CARNAGE AT SLAUGHTER RIVER:
DROWNED BISON SITE OR BUFFALO JUMP?

PLUS: ANOTHER "NEW" PORTRAIT OF PATRICK GASS
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On the cover
Baltimore artist Alfred Jacob Miller went west in 1837 and painted this scene of mounted Indians stampeding buffalo over a cliff—a method of hunting Miller probably heard about but did not actually witness. Meriwether Lewis described a pile of buffalo corpses on the Missouri and attributed the kill to this hunting tactic. Although some scholars believe the buffalo were victims of drowning, in his article beginning on page 26, Francis Mitchell argues that Lewis had it right. Courtesy Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska.
Eye of the Needle; Missouri’s headwaters

You may have heard from dozens of readers concerning the caption for the photograph on page 16 of the November WPO accompanying Dayton Duncan’s article on Montana’s White Cliffs. The image is of the Hole in the Wall, not the feature known as the Eye of the Needle. Duncan had it right when he said that the Eye of the Needle was across the river from Stonewall Creek (now Eagle Creek).

I enjoyed Duncan’s article, which brought back memories. I am very familiar with that stretch of the Missouri, having worked for the B.L.M. at Lewistown, Montana, as the team leader putting together the first management plan after its designation as a national wild and scenic river. I am also a longtime member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and served as its sixth president (1975-76).

GARY LEPPART
Fort Benton, Mont.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Thanks for alerting us to this error, which was also pointed out to us by Dayton Duncan.

While canoeing the upper Missouri last summer, some friends and I stopped at a prominent feature in the White Cliffs, a “window” in the rocks known as the Hole in the Wall. It is a few miles below the Eye of the Needle, now collapsed. Neither Lewis nor Clark mentions the Hole in the Wall (or the Eye of the Needle, for that matter), but it is certainly an obvious window, and you’d think they would have. Why didn’t they?

We speculated that perhaps it had been formed after they passed through the area; this is possible but unlikely, although rocks could have fallen from the wall to create the hole.

It was raining when the explorers passed the Hole in the Wall going upstream in 1805; they were working hard towing the boats, and perhaps the combination of poor visibility and the effort of towing caused them to miss it. Also, this feature can’t be seen from downstream, and once they were upstream of it, it’s doubtful they would have looked back and seen it. Of course, on the return journey they were paddling in canoes with the current, not struggling against it, and they were in the right position (upstream, looking downstream) for seeing it. But they were in a hurry to get home, so perhaps they weren’t looking out for such features; it was raining then, too, which may have obscured the view.

Can readers offer any other theories?
VERNE HUSER
Albuquerque, N.M

Source of the Missouri

An article by Donald Nell and Anthony Demetriades, “The Utmost Reaches of the Missouri,” appeared in the November 2002 WPO, followed in the February 2003 issue by letters in response to it from James Wallace and myself. My letter called into question the article’s statement that the source spring is at an elevation of 8,500 feet; by my reckoning it should be 8,800 feet.

To clarify the discrepancy, I returned to this area last August. At that time I located the spring and the cairn marking it and once again found them to be at an elevation of 8,800 feet. I am sure this is the same site visited by Nell and Demetriades, as evidenced by their photograph of the cairn. (A jar, with records of several recent visits, is hidden in the rocks.)

I believe the authors may have recorded the 8,500-foot elevation because of the misleading description by Mrs. Culver, cited by Wallace, that “suddenly the creek turned quite abruptly and headed in the northeast at quite a pretty spring, which came from under a large black rock on the side of the mountain near some balsam.” The abrupt turn is at 8,500 feet, but the spring is half a mile away. Had Mrs.
Culver written that the creek turned “and headed northeast until it arrived at a pretty spring.” I doubt that there would have been any confusion.

Although there was some water in a pool at the spring, it did not produce even a trickle under the drought conditions that existed during my visit. Water did start to flow, however, about 100 yards down the valley. And, while it is appealing to consider the spring as the utmost source, owing to its proximity to a pass on the Continental Divide, a small but vigorous tributary that drains the steep slope to its north would add a bit to the river’s overall length. I think this is what Mrs. Culver had in mind when she noted that “a dozen or more tiny springs higher up run into this one.”

JAMES R. WOLF
Baltimore, Md.

Saying it right

I enjoyed the November WPO, and after reading “Beautiful Blue Camas” and “Indispensable Old Toby,” I was reminded of something that has bothered me for a long time: the mispronunciation of Idaho place names. I’ve seen television programs about the Lewis and Clark Expedition in which many are mispronounced, even by reputable historians and authorities.

Below are some names that frequently appear in historical accounts, followed by their correct pronunciation as established by widespread usage in Idaho.

Weippe: WEE-ipe (final “e” is silent). Weitas: WEE-tus.
“Kamiah”: KAM-ee-aye (long “i” sound).
Koonska: KOO-skee-yuh (soft “yuh” on the end), and sometimes without the “yuh.”
Lochs: LOCK-saw.
Nez Perce: nez-purse, with more or less emphasis on both syllables. (This pronunciation is an anglicized version of the French for “pierced nose,” which is rendered nay-per-SAY.)
Ahsahka (the place across the Clearwater River from Canoe Camp): aw-SAW-ka.

Clearwater: clear-water—that is, as one word, not as though it were a two-word adjective.

MILT WILLIAMS
Boise, Id.

Don Nell

On behalf of our family I would like to thank WPO for the tribute to my husband, Don, in the November issue. Our thanks also go to the many friends whose letters of condolence bolstered our spirits. Such kind comments from those he admired so much would have meant a great deal to Don.

BARBARA NELL
Bozeman, Mont.

Learning at Lemhi

Lewis and Clark enthusiasts wishing to expand their knowledge of the expedition can participate, as I did last August, in a U.S. Forest Service program that retraces some of the L&C Trail from Montana into Idaho.

The first day we spent in a classroom in Salmon, Idaho, with lectures on the history of the expedition in the area and the explorers’ use of navigational aids, including maps, sextant, compass, octant, and circumferentor.

Days two through four were spent in the field using the explorers’ journals and maps to follow in their footsteps. On the second day, we split into two groups to cross Lemhi Pass. The excursion included trying to find the stream designated by Lewis as “the most distant” fountain of the Missouri and another where he first drank from waters flowing to the Columbia. This involved hiking two to three miles up and over the pass, which lies at an altitude of 8,500 feet. On the third day, we retraced Clark’s reconnaissance of the Salmon River. The Indians told the explorers that they could not navigate the river, but Clark wanted to see for himself. On the fourth day, we looked for the explorers’ route across Lost Trail Pass. During this phase of the journey they became lost, the temperature dropped below freezing, and it snowed. Hiking in these rugged mountains, even in summer, gave us an appreciation for what they must have gone through.

On the fifth day, we returned to the
Letters (cont.)

classroom for a wrap-up of the week and downloaded the information we compiled into a computer database.

Those interested in participating this summer can contact me at jcrx@702com.net or Stephan Matz at 208-756-5116. They can also write to the Salmon-Challis National Forest, 50 Highway 935, Salmon, ID 83467.

JOHN C. ASKEW
Fargo, N.D.

Clark signatures
Those who read my article in the August WPO about the signature of “William Clark” in a copy of Elements of Mineralogy might wish to know about my additional research on whether this signature belongs to “our” William Clark.

At the Foundation’s annual meeting I was lucky to run into Bud Clark, a direct descendant of William who had several of his letters with him. I was particularly interested in whether and how the signatures were underlined, because I knew that Clark, at least in his official correspondence, generally didn’t underline his signature. All of the examples Bud had with him were in fact underlined, but for the most part not in the same style as the signature in Elements of Mineralogy. One example, however, was nearly identical to the mystery signature.

After my article appeared, one reader (Thomas Danisi, of St. Louis) wrote me about the Clark signatures he has seen while conducting his own research on the expedition. He correctly pointed out that Clark in his post-expedition life as a public official usually signed his name with the abbreviated “Wm Clark.” One of the signatures Bud had with him was written in full, and some of its individual letters very much resembled those of the signature in question. Others—particularly the “W”—looked rather different.

JOHN JENGO
Downingtown, Penn.

Enclosed is a sample of Clark’s signature as found on his marriage license, dated January 5, 1808, and located in the Fincastle Court House, Botetourt County, Virginia. I do not believe that it resembles the one found by Mr. Jengo.

GENE CROTTY
Daleville, Va.

EDITOR’S NOTE: For yet another example of Clark’s signature, see page 35.

Finding latitude
In the November 2001 article “Revisiting Fort Mandan’s Latitude,” Lawrence Rudner and I indicated that, because of an error in applying the correction of the sextant’s index error, Lewis’s deduced latitudes for sextant-measured meridian sights should generally be corrected by one-half the reported index error. Thus, all sextant-determined latitudes from St. Louis to Fort Mandan will appear too far north by 4° 22.5′ (about 4.4 statute miles). Anyone working artificial-horizon sight data as Lewis did, therefore, would use an effective sextant index error of 4° 22.5′–.

Readers should know that the correction for the misapplication of the sextant’s index error actually goes beyond just the sextant meridian (noon) sun-sight data. It also applies to other measurements or corrections that the explorers made which would have been based on artificial-horizon measurements with the sextant. For example, the calibration of the index error for the back-sight mode of the octant may well have been based on a cross calibration between octant and sextant data for the same angle. This is inferred from one of Lewis’s clearer octant-error journal notes recorded late in the trip. The sextant-derived value would have been treated as the “known” value against which the octant reading would have been compared. For example, on June 9, 1805, Lewis recorded a standing octant back-observation error of 2° 4′ (he used the
seconds symbol after “4,” but he obviously meant to use the minutes symbol). Using this value to work his June 3, 9, and 10 data results in an average latitude value that is approximately 7.9 statute miles north of the modern estimate noted in the Preston data footnoted in our article. Incorporating a corrected sextant error into an effective octant index error of 2° 8′ 22.5″ + results in a deduced average latitude that is only approximately 2.9 miles north of the referenced modern value.

During the early portion of the journey, the standing octant back-observation error was listed on July 22, 1804, as 2° 11′ 40.3″+. It appears that in obtaining this value the sextant’s index error was not accounted for at all. Allowing for the missing sextant error results in an effective octant error value (as Lewis would have applied it to the data) of 2° 7′ 17.8″+. This effective value is within 1′ 04.7″ of the effective value derived for the June 1805 calibration. An example of the application of the effective index-error value for this time period would be the data for July 12, 1804. For this date the latitude obtained with the index error listed in the journals results in a latitude that is 5.6 statute miles south of the modern value. However, using the new, effective index error, the deduced latitude is just 0.5 miles south of the modern value.

The new octant index-error values provide insight into the systematic offset values of several miles (sometimes north and sometimes south) observed in working with the journal data. Again, it appears that Lewis and Clark produced better celestial navigation data than they realized.

HANS A. HEYNAU
Tequesta, Fla.

Lewis’s air gun
In his letter in the November 2003 WPO, Kerry Lippincott notes that “Charles McKenzie’s Narratives” may have been underutilized in reference to Meriwether Lewis’s air gun. Lippincott may not be aware that McKenzie’s narrative is a key reference in two lengthy research reports on Lewis’s air gun (Airgun Revue 6, 2000 and Blue Book of Airguns, ed. 2, 2002). These reports considered McKenzie’s observation that Lewis’s air gun “could discharge 40 shots out of one load” as primary evidence that this weapon must have been a butt-reservoir pneumatic.
In the November 2002 WPO, Michael Carrick proposed that Lewis’s air gun may have been a Girandoni-system repeater. In my view and that of many other air-gun historians, however, McKenzie’s note about its firing 40 shots makes it virtually impossible that Lewis’s air gun could have been such a repeater. Gary Barnes, a leading maker of modern large-bore air guns, believes that Lewis would have been fortunate to get 15 to 18 useful shots out of a single charging of an air rifle of such large bore.

As reported by Carrick, the repeater premise originated from a single puzzling passage in the journal of Thomas Rodney, who spent a part of one day with Lewis on the Ohio River in September 1803. But Rodney’s credibility has been seriously questioned. According to one of the journal’s two editors, “both creative exaggeration and rich embellishment had their share in coloring his memory. Unfortunately, with a paucity of documentary or any other evidence it is virtually impossible to sift fact from fancy in some of his descriptions.”

The Girandoni repeating air rifle was an Austrian military weapon of lethal firepower—the assault rifle of its day. This and the fact that it was a breech-loading repeater in a day of single-shot muzzle-loaders were far more noteworthy than the fact that it was an air gun. Yet not one of the 39 references to the air gun in the Moulton edition of the Lewis and Clark journals mentions either its firepower or its loading from the breech.

A weapon that better fits the journal descriptions is the Lukens “Double Neck Hammer” single-shot air rifle (now at the V.M.I. Museum). It is doubtful that the key features of the Lukens rifle—single shot, moderate bore size, little value as either a military or hunting rifle, appearance and lock structure similar to the expedition’s flintlocks, etc.—would provoke detailed comments. The key features of a big-bore, rapid-firing repeater like the Girandoni, however, would have.

With the help of most of the world’s leading air-gun historians and experts, I have compiled a list of 16 reasons why Lewis’s air gun was almost certainly not a Girandoni-system repeating air rifle. The list and accompanying discussion appear on the Web site of Airgun Information International (www.Beemans.net).

ROBERT D. BEEMAN
Healdsburg, Calif.
President’s Message

New staff; Space Day; Trails and Rails; nominations

It is truly a pleasure to write this column, because so much has happened and is happening. First, we have hired a new director of field services to replace Jeff Olson. Wendy Raney began her work with us on December 1. Wendy majored in American history at Vassar College and wrote her senior thesis on Sacagawea; she also has a master’s degree in journalism. As director of field services Wendy will be the primary contact with our chapters. This is the first time in many months that the Foundation has been fully staffed. For more on Wendy’s appointment, see L&C Roundup, page 50.

Space Day is a program that engages students and teachers in efforts to promote science and math in United States and Canadian schools. Space Day’s theme for 2004 is “Blazing Galactic Trails” and incorporates the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Foundation’s board voted to partner with Space Day for this worthwhile educational venture. See the ad on page 51 for more details.

Trails and Rails, a joint program of the National Park Service and Amtrak, has seven train routes that follow portions of the L&C Trail. The program’s officers have asked us to work with them in promoting Lewis and Clark on their trains. Foundation members will have the opportunity to “ride the rails” and share the Corps of Discovery’s story with Amtrak passengers.

In order to improve our nomination process, the board decided to publicize a call for nominations in the January Orderly Report. The Nominating Committee will receive and review all names submitted. This more open nomination process recognizes that we have many well-qualified members who could be candidates for board positions or committees.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that in 2003 we participated in two great Signature Events, Monticello on January 18 and the Falls of the Ohio on October 26. Many people worked hard in planning and organizing these events, and their efforts certainly paid off. Thanks, too, to the Home Front Chapter and the Ohio River Chapter for their work on both these occasions. Our chapters are great partners.

2004 annual meeting

“Lewis & Clark among the Canadians” is the theme of the Foundation’s 2004 annual meeting, to be held Wednesday-Saturday, August 4-7, in Bismarck, North Dakota. Participants will visit the Knife River Indian Villages, the National Historic Site where the captains recruited Sacagawea as an interpreter for the expedition, as well as the reconstructed Fort Mandan and the earth lodges at On-a-Slant Village, the birthplace of Sheheke. More information and registration materials are included in this issue’s mailing envelope.

Leandra Holland

I must close on a sad note. Leandra Holland, the wife of our treasurer, Chuck Holland, died in early October as the result of a car accident. Just days before the accident, Leandra had finished her book, Feasting and Fasting with Lewis & Clark. In her memory, the Holland family is setting up a grant program financed with the proceeds from the sale of her book. The Leandra Zim Holland Memorial Fund will be part of our monetary grants program. Details are being worked out as I write this. Leandra will be missed not only by her family and friends, but also by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the Headwaters Chapter, in Bozeman, Montana. We thank the Holland family for this most appropriate memorial to a wonderful person and outstanding scholar.

—Ron Laycock
President, LCTHF
Remembering Sheheke: Mandan chief and American patriot

In North Dakota cars have an extra appendage, an electrical cord protruding from the front grill. This umbilical cord is silent evidence of the plummeting winter temperatures that drop to minus 40 degrees and are driven by howling north winds that pummel like tiny icicles dropped from a two-story building. In these temperatures motor oil becomes brown putty and cars freeze up solid in one frigid night. Once I stopped in a Bismarck motel in January and was grateful to find a dangling cord in my parking space just long enough to reach my car.

Lewis and Clark and their men spent the winter of 1804-1805 among the Mandan Indians, the earth lodge people. They had never experienced such a vicious winter. Without the aid of the Mandans they would not have survived the frost-biting temperatures, nor would they have had enough buffalo to eat. But fortunately Sheheke, a.k.a. White Coyote, born in On-A-Slant Village in 1766, befriended them. He was a Mandan civil chief. His villages were more populous than St. Louis, even though his people had been cruelly decimated by a smallpox epidemic introduced by white traders some twenty years before.

In the fall of 1804, when Lewis and Clark first met Sheheke and smoked his pipe of friendship, they did not foresee how dependent they would become upon his goodwill and aid. But he made a solemn pledge to Lewis and Clark. Listen to his words as he welcomed the captains’ urging, Sheheke agreed to accompany the expedition home, but only if his wife and baby boy went as well. So Sheheke and his small family made the trip. They were with Lewis and Clark when they arrived back in St. Louis. He attended the parties celebrating the expedition’s return. He accompanied Lewis all the way to the White House. The man from the Missouri River earth lodges, thousands of miles from home, arrived in a horse-drawn carriage to see Thomas Jefferson.

As we commemorate the L&C Bicentennial, we let us also remember Sheheke, who unstintingly gave crucial succor to Lewis and Clark when they needed it most. In doing this, we honor an original American who bravely embarked in the opposite direction on his own brave “voyage of discovery.” Let us place Sheheke in our pantheon of American heroes and thus reclaim forgotten branches of our own roots in this marvelous land.

President, Bicentennial Council

Ad campaign launched
“Walk with them and see what you discover,” is the theme of the L&C Bicentennial now being promoted nationwide since the launch of the Ad Council’s promotional campaign in mid-December. The National Council and the Missouri Historical Society partnered with the Ad Council, the nation’s leading public-service advertising organization, to launch the multi-million-dollar campaign to promote the major themes of the bicentennial. The ads were developed at Young & Rubicam for TV, radio, and print. Each ad features the address of our upgraded Web site, www.lewisandclark200.org, which has a wealth of information about the L&C Bicentennial.

COTA grants
Congratulations to the recipients of the 2004 COTA (Circle of Tribal Advisors) Tribal Involvement Grants. The grants were awarded by the National Council with the support of a leadership grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Other applications are still being considered, but thus far the following institutions were recommended for awards by the COTA Grant Review Committee: Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates; Blackfeet Tribal Business Council; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe; Clatsop/Nehalem Confederated Tribes; Cowlitz Indian Tribe; Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara National Cultural Center; Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance; Nez Perce Arts Council; Osage Tribal Tourism Department; Osage Tribal Museum; Twin Buttes Elementary School; and Yakima Nation Cultural and Heritage Museum. The selected tribes were granted funds to host exhibitions and symposiums, publish handbooks and brochures, establish cultural centers, and conduct educational seminars, among other projects that will promote cultural awareness.

—Robert R. Archibald
President, Bicentennial Council
SOUTH DAKOTA TOURISM 4/C

ART KOBER
4/C
Another “New” Portrait of Patrick Gass

Descendants of Corps of Discovery’s longest-lived member find photograph among his granddaughter’s effects

In the February 2001 issue of WPO we published an article about a “new” portrait of Patrick Gass, the rugged sergeant and carpenter who was the longest-lived member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.1 That portrait, which is owned by Gass’s great-grandson Eugene Gass Painter, of Avella, Pennsylvania, became the sixth known likeness of Gass made during his life (he died in 1870, at age 98).

Now there is a seventh. Last October, we heard from Gass descendants Edith Wade and her mother, Kathleen R. Smith Wade, about a portrait of Gass they found “tucked away in the corner of a large manila envelope” in some materials that had belonged to Kathleen Wade’s mother, the late Kathryn L. Downing Smith, the wife of one of Gass’s grandsons.2 They described the portrait as a small tintype (2 5/8 by 3 1/4 inches). Edith Wade said that after viewing an enlargement of the portrait made by a professional photographer who digitally scanned it, she and her mother were “instantly excited by its lifelike qualities: the naturalness of the face and pose, the details of features and of clothing.” She noted, too, that the subject appeared to be holding reading glasses similar to a pair originally owned by Gass which are now in the possession of another descendant, Jeanette Taranik, of Auburn, Washington.

The portrait is undated, but research on the early history of photography convinces the Wades that it is a tintype, a process that was introduced in 1856, when Gass turned 85, and that remained popular through the 1860s. A tintype reproduced a photographic likeness on an iron plate (the “tin” in the name is a misnomer; such photos were originally called ferrotypes). Color touch-ups are a common feature of tintypes, and the Wades report that the subject’s cheeks have been tinted.
Newly discovered photograph of Patrick Gass is a tintype made when he was in his late eighties or early nineties.
pink and that the edges of the book he is holding are tinted with a gold wash.³

Edith Wade shared a copy of the tintype with Eugene Painter, and both Gass descendants were struck by similarities between their respective portraits. Painter wrote her, “I expect that he only had one good suit and it is the same one in both pictures.” The jacket, vest, and shirt do appear to be the same, although in Painter’s portrait the subject is wearing a bow tie. Painter says his portrait is a photograph, but if so it is doubtful it is one made of Gass in his lifetime; it is more likely a pastel or charcoal sketch, or (perhaps) a photograph of a sketch that has since been lost.⁴ Similarities of pose, hair, and facial details suggest, at least in this writer’s view, that Painter’s portrait is an artist’s rendering of the Wades’ tintype. For a comparison of all known Gass images, see box, opposite. For more on Patrick Gass and his post-expedition years, see the article by Carol Lynn MacGregor immediately following and the two accompanying articles by the Wades and another Gass descendant, Carol A. Harrington.

—J. I. Merritt

NOTES
2 Edith Wade and Kathleen R. Smith Wade, letter of October 7, 2003. Kathryn L. Downing Smith was married to Gass’s grandson James S. Smith, Jr., who was the son of Annie Jane Gass Smith, one of Patrick Gass’s three surviving daughters. Kathryn Downing Smith died on April 8, 1976, in Menlo Park, California. Edith Wade later told the writer that she and her mother didn’t realize the photo was unknown until they joined a trip exploring Lewis and Clark in the Ohio Valley in August 2002, following the LCTHF’s annual meeting in Louisville; the materials distributed to participants included photos of Gass, and theirs was missing.
3 The Wades confirmed that the portrait is a tintype by visual inspection and by testing it with a magnet. The two other photographic media of the day were the daguerreotype and the ambrotype, which captured images on, respectively, copper and glass, neither of which is magnetic. Because the images on daguerreotypes and ambrotypes were easily scratched, they were usually enclosed in a protective case. This was less typical of tintypes, and the Gass portrait is not cased. The Wades’ main source was the Web site www.gclark.com/phototree/main/history/index.htm.
4 This statement is based on the writer’s examination of the portrait during a visit with Painter on October 13, 2000. The portrait is rather large—an estimated 24 by 30 inches, which is bigger than most photographs made in the 1860s (at the time, photographers worked from glass-plate negatives, and they did not use enlargers but printed directly to paper)—and looks like a sepia sketch. If it is a photograph, then it is likely a photograph of a drawing of Gass taken many years later.

Here are the seven known portraits of Patrick Gass, Lewis and Clark’s last man, labeled according to their ownership or provenance.¹

• WADE. This portrait, the most recent to come to light, is owned by Kathleen R. Smith Wade, a great-granddaughter of Gass, and Edith Wade, a great-great granddaughter. They are descendants of Gass’s daughter Annie Jane Gass Smith and live in Redwood City, California. It is a tintype and was probably made when Gass was in his late eighties or early nineties. (Tintypes were introduced in 1856, when Gass turned 85.) In his right hand he is holding a book and what appears to be a pair of reading glasses. These are presumably the same glasses seen hanging from a lanyard around his collar in the Taranik and Jacob pictures.²

• PAINTER. This portrait is either a drawing or a photograph of a drawing.³ It is owned by Eugene Gass Painter, of Avella, Pennsylvania, a great-grandson of Gass and a grandson of his daughter Rachel Gass Brierley. Similarities in pose and details in the face and clothing suggest it is likely based on the Wade portrait.

• TARANIK. This photograph of Gass is owned by Jeanette D. Taranik, of Auburn, Washington, a great-granddaughter of Gass and like the Wades a descendant of his daughter Annie Jane Gass Smith. She believes it is a daguerreotype taken in the last year of Gass’s life (he died in 1870 at age 98); if it is a daguerreotype, it was probably taken when Gass was in his eighties. The daguerreotype was introduced in 1839, and its peak use was in the years 1847-1854; by 1860 it had been superceded by the tintype and wet-plate photography.⁴
• **Smith.** This portrait, which is also in Taranik’s possession, was originally owned by her grandmother Annie Jane Gass Smith. According to Taranik, “it appears to be an enlarged photograph which has been touched-up by the photographer. Many lines of age have been erased. Charcoal has been used to shade and delineate some of the features,” and the cheeks and eyes have been tinted pink and blue, respectively.5

• **Forrest.** This portrait comes from the frontispiece of a biographical pamphlet privately published in 1950. The author, Earle R. Forrest, states it is an “enlargement” of a restored photograph of Gass taken when he was 90, but it appears to be a drawing rather than a photograph. In several of its features—the orientation of the head, the position of the hands, and the shirt collar—it is reminiscent of the Muter portrait. Eugene Gass Painter believes it is based on a photograph of the Muter painting.7

• **Muter.** This is a painting owned by Richard B. Muter, a great-great-grandson of Gass descended from his daughter Sara Gass Bowman.6 It bears a clear resemblance to the Smith photograph, which was probably its source.

• **Jacob.** This woodcut was first published in an 1859 biography of Gass by J. G. Jacob. It is based on an ambrotype of Gass taken by E. F. Moore when Gass was in his late 80s.9 The ambrotype is now lost. However, crude, this is the one portrait of Gass that can be dated with some certainty, since it could not have been made later than 1859.9

—J.I.M.

**NOTES**


2 Previous articles refer to Gass’s glasses as a lorgnette—armless spectacles attached to a lanyard. A gold-and-tortoiseshell lorgnette that belonged to Gass is now in the possession of Nikolas and Jeanette Taranik, of Auburn, Washington.

3 The previous article about the Painter portrait (Merritt) suggests it might also be a touched-up photograph, but even a casual inspection makes clear this could not be so—it is either a portrait in sepia, pencil, pastel, or charcoal, or perhaps a photograph of a portrait. Its relatively large size—approximately 24 by 30 inches—is beyond the dimensions of photographic portraits of the 1850s or 1860s.


7 Ibid., p. 5; author’s telephone interview with Painter, December 27, 2000.

8 Chuinard, p. 5.

9 Chuinard, Taranik, and Merritt all discuss the representation of Gass’s left eye in this image. During the War of 1812, Gass injured his left eye in an accident that left him blind in it. The Jacob woodcut illustrated Charles G. Clarke’s *The Men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, published in 1970; the caption accompanying the illustration implies that the left eye is closed (it’s difficult to tell if this is actually the case), and that it was disfigured and that other portraits of Gass were retouched to give the eye a normal appearance. However, there is no known evidence from portraits, documents, or family lore to suggest that Gass’s left eye was disfigured. In the Wade photograph the eye appears normal and shows no signs of retouching.
Patrick Gass's Account Book

And what it and other documents tell us about the longest-lived member of the Corps of Discovery

By Carol Lynn MacGregor

Patrick Gass rises above the relative obscurity of most members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. We know a great deal about him, thanks to many sources—a published version of the journal he kept during the expedition, two biographies (one published during his lifetime), and a wealth of documents, including military and census records, government petitions, and family letters. We also have an account book he kept for 11 years (from 1826 to 1837), which offers details about his day-to-day activities and many insights into his personal life.1

Gass was born on June 12, 1771, near Chambersburg, in central Pennsylvania, and later moved with his family to the western part of the state. He served in the militia, apprenticed as a carpenter, and in 1799 enlisted in the regular army. He was stationed at Fort Kaskaskia, in Illinois Territory, in 1803 when Meriwether Lewis recruited him for the expedition. Gass was 32 years old at the time—three years older than Lewis and a year younger than William Clark. He was elected sergeant in August 1804, when the explorers were ascending the Missouri River, and served with distinction during the entirety of the 28-month journey to the Pacific and back. The captains particularly valued his skills as a carpenter when it came to constructing winter quarters at Camp River Dubois, Fort Mandan, and Fort Clatsop. In 1807, following the expedition's return, he settled in Wellsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), on the Ohio River.2 Except for another three years spent in the army during the War of 1812, he remained in the Wellsburg area for the rest of his long life. Gass married in March 1831—he was 59 and his bride, Maria Hamilton, was probably 16.3 Between 1832 and 1846, Maria bore him seven children. Except for the first child, a daughter who died in infancy, all of them lived into early adulthood, and four are known to have married and had children.4 Maria died of measles, probably at the...
age of 30, on February 16, 1847, 11 months after the birth of their last child, Rachel. The widowed Gass lived another 23 years and died on April 2, 1870, two months short of his 99th birthday.

Gass’s journal was published in Pittsburgh in 1807, less than a year after the expedition’s return and seven years before the authorized version based on the journals kept by Lewis and Clark. Like the other enlisted men’s journals, Gass’s corroborates and amplifies many journal entries made by the captains, and it provides some information about the expedition found nowhere else. More than any of the other first-person accounts, for example, it includes details about the construction of its winter quarters and identifies trees for their potential as lumber—just the sort of thing one would expect from the Corps of Discovery’s carpenter.

The printed version of Gass’s journal was edited by its publisher, a bookstore owner named David McKeehan. Its polished prose has led many scholars to assume that the entries were largely rewritten by McKeehan and bore little resemblance to Gass’s daily jottings on the trail. This assumption is based in part on a mistaken belief that Gass, who according to his biographer J. G. Jacob had only 19 days of formal education, was at best marginally literate.

Unfortunately, Gass’s original journal is lost—probably destroyed in a flood in 1884 or 1891 (see related article, pages 24-25)—so we will never know for sure how much the original and published versions differ. There is evidence, however, that strongly suggests the two were probably quite similar. Jacob appears to have had access to the original journal, and in a letter written long after Gass’s death he unequivocally stated that the published version “was but very slightly altered, either in verbiage or arrangement from the original.” A close reading of the published journal reinforces this view. Except for the occasional flowery locution that is clearly from McKeehan’s pen, it is written in terse, laconic prose that surely reflected Gass’s style—“the very plainest and most unadorned style possible,” as Jacob put it. Gass’s account book further validates his literacy and confirms that, while largely self-educated, he could spell better than most people of his time, and that he added and subtracted figures with reasonable accuracy. We know from the account book or other sources that he owned a spelling book, a Bible, and a copy of The Lost Trappers, by David H. Coyner, a book about the Rocky Mountain fur trade published in 1847. He was also a regular reader of the local paper.

Gass’s discharge papers from the War of 1812 record that he stood five feet, seven inches tall and had gray eyes and dark hair. Photographs show that he kept a full head of hair into his nineties. He remained an impressive physical specimen long after every other member of the Corps of Discovery had passed on. Jacob described Gass in his late eighties as being “stoutly and compactly built, broad-chested and heavy limbed, yet lean, sprightly and quick of motion ... remarkably alert” and an “active walker” who could make the four miles between his country home and Wellsburg “in about as good time as most of those of one fourth his years.”

The Active Veteran

Gass was liked and respected in Wellsburg and the surrounding community. On his and his fellow veterans’ behalf Gass twice organized petitions to federal officials to improve their government pensions, and in January 1855 he led a delegation of old soldiers to Washington, D.C., to make their case in person. The group met with President Franklin Pierce and his cabinet in the White House, and its leader was presented with a brass-eagle
Gass’s pension, awarded for his service in the War of 1812, was for complete disability due to the loss of sight in his left eye from a splinter; the accident apparently occurred when he was felling a tree during construction of a fort. The pension paid him $96 a year. The government also awarded him three land grants—320 acres in 1807 for service on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 160 acres in 1816 for service in the War of 1812, and 320 acres in 1854 in response to an appeal for additional compensation because of his disability. Gass cashed in the 1807 and 1854 grants and appears to have forfeited the 1816 grant through failure to pay property taxes due on it.

“HAPPY AS A MILLIONAIRE”

Although for pension purposes Gass claimed to be disabled, he apparently continued to work as a carpenter into his sixties, and perhaps longer. Oral tradition in Wellsburg says he built several houses there, and his account book shows that he periodically purchased carpentry tools. The account book lists no entries for any payments received for his services, suggesting he may have bartered them. Regarding his financial condition in 1859, Jacob noted, “With the pittance of $96 a year, which he has been for many years in the habit of drawing in half yearly instalments from the agent of the government at Wheeling, and the small amount he has been enabled to eke from his spot of stony land, he has lived in patriarchal simplicity, scrupulously honest, owing no man anything, and apparently contented and happy as a millionaire.”

Gass enjoyed life and was generous toward others and himself. His account book shows that in the years before his marriage he bought gifts, including combs and handkerchiefs, for girls whose names he duly recorded. He dressed well and at least once might have paid a tailor to make clothes for him. On occasion he indulged a taste for expensive store-bought shoes and hats, and for his wedding day he purchased a fur hat, new suspenders, and cloth for a new pair of pants. Post-wedding purchases of a pitcher, dressing comb, inkstand, and a set of knives and forks were for setting up house. In the 13 months between April 1826 and May 1827, for example, he purchased a total of 12 quarts and one pint of whiskey. This was followed by a 20-month stretch (through December 1828) when his purchases were recorded as “Miss Hambleton” (Hamilton), but later he refers to her more familiarly as “Maria,” and following their marriage she is simply “wife.”

A careful reading of the account book also offers clues to their domestic joys and sorrows. Three days before the birth of their first child, a daughter named Elizabeth, Gass purchased rum, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves—ingredients, perhaps, for a party to welcome her into the world. Two days after her birth, which occurred on February 24, 1832, Patrick paid 25 cents for a chamber pot, probably to save Maria from trekking to the outhouse in freezing weather. In May, Maria purchased buckram, padding, and muslin, perhaps for making a baby’s bed and mattress. Three items purchased on November 8—a quarter yard of black crepe and two black handkerchiefs—were for mourning their eight-month-old infant, who had died the day before.

The account book tells how the Gasses ate and cared for themselves when sick. Food items purchased included coffee, tea, sugar, raisins, rice, licorice, and chocolate, and for various bodily ills they took gum guaiacum, camphor, castor oil, sparrow pills, and malaria. They bought bacon, hog jowls, and salted mackerel, herring, and shad. (There are no purchases listed for beef or lamb; perhaps Gass raised and slaughtered his own cows and sheep, and he probably hunted deer to supply the family table with venison.) Listings for a cow bell and a curry comb suggest they owned a milk cow and a horse. Credit entries show that Maria sold butter rendered from the cow’s cream as well as vegetables grown in a home garden.

GASS’S DRINKING

Tobacco—for both chewing and smoking—is a recurring entry. So too is whiskey (often abbreviated as “Why”). Writers have made much over the years about Gass’s penchant for drink. The account book bears out a certain weakness for the bottle but also shows he made efforts to curb his drinking, particularly after he married. Gass’s entries for liquor purchases between March 1826, when he began the account book, through February 1830 (13 months before his marriage) reveal a pattern of moderate-to-heavy drinking interspersed with periods of teetotaling. Overall, Maria’s influence and the responsibility of parenthood appear to have had a positive effect on his behavior. In the 13 months between April 1826 and May 1827, for example, he purchased a total of 12 quarts and one pint of whiskey. This was followed by a 20-month stretch (through December 1828) when his purchases were...
limited to a single pint. Heavy drinking again commenced in 1829, culminating that fall in an apparent bender (probably with his future father-in-law, John Hamilton) with the purchase of 3 gallons, 2 pints in September and another gallon in October. Gass married on March 31, 1831. He purchased four quarts of whiskey in January of that year and five quarts in February, but in the month of his marriage he stayed dry. Maria became pregnant that spring, probably in late May, a month when his liquor purchases totaled three quarts.

He bought a pint and a quart in June and a pint in July, then made no more purchases until a gallon in December. His and Maria’s first child, Elizabeth, was born February 24, 1832; two days later he bought a half gallon, perhaps to celebrate. Gass purchased a quart the following June and a half-gallon in July, and between mid-September and the end of October, the period covering Elizabeth’s fatal illness, he bought 11 pints, perhaps as a palliative to relieve his anxiety. The baby died November 7, and for that month and the four following he recorded no more liquor purchases. Mostly light-to-moderate drinking resumed in April 1833 (although in May, court records show, Gass was fined for “drinking too much grog on Sunday”) and continued through September, a month marked by the arrival of their second child, Benjamin, whose birth Gass noted on the 10th in an entry unrelated to expenses or income. Two months later, on November 9, there is another personal entry, a cryptic “take care Patric.” This may have been an admonition to himself to climb back on the wagon, for it is followed by more than three years of relative sobriety—he purchased whiskey in only 14 of the remaining 44 months he kept the account book.22

The Gasses resumed the account book in January 1847 and continued it through October 1848, but during this period it was kept by a local accounting firm, Connell Wells & Co. Along with the usual notations about disbursements for cash, coffee, tobacco, and other items is a poignant entry, dated February 16, 1847, of $3.19 for “Sermon for Wife’s Funeral.”23

The widowed Gass was 75 years old and was now solely responsible for six children ranging in age from 11 months to 14 years. The burden of caring for them must have seemed overwhelming. Over time he placed all of them with other families in the Wellsburg area, some as indentured servants, and took steps to ensure they were all properly educated. Although no longer living under the same roof, Gass and his children remained close. Years later, Rachel recalled him as a loving father who enjoyed reciting nursery rhymes to his grandchildren. He also “loved flowers” and walked several miles to her adoptive home to bring her “the first violets of spring.”24

Many stories about Gass attest to his good nature. Jacob wrote how he smiled at jokes about the many children he fathered as an older man, remarking that he had always tried “to do his duty” and “would not neglect it now, but by industry make amends for his delay.”25

At a dinner during the Civil War, a friend toasted the “noble veteran” and wished that he would “live to see our country united, prosperous and free.” Gass, a pro-Union Democrat, was proud of his army service, particularly under Lewis and Clark, and was celebrated for his role in that epic of discovery. In an allusion to the expedition’s hardships, at the same dinner another friend saluted him as a man who could “Eat horse, eat dog” and who throughout his long and eventful life “played the devil generally.”26

Gass appears to have been indifferent to religion most of his life, but as an old man he entered into the Campbellite faith.27 On April 28, 1867, at age 95, he received a full-immersion baptism in the waters of the Ohio.
and Clark’s last man died three years later and now lies buried next to Maria, in a cemetery overlooking the river.28

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Notes
1 Gass’s account book was discovered in the 1990s and is reprinted in full, with scholarly annotation, in Carol Lynn MacGregor, ed., The Journals of Patrick Gass of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press, 1997). It is owned by Jane Bridge, the daughter of the late Owen Buxton, a great-grandson of Patrick Gass, and is housed with a number of other Gass items at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Fort Canby, Washington.

2 For most of the years Gass lived in Wellsburg the town was part of Virginia. West Virginia became a separate state during the Civil War.

3 A Gass family tradition recorded by Earle R. Forrest, who wrote a brief, privately printed biography of Gass published ca. 1920, says that Maria was 20 at the time of her marriage. Census records suggest otherwise. The 1830 census for Brooke County notes one female living with John Hamilton between the age of 10 and 15 years. Giving Maria the benefit of her maximum potential age, she would have been 16 the following March, when she married Gass, who turned 60 that June.

4 The Gass children were Elizabeth (born 1832, died in infancy), Benjamin (middle initial F.; 1833-1855), William (1835-1865), Sara (a.k.a. Sallie or Sally Ann; 1838-1921), Annie (a.k.a. Annie Jane; 1840-1926), James (middle name Waugh; 1843-1906), and Rachel (a.k.a. Rachel Maria; 1846-1926). This is the birth order in which they are usually listed, although at least one published source incorrectly states that James was born before Annie (see Jeanette D. Taranik, “The Patrick Gass Photographs and Portraits: A Sequel,” WPO, February 1980, p. 16); two genealogies supplied to the editor by Gass descendant Edith Wade, Taranik’s niece, confirm that James Waugh Gass was born in 1843. Two of Gass’s sons met tragic ends: according to a genealogy compiled by Virginia Grace Wade, William drowned in the Ohio River and Benjamin was killed in pursuit of a man who had robbed him of $150. Sara, Annie, James, and Rachel all married and had children; of these, at least three—Sara, Annie, and Rachel—have descendants living today.

5 J. G. Jacob, The Life and Times of Patrick Gass, Member of the Lewis and Clark Corps, and Soldier in the War of 1812 (Wellsburg, Va.: Jacob & Smith, 1859), p. 12. Jacob’s biography was published when Gass was 89 years old. Jacob was the publisher of the Wellsburg Weekly Herald.

6 J. G. Jacob to Eva Emery Dye, November 25, 1901, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

7 Ibid.

8 My friend Ludd A. Trozpek put Gass’s account book on a spreadsheet and checked the calculations. He told me that “over the course of more than ten years of account keeping, the noticeable arithmetic errors amount to only a half-dozen and few dollars. Patrick and Maria Gass were comfortable—perhaps even facile—with numbers.” (MacGregor, p. 308)

9 A copy of the Coyner book with Gass’s signature (indicating ownership) is in the collection of Ludd Trozpek. The account-book entry for a spelling book he purchased in 1833 appears in MacGregor, p. 383. For more on Gass’s literacy and scholars’ assumptions about it, see MacGregor, pp. 295-299.

10 Gass was discharged at Sackets Harbor, New York, on June 5, 1815. His discharge papers are archived in the Sackets Harbor office of parks and recreation. Jacob recalled Gass’s hair as “tawny” (Jacob to Dye), while his youngest daughter, Rachel, remembered it as “white” (Rachel Gass Brierley to Dye, January 6, 1902, Oregon Historical Society, Portland).

11 Jacob, The Life and Times of Patrick Gass, p. 10.

12 Ibid., pp. 192-193. For more on Gass’s Washington visit, see MacGregor, p. 305.

13 For details on this accident and the resulting pension, see MacGregor, pp. 299 and 310n. Gass was engaged in the construction of a fort on the Mississippi River northwest of St. Louis, in 1813. Evidently the splinter came from a tree he felled with an axe.

14 For more on Gass land grants, see MacGregor, pp. 300 and 311n.

15 Jacob, The Life and Times of Patrick Gass, p. 182.


17 Ibid., pp. 354-355.

18 Ibid., pp. 355-356.

19 MacGregor, pp. 338-339, 342-343, and 356-357.

20 Ibid., pp. 390-391.

21 See MacGregor, p. 440, for a chart detailing Gass’s whiskey purchases.

22 Gass’s last entry in the account book was dated April 6, 1837. The record of Gass’s liquor purchases correlates to some degree with the records of purchases for other specified items and cash withdrawals for unspecified items. Together they cast further light on his life and daily habits. For tables of these three categories of entries and an analysis of their interrelationship, see MacGregor, pp. 438-442.

23 This entry was postdated some months after the fact. It is the date of Maria’s death, but presumably the funeral itself took place a day or so later.

24 Brierley to Dye. For details about the children’s care following their mother’s death, see MacGregor, p. 303.

25 Jacob, The Life and Times of Patrick Gass, p. 179.

26 Wellsburg Herald, March 7, 1862. The exact quote is “Eat horse, eat dog, killed Indian and played the devil generally.” Gass isn’t known to have killed any Indians, at least not on the expedition.

27 Named for Alexander Campbell, a founder of the Disciples of Christ.

28 Patrick and Maria were first buried in a family plot on the Gass farm. Their remains were later removed to the Brooke County Cemetery, in Wellsburg. For additional details, see MacGregor, pp. 17 and 224n.
Dear Pearl,

We were certainly glad to get your fine letter, also the picture of the kiddies. I suppose some one was having a party, or do you just have a party like that all the time at your house?

Should like to be of assistance to you in preparing your talk for the seminar. I should certainly think I needed all the help I could get if I had to talk for two hours on any subject and think I would need an ambulance to get home in afterward. It is fine that you can do the work that you are doing and I think you are wonderful to do it.

I have talked to mother for about an hour this morning. She wants to loan you her book “Life and Times of Patrick Gass” which as you will see was presented to her by her father and was written during his lifetime by the author who interviewed grandfather. Mother seems to remember things more as they are told in the book than as she heard grandfather tell them, though perhaps the book is such a faithful portrayal that there is little else to be added.

In height he was medium, had gray-blue eyes, and dark brown hair. I think mother must be very much like him in build and complexion. You will see the resemblance in their faces and you will recall mother’s stalky build, and she is very light on her feet. She must be like him in disposition too, for I have never heard her complain of her deafness and is even tempered, always making the best of hard circumstances, quiet, methodical, and persevering. She says that of all her children, Walter is most like Grandfather Gass both in appearance and disposition. Grandfather was not so heavy as Walter.

The last twelve years of his life he lived with Mother. He was sociable and liked company. Many people came to hear him tell of his experiences on the expedition. He always spoke with praise for Lewis and Clark but Mother cannot recall any anecdotes. He had a black cat which he named “Sacagawea” for the Indian woman who accompanied them.

Mother’s farm was four miles from Wellsburg, and, up to four years before his death when he became helpless, he walked weekly to Wellsburg to get the “Wellsburg Herald” for which he subscribed. At home he read the paper, cared for the small children (Winfield and Elias, and later Ella). He was exceedingly fond of children. The boys he held, one on either knee, and sang to them “Yankee Doodle,” queer Irish songs, and nonsense rhymes. This is one of them:

Remembering Patrick Gass

He sang “queer Irish songs” and had a cat named Sacagawea

By Kathryn L. Downing Smith

The following two documents, a letter and an imagined account of a day in the life of the elderly Patrick Gass, were written ca. 1925 by Kathryn L. Downing Smith, whose husband, James Simeon Smith, Jr., was one of Gass’s grandsons. Kathryn and James cared for James’s mother, Annie Jane Gass Smith, the second youngest of Gass’s daughters, in her old age. Annie had taken care of Gass the last 12 years of his life. Both documents are based on Annie’s recollections of her father, the last living member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Gass died in West Virginia in 1870. The original documents are in the possession of Gass descendant Kathleen Wade, who lives in Redwood City, California. They are reproduced exactly except for the correction of some minor spelling and punctuation errors.
A blue bird sat on a hickory limb;
He winked at me and I winked at him;
I up with my gun and broke his shin
And away the feathers flew!

On the last line he would make an outward waving
gesture with his hands. Winfield was “The General.”
Elias he called “Daddle” which was the sound the child
made when he first began to talk. Ella was “The Lady of
the Lake.”

He helped Mother about the house, hoed the garden,
built fences, and all sorts of little jobs about the place.

Ten years before his death, or rather when he was
ninety he was baptized in the Ohio River and became a
member of the Christian Church. Mother said there was
a very large crowd there to see him baptized, one Sunday
afternoon. Mother says that after he came to live with her
he never drank, though I suppose there is no denying that
he became an addict during his military experiences and
there is evidence of plenty of liquor having been con-
sumed by all of the men on the expedition.

Although his pension and sole income during his later
years was but $96 a year he gave $10 to Bethany College.6
He remarked to Mother that it would never do him any
good but might benefit some of his descendants.

When the boys would waste bread, he would say to
them “See here, boys, I have seen the time that I would
have run a mile for that piece of bread.”

He was helpless the last four years of his life, or
nearly so. His chair sat by his bed and he would get
from one to the other. He was also, during that time
practically blind and deaf, but very patient. He never
complained except that when Mother mopped it gave
him rheumatism, or rather made his “rheumatics”
worse. He could talk until the day before his death and
died as though going to sleep. He was buried first in the
little family plot on the farm but when a railroad
threatened to go through the spot fifteen years later, the
bodies of both he and grandmother were moved to the
Wellsburg cemetery. As yet there is no monument. The
man who has been interesting himself in getting one
placed by the government died last week so I suppose
nothing will be done soon.7

Going back to his earlier life, he and grandmother
walked from Wellsburg to Squire Plumber’s just over
the Pa. line, a distance of four miles to be married.
Grandmother was twenty.8 He used to tell his girls that
“She wore a sunbonnet and a pair of coarse shoes but
she was as pretty as a bunch of May posies.” The
relationship to Alexander Hamilton, so far as Mother
knows has never been definitely established. Personally,
I think there must have been a relationship. Grand-
mother’s father was born in Scotland, as was also A.
Hamilton’s, and there are certain characteristics that
seem to me to mark the descendants as belonging to the
same stock. (We have been much interested lately in
reading Wiggam’s “Fruit of the Family Tree,” and “The
New Decalogue of Science.”) Grandmother’s father was
at one time very well to do and, as Mother expressed it,
“owned niggers.”

As to the pictures, Mother says there is one life size
at Bethany and in the Wellsburg courthouse, but she
cannot tell you to whom to write. She has an enlarge-
ment taken from the one which she is enclosing. Per-
haps you would like one taken from that. The one she is
sending is the best of the two small ones which she has.
I am sure Charlie can give you information about whom
to write for he has been there in recent years. He got for
me the post card picture of the building in which
Grandmother and Grandfather were married. I am
enclosing it. I had it in Janet’s baby book.9

I know that you cannot use much of this but it may
help you to get a little more of the atmosphere of your
subject and be of personal interest to you. Sorry I could
not do more.

Thank you for your kindness in offering the cottage.
I hope we can come, all of us, but if not all, at least
Mother and Jacques.10

My blood pressure is coming up and I hope to have
the operation soon.

With love and all good wishes,
Kittie

The Cane

The field work on the West Virginia farm was
finished for the day. The animals had been fed—
always the animals first—the milking done and the stray
eggs gathered from the hay mow.

Promptly at 5 o’clock the farm men filed into the
house for dinner. No bell had been rung, for Annie and
her wall-clock kept the same exact time and Annie was
always to be relied upon.

After a dinner of fried pork, mashed potatoes and
carrots, the old man left the table and walked slowly
out to the family woodlot where he and the 3 boys
frequently hacked and sawed the wood into short lengths for Annie’s cookstove and longer ones for the fireplace. He stopped at the pile of wood which the boys had recently brought in from the Ohio Forest. He walked around the pile scrutinizing it as though looking for something in particular. He finally stopped and pulled out a stick from underneath, some five feet long and 3” in diameter. He looked at it more carefully and seemed satisfied that it was what he was looking for.

He carried it back to the house. The boys were sitting before the fireplace with their snow-damp boots off. Their feet in the warm slightly steaming sox extended towards the fire. The sox hand-knitted by their mother, Annie, were another of her accomplishments. As Patrick walked past his 3 grandsons, one of them asked, “What you got there, Grandpap?” A little self-consciously he replied “Oh, just a stick I found.” Then he walked on toward a work table at the other end of the room. He began to try out the stick for the possibility of a tough hickory cane. He cut the stick down to about a yard in length. He went to peeling off its half-green bark and cutting the nubs where the branches had grown out. He worked at it for an hour or two on each of three days until it was smooth, had a knot at the upper end and was tapered at the lower end. It began to look like a cane. He laid it out in front of the fire to season it and alternately polished and sanded it. At the smaller end he placed a metal band so the tip might not wear from contact with floor or ground. Finally the cane was finished.

He would try out the cane next day in his usual 4-mile walk to Wellsburg for the family mail, and possibly a mug of grog with his pals. The cane thumped down across the porch and out onto the dusty road. Annie watched his going. A little cloud of dust rose about each foot as he put it down and a smaller one from the cane.

A neighbor saw him coming and called out to his wife, “Here comes Pat, where is that letter he is to take?” Pat picked up the letter and went on to the P.O. On his return he left a couple of letters and the newspaper which his neighbor was expecting. As he reached the home porch, the thump of the cane told Annie that Pat was back. The cane at that point became a means of communication between Pat and Annie, for Annie was deaf. At the age of 8 she had entered the great quiet room of deafness through the door of scarlet fever, a common affliction of the time. About the house Annie was able to follow her father Pat’s whereabouts from the lower level and up the stairs to his room by the tap of the cane.

Pat was 90 at that time with 9 years left to go before he would abandon the cane. He had not needed the cane when he was building the boats for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He had not needed it as he walked on the cutting stones in the shallows of the Missouri River helping to push the boats upstream. No cane was needed while he was turning out the cottonwood wheels and axles for the improvised wagons built to portage the expedition around the Great Falls of the Columbia.11 Nor was a cane needed as he walked from Fort Clatsop to seaside on the Oregon Coast to see how the men were getting along with their assignment of evaporating sea water to get salt for the meat of their winter supply. He watched them bring up bags of sea water to the evaporating pots.

From 90 on the cane served him well, but at 99 he went to bed and Annie waited on him.12 After that the cane stood in the comer of his room until the neighbors came in to help Annie prepare him for his simple casket which was placed with a chair under each end...
and the cane beside him.

Thus ended the life of Patrick Gass—the oldest and last member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

NOTES

1 Annie (or Annie Jane) was born in 1841. She lived with Kathryn and James in Whittier, California, and then in Ventura, California, from 1913 to 1925. Annie died in 1926 at the age of 85 and is buried in Pasadena. Kathryn was a published poet and the coauthor, with her husband, James, of “Sedulous Sergeant, Patrick Gass,” in Montana: The Magazine of Western History, Vol. 5, No. 3, Summer 1955.

2 Pearl E. Smith, second wife of Arthur H. Smith, James’s brother.

3 J. G. Jacob, The Life and Times of Patrick Gass, Member of the Lewis and Clark Corps, and Soldier in the War of 1812 (Wellsburg, Va.: Jacob & Smith, 1859).

4 Walter Smith, 1874-1933.

5 The references are to three of Gass’s grandchil-
dren: James Winfield Gass, 1858-1942; Elias McClellan Smith, 1861-1937; and Ella C. Smith, 1864-1935. James Winfield Gass was not a son of Annie’s brother James Waugh Gass but was Annie’s son born in 1858, two years before she married James Simeon Smith.

6 Bethany College, in Bethany, West Virginia, was founded in 1840. Its founder was Alexander Campbell, who was also a founder of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the denomination in which Gass was later baptized.

7 A headstone was eventually placed on the grave site of Patrick and Maria.


9 Jeanette Smith Taranik, 1913-.

10 James Simeon Smith, Jr., 1882-1965.

11 She means, of course, the Great Falls of the Missouri.

12 Gass actually died at age 98, two months and 10 days short of his 99th birthday.

I am a great-great granddaughter of Patrick and Maria Gass. Seven children were born to Patrick and Maria—Elizabeth, Benjamin, William, Sallie, Annie Jane, James, and Rachel. I am descended from their daughter Sallie.

Sallie married Joseph Bowman; they also had seven children—Cornelia, Eliza, Amanda, Horace, Clark, Wheeler, and Dessie. Their son Clark Bowman is my maternal grandfather.

I was asked by Tom Williams of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation to talk about Patrick’s missing journal. There has been a lot of speculation about why it has never been found. One of the most popular stories was that it was destroyed in a fire in the publisher’s office. I also read somewhere that his journal is supposed to be deposited in the American Philosophical Society library, but no one has ever located it. I am going to share with you what my branch of our family tree was told and has always believed about Patrick’s journal.

I was only two years old when my grandfather, Clark Bowman, passed on, so I have no conscious recollection of him, but as a child I vividly remember my grandmother (Clark’s wife), my uncle Jesse, and my mother telling me many times that Clark had Patrick’s original journal and that it was given to him by his mother, Sallie Gass, and that it was in his possession when it was lost in a devastating flood in Wellsburg, West Virginia.

The published version of Patrick’s journal appeared in 1807, a year after the expedition’s return. I believe he...
retained possession of the original all the years that he was raising his family. We know that there was a lot of grief in Patrick’s life—the loss of his infant daughter Elizabeth; the death of his wife, Maria, when Rachel was just a baby; the disappearance of his son Benjamin, and the drowning death of his son William. His son James moved on to Missouri, but he still had Sallie, Annie Jane, and Rachel with him in the Wellsburg area.

He and his daughters were very close. They loved to hear his stories about his adventures as a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and I am sure that there were many tales to tell. He didn’t have much to leave his girls, but we know that he gave them his most prized possessions, including a hatchet that he carried with him on the expedition and a portrait of himself that he gave to Rachel, his youngest daughter. There was also a razor box carved for him by his good friend, Sacagawea, when the Corps of Discovery was wintering at Fort Mandan and Patrick built a cradle for Sacagawea’s baby.

Sallie was expecting a baby when Patrick was 98 years old. At his request, she named her baby son after a man he greatly admired, Captain William Clark. This could explain why Sallie, his eldest daughter, was given the journal.

Clark Bowman, Patrick’s grandson, was born on Valentine’s day, February 14, 1870. Just two months later, in April of 1870, Patrick’s long, amazing life came to an end, just weeks before his 99th birthday.

I have done some research on the flood that my grandfather spoke of. To put a time frame on this most unfortunate event, I have obtained flood records from the city of Wellsburg. Taking into account the fact that Clark lived in the Wellsburg area from 1870 until the spring of 1891, we know that the flood had to have occurred during that 21-year period.

According to the records for that period, the first flood occurred on February 4,1884. It crested at 52.4 feet. The record states that the established flood stage at Wellsburg is 33.0 feet. This flood caused a great deal of damage. It totally destroyed the Presbyterian church in Wellsburg.

The next flood occurred on February 18, 1891. It crested at 44.1 feet. It was followed by another flood just six days later that crested at 37.9 feet.

We know that Clark left Wellsburg in the spring of 1891, just a few months after those last two floods. So, taking these facts into consideration, we can say with reasonable certainty that the journal was swept away by one of those three floods.

Clark was 21 years old when he left Wellsburg and went to Ohio. He was a glass worker, a glass blower by trade, and was going to look for work in Toledo, with the Libbey Glass Company. I still have the first paper weight that he made when he was learning his trade.

Shortly after he arrived, he went to the Hancock County Fair, where he met Missouri Powell, his future wife. He probably fell in love with her pies first—she and her sisters and their mother were the best cooks in Hancock County and always won the blue ribbons. He courted her, and they married the following year. They spent the rest of their life in Ohio except for a brief stay in Muncie, Indiana. Six children were born to Clark and Missouri—Clark Jr., Jesse, Mabel, Coza, Bessie, and Mildred, my mother.

My mother once told me that Clark spoke often and very fondly of his mother, Sallie Gass. He told her that Sallie was quite a character in her own right. She spoke plainly what was on her mind and lived her life to the fullest.

Clark passed away on April 1, 1944, at 74 years of age, a victim of cancer. He was just an infant in 1870, but he was the last person in our branch of the family tree to see Patrick alive and to have actually spent some time with him, however short that time may have been.

Clark is buried at Toledo Memorial Park, next to his wife and their two sons, Clark Jr. and Jesse.

It’s been over a hundred years since the flood, and as much as I would like to believe that Patrick’s journal was somehow saved from those raging waters and still exists somewhere, it is very unlikely.

—Carol A. Harrington
In early April of 1805, the Corps of Discovery left the Mandan and Hidatsa villages in what is now North Dakota and proceeded up the Missouri River, on its way to the Pacific. By late May, traveling in pirogues and dugout canoes, the explorers had reached the rugged badlands later known as the Missouri Breaks. On May 29, one day’s travel before reaching the stretch of the Breaks known as the White Cliffs, they camped a short distance upriver from a stream entering from the south. Today this tributary is known as Arrow Creek, but Lewis and Clark named it Slaughter River for the pile of buffalo carcasses they had passed just downriver, on the north bank.

Lewis described this mass of bison in his journal and recorded what someone had obviously told him regarding the Indian method of killing buffalo by stampeding them over a cliff. He may have learned about this strategy from the Mandans or Hidatsas during his sojourn with them the previous winter, or from a member of the expedition party; it seems likely that at least Sacagawea would have known about it.

Lewis’s journal entry is apparently the first written account of Indians’ use of a buffalo jump, or “pishkun,” as these sites are called. (The name derives from a Blackfeet word for “deep kettle of blood”; alternative spellings include “pishkin” and “piskun.”) The method as described by Lewis involved the use of a decoy—a single hunter dressed in a buffalo skin complete with head and horns—who placed himself between the herd and the cliff. Other hunters arrayed themselves on the herd’s rear and flanks and closed in on it, stampeding the buffalo in the direction of the decoy, who, running before the frightened animals, led them over the cliff. The decoy saved himself by jumping into a crevice. Lewis noted that the decoy’s role was “extreamly dangerous,” and that he was sometimes trampled or driven over the cliff, to “perish in common” with the buffalo. Here in full is Lewis’s account:

It really was a buffalo jump, as the captains reported, and a unique one in the annals of Indian hunting

By Francis Mitchell

It really was a buffalo jump, as the captains reported, and a unique one in the annals of Indian hunting.
This diorama on display at the Montana Historical Society Museum in Helena shows how Indians made use of prairie cliffs, or pishkuns, to kill buffalo. (This one was near Two Medicine River.) The use of pishkuns decreased after Plains tribes acquired horses.
flanks and at a signal agreed on all shew themselves at the same time moving forward towards the buffalo; the disguised Indian or decoy has taken care to place himself sufficiently nigh the buffalo to be noticed by them when they take to flight and running before them they follow him in full speed to the precepiece, the cattle behind driving those in front over and seeing them go do not look or hesitate about following untill the whole are precipitately down the precepiece forming one common mass of dead an mangled carcasses; the [Indian] decoy in the mean time has taken care to secure himself in some cranney or crivice of the clift which he had previously prepared for that purpose. the part of the decoy I am informed is extreamly dangerous, if they are not very fleet runners the buffalo tread them under foot and crush them to death, and sometimes drive them over the precepiece also, where they perish in common with the buffaloe,— we saw a great many wolves in the neighbourhood of these mangled carcasses they were fat and extremely gentle, Capt. C. who was on shore killed one of them with his espontoon.2

As later verified by numerous other pishkun sites, Lewis in this journal entry has descriptively covered the key elements of the classic buffalo drive.

William Clark and the corps’s other journal keepers also wrote about the dead bison and stated unequivocally that they had been killed by Indians stampeding them over a cliff. Later interpreters of the Lewis and Clark story, however, have challenged that explanation, noting that the topography along this part of the Missouri doesn’t match any other known pishkun. They propose, instead, the “float-bison” theory, which argues that the dead buffalo had drowned farther upstream while attempting to cross the river on thin ice, and that spring floodwaters had then deposited their bodies at this site. Here, for example, is what Stephen E. Ambrose said about the site in Undaunted Courage, his 1996 biography of Meriwether Lewis:

They passed a point where rotten, stinking buffalo were piled up in incredible numbers. Lewis thought it was a pishkin, or buffalo jump. In what is one of his best-known passages, he described the way Indian boys wearing buffalo robes would lure the buffalo to their death as the tribe pressed from behind. He had his information from the Hidatsas and he had it right—except that this place was not a buffalo jump, but a bend in the river where buffalo who had drowned in the river when the ice broke had piled up.3

When I read this passage in 1997, it reminded me of my own first visit to the site, in 1965, when I was confronted with what indeed appeared to be the wrong type of terrain for a pishkun. On that visit, however, I came up with an answer to how Indians could have used this site for a buffalo jump. Ambrose’s float-bison explanation made me resolve to revisit the scene, document what I had observed, and set forth my arguments in support of Lewis and Clark’s view.

In the summer of 1965, Paul Russell Cutright visited Great Falls, Montana, while doing research for his book Lewis and Clark: Pioneering Naturalists.4 I lived in Great Falls at the time, in a house just five hundred yards from the expedition’s Upper Portage Camp. My friend Larry Gill and I had been retraceing the expedition’s portage route around the falls, and the two of us guided Cutright and his brother Clifford to Lewis and Clark sites in the vicinity. We also arranged for Emil DonTigny, a river guide from Havre, Montana, to take them on a boat tour of the White Cliffs area of the Missouri. At Cutright’s invitation I went along. We put into the river at the ferry crossing of Virgelle, Montana, and took out at the highway bridge a mile below the mouth of the Judith River.

When our boat reached the cliff in question, two-thirds of a mile below the mouth of Arrow Creek, we all agreed that it did not appear to be a feasible location for a pishkun. There was a cliff at the river’s edge, but it lacked any broad plain immediately behind it over which a typical buffalo drive could be staged. The terrain going back from the river is a series of parallel ridges from which steep slopes run down into deep washes and ravines. These ridges and ravines radiate from an expanse of high, flat table-land called Eight Mile Bench about a mile back from the river. It seemed to us that any attempt to stampede buffalo on that bench would wind up scattering the herd among the many ravines.

THE FLOAT-BISON THESIS

Stephen Ambrose is but one of several historians to assert that the Slaughter River terrain is unsuited for a pishkun and that the bison had died by drowning. Published in 1987, Volume 4 of The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, edited by Gary E. Moulton, contains a footnote that reads in part, “the broken country back of this bluff is not really suitable for concentrating and stampeding buffalo; it is likely that the dead animals had in fact drowned in the Missouri, floated downstream, and washed ashore at this location.”5 Other books offering versions of this same explanation include Traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail (2000), by Julie Fanselow, and Lewis and Clark’s Montana Trail (2001), by Rick and Suzy Graetz.6

The idea that the pile-up of dead buffalo at Slaughter River resulted from a mass drowning originated with W. Raymond Wood, who presented his view in two articles
that appeared, respectively, in Quarterly Review of Archaeology and We Proceeded On in 1982 and 1986. Explaining his float-bison theory in his 1986 WPO article, Wood states, “The general locale of the dead bison is ... well documented [by Clark’s mapping] but the exact spot where they were seen cannot be convincingly identified on the ground today.” He observes that five members of the expedition made note of the bison kill in their journals and attributed it to Indians, “without, however, revealing how this identification was made.” He also points out that “None of the expedition members are known to have witnessed this means of hunting, for it is a technique not mentioned earlier in the journals.”

Wood notes that “historical and archaeological studies have documented that one of the basic prerequisites for a successful bison drive is to discover, or to maneuver, a large group of bison into such a position that they may be stampeded over a precipice. He correctly observes that “the land immediately behind the bluff is a tangled maze of ravines and steep, broken ground.” Such broken topography, he contends, would be impractical for assembling and driving bison. He notes, too, that “it would have been necessary to drive the bison nearly a mile across the dissected terrain, and down a slope that descended 900 feet before the animals reached the cliff face.” As a linchpin to his argument, he further observes, “The topographic setting ... resembles no other bison drive known on the northern Plains, and the situation on the scene would have made it impossible to drive bison to their death using any historically recorded means of doing so.”

Wood then offers his own “plausible alternative hypothesis” to account for the bison remains:

There are numerous historic accounts of an annual spring parade of drowned float bison floating down the major rivers of the Great Plains. ... Numerous float bison were indeed recorded by the expedition in 1805 below Arrow Creek, drifting downstream in the current as well as lodged on the river banks. ... The expedition members were, then familiar enough with the phenomenon [for us] to ask: Why did they identify these animals at “Slaughter River” as victims of Indian hunting? If any of the bison there displayed evidence of butchering or other signs of Indian exploitation, they did not mention it.

“Given these circumstances,” he adds, “we suggest that the situation described by Lewis and Clark at Arrow Creek represents a mass of float bison that washed ashore during a surge of high water and accumulated in the river bank beneath the bluff. ... In summary, a natural accumulation of drowned float bison was probably misinterpreted by the captains as having resulted from Indian activities. The presence of their remains in [this] natural but deceptive setting, we suggest, then prompted Meriwether Lewis to expound on the bison drive as a Native American hunting technique.”

WHAT THE JOURNALS SAY

Reports of the dead bison are also found in the journal entries for May 29 of Clark, Patrick Gass, John Ordway, and Joseph Whitehouse. All of these entries state without reservation that the bison were killed by being driven over a cliff. All seasoned frontiersmen, these journal keepers did not, in my opinion, misinterpret the scene. As their entries suggest, they knew the difference between a mass of drowned buffalo and a heap of bodies resulting from a mass kill by Indians. Lewis wrote, “we passed ... the remains of a vast many mangled carcasses of Buffalow which had been driven over a precipice.” Clark states, “I walked on the bank in the evening and saw the remains of a number of buffalow, which had been drove down a Clift of rocks.” Gass says, “As we came along today we came to
a place where the Indians had driven above an hundred head of buffaloe down a precipice and killed them.”  
Whitehouse observes, “we passed high Steep cliffs of rocks on the N. S. where the natives had lately drove a gang of buffaloe off from the plains[,] they fell So far on the uneven Stone below that it killed them dead. they took what meat they wanted, & now the wolves & bears are feasting on the remains, which causes a horrid Smell.”  
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Ordway notes, “We Saw the remains of a number of buffalow which had been drove down a Steep cliff of rocks.”

“Fragments,” “had been drove down,” “they took what they wanted,” “drove down a Steep cliff”—these confident phrases are revealing, even if they are not especially descriptive and do not explicitly state that the carcasses had been butchered. The journal keepers’ words do not suggest any doubt about what they saw.

The journals also make clear that Indians had recently camped in the vicinity. Earlier on the 29th, on the south bank of the Missouri near the mouth of the Judith River, Lewis had counted the remains of 126 lodge fires and estimated they were 12 to 15 days old. On the north bank Clark found the remains of a village of perhaps a hundred lodges which he thought was five to six weeks old. Sacagawea told Clark the Indians who had camped there were probably Blackfeet, and Lewis assumed the same band had made both camps. Hunters from this band could well have been responsible for the buffalo drive near Slaughter River, 13 miles upstream. The presence of Indians at the kill site is confirmed by Whitehouse in the second of two journal entries he wrote about the slaughter site: “The Indians had piled a large number of the Bones of the Buffalo & upwards 400 Horns.”

AN ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

How do we reconcile what the journals say with Wood’s argument that the topography was unsuitable for a buffalo jump? My visit to the site with the Cutright brothers and Emil DonTigny in 1965 gave me an opportunity to explore this question. There is a line of cliffs stretching for two-thirds of a mile along the north bank of the Missouri opposite and downstream from the mouth of Slaughter River. Until then, no one had apparently identified the exact cliff overlooking the kill site. Lewis’s journal entry is vague (“just above this place [the kill site] we came to … this stream we called slaughter river”) and Clark’s map is imprecise. DonTigny showed us what he presumed was the right cliff, and we put ashore near its base. When he remarked that the terrain wasn’t the type one associates with bison jumps and that he didn’t know how the Indi-
ans directed the bison toward the cliff, I decided to explore the ridges and ravines on foot to see if I could find an explanation. I hiked up a narrow ridge to Eight Mile Bench, the plateau a mile north of the river. The entire length of my route up the ridge followed a deeply rutted cattle trail. By the time I returned to the boat, I was sure that I had an answer.

I was certain that the rutted cattle trail was first cut into the sod by bison traveling this route between the plateau and the river. They probably used this trail for centuries to get to the river to drink or to cross to the other side for better grazing. Significantly, it appears to be the only continuous trail between the bench and the river throughout this stretch of cliff-fronted terrain. Although Wood says “The exact position on the locale … appears to be irrelevant, since the physical setting is much the same for some distance above and below the valley opposite Arrow Creek,” I am convinced that the precise locale is important, because only this trail allows us to explain how the Indians successfully used this site as a pishkun. Consequently, the trail also solves the question of where the kill cliff was located.

As a young man in Montana, I spent a great deal of time herding cattle and horses in the foothills of the Little Belt and Bear Paw Mountains and in the vicinity of the Missouri near Great Falls. That experience taught me something about the herd behavior of frightened animals and how humans can use the terrain to manipulate them. I realized this isolated trail provided the Indians an opportunity for shrewdly adapting the drive method of bison hunting. Instead of having to wait for uncertain gatherings of bison on expanses of prairie near a typical buffalo jump and then attempt to surround the herd, the Indians could watch from afar while the herd moved across the plains toward Eight Mile Bench and the trail to the river. As the bison neared the bench, or even after they began descending the trail, the Indians could position camouflaged hazers in the appropriate side coulees branching off the trail ridge. The hidden hazers could let a sufficient number of bison get downhill before stampeding them a short distance over the cliff. Although some of the bison might scatter into the coulees, more than enough animals would have been driven off the precipice to meet the Indians’ needs. Given the actual topography along the trail, especially just uphill from the buffalo jump, it appears that a successful drive would not have required the decoy runners described by Lewis.

Contrary to Wood’s belief that the site was unsuited for a buffalo jump, I saw that this isolated trail was ideal for
one, but of a very special kind. As a pishkun it must have been a unique “opportunity site” for Indian hunters.

A SECOND, CLOSER LOOK

In 1977, I moved to Alaska. On a trip back to Montana in November 2002, I revisited the Slaughter River locale to refresh my visualizations before writing this article. I was equipped with a digital camera and a GPS receiver to help document my case, which I present in more detail in the following text and accompanying photos.

En route to the Missouri Breaks, I stopped in Great Falls and met with Don Peterson, a local historian and member of the LCTHF’s Portage Route Chapter. Don told me about Wood’s WPO article and gave me a copy. Reading the author’s statement about the exact position of the kill site being “irrelevant,” I realized the importance of carefully checking for any other trails that might intersect the row of cliffs. The article also revealed that at least one other person thought a trail through those cliffs might have been used for a bison drive. Wood wrote that Stuart Connor of Billings, Montana, had noticed a cattle trail leading to the river and believed that Indians may have stampeded buffalo down it. While sticking to his float-bison theory, Wood reported that he too had seen “several very steep cow trails down the bluffs along this part of the river by means of which cattle reach the river from the uplands.”

To reach the pishkun site I drove on back roads as far as possible into the Missouri Breaks, then hiked to the north bank of the river. I turned downriver to walk along the bank to what I had previously identified as the pishkun site, located at the end of the row of cliffs, about two-thirds of a mile below the mouth of Arrow Creek. I skirted around the cliff and then followed the trail up the ridge to Eight Mile Bench. In my examination of the cliffs and the broken terrain behind them I found only one continuous trail from the bench to the river—the one I hiked. Perhaps other trails seen by Wood were those that exist upriver and downriver from these cliffs.

The topographical map on page 29 shows how the trail runs along a ridge between Eight Mile Bench and the river. The contour lines reveal that the ridge is sharp and narrow. The single, deeply rutted trail indicates that the animals walked it in single file. The map and the photos on pages 29-33 show how the steep slopes on either side of the ridge are cut by deep ravines that would have discouraged the bison from leaving the trail. Numerous smaller ravines also branch off the ridge, offering excellent hiding places for Indian hazers.

Between Eight Mile Bench and the river the trail varies in grade—it starts out steep, then becomes less severe. Through most of its length the descent is quite gradual, and the bison would have had no trouble keeping their feet, even in a stampede. The trail trends south-southeast for most of its length, but as it approaches the river it skirts the west flank of a knoll, then turns southeast and descends gently and directly to the river.

The knoll’s southwest flank drops sharply to the cliff, whose edge is just a hundred feet or so from the trail. The knoll is where some of the Indian hazers would have diverted the bison from the trail and toward the precipice. The hazers would have hidden on the east flank of the knoll, out of view and downwind of the bison.

Keeping all of the above in mind, imagine the follow-
ing scenario. It begins with bison heading from the high, dry plains toward the river to drink. Funneled by the terrain of Eight Mile Bench to the one feasible exit point off the bench, they file down the trail in an unbroken line. When a designated hazer hidden somewhere along the mid-section of the trail judges that a sufficient number are between himself and the cliff, he jumps up, waving his arms and yelling. Positioned farther down the trail, other hazers follow his lead, rising and yelling as the bison rumble past. The hazers’ actions quicken the animals’ pace and keep them from breaking into the ravines. When the bison reach the knoll, other hazers secreted on its eastern flank rush out, herding them off the trail and across the short, steep slope toward the cliff’s edge. Pushed by their own momentum and the gathering mass of other panicked animals behind them, they pour over the precipice, plunging to their death on the rocks below.

While standing on the edge of the cliff, I took a GPS altimeter reading. I did the same at the base of the cliff. The difference was 120 feet. In his journal, Lewis wrote that the Indians drove the “Buffalow . . . over a precipice of 120 feet.”

The lower portion of the trail where the actual drive would commence and culminate could easily accommodate more than a hundred bison moving in single file along it. Even if some animals avoided going over the cliff, the hunters could simply have repositioned themselves and waited a while until more bison filed down from the bench, unaware of the fate of those that had gone before them.

As noted, the similarity of the topography along this stretch of the Missouri and the vagueness of journal entries have made it difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the bison kill encountered by the Corps of Discovery. My investigation convinced me, however, that the kill site was directly beneath the cliff adjacent to the knoll, and that the trail from Eight Mile Bench to the knoll was the path the bison followed—indeed, was the only path they would have followed. The cliff overlooking the kill site is the easternmost one in the row of cliffs fronting the river opposite Arrow Creek. There are no other continuous trails to the river through these cliffs. Here and there the cliff front is cut by ravines, but these gaps are much too rugged for regular use by bison. The trail I followed and the cliff beneath the knoll is the only real candidate for this unique pishkun. Its topography tells us how the Indians drove the bison and exactly where their carcasses lay when Lewis and Clark came upon that stinking scene of carnage nearly 200 years ago. The evidence vindicates the reports of Lewis, Clark, and the rest of the party.

This remarkable adaptation of a bison drive to special terrain would not be known to us if Lewis and Clark had not recorded what they saw. Even though they did not reveal precisely how this particular cliff site worked, their report is a significant contribution to ethnography, for it enables us to arrive at an understanding of a unique buffalo jump—one that indeed, as Wood states, “resembles no other bison drive known on the northern Plains.”

Foundation member Francis Mitchell lives in McGrath, Alaska.

NOTES
2 Gary E. Moulton, ed., The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Ex-
“we passed immence herds of buffaloe . . . “

The journals are replete with references to “immence” numbers of “buffaloe,” especially in present-day Montana. No doubt one of the contributing factors to the success of the Slaughter River pishkun strategy was the enormous size of the herds. Once a “gangue of buffalow” began moving off Eight Mile Bench, it seems certain that the line of animals would continue for hours, giving Indian hunters repeated opportunities, if necessary, to re-conceal themselves and wait for the arrival of more.—F.M.

- “we observe in every direction Buffalow, Elk, Antelopes & Mule deer innumerable and So jintle that we Could approach near them with great ease.”—Clark, May 11, 1805
- “the buffaloe are in immence numbers, they have been constantly coming down in large herds to water opposite to us for some hours sometimes two or three herds wartering a the same instant and scarcely disappear before others supply their places.”—Lewis, June 20, 1805
- “Great numbers of Buffalow in every direction, I think 10,000 may be Seen in a view.”—Clark, June 30, 1805
- “the buffaloe again appear in great numbers about our camp and seem to be moving down the river. it is somewhat remarkable that altho’ you may see ten or a dozen herds of buffaloe distinctly scattered and many miles distant yet if they are undisturbed by pursuit, they will all be traveling in one direction.”—Lewis, July 5, 1805
- “when I arrived in sight of the whitebear Islands the missouri bottoms on both sides of the river were crouded with buffaloe. I sincerely belief that there were not less than 10 thousand buffaloe within a circle of 2 miles arround that place.”—Lewis, July 11, 1806
- “we passed immence herds of buffaloe on our way in short for about 12 miles it appeared as one herd only the whole plains and vally of this creek being covered with them.”—Lewis, July 18, 1806
- “we . . . encamped on the N.E. side of the river at the same place we had encamped on the 29th of May 1805. [just upriver from the mouth of Slaughter River] . . . we saw immence hirds of buffaloe in the high plains today on either hand of the river.”—Lewis, July 29, 1806
- “at 2 P. M. I was obliged to land to let the Buffalow Cross over. not withstanding an island of half a mile in width over which this gangue of Buffalow had to pass and the Chanel of the river on each Side nearly 1/4 of a mile in width, this gangue of Buffalow was entirely across and as thick as they could Swim.”—Clark, August 1, 1806

Lost & Found: Discharge Papers of John Shields

Archives yield documents of the Corps of Discovery’s ace gunsmith

By James J. Holmberg

One of the hopes and joys of Lewis and Clark historians and enthusiasts is the discovery of previously unknown historical material regarding the Corps of Discovery’s epic adventure across the American West. Such discoveries may occur in attics, barns, basements, garages, or other non-institutional places. But sometimes important historical material can be found in institutions themselves, often there for many years, forgotten or undetected. I have experienced both over the years—William Clark’s letters to his “Dear Brother” Jonathan emerging from a Louisville attic and finding historical treasures that had lain undetected in The Filson Historical Society’s large collection are examples.

Such an event occurred in the spring of 2003 at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. The catalyst was a project by the Harrison County (Indiana) Convention and Visitors Bureau to honor expedition veteran John Shields (1769-1809). Headed by Sean Hawkins, a member of the bureau staff, the project had the objective of placing a grave marker in the Little Flock Baptist Church cemetery near Buena Vista, south of Corydon. Shields is believed to be buried there. Like so many graves of that period it was either unmarked or the marker had long ago disappeared.

After the expedition, Shields is believed to have returned to West Point, in Hardin County, Kentucky, where he was living when he signed on as one of the Nine Young Men from Kentucky. As the corps’s blacksmith and gunsmith he had provided invaluable service to the undertaking and been one of the few men praised by Meriwether Lewis in post-expedition comments. Shields, wrote the captain, was “peculiarly useful” for his “skill and ingenuity as an artist, in repairing our guns, accoutrements, &c.”

Shields was also one of just three married men on the journey—York and Toussaint Charbonneau being the others. Although only unmarried men were supposed to on the expedition, Clark had made an exception in Shields’s case while recruiting in the Louisville area because the expedition needed someone with his smithing skills. The captains enlisted him on October 19, 1803, at the Falls of the Ohio. They chose well. In addition to keeping the explorers’ guns in working order and doing necessary smithwork, Shields also was one of the corps’s primary hunters. In order to secure his agreement to go, it is possible that Clark made arrangements for his brother Jonathan to assist Nancy Shields while her husband was gone. After his return, Shields settled across the Ohio from West Point in a part of Knox County, Indiana Territory, that was soon to become part of the newly created Harrison County.

There were a number of reasons and inducements for John Shields to join the Corps of Discovery. Adventure, curiosity, service to country, and the persuasion of Lewis and Clark are some of them. But there were at least two other, more tangible, reasons—money and land. Shields’s service as a private in the U.S. Army dated from October 19, 1803, to October 10, 1806. The latter date is the day of discharge for the enlisted members of the expedition. The bond for Shields’s land grant was signed by both Lewis and Clark.
pay of a private was five dollars a month—not much on a monthly basis but, when received in a lump sum after three years’ service, a tidy sum in 1806. Shields’s payday amounted to $178.50. On October 11, 1806, Lewis executed a bill of exchange in favor of Shields for $180.07, slightly more than his official pay. Such bills were executed for other expedition veterans on the same date, for some men less than the amount of pay due them but for others considerably more. A perhaps unexpected windfall occurred on March 3, 1807, when Congress passed a bill granting each of the official expedition members double pay.3 Shields’s pay then became $357, a small fortune in that day.

Another incentive to face the journey’s dangers and hardships was land. The enlisted men had each been promised a grant of land in the same amount as that received by a soldier who had served in the American Revolution. Such a grant was 320 acres. The award was confirmed by the same act that granted expedition members double pay. However, the land had to be located west of the Mississippi River, a requirement that some of the explorers objected to in vain. Some who had no intention of settling in this “new” West, or who simply preferred the cash, sold their warrants (in a few cases to fellow expedition veterans).4 What John Shields did with his warrant is uncertain. By March 7, 1822, it had been accepted in payment for land by the Receiver of Public Monies at Franklin, Missouri.5 He might have sold it, or it might have become part of his estate upon his death, in December 1809 (although it does not appear in his estate records).

Private John Shields’s service on the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the promise of land upon its return created paperwork. And it is some of that paperwork—historic and rare documents—that was discovered in the Indiana State Library this summer. The discovery began with a lead—a genealogical link. The papers of the prominent early Indiana resident John Tipton reside in the state library. John Tipton was Shields’s son-in-law. Might there be something regarding the explorer in Tipton’s papers? Sean Hawkins, working on the Shields’s grave marker project, asked the library staff to check. There, among Tipton’s papers, they found the original bond for Shields’s land grant and his discharge. These and other documents, including his commission as a captain in the Indiana militia, had long lain undetected by Lewis and Clark researchers. The bond, dated October 8, 1806, and signed by both Lewis and Clark, and the discharge, dated October 10, 1806, and signed by Lewis, are extremely rare documents. Donald Jackson, in his Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, lists the bond for Joseph Whitehouse and the discharge for William Bratton as the only ones known to be extant.6 With the discovery of the John Shields bond and discharge we now know of the existence of two more of these historic expedition documents and have both for one of the corps’s key members—a gunsmith, blacksmith, hunter, and explorer of “skill and ingenuity.”

Meriwether Lewis had high praise for John Shields. The text of his discharge (opposite) reads in part, “I with cheerfulness declare that the ample support which he gave me under every difficulty[,] the manly firmness which he evinced on every occasion and the fortitude with which he bore the fatigues and painful sufferings incident to that long Voyage entitles him to my highest confidence and sincere thanks.”

Founding member James J. Holmberg, curator of special collections at The Filson Historical Society, in Louisville, Kentucky, is the editor of Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark (Yale University Press, 2002).

Notes

1 Donald Jackson, Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854, 2 vols., Second Edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 367. Lewis’s remarks in full: “[He has] received the pay only of a private. Nothing was more peculiarly useful to us, in various situations, than the skill and ingenuity of this man as an artist, in repairing our guns, accoutrements, &c. and should it be thought proper to allow him something as an artificer, he has well deserved it.”


5 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 381.


7 Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 367. I would like to thank Sean Hawkins for his work that resulted in the discovery of these documents and for contacting me about them. I would also like to thank Andrea Bean Hough and the staff of the Indiana State Library for their cooperation and assistance in making these documents available. These are just two of the documents related to Shields that were found in the Tipton Papers and also in the Harrison County Records and other repositories. Founding members Linda and Jerry Robertson (Jerry is a collateral Shields descendant) have also done extensive research on John Shields. Linda, Jerry, Sean, and I have been sharing our research on Shields. Look for a more comprehensive article on Shields in a future issue of WPO.
St. Louis October 10th 1806

To all whom it may concern:

Know ye that the bearer hereof, John Shields a private in a corps destined for the discovery of the interior of the continent of North America having faithfully discharged his duty in said capacity so long as his services have been necessary to complete the object of a voyage to the Pacific Ocean in virtue of the authority vested in me by the President of the United States hereby discharged from the military service of the said States, and as a testimony public and the mark of the said John Shields, I with cheerfulness declare that the ample support which he gave me under every difficulty, the manly firmness which he evinced on every occasion and the fortitude with which he bore the fatigues and painful suffering incident to that long voyage entitles him to my highest confidence and my warm thanks, while it equally recommends him to the consideration and respect of his fellow Citizens.

Meriwether Lewis Capt.
1st U.S. Exp. Party
Howard Frank Mosher simply was not willing to chance that we might take this bicentennial stuff too seriously. By way of a cure, his novel *The True Account* may turn the entire Lewis and Clark experience upside down, but then only a stuffed shirt would complain. Mosher is a denizen of Vermont—Vermont, that freedom-loving state. Not surprisingly, the eponymous hero of this burlesque, Private True Teague Kinneson, won his spurs at Fort Ticonderoga with Green Mountain boy Ethan Allen.

A blow to the head received by True at Fort Ti may explain the “account” that follows. True aspires, first, to obtain Thomas Jefferson’s commission to explore Louisiana, and, failing that, to steal a march on Lewis and Clark and beat the Corps of Discovery to the Pacific. True’s admiring and concerned nephew, Ti, named for Ticonderoga, serves as narrator and co-explorer. The resulting comic saga seems inspired by sources as diverse as *The Odyssey* and *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

What ensues is a sequence of adventures mimicking expedition history in which True, Ti, and Native American mentors save the bacon for Lewis and Clark while upstaging their physical feats and appropriating their best lines. Thus it is a Blackfoot woman, Yellow Sage Flower Who Tells Wise Stories, who throws her wrap over her lost brother and a Blackfeet savant who leaves a note on a pole near the headwaters of the Missouri. Ti records how tired, cold, wet, and hungry the expedition is during the Bitterroot passage and True invents baseball for a pickup game with the Nez Perces. Such exploits are aided by fanciful inventions, including a flying canoe and hot-air balloon. When necessity beckons, True makes himself airborne as effortlessly as Mary Poppins.

As white naifs adrift in a vanished Native American Eden, Mosher’s heroes, plunging deeper into *terra incognita* along the Missouri, evoke the cinematic tradition represented by Jack Crabb in *Little Big Man* and Lieutenant Dunbar in *Dances with Wolves*. Like others so cast, True and Ti find a level of wit, wisdom, culture, and delicacy of sentiment in native peoples not likely to be as thoroughly appreciated by the impending horde of sod-busters, prospectors, hustlers and saber-rattling Seventh Cavalrymen.

Political correctness does not reign, however. The original inhabitants are depicted with their dark side, prepared when provoked to baptize their lances and scalping knives in the blood of neighboring indigenes and white interlopers alike. Also, True differs from other innocents abroad in the West in his seasoned craftiness and uncanny ability to scam any Indian or white man right out of his moccasins.

The narrative has its graphic moments of crucifixion, flaying, and cannibalism, including lip-smacking consumption of human bone marrow. Despite these lurid passages, the narrative eschews the level of gratuitous violence that is found in, say, the average Hollywood movie trailer. Bloody retribution is reserved for those miscreants whose predation on fellow human beings demands swift and final punishment.

Mosher’s women are tall, strong, and, not to put too fine a point on it, romantically forward. Red and white alike exhibit a testosterone level exceeding that medically recommended for their gender. Flame Danielle Boone, Daniel Boone’s daughter, is as subtle as a mountain lioness in heat; Tall Mare leads an all-girl Crow war party; Little Warrior Woman displays an eerie propensity to show up in male drag primed for battle. When True finally recalls Hippolyta and the Amazons of old, the reader has long since drawn the obvious comparison.

Even the more benign and loving Yellow Sage Flower, destined to become Ti’s inamorata, mounts her horse by vaulting over its rump in the best B-movie cowboy tradition. Mosher’s ideal sweetie can ride and shoot like a man, eat as much buffalo, and deck any frontier smart aleck with a roundhouse right.

Once in Shoshone country, Sage presents a dyed-quill medallion to Sacagawea and instructs the Shoshone girls in arts and crafts with the zeal of a Girl Scout leader. Even Cameahwait is impressed and gives her plaudits as the gal who keeps the expedition perking. At an earlier moment, Mosher describes Sacagawea as “bemused.” This could well be her reaction to the unabashed way the author has purloined her stellar traits of character and redistributed them among his other native heroines.

At one point Mosher quotes a review in the *Times of New York* of a True theatrical performance: “Juvenile in conception, violent in execution, puerile, nay, prurient, in its attempts at humor, and in the most vile taste.” A less self-assured storyteller than Mosher might have feared giving his own reviewers ideas. Not to worry. Lewis and Clark enthusiasts will find little to snipe at in his treatment of their heroes and will discover a beguiling bit of whimsy to unwind with in the waning days of winter.

—Dennis M. O’Connell
**Lewis and Clark in Washington State**

*In Full View: A True and Accurate Account of Lewis and Clark's Arrival at the Pacific Ocean, and Their Search for a Winter Camp Along the Columbia River*

Rex Ziak

Moffitt House Press

214 pages / $35 hardcover

When it comes to Lewis and Clark, many Washingtonians suffer from an inferiority complex. In a journey that lasted more than two years, the explorers spent a mere 39 days in what is now Washington State, and called much of their stay there “most disagreeable.”

Luckily for Washington and all Lewis and Clark enthusiasts, a new book by Rex Ziak should put to rest the notion that the explorers’ time in Washington was in any way insignificant. Ziak investigates 31 days—November 7 to December 7, 1805, a crucial month that encompassed extraordinary events and changed the history of the expedition.

As Ziak notes, it was during this month that Lewis and Clark completed a primary goal of their mission. The captains recorded November 17 as their last day westbound and as the day they fulfilled President Jefferson’s directive to reach the Pacific Ocean by land. Ziak shows that the end of the Lewis and Clark Trail is, in fact, in Washington State and not in Oregon, where they spent the winter at Fort Clatsop.

Finding a winter camp was a prime concern after they reached the Pacific. Here Ziak makes the case that the explorers had initially planned to winter higher up on the Columbia—until weather changes twice postponed the expedition’s eastbound departure, no one had even considered the Columbia estuary’s south shore for a winter encampment. When the group was delayed, first by a storm and then by the captains’ desire to measure latitude and longitude once the weather cleared, a group of Clatsop Indians visited their camp and told them that elk were plentiful there. Ziak persuasively argues that it is this unexpected information, coupled with the impending winter, the mild climate, and the potential for harvesting salt, that spurred Lewis and Clark to consider building a winter camp at the mouth of the Columbia rather than return upriver to the Sandy River or Celilo Falls. Thus, one of the most talked-about events of the expedition transpired: Lewis and Clark “consulted the men’s opinions” on where to spend the winter. Ziak explores this moment fully, calling it a “consultation” (except in one sidebar, where it is regretfully labeled “The Vote”) and carefully detailing what was recorded.

Readers will appreciate this engaging work, with its excellent maps (based on an 1876 navigational chart), informative sidebars, and useful appendices (including one that shows how Clark saw the Pacific on November 7, despite many historians’ assertions that this was graphically impossible). Evocative photos, many by the author, bring to life the lower Columbia environment of stormy weather, giant trees, dripping forests, fog-shrouded hills, and crashing waves.

A lifelong resident of the lower Columbia, Ziak brings his enormous knowledge of the region to bear on filling this void in L&C history. Years of experiencing winter storms, exploring remnant forests, and considering the journals has resulted in a history written from the ground up, with sensitivity for the influence of environment and an understanding of cultural context that makes for an intimate, important narrative.

—Lauren Danner

**In search of Prince Madoc’s Welsh Indians**

*Prologue to Lewis & Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition*

W. Raymond Wood

University of Oklahoma Press

234 pages / $34.95 hardcover

A persistent myth in the American West is the existence of a tribe of blue-eyed, red-haired Indians descended from a lost colony of Welshmen led by a 12th-century nobleman named Prince Madoc. This belief launched the career of one of the Missouri River’s most interesting explorers and contributed to the exploration and mapping of the Missouri nearly a decade before the Lewis and Clark Expedition. John Thomas Evans, a native of North Wales, was sent in search of Madoc’s tribe by the Gwyneddigion, a London literary society devoted to the idea that such a tribe actually existed.

James Mackay, a native of Scotland, had worked in Canada for the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies, and got as far south as the Mandan villages in 1786 or 1787. Sometime in the 1790s, he heard about Evans from another Welshman and decided to find the young man on his own. For a period these two natives of Great Britain were Spain’s bulwark against the encroaching British traders pushing down from Canada.

Readers of WPO have long been aware that for the first year of their expedition, Lewis and Clark were traveling on a river that had been a busy highway for explorers and traders for at least twenty years. A. P. Nasatir’s *Before Lewis and Clark*, a collection of documents detailing the commercial activity on the Missouri River between 1785 and 1804, appeared in 1952 and was reissued by Bison Books in 1990. Nasatir’s introduction provides the
background and context for these voyages. In Prologue to Lewis & Clark, W. Raymond Wood covers much of the same material, but his long career as a field worker and researcher allows him to bring new insights and perspectives to the early history of the Missouri Basin.

Although Mackay had approached the Mandan villages from the north, Wood suggests that he never went up the Missouri beyond the vicinity of present-day Sioux City, Iowa, where he established a trading post known as Fort Charles. Unfortunately, neither Mackay nor Evans was as adept at journal keeping as Lewis and Clark, so the record is spotty. It is clear, however, that Evans followed the Missouri to the Mandans in 1796, and he had instructions to continue on his voyage to the Pacific Ocean.

He never did that, of course, and the remaining story of Mackay and Evans is one of disappointment, or as Wood puts it in the title of his final chapter, “Dénouement and Disillusion.” Although Mackay lived to age 63 and was an important source of information in St. Louis for Lewis and Clark, his contributions were little remembered. Evans, likely suffering from the effects of an early attack of malaria, was only 29 when he died. To the great disappointment—and disbelief—of his Welsh nationalist sponsors, he concluded that the Welsh tribe did not exist.

The lasting contribution of the Mackay and Evans collaboration was two important maps. These maps hold the greatest fascination for Wood, and his discussion of them is the most interesting part of the book.

The Indian Office Map of 1797 (map 5 in Gary E. Moulton’s Atlas of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 1 of his 13-volume edition of the journals), discovered in 1915 at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, covers the river from St. Louis to the Mandans in considerable detail and with uncanny accuracy. The other map, in six separate sheets (Moulton, Atlas maps 7-12), depicts the river above Fort Charles. The Beinecke Library Map, named for its location at that library at Yale University, is clearly the work of Evans. Lewis and Clark had this map with them, and Clark often made notations on the sheets.

Wood’s book reproduces the Indian Office Map, but it is too small to see many details; and, strangely, only about a fourth of the map appears in the illustration. Readers should turn to Moulton’s Atlas for a much better representation. For clarity, Wood has wisely chosen to print redrawn versions of the Beinecke sheets rather than facsimiles.

Wood includes documents from Nasatir’s book, correspondence preserved in the Brandon House Journals from the years 1796-97, and other material relating to Evans’s search for the elusive Welsh tribe. All of these documents have been published before. An appendix offers a “Concordance of Physical Features” on Mackay and Evans’s two maps. Here Wood lists each of the features on these maps, gives an English translation, and identifies the modern name of the feature if it can be found. It is a tribute to both Mackay and Evans—and to Wood’s careful attention to detail—that very few (only about thirty) of the 170 so different names on the two maps cannot be identified or associated with a feature on the current landscape. And many of these are names of islands deep beneath the impounded waters of the Missouri reservoirs.

—Thomas J. Gasque

### Tales of intrigue in Jefferson’s West

**Seduced by the West: Jefferson’s America and the Lure of the Land Beyond the Mississippi**

Laurie Winn Carlson

Ivan R. Dee

199 pages / $26 hardcover

A s public awareness of the central narrative of Lewis and Clark deepens, expedition scholarship is enriched by backstory and historical context. In this small volume, Laurie Winn Carlson examines some lesser-known exploratory tendrils that snaked out from the settled East to the theoretically empty but contested West. _Seduced by the West_ is an account of freelance adventurers, schemers, and soldiers of fortune whose fervor for American hegemony often masked a personal lust for power.

Carlson profiles some intriguing characters whose machinations could supply the stuff of a miniseries entitled _Founding Scoundrels_. These illegal fo-menters of foreign unrest or “filibusters” include Aaron Burr, tried and acquitted multiple times for treason, and General James Wilkinson, Revolutionary War veteran, perennial trouble-maker, and possible unindicted co-conspirator to create a private western empire. Also in her sights is James Callender, a bottom-feeding flack who did pro-Jefferson hatchet work but then reversed sympathies and broke the story of Thomas Jefferson’s affair with a winsome unpaid member of his household staff—Sally Hemings.

Carlson reveals the rather startlingly strong European presence in the Northwest: Russians ensconced in Alaska, British ships plying the coast, a Spanish town as far north as Neah Bay. In contrast to this exuberance, the young American republic occasionally threatened to fray at its margins like a poorly hemmed garment. Between the Whiskey Rebellion and the conflagration of 1861-65, the republic had a
HOLLAND
“FEASTING AND FASTING”
4/C PICKUP FROM NOV. 2003, P. 42 (BOTTOM)

MOUNTAIN PRESS
4/C
number of separatist near misses. Carlson suggests how, despite the threatened fractures, it became an American vision, not a Russian, British, Spanish, or French one, that shaped the trans-Mississippi region.

At the center of the tension between expansionist and fragmentary impulses stands the paradoxical figure of Jefferson. Jefferson viewed a chance to trump Spain, “the sick man of Europe,” like a cat that has just seen a squirrel. But, although he ranks as one of the era’s passionate imperialists, he was loath to denounce centrifugal tendencies. The South later claimed him as a spiritual ancestor, sympathetic to a regional loyalty that nearly sundered the republic. Jefferson could blandly observe that a splitting of the nation into Atlantic and Mississippi confederacies posed no intrinsic threat to the American vision even while expansionism remained an ineradicable substratum in his mind.

Jefferson was a student of exploration, and Carlson offers a fascinating synopsis of what she sees as an infatuation with a quixotic proposal by Cook expedition veteran John Ledyard to transit Siberia, cross to Alaska, and then tread east on foot to Virginia, becoming a “circum-ambulator” of the globe. Ledyard, after crossing most of Eurasia in 1787, was expelled by Empress Catherine. Some histories dismiss the Ledyard affair as a footnote. But Donald Jackson, like Carlson, offers sufficient detail for us to contemplate the possibility that the imaginings of this 18th-century Forrest Gump had an early influence on a westward-looking Jefferson.

Carlson’s most controversial hypothesis is that Jefferson dangled former aide Meriwether Lewis and the expedition as “bait” to prompt a Spanish raid that would have served as a casus belli. Assuming that Jefferson was enough of a cynic to author such a maneuver, the stated terms of the project weigh against it. It was outfitted for success, armed and equipped to meet likely difficulties, and had instructions on what to do if challenged.

Along much of its passage across the
northern plains, the expedition transited a kind of no man’s land, seemingly bereft even of permanent native occupation. This stretch of Montana is even today nicknamed The Big Lonely. So the expedition was quickly “out of range” of the tepid and tardy Spanish countermeasures. Also, when Lewis, forever the pup with its nose down every rabbit hole, sought to alleviate pre-expedition boredom with a sally toward Santa Fe, Jefferson reined him in.

Carlson’s account foreshadows factors that would catalyze the Texas War of Independence and the Mexican War. In Jefferson’s day, population pressures were already building that would fuel expansion to the Southwest—the struggle for the region could be said to have been won in American bedrooms. Spain’s successor, hapless Mexico, lost half its territory in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Carlson links the adroit negotiator of that pact, Nicholas Trist, with Robert Livingston, the negotiator of the Louisiana Purchase. These unsung bureaucrats, at the ends of tenuous diplomatic tethers, deserve credit for adding the vast western empire to the American domain.

In evaluating historical shifts, historians must choose between contingency and a sense of inevitability. The occupation of the American West inclines one toward a sense of inevitability, so deeply inscribed was the westering instinct on first the European, then the American, consciousness. In his PBS companion-book essay, “Come Up Me,” Ken Burns writes that the Missouri seemed to summon the adventuresome spirit irresistibly to the West.

It was a characteristic of the English colonists and their American heirs that they came to stay. Americans sought a home in the West, not simply a “passage through the garden,” in John Logan Allen’s elegant phrase. In keeping with that history is Laurie Winn Carlson’s epitaph for Lewis and Clark, that they made the American interior “solid ground,” whereas previously it had been only an abstraction.

—Dennis M. O’Connell

Reviews department continues next page.
One of the most positive aspects of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, from a broad social perspective, is the opportunity it offers to include the Native American experience in the re-telling of our nation’s early history.

*Sheheke: Mandan Indian Diplomat,* by Tracy Potter, subtitled “The Story of White Coyote, Thomas Jefferson and Lewis and Clark,” is a commendable step in that direction. The book (the first published by Fort Mandan Press, an imprint of the North Dakota L&C Bicentennial Foundation) contains a wealth of information about the Mandan chief who welcomed the explorers to his village and visited Washington, D.C., at their invitation. Indirectly, Sheheke also played a fateful role in the postexpedition life of Meriwether Lewis, whose failed effort to return the chief to his village prompted a chain of events that led, ultimately, to Lewis’s probable suicide.

Most of the information about Sheheke has been assembled in a single narrative for the first time. Potter seems to have worked hard to pull together what is known from contemporary written sources, tribal oral traditions, and High Plains archaeology to create an integrated picture of who Sheheke was and where he came from, culturally speaking. Both Lewis and Clark enthusiasts and others interested in North American ethnology should find much that adds to their appreciation of the Mandans’ role in that early period of intercultural contact.

The general reader, however, may find the book rough going in places. The narrative is often hindered by logjams of clauses that have seemingly drifted together at random, but which the author (and his editors) let stand as sentences. Mandan terms poke their heads out unexpectedly, to be explained much later, or perhaps never. (What is *x’opini*, anyway?)

Still, *Sheheke* offers a fascinating glimpse at a vanished culture and one of its most dynamic leaders, and L&C devotees will relish the new and interesting facts to be found along the way. For those who follow its course patiently, Potter’s book is a route to rewarding historical vistas.

—Mark Chalkley
A thoughtful video rendering of Sacagawea

We tell many stories about Lewis and Clark. But as historian James Ronda reminds us, we need to “step off the boat and onto the bank” to learn from stories told by the native peoples who first encountered the Corps of Discovery and the Indian woman who accompanied the expedition and proved critical to its success.

We are talking, of course, about Sacagawea, the Shoshone interpreter for Lewis and Clark, whose story is engagingly told in The Journey of Sacagawea, a 60-minute video written and produced by Lori Joyce for Idaho Productions, of Boise, Idaho.

Joyce has captured the adventure and wonder of Sacagawea’s life, from her abduction by Hidatases at the Three Forks of the Missouri when she was 12 years old to her disappearance from the historical record a few years after the expedition’s return. Narrated by folk singer Rita Coolidge, the video mixes scenes of the expedition staged by reenactors at sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail with vintage and contemporary art work. Historians Barbara Kubik and Robert Saindon (a former editor of WPO) and a host of Native American interpreters of the Lewis & Clark story, including Amy Mossett, Keith Bear, Rose Ann Abrahamson, Calvin Grinnell, and Diane Na Likam, provide insight into the woman whose name can be variously interpreted as Bird Woman, Crow Woman, or Boat Launcher.

This video is obviously the result of substantial effort and serious thought; unlike too many L&C-related items these days, it has not been hurriedly conceived and assembled to profit from the bicentennial. It does justice to a brave young woman while giving us a fresh perspective on her story. The comments by Native Americans include oral history often missing from accounts of the expedition that rely more or less exclusively on the documentary record. From Nez Perce Levi Holt, for example, we learn about the friendship that developed, out of the shared experience of capture and forced exile, between Sacagawea and Watkuweis, the old Nez Perce woman who urged her people not to kill the explorers when they emerged, half starved and frozen, from the Bitterroot Mountains.

Appropriately enough, four of the video’s nine commentators are women, and they offer additional insight into what it must have been like to be the sole female—and a teenage mother carrying an infant at that—among 32 adults in the permanent party. As Kubik observes, “I sometimes wonder if she was very, very lonely.”

Outstanding production values, historical accuracy, and a fresh approach to its subject make The Journey of Sacagawea perhaps the best L&C video we’ve seen. It is a work that blends multiple perspectives on Lewis and Clark and the native peoples they met on their way to Pacific and back—and without whose help the expedition would have failed.

(The Journey of Sacagawea. $29.95, shipping included. Order from Idanha Films, 208-426-8890; www.idanha.org.)

—Larry and Callie Epstein

New, updated edition of user-friendly L&C guide

Julie Fanselow has done a service to the Lewis and Clark community with a bicentennial edition of her perennially popular trail guide. Indeed, having seen the author chimney up the business end of a slot canyon on a Missouri River trip, I can attest that she comes by her trail lore honestly. Appropriately, this guide’s coverage of the options for exploring the trail by water, on your own or on a guided trip, from the lower Missouri to the lower Columbia has always been one of its distinctions. What’s new for the bicentennial is material on the neglected eastern heritage of the expedition, focusing on Jefferson’s vision from Monticello, preparations in Washington and Philadelphia, and provisioning in Harpers Ferry and Pittsburgh. Fanselow’s running historical narrative makes the book an interactive manual for the trail, inviting tourist and buff alike to learn, see, and do.

Also, this edition covers new interpretive and cultural centers that have sprouted like mushrooms along the trail, such as the Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural, and Education Center, in Salmon, Idaho, and the Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center, near Chamberlain, South Dakota. It includes pioneer and Native American heritage sites, and also diversions available along the route—be it a St. Louis Cardinals game, an art gallery, a ghost town, or a national monument such as Mount Rushmore.

One of the most user-friendly guides available, it makes the trail “doable” by the average traveler. Fanselow includes a two-week itinerary covering the entire route. Careful planners will be rewarded with albums duplicating this edition’s enticing color and black-and-white photography of trail landmarks.

—Dennis M. O’Connell
The move to a new space within the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center has served to emphasize the need for long-term financial support for the Foundation, especially its library and archives. As each book, magazine, photograph, map, media recording, object, and pamphlet was packed, we had the delight of discovering hidden treasures in the collection. As the principal repository for the ephemera and publications from the L&C Bicentennial commemorations, we are adding new items daily. But these treasures must be processed and housed.

Philanthropic donations by individuals and families have become one of America’s most valued traditions. Each year, millions of people find creative ways to contribute to their favorite nonprofit organization. Many of you have given generously in the past, and many will continue to give in the future. The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation is working to establish a strong financial base so that we can continue to provide support and services to library and archival researchers long after the bicentennial.

One direct way to support the library and archives is through the gift of books and other materials; these are the types of gifts that we most often receive. Major donors, in consultation with the library and the executive committee, may wish to establish a new program, named in their honor, with an outright gift, and to endow it later through another planned gift.

Wise foresight has inspired some of our members to consider direct bequests of materials to the library. We are fortunate, for example, that Barb and Rennie Kubik have chosen to support the William P. Sherman Library and Archives in this way. Their book and research collection has been willed to the library, and we are grateful for their thoughtfulness. If you are considering a bequest of books, ephemera, or other materials, please contact me to discuss how we can best assist you.

One of the best vehicles for supporting the Foundation’s Endowment Fund, and thus the Foundation’s many programs, is through planned giving, a process for making a charitable donation in a manner that can financially benefit both the donor and the Foundation. Many options are available for this kind of giving. You can make a gift to honor a loved one, to support educational programs, to add to the library collections, to express gratitude for a service well performed, or for your own personal reasons.

The manner in which you make an endowment gift can have an impact on your tax liability. Some options to consider are outright gifts, bequests, charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, or matching gift programs. Your financial adviser, lawyer, or tax professional can advise you about the best method for your needs. Various types of trust funds can also be beneficial to both the donor and the library. And many corporations have matching gift programs; your employer may be willing to match your contribution.

The easiest way to support the Sherman Library and Archives—and keep current on the library’s acquisitions and activities—is to join the Friends of the Library. You can join or donate online at www.lewisandclark.org or call the library in Great Falls for more information (406-761-3950).

—Jill Jackson
Librarian and Archivist, LCTHF

Less than 3 cents an acre

Charles Knowles of Moscow, Idaho, has drawn our attention to an errant decimal place on page 11 of Brad Tennant’s article “Lewis and Clark and the Louisiana Purchase,” in the August 2003 WPO. The price the United States paid France for Louisiana works out to less than 3 cents an acre, not 27 cents. The error is the editor’s.
KANSAS CITY
SIGNATURE EVENT

OMAHA
New director of field services appointed

The LCTHF has appointed Wendy Raney as its new director of field services. She replaces Jeff Olson, who left last year to work for the National Park Service.

Raney was born and raised in Livingston, Montana. She is a 1993 graduate of Vassar College, in Poughkeepsie, New York, and earned a master’s degree in 1998 from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism. She has worked as a business reporter for the Great Falls Tribune and as public-information officer for Montana’s insurance and securities commissioner. At Vassar she wrote a senior thesis on “mistruths and misconceptions” about Sacagawea.

Raney’s responsibilities include trail stewardship and media, government, corporate, nonprofit, tribal, and chapter liaison.

L&C in other publications

“Still looking for Paradise,” an article by Reed Karaim in the September/October 2003 Preservation, the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, retraces the L&C Trail between Bismarck, North Dakota, and Fort Benton, Montana. It examines the impact of contemporary interest in the expedition on High Plains communities.

“Which Way to the West?,” an article in the September 1, 2003, U.S. News & World Report, explores the debate over whether the L&C Expedition began in St. Louis or Pittsburgh.

The September/October 2003 issue of Connect, a magazine for teachers of grades kindergarten through 8, is devoted to hands-on learning exercises related to the expedition, with an emphasis on natural history and celestial navigation. (Copies available at $6 each; 800-769-6199, ext. 5233.)

Leandra Holland; Sid Huggins; Gary Miller

Leandra Adalyn Zim Holland, a food historian and authority on the culinary and nutritional aspects of the L&C Expedition, died from brain injuries suffered in a vehicle rollover south of Livingston, Montana, on October 4. She was 59 years old and lived in Emigrant, Montana, and Mesa, Arizona.

Holland was the author of Feasting and Fasting with Lewis & Clark: A Food and Social History of the Early 1800s, published in December by Old Yellowstone Press. (See www.lewisandclarkfood.com.) She also wrote two cover stories for WPO—“Preserving Food on the L&C Expedition,” which appeared in August 2001, and “Empty Kettles in the Bitterroots,” in the August 2003 issue. She lectured to many Lewis and Clark groups and was a speaker at the Foundation’s annual meeting last August in Philadelphia. An accomplished cook, she enjoyed re-creating meals of roasted buffalo, roots, ash cakes, and other fare that sustained the Corps of Discovery. One such period dinner was the subject of an article in the July 8, 2002, issue of Time magazine.

A 1965 graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, Holland also pursued graduate studies in library science and Russian history at the University of Southern California and the University of California–San Diego.

She is survived by Evelyn, her wife of 59 years, and by three children and six grandchildren.

Sid Huggins, former president

Cylde G. “Sid” Huggins, who served as Foundation president in 1996–97, died November 11 at age 81. A resident of Covington, Louisiana, he was a retired research biochemist and emeritus professor at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, in Mobile.

Huggins was a native of Watertown, Tennessee, and a Marine Corps veteran of World War II. A graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, he earned master’s degrees from the University of Mississippi and a doctorate from Tulane University. Huggins taught at Tulane and the Kansas City Medical Center, and in 1972 he became a charter faculty member at the USA College of Medicine, where he became the dean of students and was honored with its Distinguished Service Award.

He is survived by Evelyn, his wife of 59 years, and by three children and six grandchildren.

Gary Miller, L&C artist

Gary P. Miller, a Bismarck, North Dakota, artist known for his paintings of the L&C Expedition and other western themes, died of cancer on October 28, at age 68.

As an artist, Miller was mainly self-taught. He worked at an oil refinery before taking up painting vocationally in 1975. He and his wife, Darla, operated Gary’s Gallery in Bismarck, and for many years they also owned a gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona.

His painting of the Corps of Discovery at Fort Mandan in 1805 (detail, above) appeared on the cover of the November 2001 WPO. The same work and two others by Miller are on the covers of the three-volume WPO anthology Explorations into the World of Lewis & Clark, edited by Robert A. Saindon.

Last year the State of North Dakota honored Miller with a certificate for lifetime achievement.

He is survived by Darla, his wife of 49 years, and by five children and eight grandchildren.
I have just read James Tobin’s wonderful book, *To Conquer the Air*, the story of the Wright brothers, who on December 17, 1903, made the world’s first successful powered flight, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This was exactly 100 hundred years after the Corps of Discovery settled in for its first winter, at Camp River Dubois.

There are many similarities between the Wright brothers and Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their respective achievements.

The Wrights were inventors and the two captains were explorers, but in a broad sense the reverse is also true. The Wrights explored a new technology that over time would dramatically shrink the world, while the captains were often inventive in their solutions to problems and challenges encountered along the trail.

The older Wright, Wilbur, was a loner; he never married, and died in 1912, four years after his great accomplishments covering the years 1903-1908. Lewis was also a loner; he never married, and died in 1809, three years after his return from the Pacific. The other half of the respective teams—Orville and Clark—lived many years. (Orville Wright believed Wilbur’s premature death was brought on by patent battles with rival aviator Glenn Curtiss. A factor in Lewis’s probable suicide may have been his inability to write the account of his journey promised to Thomas Jefferson.)

The Wrights complained about mosquitoes at Kill Devil Hill, just as the captains complained about them on the Missouri River.

Luck factored in both endeavors, but luck is often the product of genius and careful planning and execution. The Wrights did exhaustive research before attempting anything in the air. By observing birds for hundreds of hours the brothers discovered the principles of lift and flight control. Lewis and Clark spent months preparing for each phase of the journey and left little to chance.

The French figured in the success of both the inventors and the explorers. The Wrights tried to sell one of their later airplanes to the U.S. Army, but our military showed little interest until Wilbur flew it in France, to rave reviews in the French press. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was conceived by Jefferson and authorized by Congress before the Louisiana Purchase, but Napoleon’s decision to sell Louisiana to the United States further validated the expedition’s purpose.

Only one person died in a Wright brothers plane—Thomas Selfridge, an army lieutenant flying with Orville at Fort Meyer, Virginia. Similarly, only one of Lewis and Clark’s men—Sergeant Charles Floyd—succumbed on the expedition. Selfridge was the first American soldier to die in a plane crash, and Floyd was the first American soldier to die west of the Mississippi.

The Wright brothers kept meticulous notes and wrote many letters describing in great detail their work and progress. Lewis and Clark were also prodigious correspondents, and as journal keepers they wrote more than a million words about the expedition. Both teams left a written record that has enriched our understanding of their struggles and accomplishments.

Wilbur and Orville Wright were first in flight, and Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were first to explore the American West. Jefferson praised Lewis as the embodiment of “courage undaunted,” but his phrase applies equally to all four men. They changed history, and humanity is indebted to them for what they did. Let’s hope there are young men and women today who, inspired by their examples, will go on to invent and explore and leave the world a better place.

*Foundation member Ernest W. “Bill” Smith is a lawyer in Jeffersonville, Indiana.*