooper fitted the travels of President Jefferson's explorers into a B-grade romantic novel, The Prairie, produced only 21 years after the Expedition.

Poe never published Julius Rodman in book form, so Van Orman's description of it as a "novel" is somewhat misleading. It actually appeared in six monthly serial installments running from January through June, 1840, in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine, where Poe was an assistant editor. The serial pretended to contain excerpts from the just-discovered journal of a 15-man trapping expedition, headed by one Julius Rodman, that started up the Missouri River in 1791. The entire first installment consisted of a straight-faced introduction by the "editors" (i.e., Poe) describing how the journal was found, and promising that the serial would follow Rodman across the Rockies into the Canadian Yukon and return him to his Kentucky home.

The Philadelphia magazine presented the long-lost journal as a sensational bombshell proving that Rodman crossed the Rockies ahead of any other "civilized" person. Boomed Poe in the January introduction: "The credit of the enterprise should never have been given to Lewis and Clarke, since Mackenzie succeeded in it, in the year 1793; and that in point of fact, Mr. Rodman was the first who
overcame those gigantic barriers; crossing them as he did in 1792. Thus it is not without good reason that we claim public attention for the extraordinary narrative which ensues." Excerpts from the Poe-fabricated Rodman journal itself began in the February issue.

The serial’s grand design collapsed when Poe quit William E. Burton’s magazine after writing only six installments. The series stopped without explanation after the June issue, leaving Julius Rodman stuck in Montana without ever reaching the spine of the Rockies, much less the Yukon. Poe’s name appeared nowhere in the truncated serial, and he never seems to have publicly acknowledged his authorship. Yet Lewis Gaylord Clark, writing in the April, 1840, issue of the rival Knickerbocker magazine, fingered Poe as the real author while the Rodman journal was still running in Burton’s: “We think we discover the clever hand of the resident author of the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine,’ Mr. E.A. Poe, in these records.” Not until 1877 did the London Mirror of Literature nail down Poe’s authorship to everyone’s satisfaction by printing a private 1840 letter from Poe to magazine publisher Burton discussing his progress in writing the Rodman series.

There’s also general literary agreement that the magazine series was a commercial potboiler aimed at cashing in on strong mid-19th century interest in western adventure. But scholars still don’t quite know what other labels to put on this odd work. The Rodman journal is an “obvious and universally recognized fraud,” judged plains historians W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen in their 1985 book on records of the fur trade. But “fraud” doesn’t quite capture the touch of fun that spices a classic literary hoax, of which Poe was a master.

An official State Department survey of western exploration published in 1840 seemed to take the Julius Rodman journal seriously. Because of that, Burton Pollin concluded in his introduction to a 1981 edition of the Rodman journal that except for a later fake tale of transatlantic ballooning, “this was Poe’s most successful hoax, being enshrined in the government’s documents.” By copying the reports of Lewis and Clark and other real explorers, said David Ketterer in a 1979 study, “Poe wanted the impression of versimilitude for the purpose of a hoax.”

To other Poe scholars, the story seemed more like a sarcastic “parody” of western travel writing generally. In this view Poe concocted an ironic twist to the question of who was plagiarizing whom: if Rodman was first across the Rockies, then those who supposedly came later were guilty of stealing from him.

Poe’s prime source of Lewis and Clark lore was the 1814 paraphrase version of their journals written by Philadelphia lawyer Nicholas Biddle. Poe even picked up the “Clarke” misspelling that ran throughout Biddle’s original text.

The magazine writer’s irreverence in handling this material at one point became such a broad burlesque as to risk giving the hoax away. In the fourth installment Rodman encounters on the Missouri a party of Sioux, leading to a description of the various bands of that tribe. Here Poe was guided by an inventory of Sioux tribal divisions that Biddle had included in his Expedition entry for August 31, 1805, listing such groups as the Wahpatoota, Sistasoose, Minnakenozzo and Okandandas.

Poe playfully transformed these names to Wapptoooties, Sissytoonies, Minnakenozzies and Okydandies. However, he tracked Biddle nearly word-for-word in sketching the appearance of the band met by Rodman. Following Clark’s first-hand account, Biddle had written of the Sioux: “In their persons they are rather ugly and ill made, their legs and arms being too small, their cheekbones high, and their eyes projecting.” Wrote Poe: “In person, the Sioux generally are an ugly ill-made race, their limbs being much too small for the trunk, according to our ideas of the human form—their cheek bones are high, and their eyes protruding and dull.”

Poe said in his introduction that Julius Rodman himself was born in England and came to America in 1784. He was portrayed as a moody loner, given to “hereditary hypochondria.” Literary sleuths easily traced that to a biography of the moody Meriwether Lewis that ex-President Jefferson had written for Biddle’s 1814 narrative. “It was Jefferson’s memoir that interested Poe, for here he found his Julius Rodman,” concluded Polly Pearl Crawford in a 1932 study of the links between Poe’s hoax and the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The magazine claimed not only that Rodman beat Lewis across the Rockies but also implied Rodman’s journal was more honest. Early in his trip Rodman comes to a Missouri River cave call-
ed the "Tavern," just as Lewis and Clark did. Said the Rodman journal: "We could not distinctly perceive the depth of the cavern, but it was about 16 or 17 feet high, and at least 50 in width." Here the "editors" inserted a footnote comparing Rodman's Tavern Cave measurements with bigger ones in the Biddle narrative, recorded as 20 feet high and 120 feet wide. Sniffed Poe: "We wish to call attention to the circumstance that, in every point, Mr. R.'s account falls short of Captain Lewis's. With all his evident enthusiasm, our traveller is never prone to the exaggeration of facts."

After that candid-sounding aside, Poe resumed the voice of the Rodman journal, describing the landscape around the Council Bluffs in much the same words as Biddle, but without courtesy of attribution. Of this Lewis and Clark landmark on the river's Nebraska shore, Biddle had written: "The land here consists of a plain ... covered with a grass from 5 to 8 feet high, interspersed with copses of large plums, and a currant." Wrote Poe: "Our encampment was on the south, upon a large plain, covered with high grass, and bearing a great number of plum-trees and currant-bushes."

One of the best anecdotes in Biddle's account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was the reaction of a Hidatsa chief to the alien looks of York, the slave Clark brought along on the trip. In his Expedition entry for March 9, 1805, Biddle said the chief "was very much surprised at his appearance, examined him closely, and spit on his finger and rubbed the skin in order to wash off the paint." Had the explorers' actual journals been available to Poe in 1840 he wouldn't have found the story there at all; Biddle got it for his book in a post-Expedition personal interview with Clark. 10

At any rate, Poe couldn't resist picking up the substance, if not the exact words, of Biddle's finger-rubbing story in the passage quoted at the start of this article. As with several other Lewis and Clark borrowings, Poe made some changes to disguise his plagiarism or fit the needs of his plot. In his account, the slave was examined by a group of Assiniboine warriors, not a lone Hidatsa chief. Poe also changed the name of the Rodman party's slave to Toby, instead of York.

Here was one of two strange apparent coincidences in Poe's appropriation of Lewis and Clark material. Students of the Expedition will recognize "Toby" as the explorers' nickname for an elderly Shoshone who guided them through a stretch of the Rockies. Poe evidently was unaware of this, because Biddle didn't use the guide's name in his account, and it didn't appear publicly until an excerpt from a raw Lewis journal was published in 1893. 11 Poe also wrote that a member of the Rodman party owned "a large dog of the Newfoundland species," seemingly a direct steal from Lewis's description of his own dog. Here again, however, Poe couldn't have lifted that from the 1814 Biddle narrative, which only referred to "our dog" or "Captain Lewis's dog" without identifying the breed. Not until 1916, with the discovery of a missing Lewis journal by Biddle's descendents, did anyone have a written basis for knowing that the captain's dog was a Newfoundland. 12 Big floppy Newfoundland dogs were a recurring signature in Poe stories written both before and after the Rodman journal, without any evident prompting by Biddle.

As he took Rodman further up the Missouri, Poe found other ways to borrow from Lewis and Clark. Jefferson's explorers reached a point in modern Montana where they noticed that the atmosphere, in Biddle's account, became "astonishingly dry and pure ... the case of our sextant, though perfectly seasoned, shrank and the joints opened." Echoed the Rodman journal: "The atmosphere ... now became dry and pure; so much so indeed that we perceived its effects upon the seams of our boats, and our few mathematical instruments."

The Rodman party passes through a familiar Lewis and Clark landscape of "enchanted" riverside cliffs of "very white soft sandstone," and arrives at a fork where the Missouri divided into two branches of equal size. Here, Rodman exactly apes the movements of Lewis and Clark at the Missouri-Marias junction. Poe's hero dispatches boatmen to scout both branches, while he ascends "the high grounds in the fork," Biddle's exact words. Poe hardly bothered to rewrite the next two Biddle sentences about viewing a "vast plain covered with verdure, in which innumerable herds of buffalo were roaming," with snowy mountains in the background. Finally there's a puckish reversal of plot; though Lewis and Clark finally chose to proceed up the south branch, Poe turned Rodman north.

While at the forks Lewis and Clark dug a cache to store surplus cargo, so Rodman does likewise.
Edgar Allan Poe
Here, Poe apparently borrowed from both Biddle and Washington Irving in describing how the hole was made. Rodman's journal itself merely mentioned that goods were left in a "well constructed cache" at the river forks, but there "editor" Poe attached a footnote explaining how a narrow-necked hole was widened as the storage cavity was sunk to a depth of eight or ten feet.

In a 1968 study, Wayne R. Kime noted several details in Poe's Rodman series that could be traced back to Irving's 1836 book *Astoria*, which told of an overland trek by Wilson Price Hunt from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811-1812. Irving relied partly on Hunt's journal in telling the tale, which at one point included a description of how Hunt's party dug some caches on the Snake River in Idaho.

Kime concluded that in describing how Rodman's cache was dug "Poe borrowed in this instance from Irving alone." But phrases from Biddle's account of the Lewis and Clark Marias cache also echo in Poe's description, so it would seem that the plagiarist helped himself to both sources.

There's no question that Poe was familiar with Irving's *Astoria*, having reviewed it favorably in 1837 for the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Some of Irving's landscape descriptions clearly inspired Poe, and at times the copying became blatant. Wrote Irving in *Astoria*: "The soil of this immense region is strongly impregnated with sulphur, cupperas, alum and glauber salts; its various earths impart a deep tinge to the streams which drain it ..." Wrote Poe in Rodman: "The soil is strongly impregnated with mineral substances in great variety—among others with glauber salts, cupperas, sulphur and alum, which tinge the water of the river ..."

In detailing the habits of beaver encountered by Rodman, Poe borrowed from another Irving book, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, published in 1837. Irving got his material from interviews with this soldier-turned-trapper, at one point recording Bonneville's observation of a beaver colony felling trees in a swamp. Bonneville's beavers, said Irving, "indulged in a little recreation" after the trees were down, "chasing each other about the pond ..." Rodman's beavers, said Poe, "seemed to think a holiday was deserved, and ceasing work at once, began to chase each other about in the water ..."

"Poe evidently wrote a number of these passages with his Irving open before him," observed H. Arlin Turner in a 1930 analysis of the Rodman journal. Others have noted Poe's debt to Alexander Mackenzie, the Scottish fur trader who trekked to the Pacific in 1793, for Rodman's account of how to make pemmican from pounded buffalo meat, fat, marrow and dried berries.

"As we proceeded on our journey, I found myself less and less interested in the main business of the Expedition," wrote the moody Rodman, who preferred communing with the "majestic beauties of the wilderness" to workaday trapping duties. By the serial's sixth installment for June, 1840, Rodman and his adventurers have become mere rubbernecking tourists, eagerly looking for their first glimpse of the Rockies. The party has a titanic fight with two grizzly bears, and the story simply stops right there. In the spring of 1840 Poe had quarreled with publisher Burton, who thought his editor drank too much. After handing in the June installment Poe went to work for another magazine, abandoning the unfinished Rodman saga forever.
The various sources underlying The Journal of Julius Rodman show that Poe was right at home with the contemporary literature of western exploration, including Biddle's account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. However, some literary scholarship has insisted on trying to stretch the Lewis and Clark connection far beyond this single throwaway magazine serial. Perhaps the most extreme case was a 1988 book by Robert Lawson-Peebles, a professor of English at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, discussing the western landscape's impact on American literature. Lawson-Peebles claimed the Biddle narrative was used by Poe as "a source for five tales written over a period of ten years."17

Besides the Rodman journal, that list included two Poe fantasies about landscape gardening and the lengthy Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, published in 1838. Pym is decidedly a maritime adventure story, but Lawson-Peebles reasoned that Poe used the ocean as a symbol of western wastelands, and noted that Arthur Gordon Pym, the protagonist, once put himself to sleep in a ship's hold by reading about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The clincher: Pym also owned a Newfoundland dog. As we have seen, however, that probably was Lewis and Clark connection known to Lawson-Peebles, not to Poe himself.

The Aberdeen professor also contended Lewis and Clark helped inspire The Gold Bug, one of Poe's most famous inventions. That's an 1843 treasure-hunt story in which the hero locates Captain Kidd's buried loot near Charleston, South Carolina, by ingeniously solving a cryptogram. The Lewis and Clark linkage? Well, one of the characters is a slave, not surprising for a tale set in the Old South. There's yet another big Newfoundland dog. And where Poe described "deep ravines" in the Carolina tidewater landscape, Lawson-Peebles imagined a subliminal reference to the Breaks of the Missouri.

Mistaken canine symbolism aside, this is the fevered realm of academic make-work. No such strained interpretation is needed to appreciate the debt which The Journal of Julius Rodman clearly owed to Nicholas Biddle's original sources. The borrowing actually honored Lewis and Clark, for when Edgar Allan Poe needed a template for his "extraordinary narrative" of western adventure, he turned to two experts who already owned the franchise.

Were Lewis and Clark the forerunners of greedy people who would despoil the pristine beauty of the American West? That's the kind of charge being aimed at Christopher Columbus during the 500th anniversary of his first voyage to the New World. As the Lewis and Clark Expedition bicentennial approaches in 2003-2006, Foundation members are wondering whether President Jefferson's explorers similarly will be tagged as the heedless pathfinders of environmental rape.

Relax. The suspense is over. It's already been done—by James Fenimore Cooper in his 1827 novel The Prairie.

Cooper's story was set on the Great Plains somewhere south of the Platte River in 1805, when Lewis and Clark were traveling up north on the Missouri. At one point the hero, Natty Bumppo, tells a young Pawnee warrior about the Louisiana Purchase transferring this land from France to America.

The Pawnee says he has heard of that, and of something else, too: "And warriors are wading up the Long River, to see that they have not been cheated, in what they have bought?"

"Ay [Bumppo replies], that is partly true, too, I fear; and it not be long afore an accused band of choppers and loggers will be following on their heels to humble the wilderness which lies so broad and rich on the western banks of the Mississippi, and then the land will be a peopled desert from the shores of the Maine sea to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, fill'd with all the abominations and craft of man and stript of the comfort and loveliness it received from the hand of the Lord."

When Cooper wrote that prediction there had been hardly any despoiling at all. His book appeared before the heyday of the fur trapper rendezvous system which opened the region crossed by Lewis
James Fenimore Cooper
and Clark to serious commercial exploitation. The miners, farmers and woodchoppers of Bumppo’s dreaded “peopled desert” came much later.

*The Prairie* was one of a series of five Cooper novels known as the “Leatherstocking Tales,” of which *The Last of the Mohicans* is the most famous. The Lewis and Clark Expedition wasn’t a focal point of *The Prairie*, but Cooper was familiar enough with Nicholas Biddle’s 1814 account to make use of it in some of his novel’s labored dialogue.

Early in the story Bumppo asks a white stranger on the plains if he is part of Jefferson’s exploration of Louisiana. “I am not,” the stranger replies. “Lewis is working his way up the river, some hundreds of miles from this. I come on a private adventure.” Elsewhere Bumppo talks of “the great bears that are found at the falls of the Long River;” and an Indian refers to a time when “the eagle at the falls of the endless river was in its egg.” When Cooper wrote, Lewis and Clark had provided the only available description of grizzlies and the resident eagle at the Great Falls of the Missouri.

When a grass fire roars across Cooper’s prairie a resourceful Indian survives the flames by crouching under a buffalo hide. Cooper had doubtless read in Biddle’s Lewis and Clark narrative how a Mandan boy did the same.

Cooper completed *The Prairie* during a visit to France. He needed landscape descriptions of what became central Nebraska but Lewis and Clark had crossed the plains too far north. The absentee author therefore turned to the journal of Major Stephen H. Long’s expedition up the Platte River to the Rockies in 1820. That gave Cooper inspiration for the “bleak and solitary” wastes, the “withered grass” and “unyielding soil” in which he laid this Leatherstocking Tale.

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---About the author---

Arlen J. Large of Washington, D.C., is a former Foundation president (1983-84), a frequent contributor to WPO, a retired science correspondent of the Wall Street Journal, and continues to travel the world pursuing his many scientific interests.
TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING
Vancouver, Washington
August 1-4, 1992

BY MARTIN PLAMONDON II
1992 Annual Meeting Chairman

Allow me to thank the membership for their enthusiastic support, especially those who have registered early for our Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting this August in Vancouver, Washington. The dates are August 1-4, 1992 but post-meeting events will continue through Friday, August 7, 1992. August 1 will include displays and demonstrations during the day. We are also working on a birthday party for William Clark that day. You may wish to be here in the morning to take in everything before the Get Acquainted Social in the evening. If you like country fairs, you may want to stay a few days longer. The Clark County Fair begins August 8 and runs 10 days. The fair features two stage shows daily with big name entertainment, free with admission. This is not just another county fair. It is consistently top rated in the nation and larger than most state and regional fairs. There are so many things of interest in the Vancouver/Portland area that we think you will find a few extra days a rewarding vacation for the whole family.

Hardly a day goes by that I do not receive at least one registration and I have received as many as seven in one day. If you have not registered, the situation is certainly not hopeless, yet. A number of people have asked about events which have a limited participation. There is a number limit on such events as the alternate trip up the Columbia River Gorge and the post-meeting whitewater raft trip on the Deschutes River. The whitewater event has a low limit and while there is still plenty of room, interest is high and the slots are filling. There is plenty of room on the Columbia River Gorge trip. I would caution again that the coast trip will be very long and could be taxing for people with low levels of endurance. Certainly no one should feel that the planned trip up the Columbia River Gorge is an “also ran.” For anyone interested in Northwest history beyond Lewis and Clark, this trip will be a real jewel. That is not to say Lewis and Clark are not represented. I have traveled the route many times in the last 30 years and I personally wrote the scripts for the bus narrators. I still have doubts whether the narrators can get everything in. Remember, full registration includes your choice of either trip.

We still have posters available. The youth packets are a very good value and there is no limit on how many you may purchase for your children and grandchildren. We have invited 38 publishers of historical books to participate in the two day publisher’s show. It is too early to say how many will show for sure but interest is high. Models and displays are coming along nicely. A major, new, historically correct structure is presently under construction at Fort Vancouver. It will be ready for your visit in August. We are now preparing activities for those spouses and children who have less than a dedicated interest in Lewis and Clark.

I urge you to register now. News stories on the meeting will start appearing in the local press shortly. There is already a strong interest among non-foundation members in the local area. These people will be invited to participate in the meeting events as an incentive to join the national foundation.

This promises to be a sensational meeting. There are some fine speeches planned by Dr. Stephen Beckham, Dr. William Lang, and others. The beautiful, friendly people of the Chinook Nation will be there. Superintendent David Herrera of the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site plans to have something special for our visit there. The people of the Columbia River Gorge are planning great things for those who choose to visit that area. Superintendent Cynthia Orlando and her staff at the Fort Clatsop National Memorial are excited about their plans for people traveling to the coast. The people of Long Beach, Washington, are planning a formal welcome for visitors on the coast trip. This will be a great meeting. We look forward to seeing all of you in August. Register now.
EDITOR’S NOTE: The following is a speech that was given by Jim Ronda in Great Falls, Montana during the 3rd Annual Lewis and Clark Festival. It was presented at the Charles M. Russell Museum on June 30, 1991.

I have always believed that the best lectures focus not so much on an idea as on a question. After all, we learn everything in our lives by asking questions—how does it work, where does it come from, what does it mean, what should I do next? So let me pose a question, one that I hope will engage our minds and hearts, our thoughts and imaginations. Let me warn you in advance. This is a deceptive question. It will sound easy to answer but the search will probably take us in unexpected directions. And my guess is that those answers will be a bit unsettling. But then all good exploring is unsettling and maybe even troubling.

With that as a cautionary prologue, the question is: What did the West look like to Lewis and Clark? How did it appear to those eyes and minds so comfortable with familiar eastern landscapes? What does it mean when we read Sgt. John Ordway describing what is now Fergus County, Montana as “the desert of North America,” a place wholly unfit for any human life? And Sgt. Patrick Gass agreed, calling that part of the Treasure State “the most dismal country I ever beheld.” Montana patriots need not take offense. Lewis and Clark journal keepers said equally unflattering things about the present states of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Let me ask the question again. What did the Corps of Discovery see in the West? Remember that seeing is not just a physiological act. The old rule from first year physics applies here. To every observation the observer brings something. The Expedition saw the whole western landscape through eastern eyes. Like us, they saw through a glass darkly. If we understand that seeing means more than just looking, then we can begin to re-imagine the West through explorers’ eyes.

Most of us would have a simple, quick answer to the question. We would march off to our favorite museum or perhaps page through a lavish book of western art until we came to the Catlins and the Bodmers. See, we would say, here is the West just as Lewis and Clark saw it. Question answered, case closed. But as Sherlock Holmes and Sam Spade knew, no case is ever really closed, no question is ever fully answered. Think of it this way. Lewis and Clark laid one main line of exploration track from east to west. That main line was important, but it showed them only one slice of the vast and vastly complex country. Three decades later when Catlin and Bodmer rode the Lewis and Clark Missouri River trunk line they took it only into Montana. It’s important for us to remember that while Lewis and Clark saw only one slice of the western pie, the pioneer artists painted an even thinner slice of that pie. Not only was the Catlin and Bodmer geographic range a sharply limited one but it was also an artistic vision interested only in a few things. Catlin’s bright colors and Bodmer’s wonderful eye for detail can trick us into a romantic, technicolor West. So we are back to the original question—What did the
West look like to Lewis and Clark? How can we recapture what they saw? Can we share the dream, relive the experience?

I think there is a way for us to do just that. I’ve always thought that the eye of the mind and the power of print are the real secrets to time travel. The force of the imagination is far greater than the command from the Starship Enterprise: “Beam me down Scotty.” So I’m going to suggest that we do something quite strange given the fact we are in a place filled with so many wonderful visual images. We need to read thoughtfully and listen carefully to the words of the explorers themselves. Let those simple, memorable words from the journals give wings to our imaginations and take us back to another time.

We should begin where Lewis and Clark began, not in St. Louis, but in the spacious mind of Thomas Jefferson. Like all explorers, Lewis and Clark carried with them a program, a design. It was Jefferson’s design, one that he fashioned by blending his own thoughts with the dramatic voyages of James Cook, George Vancouver, and Alexander Mackenzie. Jefferson’s captains saw the West through his eyes and by his design. So if we want to know what Lewis and Clark saw, we must begin with the words and vision of the third president of the United States.

There is no more familiar document in exploration history than the instructions Jefferson drafted for Meriwether Lewis in the early summer of 1803. We tend to think about that piece of paper as guidelines for the explorers, a kind of rough script for the Expedition’s great western movie. And indeed it was that, but it was something more as well. The instructions give us clues toward deciphering Jefferson’s own secret code of the West. What he thought he would see if he went up the Missouri, across the mountains, and down the Columbia can help us understand what Lewis and Clark encountered on their real journey.

Reading the instructions as a commentary on Jefferson’s mind and imagination tells us some fascinating and important things. First, the president assumed that the West was already a battlefield, an arena where the great imperial powers would fight it out for the control of the West and the ultimate destiny of all North America. We should not be surprised by this. After all, the American continent had been both battleground and prize since 1492. And native people had been struggling against each other for the first conquest of America long before 1492. Jefferson was determined to make the United States an imperial contender. It was Alexander Mackenzie’s vision of British dominion in the West that proved the immediate cause for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, something we forget as we romantically imagine Jefferson dreaming about the West all his life. The word “empire” does not appear in Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis. But there is a word, an eighteenth century synonym for empire, that appears four times in crucial places. The word is “commerce,” a word broadly defined as nearly all productive, profit-oriented human activity. Jefferson and other imperial visionaries knew that business enterprise and national empires always marched together. When the president ordered his captains to find a passage from Atlantic to Pacific “for the purposes of commerce” he plainly put the United States on the list of combatants in the war for America. That struggle would, in one way or another, shape the entire course of American history.

Jefferson’s second assumption about the West had to do with geography. Maps of the West before the Expedition portrayed an uncluttered, nearly empty region. While Jefferson did not envision the kind of geographic complexity we know in the West today, he did not think it was a simple, empty place. Mountains interested him—aft all he built his house on a mountain and named it Monticello. But it was rivers that fascinated him, both aesthetically and for their commercial value. He expected Lewis and Clark to find a West filled with rivers, a republic of rivers. Their names run through the instructions like a shining thread—the Missouri, the Columbia, the Oregon, the Colorado, and the ghost river Rio Bravo. Jefferson assumed an intricate western landscape and as we know, Lewis and Clark got even more than the president bargained for!

Jefferson once wrote that “no occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth.” This devoted gardener put new plants and animals high on the Lewis and Clark priority list. Jefferson anticipated that his explorers would find a West overflowing with what he called “productions animal and vegetable.” But it is important to remember that Jefferson expected particular kinds of plants and animals in the West. Science in Jefferson’s time was really applied science.
Knowledge was valued in direct proportion to its practical application. Like his contemporaries, Jefferson was interested in useful knowledge. That meant botany and other sciences with immediate practical, economic consequences. Today we are delighted by looking at the lovely plant specimens from the Expedition, some so fresh they seem to have been cut yesterday. But remember that as we admire the bitterroot, what Jefferson prized were the corn and tobacco.

Although Jefferson never journeyed beyond the Blue Ridge, he expected the West to be a land of wonders. While some of the more fantastic notions about the West were beginning to fade, the president was not immune from some of the best western folklore. Thomas Jefferson's Land of Western Wonders—a theme park of the mind—still held herds of llamas and packs of mammoths in a landscape of volcanic towers and salt mountains. And of course there were blond-haired, blue-eyed Welsh Indians to round out a truly exotic world. But the president's belief in a western wonderland went far deeper than fantastic scenery, bizarre animals, and mysterious natives.

Jefferson believed in his very soul that the West offered the promise of renewal, of starting again in a new place. Like so many others of his age, Jefferson had a nearly religious belief in owning land. Farmers were the chosen people of God, so he said, and in the West there was land without end. The West could promise a forever young, vibrant American republic. In the West, so Jefferson imagined, Americans could erase the troubled past and begin life fresh. This was the greatest, most seductive of Jefferson's wonders. The West would spawn no larger, no more troubling illusion.

Jefferson's vision of the West as a wonderland and cultural fountain of youth was a fantasy, a very dangerous fantasy, but his final expectation was anything but illusory. Look again at his instructions for Lewis. I won't ask you to count the lines but nearly one-half of the document deals with native people, either as objects of scientific study or as important peoples and tribes to be reckoned with. Jefferson understood one of the fundamental western realities—that the region was not an empty space, an unpopulated place. Lewis and Clark had many Indian missions—everything from diplomacy to ethnography. And in all of those duties Jefferson recognized what became the Expedition's almost daily experience. The West was Indian country. Throughout the instructions Jefferson acknowledged what only a few maps hinted at—that the West's first explorers had already scouted the land and called it home.

So how would Lewis and Clark see the West? In many ways they would come to see it through Jefferson's eyes. The captains were not remote controlled robot mini-cams automatically sending back thirty second sound bytes for the Five O’Clock Action News. They were intelligent, thoughtful observers but what they saw and how they saw it were largely determined by Jefferson's expectations. I guess we might call all of this the preconditions of exploration seeing. None of us ever comes to a place innocent of preconceptions about that place. Lewis and Clark's preconceptions were molded and shaped not only by their own personal experiences but by the hopes and dreams of the man from Monticello. Knowing that, we can now begin to answer the original question—what did the West look like to the bearded strangers who came from the sunrise?

Let me suggest to you that Lewis and Clark saw five distinct things in the West. Remember that I'm using the idea of seeing as more than a visual/biological fact. For me seeing is another way to talk about experiencing a reality that might be invisible but nonetheless quite real.

First, the Expedition saw a remarkably urban West. What a surprise. We tend to think that if ever any party of travelers should have seen the wide open spaces it was Lewis and Clark. But their journals and maps tell a very different story. Everywhere they went, the explorers found Indian communities. Some of those communities were large, well-established towns. It is important to recall that in 1804 more people lived in the five Mandan and Hidatsa towns than called St. Louis home. The Indian agricultural towns of the Missouri River were flourishing communities. We need to remember that towns like Mitutanka, Rooptahoe, and Menetarra were home to farmers and merchants long before the map held names like Pierre, Mobridge, Bismarck, and Williston. Across the Great Divide and down the Columbia the explorers found the same urban reality. Stock lodges, wickiups, teepees, and great plank houses—here was a land of towns and villages. One final reminder on this point. Look sometime at the maps Clark drew of the Columbia River.
from present-day Pasco, Washington to the Pacific. There are towns and fishing camps everywhere. In fact, the maps suggest a fascinating thought. Perhaps the immediate banks of the Columbia were more densely and continuously inhabited in 1805 than today.

If Lewis and Clark saw a West already dotted with towns and villages, they also saw a region of astounding human diversity. Here perhaps neither Jefferson nor his explorers were quite prepared for such variety. Jefferson knew the West was filled with native people but he could not have guessed at the rich cultural complexity of the Great Plains, the Rockies, the Plateau, and the Pacific Northwest. As fortune would have it, the Expedition passed through four of the most important native American culture areas. During the winter at Fort Mandan the explorers saw the world of the village farmers, those earth lodge people who made the Dakota soil bloom long before the days of dams, John Deere, and custom cutters. And there were the people of the horse, buffalo, and teepee. The plains nomads entered the world of Lewis and Clark in the guise of Sioux warriors, Cheyenne traders, and Assiniboine merchants. On the second season of western travel there were the peoples of the Plateau—Shoshoni, Flathead, and Nez Perce. Days running the Columbia and weeks at Fort Clatsop showed the explorers a native universe profoundly different from the plains and the plateau. This was the world of salmon, not buffalo; of sea-going canoes, not spirited horses; of plank houses, not teepees or earth lodges.

Lewis and Clark did not always understand or appreciate the crazy quilt cultural mix in the West. All too often they acted as if all native people were generic "Indians." But the explorers' journals and other records are filled with the signs of a rich human diversity.

What did Lewis and Clark see—a west already settled with towns and villages, home to many sorts of people. Add to this a third element. Jefferson's captains found large-scale economic development. We might imagine the West's economic map largely empty in 1804. We might emphasize resources not yet exploited. But if Lewis and Clark had that Third-World, undeveloped vision of western economies, they soon lost it. From the Missouri to the Columbia the West was crisscrossed with trading trails and exchange routes. Two vast economic systems—the Middle Missouri System and the Pacific Plateau System—spanned the whole West. Through these networks passed every conceivable item: corn from Arikara fields, squash from Mandan gardens, trade guns carried by Sioux middlemen, fancy clothing made by Cheyenne artisans, dried salmon from Columbia River fishing folk, and beargrass baskets from the Chinook villages of the Pacific coast. Lewis and Clark saw Spanish village tacks in North Dakota, found war hatchets they had made at Fort Mandan in the hands of Idaho Indians, and remarked on Boston overalls and British teapots along the Columbia. Think of these huge trade systems and their annual rendezvous not as abstract economic structures. What Lewis and Clark saw was a West bound together by a great circle of hands. Those hands passed around not only fish and fur but songs, stories, and the gift of friendship.

A quick look at the economies of the modern West suggests some enduring continuities with the past as well as some obvious changes. Perhaps the fundamental economic continuity from 1804 to the 1990s is the extractive nature of western economies. The westerner—whether native or non-native—harvests the earth. That harvest has changed over time, moving from corn, buffalo, and fish to wheat, cattle, minerals, and oil. And of course we ought not forget tourism, quickly becoming the region's most productive extractive industry. After all, Lewis and Clark were the West's first tourists, seeing all the great sights and writing home to an eager presidential audience. And the explorers were a tourist attraction. Indians came out in great numbers to gape at the odd strangers and their outlandish ways.

Lewis and Clark were economic geographers. They gave us the first detailed study of business in the West. And we can see that in some ways western business has remained remarkably the same. But Lewis and Clark also serve to remind us of how much has changed. What the explorers saw in Indian country were regional markets just beginning to feel the pressure of outside, non-Indian economic forces. While Lewis and Clark did not initiate the western fur trade, the Expedition gave added energy to an enterprise already well underway. What the fur trade brought is what the West has today—extractive industries in a global marketplace. The trip from fur to oil, from
digging sticks to air-conditioned combines, is not nearly so far as we might think. And Lewis and Clark help us understand how we began that fateful journey.

Once again, let's go back to the original question. What did Lewis and Clark see in the West? The explorers saw busy communities filled with diverse peoples all linked together by substantial business systems. But the captains also saw conflict and violence. One of the most powerful, enduring myths about the West is that it was once a peaceable kingdom, a kind of native Garden of Eden. Eastern writers from Jefferson to Zane Gray and Louis L'Amour imagined a western paradise where we could repeal the past and find the best in ourselves. It was as if motion west meant salvation and the death of the past. Dances with Wolves plays that game when John Dunbar thinks that in the land of open spaces he can outrun his own personal and cultural past. There is no greater personal or national delusion than this. At the same time, Jefferson and his successors in the White House knew that the West was a place of terrible conflict, a dark and bloody ground. What did Lewis and Clark see in this country of paradise and sudden death? For the most part, Lewis and Clark found friendship, good company, and open-handed hospitality. After all, they were tourists sure to move on to the next Best Western. But more to the point, the explorers encountered a West riddled with suspicion, hostility, and open warfare. Read again the accounts of Expedition diplomacy with the many tribes. Fear and ill-concealed aggression ooze out from every page. The native American West had its own rhythms and patterns of personal and communal violence long before Lewis and Clark pitched camp and talked with the voice of the Great Father. When Lewis urged a young Hidatsa warrior to give up warfare, the explorer got a pointed lesson in western realities. As the Hidatsa put it, warfare was the way young men distinguished themselves and the nation gained respected leaders. Without the discipline of the raid, the nation would collapse.

But Lewis and Clark did more than simply record the tracks of violence. As agents of empire they often unwittingly intensified the conflict, extending its reach by new technologies, and giving it a hard ideological edge. What happened at the Two Medicine Fight with the Piegan Blackfeet is an excellent case in point. The events of the morning of July 27, 1806 are so well-known that I won't tell them again. What is important about the struggle between Lewis's small detachment and several Piegans is not the immediate event itself. We need to understand the consequences of the deaths of Side Hill Calf and his now-unnamed friend. Their deaths at the hands of Lewis and Reuben Fields are sometimes credited with being the cause of later violence between American fur traders and the Blackfeet. Popular writers would want us to believe that the bloody deaths of some mountain men was all about revenge. But the truth is more complex and considerably less tidy. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was implicated in that later trader-Indian violence, but not because of simple revenge.

The origins of the violence can be traced to something Lewis said the night before guns barked and knives flashed. Talking with the Piegans around the campfire, Lewis inadvertently dropped a bombshell by declaring that the Blackfeet traditional enemies—the Nez Perce, Shoshone, and Kutenai—were now united by an American-inspired peace. Even more shocking to Piegan ears was word that these united tribes would be getting guns and supplies from Yankee traders. Here was a threat to Blackfeet dominion that could not be ignored. All of this seemed to come terribly true in subsequent years. By 1807-1808 men working for St. Louis merchants were busy trading with Blackfeet rivals. When a former member of the Expedition, John Colter, joined in an 1808 battle with Crow and Flathead warriors against the Blackfeet, the message seemed loud and clear. In the face of a massive assault on their plains empire, Blackfeet warriors and diplomats hardly had time to think about avenging the deaths under the three cottonwoods. But they did remember Lewis's words. The explorer was the prophet of violence to come.

A century ago the eager press agents of the Northern Pacific Railway published a glorious series of pamphlets extolling the wonders of the West. Jefferson would have loved to page through these wonderland guides. They would have convinced him about what he already believed—that the West was a treasure chest bursting with every fantasy known to the super-heated eastern imagination. The solid men of the NP, CB&Q, and the GN were not about to fill their pages with llamas, mam-
moths, and Welsh Indians but the impulse was the same. Edna Ferber once said that in Oklahoma anything could happen and probably has. In Jefferson’s West, the press agent’s West, the line between fantasy and reality was hard to find and often transgressed. In many ways the pages of the Lewis and Clark journals were a stiff dose of reality. There were no llamas, the ground now shook with buffalo, not mammoths, and the Welsh Indians proved as elusive as ever. But giving up fantasy does not mean the death of wonder, the loss of what we might call the ah-factor. Lewis and Clark saw more than enough to fill them with wonder and astonishment. And if they called the magnificent Rockies a desert it was because their own cultural baggage conditioned them to save the best, most positive words for the green lands of a cherished Virginia and Kentucky. Remember what Lewis said when he was here, seeing the Great Falls for the first time. “This sublimely grand spectacle ... the grandest sight I ever beheld ... this tremendous fall ... this majestically grand scenery.” Lewis later complained that he had neither the artistic skill nor the equipment to produce a portrait of the falls. I for one am glad he didn’t try. The words are enough. They force us to use our imaginations, to exercise the eye of the mind.

So what did Lewis and Clark see on their grand tour of the West? Certainly they did not find an empty place; surely no savage wilderness. Up the Missouri, across the mountains, and down the Columbia they saw home places. Despite dozens of Hollywood movie titles and countless potboiler novels, this was not the untamed land, the wild country. It was home, and this house of sky was about to get a new set of renters. Moving through Mandan, Shoshoni, Nez Perce, and Chinook back yards, Lewis and Clark saw a busy, sometimes violent West already settled by farmers, merchants, artisans, politicians, and soldiers. At heart, what the Expedition saw was more than memorable landscapes. What they saw should not automatically bring a Bierstadt or Bodmer answer. The captains found a real place, already outlined by and filled with the visions of other American dreamers. The coming storm would pit those first dreamers against others possessed by equally powerful visions of the future.

I’m an historian, not a lawyer but I want to conclude with an argument, a brief, a piece of special pleading. We live in an age of instant wisdom, a time when the visual image and the moving cursor on the display terminal are more valued than the word and the book. The Lewis and Clark Expedition is the most richly documented exploratory journey in western history. But the journey can enrich us only if we take time to read the record of those memorable days. Words give wings to thought. Charlie Russell, the master western imagemaker, understood that. One of his best sayings goes like this: “The West is dead my friend, but writers hold the seed and what they sow will live and grow again to those who read.” The Lewis and Clark words can grow in our minds. Those words can give us fresh eyes and renewed imaginations. Reading the words we can stand yet again with the captains and see the West as it once was and still can be. All of us seek the lost places, the places of the heart, the places where wonder lives. Those are the places where we find an inner harmony and a special connection to the past. The great poet T.S. Eliot put it best.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Through explorers’s eyes we may yet see this western land afresh and gain the wisdom of all pilgrims bound for the great western sea.

About the author ... James P. Ronda is one of the premier authorities on Lewis and Clark. He is perhaps best known for his best selling book Lewis and Clark Among the Indians, which was nominated for many prizes including the Pulitzer Prize in American History. A collection of his essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Westering Captains, is available from the Foundation.
SURELY the one thread that binds all Lewis and Clark Trail devotees together is the genuine appreciation of the faithful performance of duty adhered to by the Captains in carrying out the instructions of President Jefferson. Among other things it required the recording in their journals of “everything new” that they would observe in this great unexplored land they were about to traverse.

Despite the willingness to comply, one might ponder how far into the journey they traveled before the magnitude of recording it all really set in. Reducing all this “new stuff” to writing must have been considered at times a mountain of drudgery. Yet “they proceeded on.”

As we all know, they brought back a treasure trove of material. All of the information returned was extremely important and is still very beneficial today.

Even seemingly minor details in the journals, when looked at in the light of hindsight, may still contain a story of possible interest “including some of those “little mistakes” that occurred. One such recording in Meriwether Lewis’s journal on September 21, 1805, while traveling west on the now famous Lolo Pass in northern Idaho, might serve as an example.

He apparently saw a “new” tree unlike—but similar to—a species that had already long been identified by dendrologists. That tree was one known to be common over a large area of the northern and eastern part of the country. Its accepted common name at that time was eastern white- cedar (Thuja occidentalis). Because of the similarity he called the new tree “Arborvitae.”

According to Rudy Kallander, former Assistant Dean of Forestry at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Lewis was entering the eastern limit of growth of the western red cedar (Thuja plicata). The party was then on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains and this was his new tree. (See map on page 28.)

At the time of this entry in his journal he could not have known that this new tree on the Lolo would turn out to be the tree, more than any other, that would play the major role in the lifestyle of a group he was about to meet. It would touch every Indian he would be associated with during the entire time the Expedition wintered at Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia River.

As a matter of fact, the above statement could even be expanded to include the entire coastal Indian population from northern California to Alaska. The tree may have even provided much of the building material in the construction of the fort itself.

However, his coming descriptions of that tree would also create a problem for later journal readers, for he would repeatedly use the term “white cedar” as the common name for his new “arborvitae.”

At Fort Clatsop Lewis would write, “the country in general at about Fort Clatsop is covered with a very heavy growth of several species of pine and furr, also the white abor vita or white cedar.”

“This was not correct,” according to Kallender. “There would have been no ‘white cedar’ at Fort Clatsop.” It is not native to the West. The tree that Lewis saw was western red cedar. And probably there was little or no “pine” except for the windswept shore pine which, on the Oregon Coast, is hardly more than a tall “bush.” The “furr” probably had reference to Douglas fir, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, and other conifers.

Only 13 years before the Expedition, English sea captain George Vancouver (and Captain Cook and others even earlier) had mapped the western coast of North America and had mentioned the “con-
ifers” along its coast. Lewis was aware of these maps and may have been influenced by the same problem that sometimes bothers visitors to the Oregon country even today about the generic terms “conifers” and “pines.” It could also lead to similar confusion over “cedars.”

This confusion started a “long time ago” since at one time some botanists were calling all conifers “pines.” Earlier (and later) explorers to the West Coast described the artifacts made by the natives of the coastal tribes. They said they were “made from pine.” Most were not pine, but “cedar.” In Britain today, the home port of Cook and Vancouver—where deciduous trees dominate—many still refer to all conifers as “pines.”

It would take later explorers—the mountain men and trappers of expeditions like the John Jacob Astor group and The Hudson Bay Company—to explain the true meaning of Captain Lewis’s “heavy growth” description of the surrounding area of Fort Clatsop.

It would be this group that would find that Fort Clatsop sat right in the center of what was to become the most extensive commercial timber growing area in the world. They would discover that green canopies of enormous trees would stretch hundreds of miles both north and south of the Columbia River. Some were in swaths up to 50 miles wide from the edge of the Pacific Ocean eastward through the Coast Range.

Trees from 150 years up to 500 years of age were common. Some estimate that 1000 years might have been possible.

The largest living western red cedar today is 673 inches in circumference (19.42 feet in diameter) and is 178 feet in height. It has a spread of 54 feet.

The largest living Douglas fir tree standing today measures 438 inches in circumference (11.61 feet in diameter) and is 329 feet in height. It has a spread of 60 feet.

With untold numbers of such trees, within 40 years of the founding of Fort Clatsop, the area would begin to gain its worldwide reputation as the leading producer of lumber and other wood products for the construction of homes and buildings.

As to the misunderstanding of “cedar” in these forests, the dendrologist Sudsworth wrote in 1908, “The lumbermen’s and woodsmen’s name for this tree is “red cedar,” or simply “cedar.” The former name, while fairly applicable to the dull, slightly reddish brown wood, is unfortunate in view of the fact that two or three widely known eastern junipers with really red wood are most persistently called “red cedar,” and probably always will be, for they were known nearly a century before this western cedar was discovered.”

On the Pacific Northwest Coast this red cedar tree has been commonly called by many names: red cedar, western red cedar, Pacific red cedar, giant cedar, British Columbia cedar, canoe cedar, gigantia, shinglewood, western arborvitae, Washington cedar, Oregon cedar, Idaho cedar, and giant red cedar.

Despite all the “cedar” names, they are not true cedars, nor do they even belong to the Cedrus genus. They actually belong to the Cypress family.

Lewis’s tree was the Thuja genus which is grouped with the arborvitae, of which only two are native to the United States and Canada. One, a small or medium sized tree with which he was familiar having the accepted common name eastern white cedar (Thuja occidentalis). The other is the red cedar (Thuja plicata).

The error of Captain Lewis was simply in calling his new tree an eastern white cedar. There is a con-
siderable difference between the two.

The word “Thuja” is derived from a Greek name for an African tree with a sweet smelling wood. “Plicata” means “folded like a fan,” that describes the braidlike arrangement of the small scaly leaves. Arborvitae is a Latin word meaning “tree of life.” It is an apt description for a tree that contributed so much to the life of the northwest coast people who addressed the supernatural spirit of this tree as “Long Life Maker.”

The incorrect naming of the tree was a minor error, of course.

But the importance of the tree to an entire Native American culture was something else. Today we know that the culture of the northwest coastal Indians was heavily dependent upon the use of cedar for nearly every activity in their daily life.

Cedar was used to make their community long-houses, their homes, canoes, baskets, boxes, articles of clothing, tools, fishing equipment, religious totems, as well as weapons. It was even used as a medication.

Billee Hoornbeek, archaeologist for the U.S. Forest Service, has told the author that it is unfortunate that more professional investigators were not available to study this relatively obscure group of Indians. Had they done so, she believes, “The importance of cedar to these people might be said to compare as favorably to them as was the buffalo to the Plains Indians.”

When the Expedition reaches the coast and settled in at Fort Clatsop, Lewis and Clark wrote extensively about the importance of cedar to the local Indians. Clark wrote, “The [Indian] woman was a kind of a [t]wist made of cedar bark but soft ... The garment ... is a tissue formed of white cedar bark bruised or broken into small strands which are interwoven in their center by means of Several cords of the same Materials ... the men have nothing except a robe about them, they are badly made and use but few ornaments.

“The women's peticoat is about 15 inches long made of arber-vita or the white cedar bark wove to a string hanging down in tassels and [t]ied so as to cover from the hips as low as the peticoat will reach and only covers them when standing.”

Lewis described hunting bows that were “formed from the heart of the arbor-vita” and Clark described nets and fishing line “made of the Silk Grass or White Cedar bark.” He also wrote, “Their baskets are formed of Cedar bark and bargrass So closely interwoven with the hands or fingers that they are watertight without the aid of gum or rozin.”

On February 22, 1806, the captains bought a “parsel of excellent (woven) hats made of cedar bark and ornamented with bear grass from two Clatsop women to distribute among the party.” As they approached the end of their trek to the ocean the last 100 miles of river travel would have demonstrated a dramatic change of scenery from what they had witnessed in the semi-desert areas of eastern Washington and Oregon. Surely every member of the party must have been impressed with the new forest vistas that were appearing before them. These would have been obvious on both sides of the Columbia River—despite the rains as they anticipated the end of their quest.

Even within the lifetime of Oregonians alive today the memory of the vast stands of timber in the Coast Range leading to the Pacific shoreline were breathtaking. Near the coastline not even forest fires, which over the years have destroyed more timber than man, could bring down the mammoths of those forests.

Considering then the age that western red cedar is capable of reaching if it were only able to escape fire, drought, insects, diseases, and man, wouldn’t it be a thrill to find the very tree today that Lewis found that day in 1805 on the Lolo? And to be able to place a plaque near it under the sponsorship of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation? Impossible? Probably.

But, it might still be there. Remember, only a few years ago Wilbur Werner found the same trees that Lewis described in his campsite battle with the Blackfeet in Montana on the return trip to St. Louis.

But, if someone, some day, did find it! Ah, then we could complete our story. We could then tell the world about the parts of the drama once played by ... “Captain Lewis and his new cedar tree!”

---NOTES---


Hillary Stewart. “Cedar.”
The narrative recorded by Holcomb has been reviewed by two Lewis & Clark historians for accuracy.

Although this journey of discovery is famous today, Holcomb said the actual trip was a clandestine affair because Spain owned a good deal of the West at the time. But then-President Thomas Jefferson had his eye on future expansion.

"Jefferson was ahead of his time in what he wanted to do," Holcomb said. He gave strict instructions on gathering information on plants, animals, the Indians and routes west.

Congress allocated $2,500 for the military expedition, and Jefferson selected Capt. Meriwether Lewis, his private secretary, and 2nd Lt. William Clark, a friend of Lewis, as leaders. The former was a mapmaker and military man; the latter was the thinker and a man concerned with aesthetics.

With a party of 28 frontiersmen—swelled at times to 45—the two set out on May 14, 1804, on a round trip of 8,000 miles to the Pacific Ocean. Reaching the mouth of the Columbia River on Nov. 17, 1805, they returned to St. Louis in late 1806 to find that they had been given up for dead.

The men were greeted with little fanfare, and Lewis soon had a falling out with Jefferson. Lewis, who was drinking heavily and rumored to have a sexually transmitted illness, died under mysterious conditions said to be a suicide.

Not until the second edition of the explorers’ dry, factual journal, which had been fleshed out by historians, did the Expedition receive the proper respect, according to Holcomb.

The most immediate effect was the era of fur traders, from 1825-1840, followed by the arrival of settlers, miners and others anxious to exploit this new, virgin land.

Holcomb said the Expedition has been muddied somewhat by myths and legends, such as those assigning a major role to the Indian woman Sacajawea and her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian trapper signed on as a translator.

But Holcomb, who is a member of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, said the misconceptions can’t tarnish the contribution of this seminal event in U.S. history.

"The bottom line in my thinking is I’m proud of what these people did.

“You can’t change what you did; to me that’s the mathematics of history,” he said.

Rudy Kallander, while assistant dean of forestry at Oregon State University, was responsible for using western redcedar as the finish siding material for the exterior of the entire Forest Research Center located on the campus at Corvallis. This was material from the tree that Captain Lewis is credited with having first recognized as the Expedition was coming through the Lolo Pass in the fall of 1805—Thuja plicata.

About the author … Dr. Bob Holcomb is an optometrist in Corvallis, Oregon and serves on the Foundation’s Planned Giving Committee.

EXPLORING THE WEST …
(Continued from page 3)

The voyages of James Cook and Ferdinand Magellan are the other famous expeditions.

Holcomb will tell his story through a slide presentation relying on the images of such artists as Charles M. Russell, Frederic Remington and Albert Bierstadt, who crafted a romantic vision of the early West.

30 WE PROCEEDED ON – MAY 1992
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE  
(continued from page 2)

the origins and personnel, especially the Kentuckians, of the Expedition. We hope many attendees will form a new chapter of the Foundation as a result of this seminar.

Stuart Knapp, our second vice president, has developed a two credit honors course which he and members of his department at Montana State University will conduct. The course is called Great Expeditions and the Lewis and Clark Expedition will be the first great expedition to study. Future expeditions will be John Wesley Powell exploring the Grand Canyon and Sea of Cortez.

The Missouri Botanical Gardens and Ray Breun of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial will again have the bus/air tour following the Trail to Fort Clatsop, with lectures by the botanists and Ray. The St. Louis area will also be the site of a re-enactment of the first Catholic missionaries leaving St. Louis to work among the Indians of the upper Missouri. There will be a three day canoe trip down the Missouri from Kansas City to St. Louis by a group of “buckskinners.” They are taking the Journals, following the same encampments, etc.—living off the land as did the Lewis & Clark Expedition. There will be a speech by Jim Fortner, a reporter from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, who traveled in a canoe down the Missouri from the headwaters to St. Louis. He has films and did a great report in the paper about his experience. The American encounters—Lewis and Clark, the people and the land seminar was sponsored by our Missouri Humanities. There was an enthusiastic overflow crowd and the presentation by our member, Jim Ronda, was “spell-binding.” I hope you all have the opportunity to hear this presentation.

I hope you all have seen the advertisement of Chrysler on the Amazing Americans—featuring Lewis and Clark. Frank Muhly, Pennsylvania NPS Trails Coordinator Chairman is busy doing documentation and he got some wonderful publicity in the Philadelphia Daily in March for our Foundation. Con-

gratulations, Frank. Would you believe it—the headline of that article was—LEWIS AND CLARK STARTED HERE! Bob Doerk and his committee are doing an excellent job for the Foundation and NPS. Elsewhere in this issue you will read of the success of the Planned Giving Committee in securing gifts for the Foundation.

I note in my work at the Museum under the arch that there is a great increase in interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Many more visitors take the time to read the journal entries and view the photo murals by David Muench.

Now that Ted Turner has bought the Ulm Pishkun I am sure he will become familiar with the Lewis and Clark Expedition too! I hope all of you read the article by Jim Large in the January We Proceeded On on “Vancouver’s Legacy to Lewis and Clark” before you come to our annual meeting in Vancouver. I feel we are going to have a very important Lewis and Clark experience in Vancouver and hope to see many of you good folks there.

Spring is busting out all over—and so are the many activities of our members. All of these activities are directed to promoting interest in our Foundation and its goals. We are jumping off with vigor and zeal. I feel we can all say, as did Lewis on that day when he set out into the unknown, “entertaining as I do the most confident hope of succeeding!”

See you all in Vancouver!

Artist Donates Proceeds for Great Falls Interpretive Center

Sculptor Cody Houston of Great Falls, Montana offered a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of his most recent work, “Great Falls of the Missouri, 1805” to the fund raising efforts to construct the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Montana.

A local non-profit group, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Fund, Inc. is raising $300,000, a requirement to release a $700,000 appropriation from the Montana State General Fund. The raising of these funds will mean a $1,000,000 contribution towards the construction of the Interpretive Center. Cody’s bronze depicts Lewis and Clark, Sacagawea and Pompey in a 23"x18"x18" sculpture. The piece was juried into the 1992 C.M. Russell Auction, the largest western art auction in the United States. Cody has offered a signed, limited edition of 35 sculptures for the benefit of the fund raising efforts. Help CONTINUE THE VISION by purchasing Cody’s bronze. See the accompanying flyer for details.
... I could not see any rapids below in the extent of my view which was for a long distance down the river, which from the last rapids widened and had every appearance of being effected by the tide I determined to return to camp 10 miles distant, a remarkable high detached rock Stands in a bottom on the Stard Side near the lower point of this Island on the Stard Side about 800 feet high and 400 paces around, we call the Beaten [Beacon] rock ...  
Clark / October 31, Thursday, 1805