THE LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

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OFFICERS—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President
James R. Fazio
9201 S. 66th St.
Yankie Ridge
Lincoln, NE 68516

First Vice President
Stuart E. Knapp
3137 S. Black St.
Bucyrus, MT 59715

Second Vice President
Robert Gatten
3507 Somette Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27410

Barbara Kubik, Secretary
1712 S. Perry Ct.
Kennewick, WA 99337

H. John Montague, Treasurer
2928 N.W. Verde Vista Terrace
Portland, OR 97210-3356

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403

DIRECTORS

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St. Louis, MO

Patti Thomsen
Brookfield, WI

Ella Mae Howard
Great Falls, MT

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Evergreen, CO

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., is to stimulate public interest in matters relating to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the contributions to American history made by the Expedition members, and events of time and place concerning the expedition which are of historical import to our nation. The Foundation recognizes the value of tourist-oriented programs, and supports activities which enhance the enjoyment and understanding of the Lewis and Clark story. The scope of the activities of the Foundation is broad and diverse, and includes involvement in pursuits which, in our opinion, are of historical worth or contemporary social value, and commensurate with the heritage of Lewis and Clark. The activities of the National Foundation are intended to supplement those of state and local Lewis and Clark Interest Groups. The Foundation may appropriately recognize and honor individuals or groups for art works of distinction, achievement in the broad field of Lewis and Clark historical research, writing, or deeds which promote the general purpose and scope of activities of the Foundation. Membership in the organization comprises a broad spectrum of Lewis and Clark enthusiasts including Federal, State, and local government officials, historians, scholars and others of wide-ranging Lewis and Clark interests. Officers of the Foundation are elected from the membership. The annual meeting of the Foundation is traditionally held during August, the birth months 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.

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.

MESSAGE FROM

PRESIDENT JIM FAZIO

PREPARE FOR THE GAUNTLET

It is difficult to imagine either Meriwether Lewis or William Clark being forced to run the dreaded gauntlet. But that is exactly what will occur when Ph.D. candidates and the mass media become aware of the Expedition's bicentennial commemoration. I realize that I will be criticized for putting this unhappy prediction in print, but I bring the issue to your attention for two reasons. First, the inner circle of scholars in our Foundation are already debating the "new" version of the Expedition and its leaders. Second, and most important, if we all think about this challenge, discuss it openly, and do some careful planning, we can turn a negative into a positive. If so, perhaps we can prevent our celebration from turning into the debacle that marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival.

The Columbus celebration, you will recall, touched off a frenzy of expose-type articles and protest demonstrations, including a parade with people chanting, "Columbus was a murderer." Others called for days of mourning instead of celebration.

The revision of Lewis and Clark history has already begun. At the
From the Editor's Desk

Take a careful look at President Jim Fazio's column on page 2. What he is saying is all too true. We need to carefully consider all of the ramifications of the debacle that surrounded the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. The politicizing of Lewis and Clark on the bicentennial of their expedition is not our goal. It should not be anyone else's goal either.

I have had the opportunity in the past to work with and write about a number of Native Americans on both an individual and a tribal basis. When one of them told me I was one of the few white people he ever trusted, it was not because I was some sort of special person. It was because I treated him with the dignity and respect every human being deserves. When I wrote an article about an issue between a tribe and the organization I worked for, my boss told me to slant the article in favor of the organization. I said no and came close to losing my job over it. The article was balanced.

This is not meant to glorify your editor. The basis of any worthwhile relationship, whether personal, or business, or social, is dignity and respect. Anything less is demeaning for us and whomever we are dealing with. Making an effort to understand where the other person or group is coming from can also go a long way toward leveling mountains of misunderstanding.

None of this is new to any of you who may read this column. We are taught it in a number of ways as we grow up. Unfortunately, we sometimes lose sight of it in our zeal to create our own version of a perfect world. Let us not lose sight of it, as individuals or an organization, as we approach the bicentennial of the journey of Lewis and Clark.

Dear Mr. Erickson:

Why does everyone assume that the wife of Toussaint Charbonneau had a Shoshone name?

She was captured quite young and could not communicate with her captors who used a strange language. Many Indians had several names, depending on events over the course of a lifetime.

Her Hidatsa owners eventually gave her a name that suited them. An article by Russell Reid, Superintendent of the State Historical Society of North Dakota for many years, appearing in 1963 North Dakota History, discussed her name:

"Her Hidatsa name, which Charbonneau stated meant 'Bird Woman,' should be spelled Tsakakawias according to the foremost Hidatsa language authority Dr. Washington Matthews. When this name is anglicized for easy pronunciation, it becomes Sakakawea, Sakaka meaning bird and wea meaning woman. This is the spelling adopted by North Dakota."

"Other spellings merely perpetuate an unexplained spelling used by the editor of the Biddle text of the Lewis and Clark Journals. It does not occur in the Original Journals." Mr. Biddle had no conception of Hidatsa or any other Indian language, and George Shannon could not help much there either.

At this late date, there are too many bronze plaques, statues, and books using a variety of spellings to ever finally correct the problem. People will argue the spelling forever.

But at least we should all agree that it is a Hidatsa name.

(LETTERS—Continued on page 30)
It was July 6, but snow still flanked Gibbons Pass as William Clark descended on horseback to the broad valley of the Big Hole River in modern Montana. He was seeing entirely new country on this 1806 route home from his expedition to the Pacific. The Expedition’s co-leader, Meriwether Lewis, was exploring independently somewhere up north.

The Big Hole valley didn’t look a bit foreign to Sacagawea, one of the 22 people riding with Clark. The Shoshone woman had dug camas roots there as a girl. From his compass the captain knew his immediate destination lay somewhere to the southeast. He asked Sacagawea the easiest way to get there.

“She pointed to the gap through which she said we must pass,” said Clark in his journal.

The Squar pointed ... and POP went the flashbulbs of history, capturing the pose in which Sacagawea is forever frozen in American legend. A painting by Newell C. Wyeth enshrines that very moment, with Sacagawea pointing at the horizon as Clark gazes intently alongside. The painting is reproduced in a history exhibit on an outside wall of the FBI building in Washington. Tourists strolling on Pennsylvania Avenue can read the picture’s routine caption: “Sacajawea, Indian woman guide for Lewis and Clark.”

So says the authoritative voice of the FBI, merely repeating what everybody learned in school anyway. The unshakeable popular belief that Sacagawea guided Lewis and Clark across the West has defied decades of protests by purist historians that the Shoshone woman did hardly any real guiding. The Expedition at critical times did indeed rely on native guides, but Sacagawea wasn’t one of them, the purists insist. Indignant scholars can even show that the Sacagawea-guide legend derives in part from one writer’s flat-out falsification of the Expedition’s “journal.”

No matter. Sacagawea the folk heroine has ascended to the realms of pop celebrityhood, immune to picky facts that people prefer to tune out. The legend began early in this century as a willful warping of the truth by feminist authors, but the reason for its persistence has changed. These days it just seems to coast along on a pervasive tolerance for sloppiness in historical storytelling.

Consider, for example, a recent Northern Telecom recruitment advertisement for engineers invited to do some Sacagawea-like exploring of the wonderlands of technology. “As a guide for the Lewis and Clark Expedition,” says the ad, “her finger had pointed the way west—up the wild reaches of the Missouri, over great sawtooth granite ranges, and through uncharted hostile territories.” Arriving at the Missouri’s Three Forks, the explorers (in the ad-writer’s imagination) ask the guide which way to go.

“She did not hesitate. Holding her papoose in one arm, she pointed with the other. ‘Are you sure?’ asked Captain Lewis. ‘She can’t possibly know,’ said Captain Clark. ‘It is the way,’ she answered calmly and effortlessly, as she had answered many times before.’”

By now all the historical purists have fainted, but Northern Telecom goes on to jolt geographers as well. The ad’s heroes follow the Missouri fork indicated by the guide’s pointing finger. “It led them to the Yellowstone and Columbia Rivers and finally to the Pacific Ocean,” says the writer, plainly unaware that if the explorers really had met the Yellowstone, they would have found themselves
ONCE UPON A TIME A GREAT TEAM OF EXPLORERS WAS SAVED BY A STROKE OF INTUITION. The year was 1805. The explorers, Lewis and Clark. And the stroke of intuition, the product of a superbly gifted individual—Sacagawea, an 18 year old American Indian who carried a baby on her back and a grave responsibility on her shoulders. As guide for the Lewis and Clark expedition, her finger had pointed the way west—up the wild reaches of the Missouri, over great saw-toothed granite ranges, and through uncharted hostile territories. For six months, it had been a journey of enormous expectations: to find the fabled Northwest Passage to Asia and the Pacific. And for six months, it had been a journey fraught with hazards, hunger, sickness and daring acts of courage.

But now the expedition had reached its moment of truth, at the three forks of the Missouri. Supplies were desperately low, morale was barely existent—and a make-or-break decision had to be reached.

Which of the three forks of the river led over the Rockies to the Pacific? And which to dry gulches and certain doom?

The 19 mountainmen and explorers looked to Lewis and Clark—who in turn looked to Sacagawea.

She did not hesitate. Holding her papoose in one arm, she pointed with the other.

"Are you sure?" asked Captain Lewis. "She can't possibly know," said Captain Clark.

"It is the way," she answered calmly and effortlessly, as she had answered many times before.

Because Lewis and Clark believed in their guide, in her knowledge—both factual and intuitive, they followed her direction. They safely crossed the Rocky Mountains by following the northernmost fork of the mighty Missouri. It led them to the Yellowstone and Columbia Rivers and finally to the Pacific Ocean. It was beyond doubt the most daring, important and successful exploration on the Western Continent. And in the years to come, it would yield riches beyond comprehension. Also in the years to come, many statues would be erected in honor of Sacagawea.

In fact, today there are more statues of her than of any other woman in American history.

At BNR (Bell-Northern Research) we understand and appreciate the trust Lewis and Clark placed in their guide. That's because we too are explorers. And we too believe in our people. In their intelligence and in their intuition as guides to future innovations.

It is this belief in our people that has made BNR a world leader in the evolution of telecommunications—with laboratories throughout North America and the United Kingdom. And has helped make our parent company, Northern Telecom, the largest supplier of fully digital communications systems in the world.

So if you're an engineer or scientist yearning for the great uncharted territories of high technology, follow your intuition. Send your resume to BNR, HRM-1, P.O. Box 13478, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. And help make our future expeditions monumental.

WHERE FINE MINDS MANAGE INNOVATION.

floating back toward St. Louis.

There's little reason for optimism that future generations of Madison Avenue historians will do better. School curricula planners who stress "cultural diversity" understandably seize on the saga of a Native American female who guided white men around. A trusting pupil ordered to research that saga can find fresh confirmation in the 1991 edition of Encyclopedia Americana: "Sacagawea displayed remarkable ability as a guide, leading the way to her own country which she had not seen since a child."2

Another awful example of a breakdown in educational standards? Perhaps, but it's not exactly new. In 1944, historian C.S. Kingston wrote: "If the school books are silent on the subject, teachers are fond of telling the story of Sacajawea and of describing her services in conducting the explorers across the mountains." Kingston was the author of "Sacajawea as Guide—The Evaluation of a Legend," published that year in The Pacific Northwest Quarterly. After examining the evidence he rendered an uncompromising purist's verdict: "She did nothing to determine the course or direction of the Expedition on its way to the Pacific or (with one exception) on the return trip."3

But that tilts the story a shade too far toward the opposite extreme. In trying to combat the myth of Sacagawea's perpetually pointing finger, Kingston and others have sometimes overreacted by playing down occasions when she was of genuine geographical help to the Expedition. True, the debunkers usually include some ritual praise of Sacagawea's talents for finding berries or calming native strangers by her very presence. "She was a young woman of fine qualities," volunteered Kingston.

That sort of frozen academic smile points up a general quandry faced by writers of western history and even our own Foundation: how do you stick to the historic truth without dumping too hard on one of the Expedition's most attractive per-
sonalities? How should a Foundation speaker deal with a roomful of 5th graders brightly waiting to hear about the Bird Woman—who-points? Should the Foundation risk turning away potential new members by sounding too starchy about a relatively harmless myth?

* * * * *

Sacagawea did some guiding, but her opportunities were limited. When Lewis and Clark left their jump-off camp near St. Louis in May, 1804, they knew exactly where to go—right up the muddy current of the Missouri River, a route already well traveled by French, Spanish and British traders. The captains even carried a trader's map of the river reaching all the way to the Mandan-Hidatsa villages in North Dakota. After putting more than a third of their outbound route behind them, that's where the explorers met Sacagawea and her French-Canadian husband, Toussaint Charbonneau. Sacagawea was a teenage Shoshone from the fabled Rocky Mountains, brought to North Dakota as a captive by some far-ranging Hidatsa raiders. The captains realized Sacagawea might be a helpful interpreter once they reached her country. All the Charbonneaus—husband, wife and infant son—were engaged to go along.

When Lewis and Clark resumed their journey in April, 1805, the Missouri River itself was still the only "guide" they needed. They just pointed their canoes upstream, heading mainly west. In June, however, they came to a place where the Missouri seemed to branch north and south, and a human guide who knew that neighborhood would have been most welcome. Nobody asked Sacagawea which way to go, because like everyone else she was seeing that part of the river for the first time.

Sacagawea had been captured at the Missouri's headwaters 150 air miles away. Her Hidatsa captors were horse Indians, and if they traveled along big rivers at all, it was mainly to find direction. There's good evidence that on their western raids Hidatsa warriors usually shunned the looping Missouri as a pointer home to North Dakota and instead took a shortcut east along the Yellowstone. When Clark reached the Yellowstone in 1806 he was puzzled by what appeared to be a log fort on the river bank. Sacagawea told him that such emplacements were built by Hidatsa war parties to fend off pursuit by the Shoshones, a persuasive clue that she had been forced along that route herself.

That meant the Missouri was new to her on the Expedition's 1805 outbound canoe route through the high plains of Montana. With no knowledgeable guide to help, Lewis and Clark themselves scouted the north-south branching of the river in June, 1805. They eventually named the north branch the Marias, and turned south up what they correctly decided was the main Missouri.

On July 22, not far from modern Helena, the Expedition came upon a landscape that Sacagawea had seen as a child, probably before her abduction. "The Indian woman recognizes the country and assures us that this is the river on which her relations live, and that the three forks [where she was captured] are at no great distance," reported Lewis. That may not have qualified as "guiding," but her confirmation that they were on the right track certainly lifted everyone's morale. "this piece of information has cheered the spirits of the party," observed Lewis. Two days later Sacagawea gave added encouragement to the leaders, who worried about meeting obstructive rapids in that mountainous terrain. The Indian woman "assures us that the river continues much as we see it," said Lewis.

Anxious to find the Shoshones, the captains took turns walking ahead of the canoe-bound main contingent, where Sacagawea remained with her child. On July 25 an advance party of Clark and four men reached the predicted spot where the Missouri gathers itself from three tributary forks. Without waiting for anyone's guidance, Clark immediately decided the tributary later named Jefferson's River "appears to have the most water and must be considered as the one best calculated for us to ascend." When Lewis pulled up at the Three Forks with the main canoe party on July 27 he quickly agreed with Clark's choice. Nobody consulted Sacagawea; her big "it-is-the-way" scene in the Northern Telecom ad never happened.

The explorers proceeded southwestward up the Jefferson River and on August 4 Lewis—walking ahead—saw the Jefferson split three ways. On his own he decided the middle fork offered the best way to the Continental Divide, and he left a note so advising Clark following behind in the canoes. Clark didn't see the note when he arrived the next day, and took the fork on the right. This was Sacagawea's own country, but nothing in anyone's
The solid lines show Sacagawea's route from the Mandan-Hidatsa villages to the Pacific and back, with the shaded area showing the region where she gave geographical advice to Lewis and Clark. The dashed line shows the route of the Expedition before and after Sacagawea traveled with it.
The American explorers used native guides even more extensively on the 1806 trip home. In southeastern Washington state Lewis and Clark cut loose from their previous Columbia-Snake River route and rode horses back to the Rockies. The way was pointed by a Nez Perce man en route to his own Idaho homeland "who has attached himself to us," said Lewis. In June the captains started to re-cross the Lolo Trail, but decided it would be "madness" to grope along the snowy ridges without help. The Expedition retreated to lower country until two—and eventually six—Nez Perce guides joined the party to lead them back to their old Travelers Rest camp in Montana. "These fellows are most admirable pilots," wrote Lewis on June 27, expressing doubt that the goal could have been reached without them. As on the outbound trek across Lolo, Sacagawea was just another passenger.

The journey's next leg, however, finally allowed her to lift that famous pointing arm to the horizon. The Expedition split at Travelers Rest. Lewis took a shortcut straight east across the mountains to the great falls of the Missouri and Clark headed south toward the place on the Beaverhead where the explorers parked their canoes the previous year. At first Clark rode back through the familiar Bitterroot Valley, but after crossing the Continental Divide at Gibbons Pass he was in country alien to everyone except Sacagawea.

Would a stranger have been able to blunder through that landscape to the canoes without a guide? Probably, but Sacagawea averted any delaying blunders. Before Clark lay the flat valley of the Big Hole River, running roughly north-south. The captain knew the canoes lay more to the southeast, meaning he would have to switch at some point to an adjacent valley further east. Sacagawea told him that as they rode south along the river "we would discover a gap in the mountains in the direction of our canoes." Sure enough, the travelers reached a place near the present town of Jackson where they could see a pass to the left. As the whole world knows, the Shoshone woman pointed it out and on July 7 Clark crossed the gentle rise of Big Hole Pass to find himself in the drainage of Grasshopper Creek. From there it was more or less a straight 30-mile shot south to the canoes. Piece of cake, Clark told his journal: with a little touching up, the route would make "an excellent waggon road."

That galvanized Lewis to march the next morning ahead of the others in search of a pass leading to that river "beyond the mountains" where the Shoshones lived. He crossed the pass just four days later and, as advertised, found the natives near the Lemhi River—a very distant tributary of the Columbia. He brought a group of them back to that river or on the river immediately west of its source; which from it's present size cannot be very distant."
Back on the Beaverhead, Clark could again take his direction from streams through country previously navigated. Arriving at the Missouri's Three Forks, part of his group continued north on the main river toward a rendezvous with Lewis, while Clark led 12 others eastward along the Gallatin fork toward the upper Yellowstone. As Clark moved through this beautiful mountain-ringed basin he could see the Bridger Range rising as a rugged barrier just ahead. On July 13 his eye was caught by a conspicuous notch to his left front, modern Flathead Pass, on which several buffalo roads seemed to converge. Sacagawea had another idea. "The Indian woman who has been of great service to me as a pilot through this country recommends a gap in the mountains more south which I shall cross," said Clark.

Most likely Sacagawea physically pointed on this occasion also, as a bonus for posterity. At any rate Clark led his party through the "more south" gap, now called Bozeman Pass, reaching the banks of the Yellowstone two days later. Tough as always, C.S. Kingston in 1944 argued that Sacagawea's advice here was of little value. Granting that Flathead Pass is somewhat higher than Bozeman, he said Clark easily could have climbed over it and reached the Yellowstone "in the same length of time." Kingston even dismissed Clark's explicit praise of the woman's piloting role, decreeing that it "is to be understood more as an expression of good natured and generous congratulation than a sober assertion of unadorned fact."

Why did Kingston feel the need to take that last lick? He offered no real evidence why a modern reader of the Expedition record shouldn't take Clark's words at face value. In trying to combat a myth, overkill sometimes is employed to balance the excesses of the original myth-makers. Those excesses have sorely taxed the tolerance of scholars, and probably account for a slice of their extra severity in assessing Sacagawea's geographical role.

The original exaggeration of that role has been described in a 1979 book by Ella E. Clark and Margot Edmonds, *Sacagawea of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*. The puffery arose from a need for a propagandistic heroine by campaigners for women's voting rights at the beginning of this century. This literary drum-beating coincided with observances in 1904-1906 of the Expedition's centennial, plus publication by Reuben Gold Thwaites of his eight-volume edition of the verbatim Expedition journals. Thwaites' work brought to light previously unknown details about each member of the exploring party.

Thwaites gave Eva Emery Dye, a leader of the Oregon Equal Suffrage Association, an advance look at these raw journals. Dye used them in writing her 1902 book, *The Conquest*, a chronicle of early 19th century Americana focusing mainly on the Clark family. It contained several chapters on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, including one titled "A Woman Pilot." Dye's book is a strange stew of intense scholarship—she interviewed families of nine Expedition members—unfortunately diluted by a frothy narrative style and hilarious invented dialogue. The author scrupulously confined Sacagawea's recognition of landmarks to the relatively small patch of Montana mountains where she grew up. This limited piloting role, however, hardly laid a foundation for the extravagant music by which Sacagawea exited from Dye's Expedition story. The author pictured the heroine standing on the riverbank as Lewis and Clark left her behind in North Dakota.

"Madonna of her race, she had led the way to a new time. To the hands of this girl, not yet eighteen, had been entrusted the key that unlocked the road to Asia ... Across North America a Shoshone Indian Princess touched hands with Jefferson, opening her country."

That's the kind of gush that has given Dye a bad rap as one of the early promoters of the guide legend, though she actually was fairly careful in sticking to the record of Expedition events. In fact, it's been suggested recently that Dye wasn't primarily interested in portraying Sacagawea as a walking compass. Rather, said historian Jan Dawson in a 1992 *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* article, Dye appeared to put more emphasis on presenting Sacagawea as a role model for later female settlers of the Northwest, a young mother "who had confronted perhaps the greatest challenge of any of the women pioneers." No excuses can be made for Grace Raymond Hebard, whose 1907 characterization of Sacagawea-as-guide was not only wrong, but deliberately so. Hebard, the University of Wyoming's librarian, published in *The Journal of American History* an article titled "Pilot of First White Men to Cross the American Continent." The
feminist author offered a completely muddled account of the American Expedition's 1805 crossing of Lemhi Pass. According to Hebard, it was Sacagawea who "found for Clark the pass in the mountain through which the party went, on the other side encountering what threatened to be hostile Indians."

Hebard committed several other bad botches of fact. Perhaps worse, she sought to highlight her Sacagawea-as-guide claim by omitting any reference to Toby or the other natives who actually did help Lewis and Clark find the way. Finally, Hebard's 1907 article contained this passage:

"There is no record to show that Sacajawea received any compensation by gift or word. It is true we find the following in the journal: 'This man (Charbonneau) has been very serviceable to us, and his wife particularly useful among the Shoshones. Indeed she has borne with a patience truly admirable the fatigues of so long a route incumbered with the charge of an infant, who is even now only nineteen months old. She was very observant. She had a good memory, remembering locations not seen since her childhood. In trouble she was full of resources, plucky and determined. With her helpless infant she rode with the men, guiding us unerringly through mountain passes and lonely places. Intelligent, cheerful, resourceful, tireless, faithful, she inspired us all.'"

Two things should be said about this bit of scholarship, one mild and one harsh. The first two sentences within Hebard's quotation marks were taken from the 1814 Nicholas Biddle paraphrase of the raw journal of Clark for August 17, 1806, upon the Expedition's leave-taking of the Charbonneau family. Biddle's praise of Sacagawea had no direct counterpart in Clark's journal entry, and must be regarded as Biddle's editorial commentary. Clark surely would have agreed with it, however; he used almost the same words in a private letter to Sacagawea's husband written three days later.4

The next five sentences in the quotation attributed by Hebard to "the journal" are not found in the Biddle paraphrase, or in Clark's raw journal, or in any other Expedition record. Hebard made them up herself, falsely inventing the part about Sacagawea "guiding us unerringly through mountain passes and lonely place," fraudulently distorting the historical record to buttress her claim. If the purists are upset by Hebard's tactics, they're entitled.

But justifiable anger at history's fakers needn't find its voice in impatience either with Sacagawea or her many fans. As the Expedition bicentennial approaches, all sorts of people will be newly attracted to this great adventure story, partly because of the celebrity of the "guide." For those who care to delve no deeper than that, the myth probably won't do much harm. Others should meet friendly encouragement to poke into the details of when Sacagawea guided and when she didn't. That's an even better story than the myth.

NOTES

1. Different spellings of the Indian woman's name within quotation marks appear as the cited author wrote them, although "Sacagawea" is preferred by We Proceeded On. Arguments over which version is correct are thankfully beyond the scope of this article, as is the question of when and where the woman died.


About the authors...

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.

Edrie L. Vinson, former Foundation secretary, is chief of the Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau of the Montana Highway Department in Helena.
ELLIOTT COUES ON LEWIS AND CLARK
A DISCOVERY

BY GEORGE H. TWENEY

For those of us who have ploughed the fields of Lewis and Clark literature and history for lo! these many years, we know that the furrows are long and deep. Our late friend, Paul Cutright, in his book, A History of the Lewis and Clark Journals, has stated that to “assemble the titles of all the books and magazine articles written about Lewis and Clark would be a near impossible task.” And yet, every once in a while, serendipity brings forth a new opportunity and a new find. This paper is the story of one such find experienced by the author over twenty years ago.

The world was hungry for information about the Expedition even before its return to St. Louis in September 1806. No word had been received by President Jefferson since the party had wintered at Fort Mandan in 1804-1805. Many thought the entire party had been lost. There was no completely authentic report of the Expedition until the appearance of the Biddle/Allen edition in 1814. Two separate sources of incomplete information became available prior to that date. The first of these was the Jefferson Message (really only a curt official letter), and the second was the Gass Journal, first published in 1807 after having been put into “proper English” by the school teacher David M’Keehan.

These two sources of rather incomplete information were eagerly seized upon by certain unscrupulous publishers who appreciated the intense interest which the Expedition had awakened in the general public. The result was the appearance of a number of spurious books which pretended to be, in one way or another, the “Narrative,” “The Travels,” or “The Journey” of Lewis and Clark. It wasn’t until the appearance of the 1814 Biddle/Allen edition that the public had any reliably authentic account of the Expedition.1

The reasons why the 1814 edition did not appear until eight years after the return of the Expedition are well known: Clark’s involvement with

his appointment in St. Louis, Lewis’s untimely death in 1809, Nicholas Biddle’s detailed editing and preparation of the manuscript coupled with his procrastination, and finally Paul Allen’s preparation of the final manuscript for publication. The two-volume effort finally appeared in 1814. Let it be emphasized that this book is merely the “History of the Expedition ...” (with numerous alliterations from the Captains’ journals), but it is not a printing of the complete journals. These did not appear until the complete printing in 1904-05 edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites. As we all know, these are now being done in a superb and more detailed manner by our fellow member of the Foundation, Dr. Gary Moulton.

Thus all of the numerous editions and versions of “The Lewis and Clark Expedition” up to the appearance of the Thwaites edition of the Journals may be traced to one or another of the three mentioned sources, the Jefferson Message ... The Gass Journal, and the Biddle/Allen “History of the Expedition ...” Of these, the last named is the most complete, authentic, and authorized account, prepared by Nicholas Biddle from the original manuscripts of Lewis and Clark. The Gass Journal is a perfectly authentic account of the journey, by a non-commissioned officer attached to the party, but it is not a “Lewis and Clark.” From President Jefferson’s official communication, which is, of course, exactly what it purports to be, sprung a number of books to which the names of Lewis and Clark are more or less prominently attached, all of which, nevertheless, are spurious insofar as they claim to be narratives of the Expedition. In all, prior to the appearance of the four-volume edition of the “History ...” published in New York by Francis P. Harper in 1893, there had appeared 40 or 41 different imprints of these three series of books, about 20 of which may be con-
sidered as actually different editions.

Into this mish-mash of publications and spurious editions stepped Dr. Elliott Coues (and yes, it is pronounced "cows") in June 1891. It was at that time that the New York publisher, Francis P. Harper, enquired of Coues if he would be interested in editing a reissue of Biddle's 1814 edition of Lewis and Clark. Having some years previously made a study of Lewis and Clark literature, Coues replied promptly and enthusiastically.

Elliott Coues (1842-1899) was one of the most renowned figures of American science during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Naturalist, anatomist, taxonomist, writer and editor, historian, lexicographer, and occultist—Coues was all of these. He wrote an astounding more than six hundred publications during his active lifetime on all these various subjects. The latter part of his career was spent in editing and annotating editions not only of the journals of Lewis and Clark, but also Zebulon Pike, fur traders Alexander Henry and Charles Larpenteur, Santa Fe trader Jacob Fowler, and the missionary priest, Francisco Garces. All were credible and lasting works, useful to this day. A colorful biography of this complex and remarkable man has been done by Cutright and Brodhead, who had access to a vast collection of hitherto unpublished material.

But it is on his editing of the Lewis and Clark 1814 edition that we wish to focus our attention. Coues did nothing between June 1891 and June 1892, since he had spent the year in California for his health. Upon his return, however, after accepting an offer from Francis Harper of $750 for a bibliography, and "such explanatory and historical notes as would make the edition a valuable book for reference," Coues threw himself into the work with his usual energy and enthusiasm. Letters flowed back and forth between Harper and Coues in a steady stream. It didn't take Coues long to discover that the original Biddle edition had been poorly written and typeset. He immediately advised Harper of his intention to extensively edit the original edition to bring it up to his scholarly standards.

All of this preliminary work took a sharp upswing in September 1892 when Coues enthusiastically informed Harper that he had "found" all the original manuscripts of Lewis and Clark at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, through information supplied by Nicholas Biddle's son. Incredible as it may seem, only a few persons were aware that these original manuscripts had remained in the Society virtually unknown, unheralded, and untouched, for over seventy-five years.

Surprisingly, Coues convinced the Society that he should be allowed to borrow the original manuscripts for his editorial work, and in December 1892 Coues took all the manuscripts to Washington. He soon was spending long hours in examining the manuscripts and deciding how he might best use them. I now quote verbatim from his next letter to Harper,

"I have been working the mine opened in Philadelphia, and now have all the manuscripts in perfect order for reference and when necessary for citation by volume and page. There are 18 bound note books and 12 small parcels of other manuscripts, making in all 30 codices, and I think something like 2,000 written pages. Of course, we shall not be idiotic enough to ever let the manuscripts go out of our hands without making a copy. I have an expert copyist already at work, making an exact copy, word for word, letter for letter, and point for point. I do not know how the expense will come out, but if you will authorize the expenditure of $150, I will make up the balance, whatever it will be, and the copy thus becomes our joint property ..."

Harper agreed to this arrangement. Coues said nothing to the American Philosophical Society about making a copy, not does Harper seem to have questioned the propriety of this action. Coues assured Harper that the amount of new material in the codices was large, that it differed significantly from Biddle, and that it would not conflict with the work in progress. He then added: "Meanwhile, however, let us simply possess ourselves of the copy ... BETTER KEEP VERY DARK ABOUT THIS." [Emphasis mine.]

Whatever interpretation we might place on Coues's motives for covertly copying the manuscripts, or the seamliness of his action, the fact remains that the original manuscripts had been borrowed from the American Philosophical Society and he had no permission to copy them. From his counsel to Harper advocating secrecy, it is evident that he himself knew perfectly well that he could not defend his action.

The Coues edited and annotated edition of the Biddle/Allen came from the press early in the fall
of 1893. He had succeeded admirably in building the solid base on which many later scientific studies of the Lewis and Clark Expedition now rest. The edition was an immediate success, and is still consulted today as one of the primary sources for reliable and accurate information about the Expedition.

Coues soon informed Harper that the job of copying the original journals had been completed, and that this copy, the only one now in existence, was "a very valuable piece of property." These comments to Harper were made in December 1893. From that point on, I can find no further reference in the published literature to the surreptitiously copied codices. We now enter the serendipitous portion of this little essay.

In the early spring of 1970 I was on one of my frequent business trips to New York City. As was my custom on these trips, after the day's work was done, I spent all the spare time I could in visiting rare book dealers, libraries, auction houses, private collectors, and any other sources I could find that would further my book collecting passions. One of these visits on this particular trip was to the firm of Lathrop Harper, Inc., a rare book firm in downtown Manhattan with whom I had done business from time to time. Lathrop Harper himself, the younger brother of Francis Harper who had passed away a few years earlier, and the firm was now being run by a young man named Douglas Parsonage, who had been with the Harpers from his boyhood years when he had started out as their "go-fer." In his recent years, he had become one of the most knowledgeable and trustworthy rare book dealers in the trade, and I had known him for a number of years.

Late in the afternoon we had gone for an afternoon cocktail, and then repaired to the shop to talk books, and to allow me to do a little browsing. I had visited the shop on several previous occasions, and Parsonage was well aware of my interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. I did not spend much time browsing in the front portion of the shop, since like most dealers, Douglas Parsonage kept several shelves of choice collectible items in his office. Not finding much there to arouse my interest, he said, "Come out into the workroom, I may have something of interest out there." This was the room where incoming books were unpacked, and outgoing orders were prepared for shipment. Under the long work bench in a corner of the room, Parsonage pointed out a cardboard carton to me that seemed to be full of a jumble of loose papers, and scrawled on the side of the carton were the words "Lewis and Clark." He said, "I don't know exactly what is in that box, but you are welcome to take a look."

At the time I did not recognize the papers for what they really were, but ruffling through them, and seeing the names Lewis and Clark, and Coues, in several places, I asked him what he would take for the entire box. If the asking price were not too outrageous, I felt that I could take the entire carton "as is," and worry about what I had bought after I got home. Douglas named a very low price for the entire lot, and I quickly paid his asking price, at the same time arranging for him to ship the carton to my home. I hoped that it would be there by the time I returned from my business trip.

Upon returning home, I began to go through the papers page by page. Even then I did not really recognize their significance, but it wasn't hard for me to put all the pages in their proper order, and to discover that they were sequentially bundles of codices. Of course, I recognized their similarity to the Lewis and Clark manuscripts in the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, because I had seen those papers on several previous occasions. My "find" easily sorted into all the codices, as I later discovered, and as they had been named by Elliott Coues. The pages are all uniformly 9" x 5½" in size, and I later had them all enclosed in folding cases for safekeeping. There are a total of sixteen cases, some codices being short enough to include several or more in one case.

Since that time, these papers have been a prominent and important part of my personal Lewis and Clark collection. Finding them, and preserving them, has been one of the high spots of my collecting career. They have since been joined in my library by the editor's personal presentation copy of his 1893 edition, with a long inscribed note from Elliott Coues to his close personal friend Alfred J. Hill, in the front of each of the four volumes.

Prepared for the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation held in Vancouver, Washington, August 1-4, 1992

(Continued on page 16)
Lewis and Clark.

Codex A.

Journal, complete,
May 13 - Aug. 14, 1804,
By William Clark.

92 leaves = 184 pages of the orig. Ms.,
making folios 1-120 of this copy,
By Mary B. Anderson.
1893.

N.B. Figures in circle, italic., (12) indicate pagination
of the original.
All penciling is my memoranda of places,
distances, etc., foreign to the inked text.

Elliott Coues.
1893.

The title page of the first of 16 codexs of the Lewis and Clark
Expedition copied for Elliott Coues.
November 8th, 1835

A cloudy morning. Some rain, we did not set out until 9 o'clock, having changed our clothing. Proceeded on shore under the Star & Side, the hills high with steep aspect, shores broad and sandy. Several low bluffs in a Deep bend of Bay to the Star & Side, near about 5 or 7 miles wide, three two channels in a canoe overtook us, with salmon to sell, passed 2 old villages on the Star & Side, and at 3 miles entered a reach of about 6 miles wide and 3 miles deep, with several creeks making into the

One of the journal pages as copied by Mary Anderson for Elliott Coues.
NOTES

1 Biddle, Nicholas (Editor), Prepared for the press by Paul Allen (commonly referred to as the “Biddle and Allen Edition”). “History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the Sources of the Missouri, Thence Across the Rocky Mountains and Down the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean, Performed During the Years 1804-6”... in two volumes. Philadelphia, Bradford and Innskeep, 1814.


I am preparing a book that will chronicle the daily events surrounding the four month retracing of the Lewis & Clark Expedition by a band of Army Green Berets from May 14 to September 5, 1971.

I am looking for photographs and accounts that the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation may have of this journey. Please contact me by mail at the address below, or by collect phone call.

AVRUM M. FINE
3177 Peachtree Road N.E., Suite 209
Atlanta, GA 30305
(404) 261-3718

NEW LOLO TRAIL BROCHURE AVAILABLE

A new brochure by the Clearwater and Lolo National Forests entitled “Lewis and Clark Across the Lolo Trail” is now available. The brochure, complete with colored pictures, descriptions of camps and features, and a map, may be picked up at any Clearwater National Forest office or from the C.N.F. Forest Supervisor, 12730 Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544.

--Idaho Chapter Newsletter

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George H. Twencey is a retired manager from The Boeing Company in Seattle, and also a retired Professor Emeritus of Engineering. He is a founder member of the Foundation, and an amateur historian and book collector. He did numerous book reviews for WPO in the early issues of the publication.

Due to the lack of availability to the student of Lewis & Clark interested in the natural history and linguistic information about the Expedition, the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation has encouraged the reproduction of: Lewis & Clark-Linguistic Pioneers, by Elijah Harry Crisswell, Ph.D. The Headwaters Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation has taken on the task of xeroxing a limited number of exact copies, with the knowledge and permission of the University of Missouri Studies, Columbia, Missouri.

They are now for sale directly from the Chapter for $20.00. Include $2.50 for postage and handling. Dealer inquiry solicited.

Send check direct to Headwaters Chapter, Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Box 577, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 586-0266.

TO: ARTISTS AND AUTHORS OF LEWIS AND CLARK RELATED ITEMS

IF YOU WISH TO DISPLAY YOUR BOOKS OR ITEMS AT THE 25TH ANNUAL MEETING AT HOLIDAY INN IN COLLINSVILLE, ILLINOIS, AUGUST 1-4, 1993—PLEASE CONTACT WINNIE GEORGE, 7312 PARKVIEW DRIVE #2, ST. LOUIS, MO 63109—phone 314-351-6593.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1992 ANNUAL MEETING
Vancouver, Washington – August 1-4, 1992
PHOTOS BY BEVERLY HINDS
(except where noted)

Just a reminder that the Foundation board (above) put in two long days of work before the annual meeting started. Malcolm and Dee Buffum learn about tanning hides from Fort Clatsop's Hal Stoltz (below left). Bob and Mary Doerk stroll the spacious grounds of Fort Vancouver.
A stop for munchies housed in a dugout canoe (above left) before the salmon feed at Fort Clatsop. Don Mechals (above right), chief of the Chinook Indian Nation, was a speaker at a luncheon that also featured Chinook baskets and masks (below right). Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham (below left) was the banquet speaker.
Past Foundation president Bill Sherman (top left) gives a committee report at the business session. 1992 President Winnie George passes the gavel to Jim Fazio, 1993 president (top right). Other officers are Barbara Kubik, secretary; Robert Gatten, 2nd vice president and Stuart Knapp, 1st vice president. Ruth Lange and Gary Moulton (above) visit at the salmon feed before the announcement of the placement of the Robert E. Lange library at Fort Clatop. Ludd Trozpek (above right) presents the Foundation's Distinguished Service Award to Don Nell (right). Barbara Nell is at left. Martin Plamondon II, chairman of the 24th Annual Meeting, says, "Who, me?" while keeping things running smoothly.
CELEBRATIONS, CELEBRATIONS AT OUR 1993 ANNUAL MEETING

BY WINIFRED GEORGE, Past President
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

In our November issue of We Proceeded On our 1993 Annual Meeting chairman gave us a brief rundown on the activities being planned. There is excitement in the air in preparation for our Annual Meeting. We have just received a Proclamation from Governor Jim Edgar of Illinois proclaiming the entire month of May as Lewis and Clark Month. The Proclamation will be printed in the May issue. The Proclamation mentions the many important sites visited by the Lewis and Clark Expedition from Fort Massac in southern Illinois to the winter camp at the River Wood called Camp du Bois. It is our intent to have special programs and activities all along the route of the Captains. These special Lewis and Clark activities will be incorporated with the many planned local festivals which CELEBRATE the French influence in the area. Our participation will involve bringing to the celebrants the importance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to these communities. The Proclamation will prepare the local citizenry well in advance of the 1993 Annual Meeting and alert them to our CELEBRATION. The Proclamation will be read at each of the local festivals—a cause for CELEBRATION! We thank Governor Jim Edgar for his cooperation with our Foundation to bring advance notice of our meeting to the entire state of Illinois.

On Sunday afternoon, August 1, there will be an author's and artist's display while our registrants are renewing their friendships. That evening we will visit Lewis and Clark Community College for a garden buffet and then attend the theatre where we will see the premier performance of a new Lewis and Clark play. The theatre offering is a product of the staff and students at the college and of a distinguished group of writers and consultants. The History Theatre has worked with enthusiasm to produce a noteworthy play. First readings of the play indicate that all of us will be pleased with the endeavor. The College and Foundation have cause to CELEBRATE this new creative theatrical effort.

The CELEBRATIONS at Fort Chartres and Fort Kaskaskia and at the French village of Prairie du Rocher all involve re-enactments of the French colonial influence in the early development of Illinois. We will get a taste of that early period when we hear the lecture by Frances Stadler on "St. Louis in 1804" at our brunch August 2. After the brunch we will depart for the World Heritage Site, Cahokia Mounds. Dr. Margaret Brown, director, will describe the new museum exhibits and theatre which take us back to 900 B.C. and tell us about the urban Mississippian culture, Cahokia Mounds, built by the Mississippians, is three times larger in area than the Great Pyramid in Egypt, is the largest earthwork in the world and was built without the use of horse or wheel. From the museum we will travel to the Village of Cahokia and visit the old Cahokia post office, the Jarrot mansion where Lewis and Clark visited and the historic Holy Family Catholic Church. We will return to our hotel and proceed to the convention center next door where we will have a French colonial dinner and dance the Virginia Reel and other popular dances of the 1804 period.

On Tuesday morning, August 3, we will visit the grave of William Clark in Bellefontaine Cemetery in north St. Louis. Clark died at the age of 68 at the home of his eldest son, Meriwether Lewis Clark. The funeral, two days later, was carried out with full military honors. A company of soldiers escorted the hearse which was drawn by four white horses. A mile-long cortege accompanied the body to its resting place on the farm of Clark's nephew, Colonel John O'Fallon. The farm is now the neighboring O'Fallon Park. Years later, Clark's body was moved to the family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery where we will have a wreath laying ceremony. Inscribed on the monument are the following words "William Clark—Born in Virginia,
The Jarrot mansion (above) and the historic Holy Family Catholic Church are two of the places to be visited during the 25th Annual Meeting.
August 1, 1770—Entered into Life Eternal
September 1, 1838—Soldier, Explorer, Statesman and Patriot—His Life is written in the History of his Country." After the ceremony we will proceed to St. Charles, Missouri, where we will visit the Lewis and Clark Center to view the diorama of the Expedition by Evangelin Groth. We will also visit the Newbill House which was host to members of the Expedition in 1804. In St. Charles we board a barge for the ride downstream to Site #1 while we are entertained by Duffay's music and the Spanish group, Militia de San Carlos. The Spanish group, depicting authentic dress, uniforms, music and drills, represents the Spanish dominance in St. Louis and the entire Louisiana Territory in 1803 while our men of the Lewis and Clark company were training at Camp du Bois. Upon arriving at Camp du Bois we will have a great CELEBRATION—the ground breaking ceremony for our Interpretive Center. This event is the culmination of many years of cooperation of our hosts, the Lewis and Clark Society of America, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, the Illinois General Assembly, the National Congress, the National Park Service, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Corps of Engineers. Dinner at Site #1 will be a "Buffalo Tro" followed by programs about the Indians who lived in the area when the Expedition trained here and about the clothing of those Indians. The Militia de San Carlos will demonstrate their drills for us before we return to the hotel.

Wednesday morning, August 4, we will visit the Gateway Arch where we will have the opportunity to take the tram to the top, see movies about the construction of the Arch, see the all new OMNI-MAX theatre and take in the Museum of Westward Expansion. In the museum the Lewis and Clark Expedition is depicted in photo murals by David Muench. The Journal entries that accompany each mural are selected to give us an idea of the variety of information collected by Lewis and Clark. Before leaving the riverfront, we will have lunch on the Lt. Robert E. Lee riverboat, which is furnished in authentic 1850s decor, and then go by bus to the Missouri Historical Society at the Jefferson Memorial building in Forest Park. Artifacts from the extensive Lewis and Clark Collection will be on display and there will be a special program for our group. An alternative stop in Forest Park is the St. Louis Art Museum which features the Western Collection.

On Wednesday evening, we will have another truly great CELEBRATION, the 25th Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and our Annual Awards presentation. The silver anniversary banquet will be an elegant affair topped off with a very special banquet speaker—our good friend and fellow member, Dr. Robert R. Archibald, president, Missouri Historical Society.

On Thursday, August 5, the first post meeting trip is planned to French colonial sites along the Mississippi-Fort Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres, and Pierre Menard's home at Ellis Grove. We will cross the Mississippi to reach St. Genevieve, Missouri, where we will have lunch at a historic hotel and visit two typical French colonial homes. On the way back to St. Louis, we visit Jefferson Barracks and the Laborers' House. Clark had the Fort Bellefontaine cantonment moved to Jefferson Barracks and the Laborers' House is the only remaining building of that period. In south St. Louis, we will have dinner at Cusinelli's Restaurant which is built on land once owned by William Clark.

On Friday, August 6, the second post meeting trip is planned to Lincoln Land near Springfield, Illinois. We will drive 80 miles north to Springfield to visit Lincoln's home, the Old State House and Lincoln's Tomb. After lunch we stop at New Salem where Lincoln lived and where he worked in Anne Rutledge's parents' store. On the drive back from Springfield we will stop for dinner at Pere Marquette Lodge which overlooks the Illinois River. The final leg of the trip takes us alongside the Mississippi River Palisades north of Alton, Illinois.

The theme for our 1993 Annual Meeting might well be: CELEBRATE, CELEBRATE, CELEBRATE! You will find that all the members of the Lewis and Clark Society of America, and all the Foundation members in Illinois and Missouri are ready to greet you and to assure that you have a most profitable and enjoyable time at the 1993 Annual Meeting.

"ONLY ONE MAN DIED," the medical aspects of the Lewis & Clark Expedition by historian Dr. E.G. Chuinard, paperback, $19.00 postpaid. Don Nell, Box 577, Bozeman, MT 59715.
ORDER FORM

For Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Publications

Back issues of We Proceeded On are available at a postpaid price of $5.00 each. Orders for a complete collection of all back issues will be given a 40% discount. See the Feature Article Catalogue/Index for a listing of the articles and a description of special WPO publications. Indicate your selections with a check mark or a number for additional copies in the blank space before each item.

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FEBRUARY 1993—WE PROCEEDED ON 23
How do college professors fill their time after retirement? Jim Comer, who retired two years ago as professor at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, has no difficulty finding interesting things to do. Jim is vice president of the Lewis and Clark Society of America, Inc., which is hosting this year's national conference of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

An unusual self-assigned task—and a successful one—he undertook last summer involved restoring lettering on the monument at the Lewis and Clark State Park, south of Hartford, Illinois. The memorial, formally dedicated September 27, 1981, commemorates the beginning of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Ocean, an expedition Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their Corps of Discovery prepared for in the winter of 1803-04 at Camp Du Bois (Camp Wood).

When members of the local Lewis and Clark Society voiced concern about the damage flooding had caused on the monument, he volunteered to repair it.

"This monument is on a flood plain at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and had been flooded a couple of times," Jim explained. "The flooding, as well as the sunlight, had disintegrated the paint in some of the grooves of the lettering on the lower half of the monument's 11 columns." Arranged in a circle, the 11 three-sided columns represent the 11 trail states traversed by the explorers. A plaque on each column records important events of the journey through that state. It was the lettering on the plaques Comer repaired.

When he generously offered to repair the damage to the monument at historic Site No. 1 of the journey of Lewis and Clark, he had no idea of the dexterity required to accomplish this feat.

"Because I'd done some painting, I thought I could just spray the front of the monument, then take a scraper and peel the paint off and what would be left would be the paint in the lettering," said the retired education professor. "I found out quickly that doesn't work because the granite has veins in it and the paint would get in these veins. To do this job, I had to get a special kind of paint.

"While I was buying the paint, the salesman questioned me at length about how much of this kind of work I had done and was I interested in doing it. I told him I was interested, but I was interested in doing the Lewis and Clark monument. I was not interested in becoming a monument painter. When he asked for my name and address, I got suspicious and asked him why he wanted that information. Then he told me he had frequent calls for someone to do this kind of painting. Apparently, not many do this kind of work. I soon found out why."

Comer learned he had to paint each letter individually with "a very fine camel-hair brush. You not only have to paint the bottom of the letter, you have to paint both sides because those letters are etched in straight," he said. It's very exacting, very detailed work."

The first day on the job Jim was able to complete work on one plaque—the one representing Illinois. After that he "got a little better and could do two a day. But it was on-the-job training.

"This special paint sets about as fast as fingernail polish, so you work with a very small brush and a very small amount of paint. If you can paint four or five words before it begins to stiffen, you're lucky. Fortunately, the letters in the monument were well grooved—except for the Kansas column. It was obvious the grooving of the columns was done by different artists. Some of the letters are
Jim Comer found the job of painting the lettering on the monument at the Lewis and Clark State Park (Hartford, Illinois) was harder than he thought. He got the job done.

He said, "Here I am!" he added, smiling.

One of the things which fascinated Jim Comer during his project was the number of interesting people who came to visit the monument and see the meeting of the rivers. It was then he decided a statistical survey should be made of who comes to this historic place. A logging of visitors by members of the Lewis and Clark Society ensued.

Registration was taken every eighth day from May 16 to September 13, a total of 16 days. During this survey, 1,124 visitors signed in. They came from 37 states and 17 foreign countries, many of them explaining why they came.

For example, one day a fellow drove up "in a rather old automobile" and asked Jim to help him find where the Missouri River entered. He was from Three Forks, Montana, where the Missouri is formed. "All my life I was going to come down and see where it dumped into the Mississippi," he said. "Here I am!" he added, smiling.

On another occasion, a couple came from Italy to see for themselves where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their historic voyage to the west coast. The same day, a former school teacher from Denmark came to see "the great Mississippi and Missouri rivers" he had read about all his life.

The first day George Arnold, president of the Lewis and Clark Society hosting the 1993 convention, took roll, he met 60 religious visitors, members of the Yogi Divine Society. It is a holy place for Hindus, they explained. Each year they come to Lewis and Clark Site No. 1 to place human ashes where three rivers meet, the Mississippi and Missouri and nearby Illinois.

A Buffalo Tro is planned at Site No. 1 for those attending the 1993 national convention of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.
INTRODUCTION

"The Lolo Trail" is a generic term which has been commonly used to describe the east-west route used to cross the Bitterroot Mountains in northern Idaho before Highway 12 was built on the Lochsa and Clearwater rivers below. "Motorway 500" now winds its rocky, bumpy, one-lane path along the ridgetop, crisscrossing the various trails which comprise what I will call the "Lolo Route." This general east-west route was traveled by the Nez Perce Indians in "prehistoric" times, that is, before the white man came. It was followed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805 and again in 1806. On it was built the Bird-Truax Road, which was also traveled by the Nez Perce people, or "Nee Me Poo," in their flight from General Howard during the Nez Perce War in 1877. The Bird-Truax Road was also traversed by General Howard the same year in pursuit of the Nez Perce. In the 1930s, the Forest Service attempted to define the trail. So the "Lolo Trail" is not one defined road; it is an east-west route comprised of various pathways traveled through history by separate groups for different purposes.

Separating these threads of past usage of the mountain track is a purpose of this paper. Another reason for writing about the route over the Lolo Pass is to discuss its future. Recently, interest has grown about the Lolo Trail. Markers have been placed to show the route used by Lewis and Clark. Investigation of tread assumed to be the Bird-Truax Road is being conducted. There is a crescendo of concern and participation by Nez Perce tribal members, volunteers in the "Take Part in America" (TPIA) organization, aficionados of the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation, and students of history.

The fate of this ancient route is at stake. What kind of roadway should be allowed in the future? Should other signs be placed to tell the story of the 1877 flight of Joseph's band of Nez Perce, which traveled across the road built by Bird and Truax? What kind of archaeological work can and should be done, and at whose expense? These questions need human answers. Meanwhile, the area makes its own statement.

The rugged beauty of the Bitterroots lies in a pristine condition in 1992. The lakes are crystal clear, the air fresh, and the rocky peaks inspiring. What was foreboding to early foot and horseback travelers is breathtaking and awesome to hikers walking between sites, and to passengers of vans or sturdy cars proceeding slowly, watching not to high-center on a rock or collide with an oncoming vehicle. Many of the drop-offs adjacent to this roadway measure hundreds of feet. Aside from Motorway 500 itself, patches of scalped ground where timber was clearcut, and historical markers, the Lolo is one of the few places left where Lewis and Clark traversed, which remains in nearly the same condition as they saw it. Travel is recommended only in July and August to avoid sudden inclement weather.

KHUSAHNA ISHKIT

The old Nez Perce name for the route from their homeland near present-day Lewiston, across the Bitterroot Mountains to the Great Plains was called "Khushanah Ishkit." This name literally means "trail for buffalo losing hair." In the spring, when the buffalo shed their hair, tribal members of the past would travel east to hunt buffalo. Nez Perce names of animals could change according to the season that certain animals would appear at specific locations. Thus, "ishkit" meant "buffalo losing hair." When they lost hair was the time that the trail should be used to hunt them?

The Nez Perce people refer to the trail across the Bitterroots as the "Northern Trail." This distinguishes it from the "Southern Trail" which goes to Grangeville, Weiser, and other trade destinations which used to be traveled by the tribe to the south. Besides the oral tradition of the tribe, one must look to archaeological research to answer questions.
about who used the trail across the Bitterroots and when. Excavations verify that people were living in the Nez Perce area dating to the “Windust” projectile point. This phase dates to approximately 7,000-9,000 years ago. One cannot verify that these people were the ancestors of the Nez Perce people, however, it is logical to assume that they were. Nor can it be established just how long they used a route across the mountains along the Lolo route. Archaeologists estimate that the route is several thousand years old.

Current archaeological investigation into past usage of the trail is being conducted by the University of Idaho and by the United States Forest Service. Wayne Thompson is an archaeology student at the University of Idaho and served as a summer employee of the Forest Service in trail archaeology. He stated that two prehistoric sites (sites used before the written word, or arrival of the white man) were found in the area below “Smoking Place,” on the ridge as it leads to the “Sinquque Hole.” The find revealed the remains of stone tools. Six vitrophyre flakes (shiny green-grayish-black flakes of jasper and opal) were found. One tool was found: a large piece of modified jasper. River cobbles were also discovered on the ridge, showing an ancient braided trail about forty meters across. Since that kind of rock needed to be carried up to the ridge, it is additional proof of early usage.

A more recent indication of Indian culture is clear for any hiker to see at “blanket tree.” Here, a cedar tree was debarked in an area approximately three feet wide by four feet long over a hundred years ago. This ancient tree, between 300-400 years old, has continued to grow and prosper, despite the large scar, on the side of the trail at the height which would have been easiest for a man to cut it. These chunks of cedar were commonly removed by the Nez Perce with a knife, put over a log, and beat repeatedly until the cedar spread and became thin, thus providing a pliable, thin blanket.

While ample proof exists that the trail was used for centuries, it is more difficult to piece together the story of why it was used. That is what Sandy McFarland, cultural coordinator of the Nez Perce Tribe, intends to do in her Master’s thesis. Clearly, early travel was by foot on game trails to get food, primarily buffalo. Along the way, there were stops to fish for salmon in the Clearwater and Lochsa rivers. Game trails changed according to ecological dictates, such as forest fires. McFarland’s thesis states that the Lolo was used for more than getting buffalo or escaping General Howard’s soldiers. She contends it was a trade route over which her people traveled to exchange goods with tribes to the east. This contact resulted in intermarriage among the tribes. Through time, aboriginal tribal habits modified as trading, travel, and intermarriage exposed Nez Perce to new ways.

Tribal life was greatly enhanced around 1730 by the acquisition of horses from the Plains Indians. With horses, the trip across the Bitterroot Mountains could be made faster with more carrying capacity. Raids on other tribes to steal horses became a regular occurrence; and warfare was conducted among far-flung native groups. Nez Perce Indians were never farmers; they were hunters and fishers. Their adaptation to the horse was immediate: it facilitated their life-style. Diversions in Indian travel were now made to secure good pasture and adequate water. Families or small hunting parties no longer would have to stay the winter on the other side, which Ms. McFarland contends was a common practice and the reason for the intermarriage and social-economic-personal links among Nez Perce and tribes to the east of the Rockies. With the horse, travel over the Lolo became easier, faster, and more frequent.

At the time of Lewis and Clark, the Nez Perce tribe in northcentral Idaho and eastern Oregon was the most numerous and powerful Indian tribe in the Columbia Plateau. Travel on the Old Nez Perce Trail also had spiritual connotations for the Nez Perce. This can clearly be read in Meriwether Lewis’s journal, when he stated that the exploration party was diverted to Spirit Revival Ridge because the three Nez Perce guides wanted to halt and smoke a pipe on Friday, June 17, 1806. One feels, when one is there, that the site calls for reflection and ceremony.

THE LEWIS AND CLARK LOLO TRAIL, 1805 AND 1806

The fall of 1805 came early in the Bitterroots and the Lewis and Clark Expedition did not find the Lemhi Shoshone until August. Passage down the Salmon River was impossible. It was difficult for this impoverished tribe to spare as many horses as Lewis and Clark wished to procure to cross the difficult route over the mountains. Their chief, Cameahwait (Sacagawea’s brother), wanted to go
hunt buffalo to the east, yet he stayed to accommodate his visitors. He provided them horses and a guide, Toby, who led the Expedition west over the mountains. Without Toby, the Expedition surely would not have made it to the Pacific before winter.

Debate continues about whether or not Toby was lost, as the journals contend, when he failed to ascend the ridge at Powell. Perhaps he was following his memory to a fishing camp on the Lochsa. In either case, the path of their ascent up Wendover Ridge was probably never used by the Indians. However, the route the Expedition followed along the ridge is undoubtedly the same one used for centuries by game and the Nez Perce Indians.

Crossing the mountains between Idaho and Montana was the toughest part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Private Whitehouse wrote on Sunday, September 1, 1805, that the party “descended a mountain nearly as steep as the roof of a house.”

On Thursday, September 19, 1805, Sergeant Gass described a horse falling down a precipice about 100 feet and surviving because he plunged into a creek below without meeting any intervening object. Gass lamented that the men were becoming “lean and debilitated,” the horses’ feet were sore and that this was “a horrible mountainous desert.”

Seeing Weippe Prairie beyond, Gass expressed the men’s reactions, writing,

“Much joy and rejoicing among the corps, as happens among passengers at sea, who have experienced a dangerous and protracted voyage, when they first discover land on the long looked for coast.”

On this arduous stretch of the journey, Clark’s writing desk was smashed, Frazier’s horse fell and rolled a great distance, and little game was to be found. Three colts and a wolf were consumed.

“Bear oil and roots” were all the fare on June 27, 1806, on the return trip. One night on this Lolo route, the corps was reduced to eating candles made from buffalo tallow.

THE BIRD-TRUAX ROAD, 1866

The summer of 1990, members of Carlos Schwantes’s University of Idaho summer class, trekking the Lolo Trail, were astounded to behold a man lumbering out of the woods alone. Steve Russell, a bearded professor from Iowa State University, was certainly not lost. He grew up at Powell, Idaho, and had returned to study the “tread” of the Bird-Truax Road. Once a well-worn wagon way atop the ridges and between them, this was a road as we think of it. It was built in 1866 by Wellington Bird, administrative chief of this United States Army project, under the direct supervision of Major Truax.

Professor Russell explained that while the old Nez Perce Trail may have gone to water, fish, or grass to feed people and horses on the route, the Bird-Truax Road did not meander. It was built to go from point to point the quickest way possible. When Chief Joseph, Looking Glass and White Bird led the Nez Perce people during the Nez Perce War, they followed the best route east—the Bird-Truax Road.

THE NEE ME POCO TRAIL, 1877

It is a lamentable irony of history that the Nez Perce people—who had welcomed the Lewis and Clark Expedition on the Weippe plain in September 1805, who kept their horses for the party until they returned in May 1806, and extended hospitality to them for a month before they departed with three Nez Perce guides to cross the Lolo in June 1806—were driven from their land against their will by American soldiers. Joseph’s band of Wallowa Nez Perce had done everything feasible to stay on their land peacefully. They simply refused to sign the treaties. The spring of 1877, they were, nevertheless, forced to the reservation at Lapwai. On the way to the reservation, Joseph brought the tribes’ warriors, women, children and livestock across the Snake River at high water and rested a couple of days with White Bird’s band of non-treaty Nez Perce south of Lewiston. Anti-white resentment rose in the camp of combined bands. Young warriors raided white settlements nearby and killed several whites.

The night of July 16, 1877, the Nez Perce chiefs rode through camp after council, telling the people they would flee across the Lolo to Montana, leaving the war, supposedly, in Idaho. Looking Glass was in supreme command. The Nez Perce numbered about 200 men and almost 550 women and children. They were driving over 2,000 head of horses as well as pack animals carrying all their possessions. By July 25th, when General Howard decided to pursue the tribe over the Lolo Trail, the Indians had already arrived on the other side of the Bitterroots. Unfortunately, their “trail of
**THE FUTURE OF THE LOLO ROUTE**

In November 1986, legislation was passed to give "The Nez Perce route" historical designation to mark the 1,170 mile route of their route to flee U.S. Army troops. $550,000 was appropriated to mark the route, upgrade trails, and construct new campsites. This trail runs from Wallowa, Oregon, goes along the Lolo Trail, and then proceeds to Yellowstone National Park, and northward to the Bear Paw Mountains, where Chief Joseph surrendered. In the summer of 1990, there were no signs relating to the Nez Perce War visible along the mountainous portion of the Lolo route. The Lewis and Clark route is well documented with signs written by the Idaho Historical Society. Many have metal posts marking the sites where Ralph Space believed the campsites of the Corps of Discovery to have been.

In August 1990, the office of the Clearwater National Forest sponsored a trail ride with United States Forest Personnel and Nez Perce Indians. About forty-five people attended this five day event to ride the trail and discuss its future. Tribal members are taking more interest in the fate of their ancient route.

The Forest Service has sponsored archaeological projects to clarify trail history, and hired personnel to pursue them, including Nez Perce Indians. Coordination between the government, the Nez Perce tribe, and educational institutions is essential for future success of trail projects. Since the land lies on government property, federal funding through the Forest Service continues to be appropriate.

Each spring the "Take Pride in America" organization defines a project on the trail, and many volunteers from all over the United States clear certain portions of the trail. One must ask if the goal is to create easy passage for today's traveler, or to leave the trail as it might have been.

Most people involved with the study of the plan for the trail feel strongly that it should either be professionally dug in selected areas, or left alone "as it might have been." Amateur digging or removal of artifacts is illegal for good reasons.

Any additional signage and accompanying booklets must clarify, not confuse, the passerby interested in knowing more about the various groups using this east-west route. Roadway 500 does allow passage of vehicles, slowly and carefully. Some people would like to have a better road so more vacationers and hunters could enjoy this beautiful area. But most who love its past and its present state, fear that this intrusion would ruin the area. Making it a highway would assure that future generations could not experience the pristine path with its exciting history, which is just an easy dream away for a trekker experiencing its current natural, rough, undeveloped state.

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**NOTES**

1 Sandy McFarland, cultural coordinator of the Nez Perce Tribe and candidate for a Masters of Arts at the University of Idaho. Telephone interview on August 31, 1990.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. Also, Wayne Thompson, student studying the Lolo Trail through the University of Idaho, Department of Anthropology, School of Sociology, and a summer employee of the U.S. Forest Service on trail archaeology. Oral interview at Powell, August 8, 1990, and again October 1990, at Boise.

4 Thompson interview, August 1990.

5 McFarland.


8 Ibid., vol. 7, p. 147.


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., vol. 3, p. 71.


13 Lewiston Tribune, "Congress OKs Nez Perce Trail designation" Thursday, October 2, 1986, p. 12B.
(LETTERS—continued from page 3)
name. The North Dakota spelling is easier to remember and pronounce.

Blame the whole problem on those first women suffragettes who were looking for a heroine and distorted her record to achieve one. Sakakawea was NOT the principal guide, but made a worthy record of contributions in other areas. She deserved her fame.

Sincerely,
Sheila Robinson
Coleharbor, ND

Dear Mr. Erickson:

Just a few lines to let you know how much I appreciate receiving WPO every few months. The articles you publish are very interesting and informative and keep me up-to-date regarding activities of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

As a senior citizen living in New York state, I have been unable to attend any meetings of the L&CTHF. However, by degrees my wife and I have been able to drive over the entire Lewis & Clark Trail (with the exception of that dirt road over Lemhi Pass and areas along the Missouri River where there are no roads.

Cordially yours,
E. Lloyd Rees

"PIONEERING LINGUISTS" by Dr. Criswell now available, $22.50 postpaid.
Headwaters Chapter, Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Box 577, Bozeman, MT 59715. A must for those interested in natural history.

Editorial Policies

We Proceeded On invites the submission of articles, edited documents, and other annotated, unpublished materials that contribute to the knowledge of the history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Studies of the recorded observations of the explorers during 1803-1806, that contributed vast new knowledge of the lands, native inhabitants, and natural resources of the American West are encouraged. Analysis of the far-reaching geopolitical dimensions of the Expedition as related to America’s westward expansion movement, together with biographical interpretations of Expedition members and others associated with the Expedition, based on research found in primary sources or commentaries, are welcome. Originality, documentation, presentation, and substantive historical worth of articles will determine the suitability for publication.

Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, with endnotes typewritten, double-spaced, and numbered consecutively on pages at the end of the article. Citations must be complete. Manuscripts should generally be limited to 3500 words. The Chicago Manual of Style is the quarterly’s reference for style and usage. The 1992 Writers Market describes manuscript mechanics (see pp. 26-27). Templates of this description are available in many computer word processing programs. Black and white, glossy photographs, properly identified, or information on the location of illustrations should accompany the article. A short biographical statement of the author should also be enclosed. Eight to ten weeks should be allowed for editorial review.

Manuscripts and editorial inquiries should be addressed to:
Martin L. Erickson, Editor
1203 28th Street South, No. 82
Great Falls, MT 59405
American Encounters Conference held last September at the University of Montana, Lewis and Clark scholars were criticized for placing their focus on “antiquarian interests” (what was worn, types of boats or tools used, etc.) instead of on what one speaker said was the real significance of the journey—the beginning of the invasion of Americans into western Indian country. Another speaker belittled the importance of scientific descriptions of plants that were actually known to native peoples for centuries. Throughout the conference, there apparently was an overtone of what one of our members called a berating of all whites for attempted genocide. This same member walked out of the conference in disgust at one point in the panel presentations.

Space allows only brief mention of a few of the issues we face. The behavior of the Expedition toward the inhabitants they met would surely seem above reproach. But as “uninvited guests,” and because the leaders lacked today’s understanding of the cultures they encountered, this topic has already been a blow placed on the backs of the captains. Another issue is the charge of a “hidden agenda” and “spying” that can be easily construed from reading Jefferson’s instructions to the Expedition. Then, of course, is the whole saga of settling the West that followed on the heels of the Expedition. On those pages of history are enough shameful episodes to spread blame to literally every social group on the scene. Then, too, are Clark’s letters, as revealed to the world in the last issue of We Proceeded On. His relationship with York is sure to become headlines in articles by reporters seeking shocking sidebar during the bicentennial.

What do we do about all of this?

First, I suggest a required reading assignment for all members. It is “Thomas Jefferson and the Character Issue” by Douglas L. Wilson in the November 1992 issue of The Atlantic Monthly. Wilson’s opening quote from Emily Dickinson is in itself instructive: “Today makes yesterday look mean.” In his discussion of “presentism,” a term he explains as “applying contemporary or otherwise inappropriate standards to the past,” Wilson makes a solid case against casting blame without making appropriate allowances for prevailing historical conditions.

Second, we need to adopt as our guide a suggestion made by history professor Bill Swagerty of the University of Idaho. Speaking of Columbus, he said, “The point is not to Columbus-bash or to Columbus-promote. The point is to come to an intellectual understanding that this is the meeting of two very old worlds.”

Third, and closely related to my second suggestion, is that we need to listen with open minds to voices that may not have been heard very much in the recent past. Voices like that of Salish tribal member and historian, Dr. Betty White. She said at the Missoula conference that her intent was not to vilify Lewis and Clark, but to show that from the Native American point of view the glorification of Lewis and Clark needs to be looked at from both sides. The result, in her opinion, could prevent this country from continuing the politics of domination in the future.

Finally, we do need to focus on the future as well as the past. In fact, this could be the key to a successful bicentennial celebration. Throughout the 24-year history of our Foundation we have enjoyed excellent relations with Native Americans.

We need to build on these good relationships. We must also find ways to make certain that Native Americans share in the economic, social and intellectual benefits that can come from well-planned bicentennial activities. Recalling the words of Jefferson in his charge to the Expedition, “make them acquainted with ... our wish to be neighborly, friendly and useful ...”

Regardless of the past or how one interprets it, the only real good that can come of its dissection is if we use it to improve the future. This should be our goal, and if it does not spare us the gauntlet, at least it can make the pain worthwhile.
Capt' Lewis & Clark wintered at the entrance of a Small river opposit the Mouth of Missouri Called Wood River, where they formed their party, Composed of robust helthy hardy young men ...