LEWIS & CLARK AND THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Plus: René Jusseaume on the Upper Missouri • Billy Clark's Big Journey • Winning L&C Essay
On the cover
*Visitors at Fort Clatsop*, John F. Clymer’s painting of coastal Indians calling on the Corps of Discovery at its quarters on the Pacific to trade, depicts what was more or less a daily scene during that dreary winter of 1805-06. Lewis and Clark’s presence in the Pacific Northwest would bear on later U.S. claims to the region. For more on the captains as agents of empire, see Robert J. Miller’s “The Doctrine of Discovery,” beginning on page 24. The reconstructed Fort Clatsop will be on the list of tour sites at the Foundation’s annual meeting next August 5-10 in Portland, Oregon. Courtesy Doris Clymer and The Clymer Museum of Art, Ellensburg, Washington.
I read with interest Professor Albert Furtwangler’s article “Neglected Classics” (WPO, May 2004). I am not sure, however, how “neglected” are the Robert Lawson-Peebles and Larzer Ziff volumes he cites. I consulted both for an article I wrote entitled “A New Vision of America: Lewis and Clark and the Emergence of the American Imagination,” which appeared in the Summer 2001 issue of Great Plains Quarterly. I made particular use of Lawson-Peebles’s Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America, citing it on six occasions, including an endnote that also mentions Furtwangler’s essay “Captain Lewis in a Crossfire of Witt: John Quincy Adams v. Joel Barlow” (anthologized in Voyages of Discovery, edited by James Ronda).

The thesis of my article is that the return of Lewis and Clark had a direct impact on the emergence of an American imagination, particularly in turning it away from a compulsive obsession with European cultural models and toward the development of an indigenous culture. This hypothesis is somewhat similar to Furtwangler’s assertion (mentioned on page 30 of his WPO article) that “Lewis’s journals hold the seed of a powerful new image. It is not merely a stark contrast to Old World categories, but the beginning of a new American pattern.” In any event, I fully concur with Furtwangler’s enthusiasm for these fine volumes by Lawson-Peebles and Ziff and hope others will consult them. By the way, while it is always difficult to recall the sequence of research that leads one to a particular volume, if memory serves me correctly, it was Gary Moulton who called the Lawson-Peebles work to my attention when I was in the early stages of my research. There simply seems to be no end to the magnitude of Gary’s contributions to L&C research.

JAMES R. HENDRIX, JR.
Atlanta, Ga.

“Neglected classics” not completely neglected

It is not correct, however, that Clark’s upbraiding of Charbonneau for striking Sacagawea is “left unmentioned altogether.” On pages 13 and 14, it is reported that at a camp at Rattlesnake Cliffs, on the Missouri headwaters, Clark wrote in his journal, “I checked my interpreter for striking his woman at their Dinner.” That one sentence has become the basis for depictions of Charbonneau as a habitual wife beater.

W. DALE NELSON
Laramie, WY.

What if” in the Helena Valley

I enjoyed Robert R. Hunt’s article “Fire Paths on the Lewis & Clark Trail” (WPO, May 2004). One use of fire by Indians he doesn’t mention was to cover a tactical retreat. The Corps of Discovery witnessed an example of this on July 20, 1805, when it was in the Helena Valley. There were Indians (probably Shoshones, perhaps Nez Perces) camped in the valley that day, and they set fire to the grass and fled after observing either the main river party, headed by Lewis, or an advance party led by Clark which was traveling on foot. Probably they mistook the explorers for a party of enemy Blackfeet. Both captains saw the fire and estimated the distance to it from their respective positions—Lewis was near today’s Black Sandy Campground and Clark was in the Spokane Hills, at the southeast edge of the valley. Using a map and a compass and swinging a couple of arcs based on these known positions and distances, you find that the arcs intersect at the west end of present-day Lake Helena, formed when Hauser Dam was built on the Missouri. The waters of Lake Helena back up into the drainage of Big Prickly Pear Creek, which drains the valley. The Indians were camped along the lower reaches of the creek. (Clark observed “a Smoke rise to our right up the Valley of the last Creek.” He named it Pryor’s Creek, after one of the corps’ sergeants, but the name was later changed to Big Prickly Pear Creek.)

Clark first sighted the Helena Valley the day before. On July 19, his party passed over the highlands of present-day

Charbonneau as “wife beater”

Danas Bar and camped on the river near Lakeside. From the highlands he observed “a butifull Vallie of great extent.” The Indians camped along Big Prickly Pear Creek went undetected, but what if Clark had seen them or more likely, smoke from their campfires) and then made peaceful contact? The Indians would doubtless have told him about the “Road to the Buffalo.” The Shoshone, Nez Perce, and Salish Indians all used this well-worn path, which runs up the Clark Fork and Blackfoot River and down the Dearborn River, to travel between their homelands west of the Continental Divide to the game-rich plains east of the Divide. The Mandan Indians, in fact, had told the captains about the Road to the Buffalo the previous winter, and Lewis’s party would follow it on the return journey, in 1806. It is many miles—and weeks of travel—shorter than the long, difficult route the corps took to reach Travelers’ Rest. If the captains could have successfully negotiated with the Indians for horses, I believe they would have backtracked to the Dearborn River and taken the Road to the Buffalo west across the Divide. This could have put them at Travelers’ Rest by mid-August. From there they could have crossed the Bitterroots before the snows of September.

RICHARD E. ALBERTS
Helena, Mont.

Missouri River’s source

Regarding the article by Donald Nell and Anthony Demetriades, “The Utmost Reaches of the Missouri,” in the November 2002 WPC and the letters in response to it by James R. Wolf in the issues of February 2003 and February 2004: I conducted a solo hike along Hell Roaring Creek from Red Rock Pass Road to the source of the Missouri on August 7, 2001, and reached coordinates substantially similar to those recorded by Wolf.

To guide me to the spot I used U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps (7.5-minute quadrangles). The Missouri’s source is located on the “Sawtooth Pk., Idaho-Montana” quadrangle, most recently updated in 1964 (pictured, above). This same map is available electronically on the Geographical Information System (G.I.S.) database. The coordinates plotted by computer for the source’s location are 44° 33’ 2.10” N, 111° 28’ 17.88” W. Accuracy of the computer-generated coordinates is +/- 0.1”. These coordinates agree closely with Wolf’s coordinates, by 0.08” and 1.3” respectively. The computer gives the source’s elevation as approximately 8,840 above mean sea level.

The source I reached at the head of Hell Roaring Creek was a single spring in the creek channel (pictured, left). I also noted several smaller springs immediately downstream. Above the source spring I noted medium-lush vegetation growing from rocks in a horseshoe-shaped opening on the mountainside. The rocks obviously had a source of water, but at this time of year (mid-summer) the only water present flowed from the springs in the creek channel.

I walked about an eighth of a mile farther upstream along a dry, narrow creek bed to a point where the dry bed stopped. This was the obvious beginning of the snowmelt channel. The top of the Continental Divide was about another eighth to a quarter of a mile beyond this point. There was no indication of any previously active spring upstream of the springs I found.

Another purpose of my visit was to verify the length of the Missouri River. According to the Montana D.N.R., the length of the Missouri from the outlet of Lillian Lake to its junction with the Mississippi is 2,615.4 miles. The G.I.S. gives 4.1 miles as the length from the source spring to the Lake Lillian outlet. Adding...
A productive year in the cause of Lewis & Clark

As I write this, my last column as president, I reflect back on this past year. It has been a good one, although busy at times. We have had Bicentennial Signature Events in Louisville; St. Louis; Hartford, Illinois; St. Charles, Missouri; and Kansas City, Kansas. On March 14, at a ceremony in St. Louis, the U.S. Mint released a new nickel commemorating Lewis and Clark, and followed this up on May 12 with a L&C commemorative silver dollar. Two days later, the U.S. Postal Service did its part for the bicentennial by releasing a commemorative 37-cent L&C stamp. A great year for Lewis and Clark history buffs and collectors! (To view or order these new issues, check the Web sites www.usmint.gov and www.usps.com.)

Also in May, past presidents Larry Epstein and Jane Henley and I, together with Carol Bronson and Wendy Raney of our Great Falls staff, journeyed to Washington, D.C., to participate in an educational event for the Lewis and Clark Congressional Caucus and the Learning First Alliance. Among those in attendance were Susan Selafani, assistant secretary of education, and Anna Bryant and Joan Schmidt, executive director and president-elect, respectively, of the National School Boards Association. In brief remarks, Gerard Baker, who at the time was wrapping up his job as superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, urged those present to “take the [Lewis and Clark] story to the children. … The story is for our children and grandchildren, and it says who we are as Americans.” As “keepers of the story,” our foundation must do just that—preserve the story of the Corps of Discovery and pass it on to future generations. Many thanks to Tom Fulton, Tony Fowler, Terri Purcell, and Jane Angelis for their help during our D.C. visit.

Other good things have happened this past year. Our Third Century Committee got off to an excellent start collecting and prioritizing suggestions. Its members are looking for input, and if you have ideas let them know. (Contact Jim Gramentine at gramentine@aol.com; 414-341-9317; 9630 N. Lamp-lighter Lane, Mequon, WI 53092.) We also made good progress in planning our soon-to-be-launched fund-raising drive. Our goal is to establish an endowment fund that will make us financially stable, insuring that we can carry on our mission into the 21st century. You’ll hear more about this in the months ahead.

Our great staff deserves special mention. Carol and the others in the Great Falls office do a wonderful job for us. Presidents and board members come and go, and it is the staff that provides stability and continuity—we couldn’t operate at the level we do without them.

Our great board and committee chairs deserve a word too. They guide and direct the staff, set policies, make decisions, and make everything work.

Last of all, I must thank my wife of forty years. Ione has taken messages, checked my calendar, made appointments for me, and listened to me time after time, hour after hour. I couldn’t have done it without her. Thanks, Ione.

—Ron Laycock
President, LCTHF

Portland in 2005

Mark your calendars: The Foundation’s 2005 annual meeting will take place next August 5-10 in Portland, Oregon. Activities planned include visits to the reconstructed Fort Clatsop and other L&C sites as well as lectures, a special kids’ program, and much more. Look for more information in the November WPO.
“For millennia, our people maintained and were sustained by a pristine and natural world of abundance…. The Creator provided everything we needed to live. In return, our sacred covenant was to respectfully use and forever protect these gifts.” So wrote the curators of Many Voices, Many Nations, the Circle of Tribal Advisors’ exhibition commemorating the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. This sacred covenant remains intact today, a heritage of the native peoples who greeted the Corps of Discovery two hundred years ago. It is a legacy we must all learn to claim.

Native American tradition abounds with stories of the intimate relationship between humans and the world of nature. Alan Pinkham, a Nez Perce elder, told me a story that demonstrates the commitment his people have to the animals, and by extension to all of nature, with whom they share the planet. Long ago, Alan related, human people and animal people lived together and spoke with each other. The animal people had been here longer, but the humans had more strength and power and began to kill the animals indiscriminately. The animal people called upon the Nez Perce, threatening to stop sharing their wisdom if the wanton slaughter did not cease. If the Nez Perce would agree to be the animals’ advocates in this regard, “then we will speak with you again.” So it was agreed, and so it has remained. Just one of many examples is the Nez Perces’ well-planned advocacy in saving the gray wolf from extinction.

Roberta Conner, vice president of the National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Council and a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, further illustrated this attitude. Bobbie lives on the reservation in eastern Oregon, a fertile region where luscious blueberries grow in abundance. She startled me one day by talking about the sacred blueberry bushes near her home. I grew up on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where I picked blueberries every summer. But these were from prospective blueberry-pie bushes, blueberry-muffin bushes; I’d never known a sacred blueberry bush. Bobbie smiled tolerantly. “Those blueberry bushes have sustained my people for generations. They give life and have from time immemorial. Of course they are sacred.”

Closer to my own home in St. Louis on the Mississippi River, I found the same intimate connection. Evelyne Voelker was a Comanche who lived across the river in Illinois. Before she died, in 2002, she often came across the river, frequently to visit me. She considered the Mississippi a sacred, powerful force, despite its polluted water and the construction encroaching along its banks. On a particularly harried morning, Evelyne told me in the relative calm of my office how she focused on the river as a way of settling her thoughts, getting in better tune with the world, and banishing any evil from her mind and her work. The river was a reminder to her of things beyond a lifetime, of things that endure—an emblem of strength and power far beyond the wisdom of humans. Evelyne had her own sacred covenant with this strong brown god.

It may not be possible, or even practical, for all of us to adopt the worldview of the American Indian. But discovering this perspective and examining it will show us that we can re-think issues and philosophies and even beliefs. In the Indian principle of the sacredness of the earth and all its forms of life, there are elements that will serve to save our planet, ourselves, and our descendants from the dangers that loom in the careless neglect of spiritual connection.

The land traversed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition has been radically altered by human action. Members of the expedition would not even recognize most of it, so different are the flora and fauna, the rivers, the landscape. As we relive the adventure, let us use the lessons, in both the burdens and the treasures, bequeathed to us by the past and link the expedition with our own present. How did our predecessors treat these lands? How did their decisions affect the land and its inhabitants? What choices were made that enhanced and improved that “pristine and natural world of abundance”? And, as we join the journey and continue the adventure, what can we do now to keep this sacred covenant?

Upcoming Signature Events
Two more National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Events are scheduled for 2004:

Ooeti Sakowin Experience: Remember and Educating begins August 27 and concludes September 26 in and around the Oacoma/Chamberlain area of South Dakota. Tours to various tribes in South Dakota and a festival of various cultural activities are among the activities planned. For more information, see the Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates’ Web site, www.attribal.com. ATTA seeks to enhance and promote tourism as a means of economic development while maintaining respect for tribal traditions and lands.

Circle of Cultures: Time of Renewal and Exchange will be held October 22-31 in North Dakota. The event highlights the cordial welcome the expedition received from the Upper Missouri’s earth-lodge peoples and features a high-tech “virtual village” of the Mandan Indians, replica earth lodges, Native American interpretations and demonstrations, and presentations by re-enactors and scholars. More information is available at www.circleofcultures.com.

—Robert R. Archibald
President, Bicentennial Council
Each segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail has its own story, its own significance, and its own issues of concern. Just as Lewis and Clark respected the various American Indian tribes they met, the divergent landscapes, the nature of plants and animals, so must we. Members of the Foundation come together as one group to commemorate, revere, and protect the story and the trail of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but in doing so, we must acknowledge all the differences that make each state, reservation, community, and site along the trail unique.

The stories of the expedition are rooted in tradition, as are members of the Foundation who serve as keepers of the story and stewards of the trail. As we move forward into the third century of this great American story, we must be flexible in how we continue our mission. We have greater resources and greater numbers than ever before. We can achieve our goals from one end of the trail to the other and in many places off the trail.

The Foundation is developing several stewardship programs to promote our stated mission, which concludes with the words, “The Foundation serves as advocate, interpreter and protector of the Trail.” We must recognize that the exact same program will not work on the Lolo Pass and in St. Louis. We must be flexible in adapting our program objectives to different areas while preserving our overall goals.

Our new Chapter Partnership Program will allow chapters for the first time to establish formal relationships with one another and share resources and ideas.

Partnerships with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service will allow us for the first time as a foundation to formally carry out our mission as stewards of the trail. For decades, chapters individually have conducted stewardship projects. They have served as interpreters, performed cleanup projects, and monitored segments of the trail. Our Trail Watch program will allow chapters to work with land-management agencies to protect and preserve the trail and be compensated for their efforts.

The Trail Watch program will begin along some of the more remote and pristine stretches of the trail which are likely to see increased visitation during the L&C Bicentennial. If interest and participation in the program are strong, it will expand to other segments of the trail and will be modified, where necessary, to address the issues and concerns of various landscapes and populations. Eventually, Trail Watch could include interpretive programming. How the program grows and evolves will depend on Foundation members. You will help set the direction of the program. We are looking to you to tell us what concerns exist along the trail and what needs must be addressed.

The Foundation is also working with a program in Montana called Undaunted Stewardship (see page 40). The program has developed heritage-preservation interpretive sites at private ranches across the state and wants to partner with the Foundation to protect and preserve those Lewis and Clark sites. Undaunted Stewardship will pay an annual fee to chapters that monitor the interpretive sites on a regular basis. This marks the first time the Foundation will enter into such an agreement and opens the door for similar partnerships elsewhere along the trail.

As we move toward the third century of Lewis and Clark, the Foundation is strengthening its partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies and with private organizations. Many agencies and organizations are looking to the Foundation for leadership, strength, and vision.

The Foundation’s legacy is in your hands. Let’s work together to ensure its success.

—Wendy Raney
Director, Field Operations
Portage Cache Store
Pickup 5/04, p. 55

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Kentucky was going mad for land. The Continental Army veterans migrating to Kentucky waving their land grants were followed by succeeding waves of speculators waving conflicting land claims and attorneys waving lawsuits. The surveyors’ custom of marking out tracts with ephemeral features like buildings and bushes led to overlapping, or “shingled,” land claims and voluminous litigation.

Thanks in part to George Rogers Clark’s grants of thousands of acres in Indiana and Kentucky, the family was land-rich. Just one of his claims at the mouth of the Tennessee River was for seventy-four thousand acres. The problem was that George’s many creditors were now closing in. Most prominent among them was Laurent Bazadone, a Spanish merchant who had arrived at Vincennes when George and his men were short on supplies there in 1786. The general’s regiment had illegally confiscated Bazadone’s goods.

Bazadone’s lawsuit was just one of three major actions against George. He was also being sued by a prominent Kentuckian, Humphrey Marshall, over a contract to sell two large claims of land, and by the heirs of Captain William Shannon, a quartermaster in his old regiment. During his 1779 campaign, George had endorsed vouchers drawn by Shannon in order to supply his army. But the state of Virginia later penuriously refused to pay for either the flour for Clark’s men or the general’s own salary.

“I have given the United States half the territory they possess,” George later wrote bitterly, “and for them to suffer me to remain in poverty, in consequence of it will not redound much to their honor hereafter.”

Since George was increasingly disabled by alcohol, it fell to the entire Clark family to solve his problems. They

Excerpted from William Clark and the Shaping of the West, by Landon Y. Jones, published by Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. Copyright © 2004 by Landon Y. Jones. All rights reserved.
divided up the task. Brother Jonathan would lobby for redress with the Virginia state assembly in Richmond, the capital. Brother Edmund would supply ready cash from his gristmill and mercantile businesses in Virginia.

The job of settling the lawsuits fell to brother William. Just over a month after his return from the army, William was on horseback riding through Kentucky, surveying George’s holdings and attempting to extinguish his debts in return for land. In the process, many of the properties were transferred into William’s name; this protected them from George’s creditors and allowed the younger brother to sell them without complication.

The Clarks were not without assets. The richest 10 percent of Kentuckians in 1800 owned one-third of the land, and the Clarks were firmly placed among this planter elite. Daughter Lucy was living with her husband, William Croghan, in their elegant Georgian manor house, Locust Grove, just a few miles from Mulberry Hill. Daughter Fanny had remarried and was now the wife of a wealthy merchant, Charles Mynn Thruston, Sr. She would soon move to his plantation thirty miles upriver.

In addition to land, the family’s other chief investment was in human property. Enslaved African-Americans were present in only one of four bluegrass households, though their numbers increased as the forests and canebrakes were cleared and the region moved from mixed farming to a labor-intensive tobacco-based economy. Of Kentucky’s total population of 73,677 just before statehood in 1792, some 12,430 were African-American slaves.

Like other tidewater Virginians who settled in Kentucky, the Clarks were convinced that slaves were essential to running a successful plantation. John Clark owned about two dozen slaves at Beargrass Creek, considerably more than the average Kentuckian. Though the phrase “sold down the river” originated in the Ohio Valley, the Clarks chose to view their chattel as fixed rather than liquid assets. They rarely sold slaves and almost never freed them.

William rode throughout the area during a second hard winter, 1796-97, when temperatures fell to 18 degrees below zero at Cincinnati and the Ohio was frozen over for a full month. By the following summer, however, he had made some progress. On August 18, he wrote Edmund...
that he was “doing what parts of [George’s] business I could, which I found a very unfinished Situation.” William was planning to go to Vincennes to deal with the Bazadone lawsuit there, “which I fear will go against [George].” He then added glumly, “After which I shall not [have] Money of my own to attend any longer.”

Two days after he wrote Edmund, William set out for Vincennes along the old buffalo trace connecting a string of mineral, or salt, springs. Along the way, he camped with some Delaware Indians along the White River. At Vincennes, then a community of fifty houses along the Wabash, he learned that he would need to push on to visit the lawyer John Rice Jones in the Illinois country opposite St. Louis. George was delighted with his brother’s decision. “I am pleased for two reasons,” he told William in a letter. “First you may perhaps do some valuable business and also see a Countrey that it may hereafter be of an advantage to you to be acquainted with.”

Clark and his companions made it to Kaskaskia in five days, one of which they spent retrieving their runaway horses and riding them bareback thirty miles back to camp. On September 6, 1797, Clark crossed the Mississippi and stayed as the guest of François Vallé II, the Spanish commandant in Ste. Geneviève, a village founded by the French in the late 1740s. He recrossed to visit Fort de Chartres, once the largest fortification in North America, but by the time of his visit the fort was occupied only by lizards and foraging deer.

Farther north was Cahokia, a small village in the so-called American Bottom, an alluvial floodplain, three to seven miles wide, that stretched for nearly a hundred miles along the east bank of the Mississippi. With topsoils thirty feet deep, the region had produced huge corn crops annually for a thousand years. The remnants of the ancient Mississippian culture were evident in the six square miles of mounds, the biggest of which covered sixteen acres. As many as forty thousand people had lived there around 1200 A.D., making the complex not only the largest concentration of humans north of Mexico but also larger at the time than London, which had a population of thirty thousand. Clark noticed “the remains of some ancient city,” but there was little else to hold his attention in Cahokia, a town of “low & mean houses and much straggled.”

Of greater interest was the village he viewed across the Mississippi. It was St. Louis, officially Spanish but intensely French in character. A thousand residents—a heady mixture of French Creoles, French Canadians, mixed-race métis, Indians, and black slaves—mingled on three principal streets above a low limestone bluff. Clark “was delighted from the ferry with the Situation of this town … commanding a butiful view of the river.”

He was warmly welcomed, no doubt because many residents still remembered George Rogers Clark’s role assisting in the defense of the village against the British and Indians in 1780. He dined with the Spanish lieutenant governor, Zenon Trudeau, and met the Chouteaus, the French founding family who so dominated the fur trade that they were something like the Medici of the Middle Mississippi.

That night, William went to a ball thrown by the Chouteaus, admiring, as he noted in his journal, “all the fine girls & buckish Gentlemen.” French dancing was scandalous, since gentlemen put their arms around ladies’ waists in public; what was more, local women often applied rose-petal rouge to their cheeks and lampblack to their eyes. William did not get back to his lodgings at Charles Gratiot’s house until dawn.

Soon Clark was heading home despite “pressing inverstations to stay.” Along the way he was delayed by “a violent head ache” and outbreaks of “several large inflammatory sores on my legs & thighs.” The infected boils—a chronic problem for Clark—were no doubt exacerbated by many hours on horseback. A few months later, after recovering from “a long and lingering fe-
ver,” Clark in a letter to Edmund estimated that “I have rode for Bro. George in the course of this year upwards of 3000 miles . . . continually on the pad attempting to save him.” 8

TO NEW ORLEANS AND BEYOND

In addition to clearing George’s debts, William was helping manage their father’s plantation at Mulberry Hill. Their largest cash crop was Virginia-style bulgar tobacco, of which not just the leaves but the entire stalk was harvested and dried. Fortunately for the Clarks, the markets at New Orleans were once again open. Threatened by war with Britain, Spain had sought to mollify the Americans by reopening their trade. In the Treaty of San Lorenzo in October 1795 (also known as Pinckney’s Treaty), Spain granted Americans the right to ship their goods to New Orleans and beyond, without paying duties, and accepted the 31st parallel as the northern border of West Florida, thereby abandoning their claims to the so-called Yazoo Strip on the Lower Mississippi. In effect, Spain was beginning to withdraw from a territory it realized was too large to protect. As its minister Manuel Godoy put it, “You can’t put doors on open country.” 9

On March 9, 1798, William hired a crew at the Falls of the Ohio, loaded a flatboat with hogsheads of Clark family tobacco, and pushed off for New Orleans. In a life of journeys, Clark was beginning what would be his longest trip to date. He seemed to anticipate this. As always, he carried a notebook—but in this one he set down more than the usual quotidian entries. In the opening pages he had written a set of maxims, most likely gathered from other sources. Some of them were commonplace-book principles familiar to any follower of the Enlightenment:

Man cannot make principles, he can only discover them.

The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason.

I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy. 10

Another seemed to reflect more personally on his lack of formal schooling:

Learning does not consist in the Knowledge of Language, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names.

The last in the list could have been his lifelong credo:

Every person of learning is finally his own teacher.

The boat floated down the river against gusty winds that frequently forced them to tie up and wait out the gales.

March 11: “Wind rose blew & snowed all the evening.”

March 14: “Wind rose & obliged us to land.”

At Fort Massac, Clark bought a canoe and was joined by four other boats to make up a flotilla. Even in the best circumstances, the Mississippi’s currents were a formidable challenge for small craft. When Charles Dickens entered the Mississippi on his American tour 44 years later, he was appalled at the sight:

An enormous ditch, sometimes two or three miles wide, running liquid mud, six miles an hour: its strong and frothy current choked and obstructed everywhere by huge logs and whole forest trees: now twining themselves together in great rafts, from the interstices of which a sedgy lazy foam works up, to float upon the water’s top; now rolling past like monstrous bodies, their tangled roots showing like matted hair; now glancing singly by like giant leeches; and now writhing round and round in the vortex of some small whirlpool, like wounded snakes. 11

Clark bought a passport at New Madrid to enter Spanish territory, even as his boats continued to struggle against the gusty winds sweeping across the water. On March 23 he wrote, “The wind now verry high obliged us to land—with much Difficuelty & Danger the boates much Scattered.”

They passed the first, second, and third Chickasaw Bluffs and navigated the three-mile stretch of swirling currents and rapids called the Devil’s Race-Ground. On March 28, they arrived at the newly built Fort Adams, just above the high ground at the fourth bluff. Clark wrote a letter to William Croghan containing the results of the survey he’d made for him at the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi. “Capt. Lewis promes to Deliver it,” Clark wrote in his journal. “He will set out from [Chickasaw Bluffs] about the 15 or 20 of Apr.” 12 (This courier was not Meriwether Lewis, then an army paymaster in Charlottesville, but most likely another Virginian, Captain Thomas Lewis.)

Clark floated on downstream, beset by more foul weather:

March 30: “Raned hard set out early wind rose we con- tinued landed on a Sharp Point a Dangerous part of the river. One Boat far behind and cant get in at the port . . . the bank falling in all night.”

March 31: “A violent storm all night it litioned [light- ninged] for at least 2 hours incessently as one continued blaze.”
Disaster finally came on April 1. Another monstrous wind rose up, driving Clark’s canoe into an embedded stump that smashed the bow. The canoe then hit a “sawyer”—a partially submerged tree trunk—which “nearly sunk her.” Finally a third trunk “held her fast.” In his notebook Clark wrote resignedly, “Here I am at 12 o’clock canoe stove.”

It got worse. One of the trader’s boats, weighed down by its full load of merchandise, was sunk by the same sawyer Clark hit. The surviving flatboats were then driven up against the bank by the raging current, “a very dangerous situation.” Surveying his bedraggled men, Clark wrote, “my hands frightend.” Not until the next day were they able to dislodge the snagged boat and retrieve a few of the trader’s goods that had washed ashore.

They proceeded on downstream, amid driving rains, violent windstorms, thick fogs, and occasional alcoholic hazes. “All the hands Drunk in the contractors boat,” Clark tersely noted one day. During the journey, he drew a sequence of freehand maps of the course of the Lower Mississippi that are astonishing in their accuracy and draftsmanship.

As they neared New Orleans, Clark noticed traders’ keelboats passing almost every day. Finally, on April 24, he berthed in New Orleans—presumably avoiding the plight of less careful boatmen who, caught in the powerful current, would miss the eddy at the harbor and be swept past the city. Clark rented a warehouse to store his tobacco and successfully located a buyer. With the proceeds from his tobacco sales, Clark paid his men and bought a barrel apiece of sugar and coffee, which he shipped back to Mulberry Hill.

After the harrowing trip downriver, Clark may have hoped for a few balmy weeks in New Orleans, the capital of Louisiana and already the most exotic European city in North America. Enormous poplar trees lined the levee, where Frenchwomen strolled along a raised gravel walk. At the heart of the city was the Place d’Armes, fronted by church and state: the St. Louis Cathedral and the Cabildo, seat of the local government; both had been erected in the past two years. William stayed in Madame Chabot’s boardinghouse on Conti Street, whose Irish landlady catered to English and American visitors. He also would have observed in New Orleans a new, more brutal type of slave society based on the emerging markets for sugar and cotton. These plantation slaves worked in the fields throughout the year, generating enormous profits for their owners.

A week after he arrived, Clark noted in his journal that there was “an uproar about a War with the United States & Spa[j]n France &c.” This was the result of the so-called XYZ Affair, in Paris—a diplomatic incident that had inflamed anti-French Federalists in the United States and spilled over into an undeclared maritime war. Hundreds of French and American armed merchant ships—privateers—were roaming the seas seizing ships, sailors, and plunder. President John Adams reported that three hundred American vessels had been seized on the high seas by French warships. On May 3, 1798, George Washington had been called out of retirement to command the army, and a new naval department had been authorized.

In the midst of the Quasi-War with France, Clark was making plans to return to the East Coast by sea. On June 19, 1798, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, issued a passport for “Guillermo Clark” to travel from New Orleans to Philadelphia on the schooner Active. But delayed perhaps by the uproar with France, or more likely by weather, Clark never did sail on the Active. (Thirty years later, the ship was involved in one of the most bizarre incidents in nautical history. Anchored in the rich whaling grounds off the Maine coast, the Active suddenly began churning through the water with no visible means of propulsion. A whale had become entangled in its anchor chain and towed the vessel to Mount Desert Island, where the dumbfounded crew finally cut the anchor free.)
Waiting for another ship, Clark purchased five horses in New Orleans and took them upriver to Natchez in hopes of making some ready cash. At that time, Natchez-Under-the-Hill was the roughest vice district in North America, a gathering place for the flotsam of boatmen, traders, gamblers, and prostitutes coming down the river. The botanist John Bradbury wrote of the town: “There is not, perhaps, in the world a more dissipated place.” Here Clark sold the horses at an army camp, played some billiards, and gave nine dollars to “a pore sick man.” Two days later, he retreated downriver to New Orleans on a pirogue.

On July 27, Clark boarded a six-gun American vessel, the Star, bound for Philadelphia. Escorting it was a two-masted brig carrying eight guns. The two ships departed, passing Spanish ships of war moving up the river, and reached La Balize, the fortified lighthouse the French had built at the entrance to the Mississippi. There they waited for favoring winds to take them across the sandbar at the mouth of the river.

It was a time when suspicions rose quickly. A French privateer with four cannons and fifty men approached and anchored overnight near the Star. Clark and the Americans lay awake the entire night, “all prepared” for an attack. But when the morning came without event, Clark and the Star’s owner asked permission to board the French vessel. On it they found three American prisoners, sea captains whose ships had been captured. Would the French captain mind if Mr. Clark had breakfast with his countrymen? Mais non. It resulted in an extraordinary scene: at this unique confluence of nations and international tensions, Clark sat down at petit déjeuner with three captured American captains on a French ship in Spanish waters.

On July 7, the Star moved about a mile downstream—an act that generated much alarm on the Spanish galley patrolling the mouth of the river. “We went to shore,” Clark said, “and the officer . . . informed us that he had orders to stop us. This information astonish us as we knew of no cause.” The Americans soon learned that they had been accused of “insulting” the commander of La Balize and of making “threats” to the French privateer. Two of their party who had returned to New Orleans to inquire about the cause for the detention were escorted to prison and kept there for 24 hours. That gesture evidently satisfied the Spanish, since a letter soon arrived from Governor Gayoso stating that the ship could continue on its voyage, “as the Spanesh Nation is in perfeect harmony with the US.”

The course the Star had charted would take it through the Straits of Florida past Cuba and up the Atlantic seaboard to Delaware Bay. A few days out, a sail appeared to windward. “We all prepared for action,” noted Clark, only to learn that the feared French privateer was actually a Spanish ship bound for Havana. Instead of bullets and cannonballs, they encountered storms and heavy seas in the Gulf. Ever succinct, Clark wrote, “I am sick.” Other sails appeared and disappeared on the horizon without incident—and eventually the island of Cuba floated through the haze on the southeast.

On September 2, they were approached by an English ship-of-the-line, the brig HMS Hero, flying the Union Jack and armed with sixteen cannons and 150 men. A lieutenant climbed aboard and informed the men of the Star that they were in the Dry Tortugas, westward of the Florida Keys. Antipathy toward the English ran strong in the Clark family, but in this ever-shifting world of opportunistic empires, the Royal Navy was now helping to protect American shipping against the French. If Clark held any negative opinions about the nation most Americans blamed for the Indian “depredations” north of the Ohio, he did not note them in his journal.

It could have been because he was sick, tired, and hungry. “We are much alarmed about provisions,” he wrote, “having consumed the greater part of our stock.” So, on September 4, 1798, at latitude 24 degrees 28 minutes—a location just off the present-day resort of Islamorada in
the Florida Keys—Clark took matters into his own hands: he went deep-sea fishing. During a single day’s trolling in an area now famous for sport fish like bonefish and tarpon, he caught “a no. of fish dolfin, skipjacks, grupers snappers &c.” The “dolfin” William Clark caught in 1798 is known today as mahimahi, though how it was prepared or appreciated we do not know. The accomplished hunter of deer, bear, and bison did not record his opinion.

The Star cleared the Keys shortly before the Caribbean became the scene of the most intense naval action of the undeclared war. On November 20, a French ship seized an American schooner off Guadeloupe. Two months later, the United States Navy’s first frigate, Constellation, turned its 38 guns against the French Insurgente, defeating the larger vessel in an hour-long battle off the island of Nevis.

As the Star made its way past the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Clark diagnosed himself “sick” or “verry sick” for thirteen consecutive days, at one point bleakly adding, “Am so reduced can scarcely walk.” He may have been seasick, though the evidence suggests something else; Clark later said that he had lived “in bad health” during his civilian years. The ship’s men sustained themselves with rainwater collected in sailcloths and with “Sugar Coffee & limes” sent over by a passing schooner.

In late September, the Star followed a high tide and favorable winds over the bar at Cape May and entered Delaware Bay. But its destination could no longer be Philadelphia, which had been devastated by an epidemic of yellow fever. Congress had adjourned and hastily departed in July, and by September 40,000 people had fled the city, Of those who remained, 3,600 died.

Instead, the Star docked at New Castle, Delaware, a harbor bustling with forty ships. Among them were the soon-to-be-victorious Constellation and a 20-gun schooner, the Delaware, commanded by the already famous Captain Stephen Decatur. Two months earlier, the Delaware had seized the French schooner Croyable off the New Jersey coast, and now the captured vessel also lay at anchor at New Castle.

Setting foot on land for the first time in nearly six weeks, Clark discovered that New Castle was thronged with refugees from the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia. He and a companion hired a horse and buggy to take them to the town of Christiana, Delaware, and on to Elkton, Maryland, and Havre de Grace, on the west bank of the Susquehanna. At 11 P.M., they caught a scheduled stagecoach for Baltimore.

In the winter and spring, coach travel in the new republic was a problematic affair. The previous year, Francis Baily had traveled the same road Clark did in one of the typical coaches of the day, a covered buckboard with twelve passengers crammed onto four seats, all facing forward. “The roads, which in general were very bad, would in some places be impassable, so that we would be obliged to get out and walk a considerable distance, and sometimes to “put our shoulders to the wheel,” Baily recalled. He wound up walking six of the twelve miles to Havre de Grace through mud, mire, and pig slop up to his ankles. Still, Baily appreciated the enforced democracy of the road: “The member of congress is placed by the side of the shoemaker who elected him; they fraternize together, and converse with familiarity.”

Immediately upon his arrival in Baltimore, however, William Clark found himself thrust into democracy run amok. A congressional election was finishing up, marked by unusual vindictiveness. The incumbent, General Samuel Smith, a hero of the Delaware campaign during the Revolution, had opposed the Alien and Sedition Acts passed earlier that year—an unpopular stand in Federalist Baltimore. His opponent, James Winchester, vehemently castigated Smith while inflaming public opinion against the French.

When the polls opened on election day—Monday, October 1, 1798—the usual politicking, which revolved around free whiskey, barbecues, and rallies, soon degenerated into what Clark called “a riot,” with sailors fight-
ing in the streets and one man killed. It was “a horrid seen for an American,” he lamented.

The next day was no calmer, but by Wednesday Clark could note that “the opposition not so outrageous as yesterday.” Clark’s political sentiments were clear enough: he was a Virginian, a Jeffersonian, and a Republican. He admired the French, feared the British, and shared the usual backcountry suspicions of President Adams and Northeasterners. When Smith was finally proclaimed the victor, Clark noted with satisfaction that the general was carried through the torchlit streets for several hours on a chair sprouting laurel branches, “With Shouts Drums & Instruments of all kind playing after him.”

Clark spent a leisurely week in Baltimore, boarding at Evans’s Tavern, the same place newly elected Vice President Jefferson stayed during his trips from Monticello to Philadelphia. One night he went to the theater. Then, on October 9, he rose at 3 A.M. to catch the coach for the Federal City.

The new nation’s capital was a work in progress—only one wing of the Capitol had been built, though “the Presidents house was nearly finished.” Clark was delighted with Washington City, “the most elegant situation I ever saw.” But he proceeded on to Alexandria and Fredericksburg (where he saw another play), and to his brother Edmund’s farm in Spotsylvania, Virginia.

From there he would head home to Mulberry Hill. Clark was nearing the end of an eight-month journey in the course of which he descended the largest river system on the continent, sailed in a tall ship through the Gulf of Mexico and up the Atlantic seaboard, and traveled by stagecoach and on horseback across the Appalachians. He had covered about 4,400 miles—a distance, as it happens, more than a thousand miles greater than that from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River. Along the way, he encountered a potpourri of flatboatmen and Indians on the rivers, French Creoles and Spanish officials in New Orleans, British naval officers on the high seas, and crab-cake politicians in Baltimore.

As he traveled from Virginia to Kentucky, retracing his family’s original journey across the mountains to Redstone, Pennsylvania, and down the Monongahela and Ohio rivers, Clark continued to write. But while he was penning the last paragraph on the last page in the journal chronicling his trip, his usually flowing handwriting suddenly tightened and cramped:

Stay a few days at Col. Booths & a few <2> days at Redstone, & at Wheeling, also Chilacothe. Arrive at my father’s the 24 of Dec. at dusk —

He was unable to bring himself to complete the last sentence. What he could not write was that on the same day he returned to Mulberry Hill—Christmas Eve, 1798—his mother, Ann Rogers Clark, had died at the age of sixty-eight.


NOTES


2 Letter dated August 18, 1797. Lyman Copeland Draper Manuscripts, 2-L-45, Archives Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

3 George Rogers Clark to William Clark, September 1, 1797. William Clark Papers, Missouri Historical Society.


5 Ibid., p. 292. September 10, 1797.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid. September 12-18, 1797.

8 Draper 2-l. Letter dated December 14, 1797.


10 William Clark’s Notebook, 1798-1801; Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, Ellis Library, University of Missouri, Columbia. All subsequent journal entries are from this source.


12 Clark’s 1798 Journal, undated entry.


16 Ibid., p. 272.
Meriwether Lewis and William Clark met the fur trader René Jusseaume in the fall of 1804 at the Knife River villages, in what is now North Dakota, and hired him as an interpreter. Jusseaume, his Indian wife, and their two children, a boy and a girl, wintered with the captains at Fort Mandan. When Lewis ministered to Sacagawea during the birth of her son, Pomp, it was Jusseaume who famously suggested that a potion made from the ground-up rattle of a rattlesnake might ease the delivery. A year and a half later, when the Lewis and Clark stopped at Knife River on their way home from the Pacific, Jusseaume helped the captains convince the Mandan chief Sheheke to visit Washington, D.C. The trader and his family also accompanied Sheheke to the nation’s capital.

That, in a nutshell, is Jusseaume’s story as it relates to the Lewis and Clark Expedition and its aftermath. He is one of those characters whose contributions to the Corps of Discovery, although mainly peripheral, still have some importance, and are easy to overlook.

Many questions remain about him. For starters, we can’t even be sure about the spelling of his name, which in contemporary accounts is rendered Jusseaume, Jessaume, Jussomme, Jessomme, Gissom, Jussom, Jissom, Jessiaume, and Grousseaume. The name in its various guises crops up frequently in documents of the early fur trade, and what people had to say about the man attached to it was not always flattering. John Evans, a Welshman who visited the Mandans in 1796, accused him of attempted murder, and Alexander Henry the Younger, a North West Company trader who encountered Jusseaume in 1806, thought him an “old sneaking cheat” whose “character is more despicable than the worst among the natives.” Noting that Jusseaume’s Mandan wife and children “dress and live like the natives,” Henry observed that Jusseaume himself, while retaining “the outward appearance of a Christian,” had principles “much worse” than those of any Mandan. Henry conceded Jusseaume’s linguistic ability—he spoke Mandan “tolerably well”—but otherwise dismissed him as a man “possessed of every superstition natural to those people, nor is he different in every mean, dirty trick they have acquired from intercourse with the set of scoundrels who visit these parts—some to trade and others to screen themselves from justice, as the laws of their
own country would not fail to punish them for their numerous offenses.”

Jusseaume’s fellow interpreter Toussaint Charbonneau (Sacagawea’s husband) was viewed in much the same terms. John Luttig, a clerk at Fort Manuel in 1812-13, regarded both Jusseaume and Charbonneau as perfidious “rascals” who deserved hanging for stirring up Indians against American traders.4

Whatever Jusseaume’s failings, at least some of these assessments may reflect a certain prejudice. Jusseaume, Charbonneau, and other so-called “squaw men” bridged a cultural divide. Although valued for their intimate knowledge of native languages and cultures, paradoxically they were also scorned for what was seen as their excessive fraternizing with Indians.5

Jusseaume also failed to impress William Clark, at least at their first meeting, which took place on October 27, 1804. Evidently, he tried to ingratiate himself with the American officer by claiming that General George Rogers Clark, the captain’s older brother and a hero of the Revolution, had employed him to spy on British troops in the Old Northwest. Clark appears to have doubted this assertion, although it may well have been true. In his journal entry about their meeting he described Jusseaume as “Cunin artfull an insonear” (cunning, artful, and insincere). Setting aside reservations about his character, he and Lewis—who doubtless shared Clark’s opinion—decided to hire him anyway, as “we think he maybe made use full to us … as an interperter.”6

Nor has Jusseaume fared well with some scholars and writers. In his 1893 edition of Nicholas Biddle’s 1814 paraphrase of the explorers’ journals, Elliott Coues refrained from attacking him in the way he did Charbonneau (whom he branded a “fool” and a “coward”), but he pointedly concurred with Henry’s remarks.7 In *Breeds and Half-Breeds*, his 1969 study of the fur trade, Gordon Speck included a short chapter on Jusseaume. Speck’s citations are sparse, but not his demeaning commentary. Jusseaume, he writes, “could seldom deliver the quality of his services which he constantly boasted.” He was a man who “skulked on the fringes of great events, a sort of historical jackal—too ignoble to praise, too conspicuous to ignore.” In short, “about as reprehensible a character as the interpreter-guide clan ever turned up.”8
EARLY CAREER IN THE FUR TRADE

The first Jusseaumes arrived in Canada at the beginning of the 18th century from Saintonge, France. René was born on August 5, 1753, in Montreal. Sometime in his early-to-mid-twenties he accompanied a fur trader named Pierre Calvet to Sault Ste. Marie, a strategic trading post at the junction of Lakes Superior and Huron. Like many French-Canadians, Calvet was known to have sympathized with the American cause. Jusseaume could well have shared Calvet’s views, which would lend credence to his claim that he had spied on the British for George Rogers Clark.10

By the early 1790s, Jusseaume had moved farther west. Documents place him on the Assiniboine River, in present-day Manitoba, where two great British-Canadian enterprises, the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company, were vying for control of the western fur trade. Since the 1780s, the rival firms had been sending trading parties from posts on the Assiniboine to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages, located two hundred miles south on the upper Missouri, in present-day North Dakota. Because the villages were in Louisiana Territory, at the time part of Spain’s North American empire, these incursions set off an international conflict between the British and Spanish.11

Jusseaume played a role in that struggle as one of the first independent traders among the Mandans and Hidatsas, who lived in an assemblage of earth-lodge villages where the Knife River joins the Missouri. These traders resided with the Indians and acted as intermediaries between them and the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies, bartering goods acquired from the Canadians for horses, buffalo robes, and pelts.12

With goods supplied by the North West Company, Jusseaume made his first visit to the Knife River villages in the spring of 1793. He returned to the Canadian posts the following spring to reprovision. That fall, he led a party of Nor’westers back to the upper Missouri to spend another winter among the earth-lodge people.13 The small fort they built between the Mandan and Hidatsa villages became the first trading post in what is now North Dakota.14 Some of the goods Jusseaume brought with him from Canada were intended for a resident trader named Menard—sometimes called Old Menard or Manoah (his first name is unknown)—a French-Canadian who had been living with the Mandans since the 1770s.15

One of Jusseaume’s standing orders at his post was to hoist the British flag on Sundays. The post stood on what was nominally Spanish soil. It isn’t known if Jusseaume decided to fly the Union Jack on his own or at the behest of his British-Canadian sponsors. What is known is that after he returned to Canada in April 1795, two of his men deserted and wound up in St. Louis, where they informed His Spanish Majesty’s authorities of this latest affront to their sovereignty.16

To counter British moves into upper Louisiana, the Spanish governor in St. Louis had already chartered the Missouri Company, a fur-trade enterprise whose agents included a former school teacher turned adventurer named Jean Baptiste Truteau.17 In June 1794 the company had sent Truteau with a party up the Missouri to establish a trading post among the Mandans and Hidatsas. When Truteau’s expedition was blocked by the Teton Sioux (the same tribe that, 10 years later, nearly stopped Lewis and Clark), it retreated downriver to spend the winter in what is now southern South Dakota. Truteau by now had learned about the activities of Jusseaume and Menard. In his capacity as an agent of a Spanish-chartered company, he dispatched a message asking them to cease trading with the Indians.18

Truteau remained at the Arikara village, and Jusseaume and Menard ignored his request. But the Missouri Company wasn’t done with what it regarded as their illegal ventures.

MACKAY AND EVANS

The authorities in St. Louis next turned to James Mackay, a Scotsman who had become a Spanish subject. An experienced trader who had worked for both the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies and had first visited the Mandans and Hidatsas in 1787, Mackay was employed by the Missouri Company as principal explorer and director of its affairs in Indian country.19 Mackay was aided by John Evans, a Welshman who had come to North America in search of the legendary Welsh Indians, thought by some to be living on the upper Missouri. Mackay and Evans led a party up the river in August 1795. They spent the winter near present-day Homer, Nebraska, where they built a fort and named it for the Spanish King, Charles IV.20 The following year, Mackay explored the prairies west of Fort Charles while Evans proceeded on to Knife River. He reached the villages on September 26, 1796, distributed gifts, delivered a speech extolling the benefits of trading with the Spanish, took possession of Jusseaume’s
Post—which he renamed Fort Mackay—and raised the flag of Spain.\textsuperscript{21}

Jusseaume had temporarily returned to Canada and wasn’t around to witness the seizure of his post. He had left a supply of furs there, and after learning of Evans’s actions he was eager to get them back. So too were his North West Company underwriters, who had lost money funding his enterprise and viewed the furs as collateral. Jusseaume and two of the company’s factors, Cuthbert Grant and John Macdonell, all wrote letters to Evans requesting that the furs be returned. Jusseaume was also concerned about his Mandan wife and children, who were living at the post, and asked Evans to look after them.\textsuperscript{22}

The record doesn’t say if the furs were returned, and we can assume they were not. We do know, however, that Jusseaume was back at the villages the following March. He brought with him merchandise supplied by the North West Company for distribution among the Mandans and Hidatsas in an effort to lure them from the Spanish. According to Evans, Jusseaume also schemed to have him murdered. In his journal he wrote that the Frenchman “advised the Indians to enter into my house under the Mask of Friendship, then to kill me and my men and pil-lage my property.” Instead, some of them told Evans of the plan, and the plot was foiled. A few days later, Jusseaume himself entered Evans’s house, “and seizing the moment that my Back was turned to him, tried to dis-charge a Pistol at my head loaded with Deer Shot.” Evans’s interpreter saw what was happening and raised an alarm. Several Mandans dragged Jusseaume from the house and “would have killed him,” wrote Evans, had the Welshman not intervened. Jusseaume departed for Canada soon afterward, “disgusted on the ill success of the Execution of his Black Designs.”\textsuperscript{23}

Evans (who determined there was no connection, after all, between the Welsh and the Mandans or Hidatsas), left Fort Mackay for St. Louis in May 1797, ending forever Spain’s brief presence on the upper Missouri. He and Mackay reached St. Louis in July. Both had produced detailed maps of their travels which would later help Lewis and Clark in their own explorations. Evans died in 1799, but his six map segments of the Missouri from Fort Charles to Knife River wound up in the captains’ hands—probably a gift from Mackay, who advised Lewis during his frequent visits to St. Louis during the winter of 1803-04, when the Corps of Discovery was camped nearby at River Dubois.\textsuperscript{24}

Jusseaume returned to Knife River at the end of 1797, this time in the company of David Thompson, an employee of the Northwest Company and one of the fur trade’s greatest explorers. He and another free trader named Hugh McCraken guided Thompson on a winter trek from the Assiniboine. Thompson estimated that in good weather they could have made the 218-mile journey...
in 10 days, but delayed by blizzards, it took them 33. A man of restless intellect, Thompson brought along gifts to woo the Mandans and Hidatsas, but he was there mainly to learn all he could about their cultures. Jusseaume, who according to Thompson “fluently spoke the Mandan Language,” introduced him to the principal Mandan chiefs, including Sheheke, who would later befriend Lewis and Clark. Thompson asked endless questions, and his narrative of their 10-day visit is packed with details about tribal history, customs, ceremonies, and other ethnographic matters, yet he complained that “the information I obtained fell far short of what I had expected.” He concluded that either Jusseaume and McCraken “did not understand my questions, or the Natives had no answers to give.”

The record for Jusseaume is scanty for the years 1798-1803. His name appears in some minor commercial transactions at the Assiniboine posts. Although it can’t be documented, he presumably spent most of this period with the Mandans.

**ENTER LEWIS AND CLARK**

Jusseaume met the Corps of Discovery upon its arrival at Knife River on October 27, 1804. The captains realized that his knowledge of the Mandan language and Charbonneau’s fluency in Hidatsa would be essential to the corps’ day-to-day dealings with their Indian hosts. Both interpreters and their families moved in with the explorers. Jusseaume took up residence in camp on November 4 and settled into Fort Mandan after its completion later that month. Although Lewis and Clark mention Jusseaume only sporadically in the journals, we can assume that he was by their side during the captains’ frequent exchanges with the Mandans as they bartered for corn, observed and recorded their religious ceremonies, and inquired about intertribal politics and the country to the west. He seems to have gotten along well enough, although Sergeant John Ordway cryptically records an incident of “Jealousy” between Jusseaume and the corps’ chief hunter and sign-language interpreter, George Drouillard.

On February 11, 1805, Jusseaume was present during Sacagawea’s long and difficult labor. He told Lewis that on similar occasions “he had frequently administered a small portion of the rattle of the rattle-snake, which he assured me had never failed to produce the desired effect, that of hastening the birth of the child.” Lewis happened to have a rattle (one assumes in his collection of natural-history specimens), and he gave it to Jusseaume. The interpreter snapped off two rings and broke them into pieces, added water, and gave the potion to Sacagawea. “Whether this medicine was truly the cause or not I shall not undertake to determine,” wrote Lewis, “but I was informed that she had not taken it more than ten minutes before she brought forth.”

Lewis pointedly added, “perhaps this remedy may be worthy of future experiments, but I confess that I want faith as to its efficacy.” A snake’s rattle is made of keratin, the same substance as fingernails, and passes through the body undigested, so whatever medicinal substances it might contain are not absorbed. But native healers believed that rattlesnakes could both cause and cure afflictions, and one should not discount the concoction’s placebo effect on Sacagawea.

The Corps of Discovery said its goodbyes to the Mandans and Hidatsas on April 7 and headed up the Missouri in a flotilla of dugout canoes and pirogues, bound for the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The party included Charbonneau and Sacagawea. The captains, who were hopeful of meeting Sacagawea’s people, the Shoshones, and trading with them for the horses needed to cross the mountains, realized that she and her husband would be essential links in the translation chain from Shoshone to English. There would be no more need for Jusseaume’s services as an interpreter until the following summer, and he remained behind.

**SHEHEKE’S ODYSSEY**

The homeward-bound explorers were back at the villages in August 1806. The captains hoped to persuade Mandan and Hidatsa leaders to accompany them to St. Louis and then to Washington, D.C., to meet Jefferson. Clark invited several to join them on the downstream journey, but
they declined out of fear of a possible encounter with the hostile Teton (Lakota) Sioux, a tribe that had tried to block the expedition’s upriver passage two years before. When a Mandan named Little Crow first agreed to go and then abruptly changed his mind, an exasperated Clark turned to Jusseaume for help; if you can recruit one of the other Mandan chiefs, he said, we’ll hire you as interpreter and take you along. In short order, Jusseaume enlisted Sheheke, who said he would go so long as his family accompanied him. Jusseaume accepted with the same condition. Wrote Clark, “we were obliged to agree.”

Joined now by Sheheke, his wife and son, and Jusseaume and his wife, son, and daughter, the explorers continued downriver to St. Louis. The passage was without incident except for some tense moments between the party and an armed band of Teton Sioux who tried unsuccessfully to lure the boats ashore. Jusseaume and his Mandan wife knew some Lakota, apparently, and were helpful as translators during the exchange, which appears to have degenerated into a shouting match.

The Corps of Discovery reached St. Louis on September 23. This must have been Jusseaume’s first visit to the bustling river town the explorers had departed 28 months before. He and his family spent six weeks there before leaving in early November on the 1,600-mile overland journey to Washington via Louisville, Frankfort, Charlottesville, and Richmond. The party arrived in Washington on December 28 and two days later had an audience with Jefferson in the White House. Sheheke and company spent two weeks in the capital before going on to Philadelphia and perhaps New York, and were back in St. Louis in March 1807.

Sheheke, Jusseaume, and their families had now been away for eight months and were surely eager to get home. A detachment of soldiers commanded by Ensign Nathaniel Pryor (a former sergeant in the Corps of Discovery) was assigned to return Sheheke to his people. Attached to Pryor’s unit were 32 engagés led by the St. Louis fur trader Auguste Chouteau. More soldiers and engagés came along to accompany a delegation of Teton Sioux returning to their homeland. Once the Sioux had been safely deposited, their escort returned to St. Louis while the remaining party proceeded upriver in two boats, but it was turned back by the Arikaras in a bloody altercation on September 9 that left four men dead and six wounded, including Jusseaume, who was shot in the thigh and shoulder.

Pryor’s party retreated to St. Louis, where Jusseaume slowly recovered. In December, he wrote directly to Thomas Jefferson requesting a pension, claiming the wounds had left him unable to work. His letter went on to urge the president to take steps to punish the Arikaras. “Some savages,” he declared, “will not support the flag of the United States unless it is supported by sufficient force” (translation from the original French). He also asked the government to return him and his family to the Mandans. Jefferson did not respond to the letter, nor was a pension awarded. On May 17, 1809, however, another expedition left St. Louis with Sheheke, Jusseaume, and their families. It reached the Knife River villages on September 24. Three years and one month after leaving, they were home at last.

**JUSSEAUME’S LAST YEARS**

While waiting in St. Louis for the expedition’s departure, Jusseaume indentured his 13-year-old son, Toussaint, to Lewis to provide for the boy’s education. Toussaint’s name appears in the record again eight years later, on August 24, 1817, when he married at Cahokia, a settlement opposite St. Louis on the Illinois side of the Mississippi. Jusseaume’s daughter, Josette Therese, married three years later in nearby Florissant, Missouri, indicating that she returned to St. Louis at some point following her family’s repatriation.

As for Jusseaume père, he shows up as a minor character in the journal kept by the English botanist John Bradbury when he ventured up the Missouri in 1811. Jusseaume served as interpreter when Bradbury interviewed Sheheke, and with the Canadian’s help he was allowed to witness several Mandan ceremonies. By this time, Jusseaume was working for the St. Louis fur trader
Manuel Lisa and spending most of his time at Fort Manuel, near today’s border between North and South Dakota. He and Charbonneau are mentioned in passing several times in the journal of John Luttig, the fort’s factor. Luttig’s journal ends in March 1813, and its entries for Jusseaume are the last records we have of him. Gary Moulton, the editor of the Lewis and Clark journals, mentions in a footnote that Jusseaume was still alive at the time of Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied’s visit to the Mandans in 1833-34. An abridged version of Maximilian’s journals (the only version available in English) contains a single reference to Jusseaume, but it is in the past tense, leading one to speculate that he was dead by this time.

René Jusseaume reflects the vices and virtues of a frontier type. The historian Henry Nash Smith refers to such men as “cultural primitives.” In his classic work, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth, Smith describes cultural primitives as men “who had fled from the restraints of civilization” to marry Indians and adopt their costume, speech, and outlook on life. Jusseaume fits the description well enough, but that is an observation, not a judgment. The record shows that he was practical, durable, adaptable, and almost certainly a better interpreter than has been assumed. He was neither hero nor villain, but a product of the early fur trade of the upper Missouri.

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NOTES

3. Ibid., p. 333.
4. John C. Luttig, Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813 (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian, Ltd., 1964), p. 84. Luttig’s journal states, “Charbonneau and Jessaume keep us in constant uproar with their Histories and wish to make fear among the engages, the two rascals ought to be hung for their perfidy, they do more harm than good to the American Government, stir up the Indians and pretend to be friends of the white People at the same time but we find them to be our Ennemies.”
5. For more on cultural bias toward men like Jusseaume, see Rita Cleary, “Charbonneau Reconsidered,” We Proceeded On, February 2000, pp. 18-23.
9. For this and other facts about Jusseaume’s early life I am indebted to Tim McLaughlin, a fur-trade historian and reenactor from Minot, North Dakota. He has an extended interest in Jusseaume and has tracked down many of his descendants in Canada and the United States.
10. McLaughlin research. See also Douglas Dunham, “The French Element in the American Fur Trade, 1760-1818” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950), p. 134. Documentary proof that Jusseaume was in the Old Northwest after the Revolution is found in a promissory note he left to a certain J. Fevrier, dated Prairie du Chien, October 10, 1790, now preserved in the P. Chouteau Maffit Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.
11. Spain had acquired Louisiana from France in 1763. In 1801 it would revert to France, which two years later would sell it to the United States.
17. The Missouri Company was formally chartered as the Com-
pany of Explorers of the Upper Missouri. Truteau's name is sometimes spelled Trudeau.


22 Nasati, *Before Lewis & Clark*, Vol. II, pp. 460-461 (Grant to Evans, October 8, 1796), 474-475 (Jusseaume to Evans, November 5), and 478-479 (Macdonell to Evans, November 23). Macdonell’s name is also spelled MacDonell and McDonnell.

23 Ibid., pp. 329-331 (Clark), and Vol. 9, p. 356 (Ordway). Estimates for August 30, 1806. Clark (p. 330) says that one man in his party “could speak a few words of Seioux,” and Ronda (p. 250) infers that he is talking about Jusseaume. Ordway is more specific about the interpreter’s wife, “Mrs. Jessom,” who “could understand Some words” shouted by the Tetons. Some of the exchange was conducted in sign language.


25 Potter, pp. 136-137.

26 Jackson, Vol. 2, p. 436. A detailed account of Pryor’s fight with the Arikaras and reasons for the tribe’s hostility is beyond the scope of this article. For additional information, see, for example, Foley and Rice; and Potter, pp. 137-146. Pryor’s official report of the incident is found in Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 432-437. For other contemporary accounts, see Donald Jackson, “Journey to the Mandans, 1809: The Lost Narrative of Dr. Thomas,” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (April 1964), pp. 179-192; and Thomas James, *Three Years among the Indians and Mexicans* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1962), reprint of 1846 edition.


28 Responses to letters of inquiry to the Jefferson Library at Monticello and to the National Archives for Federal Pension or Bounty Land warrant applications.

29 Moulton, Vol. 3, p. 205, note 1; Instrument of Indenture between Jusseaume and Meriwether Lewis entered into May 13, 1809; Lewis Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.


33 A project is currently underway to translate Maximilian’s journal in its entirety. If he was still alive, Jusseaume would have certainly merited mention in the detailed journal kept by François Chardon at Fort Clark, a post (named after William Clark) located near the junction of the Missouri and Knife rivers in the 1831. See Annie H. Abel, ed., *Chardon’s Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bisson Books reprint, 1997).

On August 3, 1804, two and a half months after departing Camp River Dubois for the Pacific, the Lewis and Clark Expedition met with a delegation of Oto and Missouri Indians on the west bank of the Missouri River upstream of present-day Omaha, Nebraska. The gathering was the explorers’ first tribal council, and it set the pattern for the many that followed. Conducted under an awning made from the keelboat’s mainsail, it included a military review, the presenting of gifts, and the reading of a speech by Meriwether Lewis that ran to more than two thousand words. Lewis spoke of the Louisiana Purchase and the resulting change in political authority over the tribes living along the Missouri. In the paternalistic language common to such diplomatic ceremonies, he addressed the delegates as “children.” He explained that they now had a new “father,” the “great Chief of the Seventeen great nations” of the United States, and that their old fathers, the French and Spanish, had sailed away, never to return. As a representative of the new government, he declared six of the tribal leaders chiefs and bestowed upon them flags and peace medals. By accepting these gifts from their new father, Lewis declared, “you also accept therewith his hand of friendship”—and, by implication, American sovereignty over the Territory of Louisiana.¹

The historian Bernard DeVoto argued that the dispatch of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was “an act of imperial policy” and that the creation of an American empire stretching to the shores of the Pacific would profoundly affect the tribes of the Louisiana Territory and the Pacific Northwest.² But however great the expedition’s impact on the tribes, the tribes’ impact on the expedition was no less important. Establishing commercial relations with the tribes and acquiring knowledge about them were principal objectives of the expedition as outlined by Thomas Jefferson, and once underway, the expedition could not have succeeded without their help. In formal occasions like their meeting with the Otos and Missouris, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark laid out the case for American authority over the tribes. Their argument was based implicitly on the Doctrine of Discovery, a European legal principle that would later help legitimize the subordination of Indian rights.

TRIBES KEY TO EXPEDITION’S SUCCESS

From the time Lewis and Jefferson began planning the expedition, they realized its success would depend on the assistance of Native Americans, but the full extent of that dependency did not become apparent until the winter of 1804-05, which the explorers would not have survived without the abundant supplies of corn provided by the
The following winter, at Fort Clatsop, they were dependent on food from the Clatsops and Chinooks. Crucial assistance of one sort or another came from other tribes as well. During the explorers’ winter at Fort Mandan, the Hidatsas furnished valuable information regarding the route to the headwaters of the Missouri, and Sacagawea played a critical role as a translator when the expedition made contact with the tribe of her birth, the Shoshones, on the Continental Divide. The Shoshones and the Salish Indians sold them the horses they needed for crossing the Bitterroot Mountains, which a Shoshone guide (Old Toby) led them across. Members of the Nez Perce tribe fed them when they stumbled, on the verge of starvation, out of the Bitterroots. Two Nez Perce chiefs then led them down the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia rivers, introducing them to tribes along the way, while another chief cared for their horses until they could retrieve them the following spring. Tribes along the Columbia supplied them with salmon and roots, and it was their old friends the Nez Perces who got them back across the Bitterroots on the return trip.

The objectives of the expedition, and the part played by tribes in meeting those objectives, can be summarized under the headings of geography, commerce, science, and sovereignty.

**GEOGRAPHY AND COMMERCE**

In sending Lewis on his mission, Jefferson hoped he would find a practical water route to the Pacific—the famed but elusive Northwest Passage. This, arguably, was Jefferson’s first objective for the expedition. He assumed (incorrectly) that the Missouri and Columbia rivers were navigable to their sources and that their headwaters were close enough to be easily portaged. Jefferson alluded to this objective in his message to Congress requesting funds for the expedition, and he was explicit about it in his instructions to Lewis.

This quest for a Northwest Passage depended on geographic information provided by the tribes (particularly the Hidatsas, who informed the captains about the Falls of the Missouri and other features of the upper river, and the Shoshones, who gave a detailed account of the country west of the Continental Divide). It also underlay Jefferson’s second objective—establishing an American fur trade with China, which depended on good relations with the tribes of the upper Missouri. Jefferson envisioned a string of wilderness posts built by the U.S. government. Indians would come to these posts to trade their furs, which would then be transported by river to an American port at the mouth of the Columbia for shipment to...
the Far East. Securing tribal friendship and cooperation was key to the venture's success.⁹

Trade is a two-way street, of course, and Jefferson realized that Indians living west of the Mississippi represented a huge potential market for American goods. As he made clear to Congress and Lewis, the United States was positioned to greatly expand its commercial dealings with tribes.¹⁰ Government posts built for the sole purpose of Indian trade had been present on the frontier since Congress, at the behest of George Washington, first authorized them in 1795, and Jefferson's desire to create a similar network in the new territory was a natural extension of this policy.¹¹ The trade items carried by Lewis and Clark were intended in part to show Indians the wide range of goods available to them once they joined the U.S. market.

**Science and Sovereignty**

The advancement of science was Jefferson's third objective, and here again Indians were central. Sacagawea and other Native Americans assisted Lewis in his cataloging of new plant and animal species, and Indians were themselves primary subjects of the captains' scientific curiosity. Jefferson the Enlightenment man was fascinated by tribal cultures, and his instructions to Lewis included a long list of ethnographic questions about language, customs, religion, morals, and other topics.¹² The captains were diligent in gathering and recording this information. Clark alone wrote many thousands of words about the Indians of the upper Missouri and Mississippi watersheds during the winter at Fort Mandan.¹³

Jefferson's fourth objective was the extension of U.S. sovereignty over the indigenous tribes in the newly acquired Louisiana Territory. This vast region, encompassing all of the Missouri watershed, had long been claimed by France, except for a brief period (1763-1800) when it was part of the Spanish empire. Lewis and Clark's role as emissaries of the new governing authority was a belated assignment. The treaty transferring Louisiana from France to the United States was signed in Paris on May 2, 1803, and news of it did not reach Washington, D.C., until July 3, nearly two weeks after Jefferson's instructions to Lewis, drafted June 20.¹⁴ Jefferson covered this new objective in a letter to Lewis dated January 22, 1804, when Lewis and Clark were in winter quarters at Camp River Dubois, in Illinois Territory, preparing for their ascent of the Missouri the following spring. As the new "sovereigns of the country," wrote Jefferson, the United States was now in a position to trade directly with the tribes. He told Lewis to inform tribal leaders that the French and Spanish "have surrendered to us all their subjects ... settled there, and all their posts & lands: that henceforward we become their fathers and friends, and that we shall endeavor that they shall have no cause to lament the change."¹⁵

**The Doctrine of Discovery**

The party led by Lewis and Clark is known as the Corps of Discovery—a fitting name, given that the sovereignty it represented was based on a legal precedent, already more than three centuries old, known as the Doctrine of Discovery.¹⁶ European countries had long used this doctrine to rationalize the conquest and domination of indigenous, non-Christian, nonwhite populations and their lands. It granted any colonial power, having "discovered" a country already well known to people who had occupied it for thousands of years, the right to claim it. A related idea, *terra nullius* ("empty land"), argued that any land not used in a productive way as defined by Europeans was free for the taking. The Doctrine of Discovery was first applied in the New World in 1493, when Pope Alexander VI divided the world into spheres of “discovery” for Spain and Portugal as these nations were beginning their conquest of the Americas. English legal theory incorporated and expanded on the doctrine.¹⁷

The doctrine granted to the “discovering” country basic property rights while denying them to native inhabitants. First and foremost, it prohibited indigenous peoples from selling land to anyone other than the occupying power, which effectively retained an exclusive option on native real estate. Without either their knowledge or consent, natives lost the right of “free alienation”—the option to sell their land to whomever they wished, at whatever price they could obtain. The doctrine protected natives to the extent that it recognized their right to continue occupying and using their land, which could not be taken from them without their consent.

In the international arena, the Doctrine of Discovery prescribed natives’ rights to deal with nations other than the discovering power.¹⁸ Colonial nations respected each other’s property rights as defined by the doctrine, even if they occasionally disagreed over its exact definition and legal underpinnings. Because nations generally abided by the Doctrine of Discovery’s precepts, particularly the one granting exclusive property rights to the discoverer, legal scholars cite it as one of the earliest examples of international law.

In 1823, some twenty years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the U.S. Supreme Court based a decision on the Doctrine of Discovery, in effect adopting it as federal law. The case, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, involved a dispute
between Americans whose predecessors had bought land directly from several Indian tribes and other Americans who purchased the same land from the United States after the government had acquired the land from the same tribes. In ruling for the defendant, the Court recognized the tribes’ occupancy and use rights but denied them their right to sell land to whomever they wished; instead, they were legally restricted to selling land only to the United States. The justices seemed somewhat conflicted about Indians’ property rights. They asked why “agriculturists, merchants and manufacturers, have a right, on abstract principles, to expel hunters from the territory they possess, or to contract their limits,” while Indians do not. They then sidestepped this question by declaring, “Conquest gives a title which the Courts of the conqueror cannot deny.”

Echoes of the Doctrine of Discovery appeared in American law long before Johnson v. McIntosh. Colonies and states had enacted laws limiting Indian property rights, and the doctrine’s principles are inherent in many colonial and early state and federal court cases. The Doctrine of Discovery also informed the views of Thomas Jefferson. Twice during his presidency, in 1804 and 1808, he wrote that, notwithstanding American sovereignty in Louisiana Territory, the United States recognized the occupancy rights of tribes within its borders and that land must be bought, not seized, from its “native proprietors.” Jefferson, in other words, realized that the “purchase” of Louisiana conferred sovereignty over the territory but not fee-simple ownership of the land within its borders. The United States paid France $15 million for Louisiana, but over the next century it would pay tribes some twenty times more than this to acquire land through treaties.

LEWIS AND CLARK AS AGENTS OF EMPIRE

Many commentators have argued convincingly that Jefferson’s real agenda for the Lewis and Clark Expedition was the creation of a transcontinental empire that would include both Louisiana Territory and the Pacific Northwest, a region claimed at the time by Spain, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. The “imperial” actions taken by Lewis and Clark along their route underscore this point.

They emphasized to tribal delegations that President Jefferson was their new “great father” and that the Indians were his “children.”

They distributed what may be thought of as “sovereignty tokens”—American flags, military uniforms, and Jefferson peace medals. These items, presented to chiefs, conveyed the message of American authority over the tribes and the tribes’ allegiance to the United States. The captains occasionally demanded that chiefs surrender similar tokens they had received from other countries to show that their sole allegiance was now to the U.S.

They encouraged chiefs to visit Washington, D.C., to meet Jefferson, and dozens of tribal delegations ultimately did so. These visits were designed to impress (and intimidate) Indians with the immense size and power of the United States.
They usurped Indians’ authority to determine intertribal politics by ordering tribes to cease warring with their enemies—not for the sake of tribal peace but to further American trade and hegemony.

They aggressively pursued American fur-trade interests. This was part of an ongoing effort, which included consulting with Indians on the best locations for U.S. trading posts, to bring tribes into the American economic sphere. Whether a tribe resided within Louisiana Territory or in the Pacific Northwest didn’t matter. The captains’ overtures to the Shoshone and Nez Perce tribes, whose homelands were on the Pacific slopes of the Continental Divide, offer further proof of the expedition’s imperial reach.31

They advanced America’s claim to the Pacific Northwest by posting, at Fort Clatsop, a roster of the expedition’s personnel with an accompanying statement that they had spent the winter there after crossing overland from the United States. Copies of this document were distributed to Clatsop and Chinook chiefs, with instructions that they should deliver them to any ship captains arriving in the area.32 Clark also famously documented the Corps of Discovery’s presence on the Pacific coast by carving, on a pine tree, his name and the inscription “By Land from the U. States in 1804 & 1805.”33 This is just one of several instances of the explorers’ carving their names or initials in tree bark during their winter on the Pacific. Lewis, for his part, marked trees with a branding iron whose inscription—“US Capt.M.Lewis”—left no doubt whose interests he represented.34 All these actions were ritual assertions of the Doctrine of Discovery.35

In summary, Lewis and Clark took advantage of every opportunity to proclaim American hegemony. They represented an expanding American empire that consistently subjugated Indian rights. Once having established a claim to sovereignty, Jefferson sought to pacify the Indians as a first step toward assimilating them into the broader culture, but he was also prepared to remove them from the advancing path of American civilization and even to terminate them, if necessary.16 U.S. hegemony—legitimized by the centuries-old Doctrine of Discovery—led ultimately to policies of forced relocation and assimilation, the reservation system, and, for many tribes, the government’s decision to terminate official recognition (and the rights and obligations that go with it).

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NOTES

would not have made it across the mountains, despite having traveled the route once before. Moulton, Vol. 8, pp. 56-57 (June 27, 1806).

Both captains recorded that without the Nez Perce guides they would not have made it across the mountains, despite having traveled the route once before. Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 225n.

16 Lewis actually referred to the party as “the corps of volunteers” (Jefferson, Vol. 1, pp. 62-64 (Jefferson to Lewis, June 20, 1803) and 166 (Jefferson to Lewis, January 22, 1804).

17 Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 10-14, 61-66, and 165-166 (Jefferson’s message to Congress of January 18, 1803, and his letters to Lewis of June 20, 1803, and January 22, 1804).

18 Ibid., pp. 233-234 (Lewis’s letter to Jefferson, April 7, 1805) and Moulton, Vol. 5, pp. 81 and 88-91.

19 Ronda, p. 7; Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 62-64 (Jefferson to Lewis, June 20, 1803) and 166 (Jefferson to Lewis, January 22, 1804).

20 Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 10-14 (Jefferson to Congress) and 61-66 (Jefferson to Lewis, June 20, 1803).

21 Prucha, The Great Father, pp. 116 and 120. As Jefferson wrote in 1803, one motive for establishing these posts was to put Indians in debt to the government—debts they would then be forced to pay off with land. See also Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 57; and Robert J. Miller, “Economic Development in Indian Country: Will Capitalism or Socialism Succeed?,” Oregon Law Review 2002, Vol. 80, pp. 807-809.

22 Ibid., Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 62-63. See also pp. 50-51, Benjamin Rush’s letter of May 17, 1803, instructing Lewis on questions to pursue with tribes.


24 Jefferson was careful to advise relevant foreign officials about the expedition during its planning phase, and the French and British governments, through whose territory the expedition would pass, issued passports to Lewis. See Jackson, Vol. 1, pp. 4-8, 14-15, and 19-20. For dates of the treaty signing and news of its arrival, see Peter J. Kastor, The Great Acquisition: An Introduction to the Louisiana Purchase (Great Falls, Mont.: Lewis and Clark Interpretive Association, 2003), p. 63; and Jon Kukla, A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 287.


27 Robert A. Williams, Jr., The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 78-81 and 121-147.

28 Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Association, 1903), Vol. 18, p. 328. Jefferson, writing to the British Minister, George Hammond, in 1791, claims a “right to preemption” of Indian lands, “that is to say, the sole and exclusive right of purchasing from them whenever they should be willing to sell,” and the right to regulate commerce between Indians and whites.

29 21 U.S. 543 (1823), pp. 573-574.

30 Ibid., p. 588.

31 For laws limiting Indian property rights, see Alden T. Vaughan and Deborah A. Rosen, eds., Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789 (Bethesda: University Publications of America, 1998), Vol. XV, pp. 41-42, 65-66, 87-88, 247-249, and 393-396. These references are, respectively, to Maryland, “Law to Regulate Land Purchases” (1639); Virginia, “Law to Establish Indian Reservations” (1649) and “Law to Christianize Indians and Regulate Land Sales” (1656); North Carolina, “Law to Improve Relations Between Indians and Colonists” (1716); South Carolina, “Law to Prevent Purchase of Indian Lands” (1739); and Georgia, “Law to Regulate Purchase of Land From Indians” (1768). For cases limiting property rights, see, for example, New Jersey v. Wilson, 11 U.S. 164 (1812); Fletcher v. Peck, 10 U.S. 87 (1810); Thompson v. Johnston, 6 Binn. 68, 1813 WL 1243 (Penn. 1813); Jackson, ex dem. Gilbert v. Wood, 7 Johns. 290 (N.Y. 1810); Strother v. Cathey, 5 N.C. 162, 1 Mur. 162, 3 Am.Dec. 683, 1807 WL 35 (N.C. 1807).

32 Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 429-432 (entries for March 17 and 18, 1805). For more on the Nez Perce, see Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 429-432 (entries for March 17 and 18, 1805).

33 Ibid., p. 107 (Clark, December 3, 1805).

34 Robert A. Saindon, “They Left Their Mark: Tracing the Obscure Graffiti of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,” in Robert A. Saindon, ed., Explorations into the World of Lewis & Clark (Great Falls, Mont.: Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 2003), Vol. 2, pp. 492-503; see especially p. 501. For other examples of the explorers’ penchant for physically marking their presence along the Corps of Discovery’s route, see Moulton, Vol. 8, pp. 181, 184-185, 191, and 237 (July 14-16 and July 27, 1806), Vol. 6, p. 81 (November 23, 1805), Vol. 4, p. 276 (June 10, 1805), Vol. 11, p. 18 (June 4, 1804), and Vol. 11, p. 192 (June 10, 1805).

35 See, for example, DeVoto, pp. 430 and 512.

36 Tubbs and Jenkins, pp. 168-169.
New biography explores William Clark’s seminal role in American expansion

If William Clark, in his post-expedition role as Indian agent for tribes west of the Mississippi, embraced the prevailing view of the Indians’ choices—assimilate, be destroyed, or get out of the way—he at least implemented the overtly least bloody and demeaning of these options.

William Clark, soldier, explorer, statesman, was the quintessential family man. Equally at home in the orbit of cabinet officers or Indian chiefs, he fretted about an elder brother ensnared by debts and alcohol, the legendary George Rogers Clark. His son, Meriwether Lewis Clark, periodically snared by debts and alcohol, the leg-}

William Clark, this is only part of his achievement. He has also weaved adroitly into this biography a distinguished account of the Indian wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He has filled a substantial gap in the historical knowledge of many otherwise informed Americans. Complementing the narrative are excellent maps by Jeffrey L. Ward.

Clark and Indian removal

A focus on Clark is overdue. He has taken enough bows as a best supporting character. But if this thoroughly researched volume finds its exclusive audience among established Lewis and Clark enthusiasts, its full impact on the American history bookshelf will go unrealized. For Jones gives us the relatively unsung story of the proud and embattled eastern nations, the Shawnees, Miamis, Wyandots, Mohawks, Ottawas, and Delawares and evokes in sympathetic detail the Hobson’s choices facing the venerable eastern chiefs—Cornstalk, Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, Joseph Brant, Tecumseh, and Black Hawk.

How the rise of the expansionist American democracy foreshadowed the eclipse of these nations is his salient history lesson. As long as Europeans held a share of continental power, the Indians could form alliances and play their French, British, and Spanish “fa-thers” against each other and against the Americans. But once American sovereignty was established, they faced the full pressure of the advancing settlements and the full fury of American military might. Jones vividly demonstrates how an 18th-century world of interdependence, accommodation, alliance, and intermarriage yielded to a more race-conscious American perspective and a bitter zero-sum game of red versus white.

In exploring Clark’s seminal role in this history as agent for Indian affairs west of the Mississippi and then as governor of Missouri Territory, Jones exposes a possibly little-recognized truth of the government’s Indian policy. The removal policy under which the “five civilized tribes” were forcibly expatriated to the trans-Mississippi region was at best only half of a very distasteful story. The red exiles were banished to lands that were by no means vacant. The indigenous western and midwestern nations had to be bought out, swindled, or forcibly ejected from large tracts to accommodate the newcomers. Clark’s reputation and negotiating skills were instrumental in concluding treaty after treaty facilitating this infamous bargain.
Thus, as Jones reveals, Clark, the “red-headed chief,” who possessed no intrinsic animosity toward Indians, and held their trust, perhaps was responsible for more divestiture of tribal landholdings than any other American. But Clark embraced the prevailing view of the Indians’ choices: assimilate, be destroyed, or get out of the way. Clark at least implemented the overtly least bloody and demeaning of the options. It changed little for the Indians. The Mississippi bulwark against white land hunger was temporary. The artificially constructed western homelands would become forfeit as well.

Jones wisely chooses lesser-known details about Clark’s life in preference to overworked ground. The expedition is treated as an important but brief chapter in Clark’s younger days. And Jones skips briskly over the controversy surrounding Lewis’s death. The network of Clark’s fellow veterans, business associates, extended family, and political allies and enemies which Jones unravels from colonial years on is simply extraordinary. Had Clark lived in our times, his Rolodex doubtless would have rivaled Clark Clifford’s.

The last years

He lived long enough to endure the serial passing of many of those he most cared for—his brothers, two beloved wives, a son, a step-grandchild, Lewis, and other expedition members. Jones’s references indicate that Clark bore some of these losses stoically with a bare journal note or a record of the cost of a shroud or parson. But at other moments his grief breaks through and reveals the toll the inexorable attrition of his cherished circle has taken on his stalwart heart. His own passing was observed with the largest military funeral St. Louis had ever seen and a procession of horsemen and carriages that extended a full mile.

—Dennis M. O’Connell

A review of another new Clark biography, Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark, by William E. Foley, will appear in the November @PO.—ED.

Crossing the real and metaphorical divides

The most enduring legacy of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial may be the fresh perspectives it has brought to the Corps of Discovery’s relationship with native peoples. Lewis and Clark: Across the Divide explores that multifaceted relationship in a comprehensive and insightful way. This large-format volume—the companion book for a traveling national exhibit organized by the Missouri Historical Society—tells the expedition’s story in a strikingly original way, with a compelling text and stunning graphics.

Carolyn Gilman, who also curated the exhibit, mixes straightforward narrative with comparative analysis of the respective cultures of the explorers and their native hosts. Her analysis focuses on their material cultures—physical objects, mainly from everyday life, whose outward forms reveal deeper attitudes about the world their owners and makers inhabited. These objects are springboards for engaging disquisitions on diplomacy, trade and property, animals and plants, the respective roles of women and men, and other topics.

The book’s title is literal but also metaphorical, for the explorers crossed both a physical divide (the Rocky Mountains) and a cultural divide, one whose conceptual terrain was at least as treacherous to navigate, with many blind curves. For Gilman the recurring question is not “What did Lewis and Clark see?” but rather, “What didn’t they see?”

The answer, in a word, is plenty. The captains took their cue from Thomas Jefferson, an Enlightenment man whose intellectual curiosity about Indians came with a lot of cultural baggage and misperceptions. Jefferson’s and the captains’ rational, materialist view of the natural world was as incomprehensible to Indians as the Indians’ animist view was to them. These contrasting world views were reflected, for example, in the different ways whites and Indians depicted geography. Maps drawn by Indians invariably ignored European cartographic conventions. “North was not always at the top,” writes Gilman, “and directions were not always absolute or oriented to cardinal points but might vary with the map. The size of features showed their relative importance, not their size in nature. Rivers were not shown naturalistically, because their twists and turns made little difference to the travelers in a canoe. … The result was an abstract and diagrammatic rendition of a river system, not a representational one.”

Indian and white value systems

Lewis and Clark looked down on the Chinooks and Clatsops, regarding these Indians of the Pacific Northwest as thieving and debased. As and Gilman points out, the captains persisted in...
viewing them as impoverished despite ample evidence of their material wealth. “Why could Lewis and Clark not see the affluence around them?” she wonders, then posits several answers, most notably that different cultures have different definitions of value. Lewis denied the Chinooks for trading useful items for any “bauble which pleases their fancy.” But many of the things prized by the Chinooks were symbolic of their strictly stratified class system, an aspect of their culture that Lewis and Clark never even suspected.” Bracelets and other jewelry made from copper imported from Alaska, described by Lewis as “articles of little value,” were symbols of wealth, commanding “a premium price for their prestige value, much as platinum watches or elite sportscars do today, regardless of their utility.”

Indians, Gilman is quick to add, could be equally blind to whites’ value systems. As a white trader wrote of the Hidatsas in 1806, “They put little value on [beaver skins] and cannot imagine what use we make of such trash, as they call it.”

**Different historical perspectives**

Nor did Indian contact with the Corps of Discovery necessarily loom large in tribal memories. A Sioux “winter count” robe portraying in pictures significant events of the early 1800s completely ignores the coming and going of Lewis and Clark. As Gilman points out, for most Euro-American historians a tribe’s encounter with the expedition is seen as something “presaging great changes in their story.” But for Indians, history was a series of events in which individuals play “unique parts in a pattern as constant and varying as the weather. The chroniclers chose events that reinforced the pattern, not those that violated it.” Thus, the winter-count icon for 1804, when the corps met the Sioux heading upriver, is a pipe symbolizing a war dance in preparation for an attack on an enemy tribe; for 1806, when the explorers met them heading downriver, it is a dead Arikara.

James P. Ronda’s pioneering 1984 study, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, was the first comprehensive effort to place the Corps of Discovery in a broader context of Native American politics and culture, and his lengthy introduction to *Lewis and Clark: Crossing the Divide* provides a helpful overview of the expedition while reinforcing Gilman’s themes. He writes, for example, about Jefferson’s directive that the expedition’s supply of Indian gifts include hand-operated corn grinders: “Like peace medals or guns, these machines expressed a number of messages. Jefferson surely understood the corn mill as emblematic of the entire federal policy to civilize Indians by making them into Euro-American farmers.” Clark, writes Ronda, noted that the Mandans appeared “delighted” when the captains presented them with a device of such obvious utility. The Indians, however, “promptly redefined the corn mill, seeing it not as an agricultural machine but as a convenient supply of metal.” A trader visiting the Mandan villages in 1806 “found that some of its parts had become arrow points and hide scrapers. The largest part of the mill was attached to a wooden handle to fashion a pounder for making grease from buffalo bones. Like many other trade goods, the corn mill had moved from one world of meaning to another.”

—J.I. Merritt


**In Brief:** “improved” journals; guides to plains, geology, rivers; L&C encyclopedia


This thoughtfully conceived work is an excellent one-volume version of the Lewis and Clark journals. It is an abridgment of the journals, one of at least six in print, but differs from all but one of the others in a significant way: the editor has tinkered with the sacred text. Purists may gasp at Brandt’s radical decision to clean up the captains’ (especially Clark’s) erratic spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but the result is prose that is far easier to digest. As he explains without apology, his volume is “not meant for scholars but for the general reading public.”

The book’s structure divides the expedition into 25 chronological segments ranging from several weeks to a month, beginning with Lewis’s departure from Pittsburgh on August 30, 1803. These segments in turn alternate between day-by-day journal entries and transitional sections in which the editor summarizes events. Where needed, Brandt inserts italicized explanatory text into the journal segments.

Here, for example, is Clark’s entry for November 4, 1804 (during the building of Fort Mandan, in present-day North Dakota), first in the original (from Gary E. Moulton’s 13-volume edition) and then in Brandt’s edited version:
A fine morning. We continued to cut down trees and raise our houses. A Mr. Charbonneau, interpreter for the Gros Ventre nation, came to see us and informed us that he came down with several Indians from a hunting expedition up the river to hear what we had told the Indians in Council. This man wished to hire as an interpreter. The wind rose this evening from the east and clouded up. Great numbers of Indians pass hunting and some on the return.

An italicized paragraph then follows explaining who Charbonneau is and providing salient details about him, his wife Sacagawea, and their roles in the expedition.

Brandt’s introduction, which deals mainly with the journals themselves and his methodology for abridging them, offers just enough historical context to get the reader started. An afterword by Herman J. Viola expands on the expedition’s history and legacy. Additional materials include the full text of Jefferson’s instructions, thumbnail sketches of expedition members, a list of supplies, and an index.

Brandt is a professional journalist specializing in the literature of adventure, and Viola is a curator emeritus at the Smithsonian.


The Turners (father and son, a retired surgeon and a journalist, respectively) take an approach similar to Brandt’s—their one-volume abridgment of the journals cleans up spelling and punctuation and adds words (in brackets) where needed for clarity. Brief footnotes provide context. Here, for comparative purposes with the above examples, is their rendering of Clark’s entry for November 4, 1804:

We continued to cut down trees and raise our houses.

A Mr. Charbonneau, interpreter for the Hidatsa nation, came to see us and informed [us] that he came down with several Indians from a hunting expedition up the river to hear what we had told the Indians in Council. This man wished to [be hired as a] interpreter.

Unlike Brandt, whose abridgment relies exclusively on the captains’ journals, the Turners also draw from the journals of the enlisted men. While Brandt’s version includes portions of Lewis’s Ohio River journal and winter at Camp River Dubois, in Illinois, the Turners’ chronology begins with the corps’ departure up the Missouri, on May 14, 1804. The Turners include a bibliography and a helpful glossary, but their volume lacks an index.


This little book, with pen-and-ink illustrations by the author and six maps, identifies more than a hundred animal and plant species observed by Lewis and Clark and is a guide to more than seventy L&C sites of zoological or botanical interest. The explorers spent 14 of their 28 months on the trail on the Great Plains, a region they first encountered in late June 1804, when the Corps of Discovery reached the mouth of the Kansas River, at present-day Kansas City. Great Plains flora and fauna predominated until they reached the Three Forks of the Missouri, in today’s western Montana. The author has divided the corps’ route into six segments and discusses the animals and plants encountered in each. A historical overview that functions as an introduction provides a helpful summary of the captains’ contributions to the natural sciences.
Art of the Lewis & Clark Expedition
Jeff Evenson
Whisper’n Waters
189 pages / $42.95 cloth

This handsome large-format book contains more than ninety paintings by 23 artists, from Lewis and Clark’s contemporary Charles Willson Peale to modern visual interpreters of the expedition such as Gary P. Miller, C. Edward Fisher, Gary R. Lucy, and Ron Ukarinetz. Evenson has wisely included all the L&C paintings by John F. Clymer and Charles M. Russell, two 20th-century artists with unrivaled gifts for pictorial narrative. (See, for example, Clymer’s Visitors at Fort Clatsop on the cover of this issue of WPO, and Russell’s paintings on pages 25 and 27.) Michael Haynes, one of the most gifted and prolific artists portraying the expedition today, is also well represented. These works are complemented by those of earlier artists, including Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller, Frederic Remington, Thomas Moran, and E.S. Paxson.

Each two-page spread presents a painting on the right-hand side opposite text—mainly journal excerpts—exploring some topic, one often related to natural history. There are 20 works by Robert Bateman, a painter well known to connoisseurs of wildlife art but whose canvases are not usually associated with Lewis and Clark.

This is the third L&C–related book published by Whisper’n Waters (based in Bismarck, North Dakota), and like The Lewis & Clark Cookbook and The Sacagawea Cookbook, it showcases the aesthetic eye of Jeff Evenson. While this volume includes many of the best-known historical paintings depicting the Corps of Discovery, the title Art of the Lewis & Clark Expedition is in some ways misleading, implying as it does a comprehensive treatment of art specifically devoted to the expedition. In fact, many of the paintings, while of western subjects, have nothing to do per se with the expedition. It is, rather, a collection of paintings based on one man’s keen, but ultimately subjective, vision.

—J.I.M.
ognition, removing its oxbow turns and building wing dams to impede erosion. The author observes that in the aftermath of major floods in 1993 and 1995, agencies have become more environmentally friendly toward the river and in many places are letting it reassume its natural meanders. This guide offers tips on travel by boat, barge, bike, car, bus, train, and air, with points of interest from Fort Massac State Park, in Illinois, to Brownville, Nebraska.


The Corps of Discovery covered 450 miles of the Columbia River, but this guide deals with the free-flowing 146-mile stretch from today’s Bonneville Dam to the river’s mouth—the officially designated Lewis and Clark Columbia River Water Trail. The author, a veteran paddler and L&C buff, worked on the first Lewis and Clark Trail Commission, back in the early 1960s, and knows this section of Columbia as well as anyone. He is also a founder and past president of the Oregon Chapter of the LCTHF. Hay covers more than 260 sites of historical, cultural, geological, and ecological interest in this helpful volume, which includes 18 first-rate maps and an appendix with lists of Lewis and Clark vs. current place names, plant and animal species encountered by the captains, boat-rental liverys, the GPS coordinates of L&C campsites, and notes on river safety and trail etiquette.


The Lewis and Clark Expedition is long overdue for its own encyclopedia, and Facts On File has provided a splendid one, with more than 350 entries on subjects ranging from alcohol to York—and a great deal more besides. The up-front materials include a detailed chronology subdivided into three parts: a pre-expedition section with events relevant to Lewis and Clark and westward expansion beginning with Sir Francis Drake’s exploration of the Pacific Northwest coast, in 1578, and ending with Jefferson’s appointment, in 1801, of Lewis as his personal secretary; a comprehensive 15-page section, with 10 route maps, on the expedition per se (starting with Jefferson’s request to Congress to fund the expedition and ending with the Corps of Discovery’s return to St. Louis); and a post-expedition section commencing with the 1806 Pike and Dunbar expeditions and ending with the U.S. Census Bureau’s declaration in 1890 that the frontier was closed. Appendices include a list of tribes encountered on the expedition (those with entries are boldfaced) and 10 more maps covering other aspects of the journey. A 22-page index leads readers to items subsumed under general subject headings (e.g., “flounder,” under “fish, new species”).

Another reader-friendly feature is the typographic device of cross-referencing all subject entries using small capitals (i.e., SMALL CAPITALS). Thus, in the volume’s entry for “Flathead Indians (Salish)” one knows to look elsewhere for entries on Plateau Indians, Cascade Mountains, Rocky Mountains, bitterroot, camas root, horse, Great Plains, Plains Indians, tipis, Blackfeet...
Lewis and Clark scholars have a more commanding grasp of their subject—he founded, and oversees, the University of Montana–based Web site “Discovering Lewis & Clark” (www.lewis-clark.org), the go-to Internet source for serious L&C researchers. Musselman’s text calls the “fractal geometry” of the shoreline of Montana’s Fort Peck Lake.

Wark’s visual narrative begins at Monticello, where Thomas Jefferson first envisioned an expedition to the Pacific, and ends on the Two Medicine River near Cut Bank, Montana, where Meriwether Lewis had his deadly encounter with a band of Blackfeet Indians on the homeward journey. Accompanying each photo is a brief, lucid text by Musselman. Few contemporary accounts on the homeward journey. Accompanying each photo is a brief, lucid text by Musselman. Few contemporary
Farcountry Press
1/2H

Mountain Press
Pickup from
February issue, p. 41
Artists’ eyes on L&C

Inspiring Journey: Lewis and Clark through the Eyes of the Artist, featuring Ron Ukrainetz. 50 minutes. VHS, $39.95; DVD, $49.95. Order through www.crizmac.com (800-913-8555).

Crizmac, a Tucson-based firm specializing in education materials, has produced this two-part video as a supplementary curriculum resource for teachers, but it would be of interest to any Lewis and Clark buff. The first part is a short narrative about the expedition. To tell the story it largely relies on works of art, a few by 19th- and 20th-century masters such as Charles M. Russell and John F. Clymer but mostly by painters working today. Some of these artists—Michael Haynes, Charles Fritz, and R.L. Rickards—are well known to readers of WPO, but others—Sherry Gallagher, Jeff Walker, and Dennis Grismer—may be less familiar.

The second part focuses on the contemporary artist Ron Ukrainetz. A Montana native, Ukrainetz has recreated on canvas the activities of the explorers during their month-long sojourn at the Great Falls in 1805 (see above). The video follows him through the steps of a painting of Clark and several of the men building dugout canoes from concept through field sketches to the completion of a signed 24-by-36-inch canvas in the studio.

Ukrainetz is a reenactor with the Great Falls–based Lewis and Clark Honor Guard, and he says his living-history experience has made him a better artist when it comes to historical details and the hardship etched into the explorers’ faces: “I know what it feels like to get prickly pear in your feet.”

—J.I.M.

A fine audio rendering of the Corps of Discovery

Listening to Lewis & Clark: Dispatches from the Voyage of Discovery
Karl and Thomas Schmidt
Bridger Press / $21.95, CD-ROM

A two-disc CD directed by the father-son team of Karl and Thomas Schmidt, Listening to Lewis & Clark is an audio account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition combining excerpts from the journals with narration, original music, and sound effects. If NPR were doing a series on the expedition, this is what it would sound like.

Karl Schmidt, in fact, was one of the founders of NPR, and his experience with radio documentaries is evident throughout this professional production, which sparks the imagination while retelling highlights of the expedition’s journey to the Pacific and back. The two-and-a-half hours of running time is broken into segments, most ranging from two to four minutes. After a brief preamble and introduction, the narrative follows a straightforward chronology, starting with the departure from Camp River Dubois, on May 14, 1804, and concluding with the return to St. Louis, on September 23, 1806.

Thomas Schmidt, a seasoned chronicler of the Corps of Discovery, is the author of National Geographic’s Guide to the Lewis and Clark Trail and the coauthor (with his brother Jeremy) of The Saga of Lewis and Clark: Into the Uncharted West. He narrates the CD, but for the most part the production relies on the journals themselves to tell the story. The quotes from the journals, original music by Paul Micksch (an accomplished fiddler), and sound effects are skillfully blended in a way that encourages us to close our eyes and conjure up the details in our heads.

Elements of the Schmidts’ creative and effective use of sound include voices in the background, some of them in French, to bring the journals to life. The CD is also alive with the sounds of nature—waterfalls, waves, wind, rain, hail, and bird songs—to encourage the listener to fantasize about the encounters faced by the captains and their men. We hear prairie dogs barking, grizzly bears growling, and men grunting and straining against elkskin ropes as they haul the expedition’s boats upriver. But there are also contented sounds of men laughing. I missed only a few sounds, such as a baby’s shrilling or fussing, and the buzzing of mosquitoes—but the CD has at least one sharp slap, which is almost as good.

The casting of the captains’ voices (Karl Schmidt takes the role of Clark, while Jim Fleming plays Lewis) conveys the difference in their characters, although Virginia tidewater accents might have been in order. The journal excerpts illuminate the captains’ personalities and the differences in their temperaments, but it is important to remember that these are “dispatches”—the CD does not attempt to cover every detail of the journey. The Schmidts handle the expedition’s meetings with the native tribes skillfully, using James Ronda’s insights as a compass. For tribal terms and geographic and other names I appreciated the effort made to get pronunciations right.

This is an easy-listening CD. It does not demand heavy concentration or weigh the story down with excessive narration. Grandparents and their grandchildren will enjoy this offering, and educators and tour guides will find it helpful, especially on those long drives between trail stops. Plug it in and you will be transported.

—Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs
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Address inquiries to Karen Rickert,
P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403. 406-454-1234/fax: 406-771-9237. krickert@lewisandclark.org.
When people celebrate the Lewis and Clark Tricentennial, in 2103-2106, will they be able to visit any places that still look—and feel—as they did when the Corps of Discovery visited them? A program called Undaunted Stewardship is working toward the goal of making sure that in Montana, at least, the answer to this question will be “Yes.”

Conceived by the Helena-based Montana Stockgrowers Association and funded by congressional grants, Undaunted Stewardship (whose name echoes Jefferson’s praise of Meriwether Lewis’s “courage undaunted”) has grown into a public-private partnership managed jointly by the association, Montana State University (MSU), and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The nonregulatory, incentive-based program preserves privately owned historic sites on the Lewis and Clark Trail and helps ranchers throughout the state to improve their land stewardship practices. It’s also creating interpretive displays at eight locations along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

“Montana still looks more as it did when Lewis and Clark saw it than any other state they passed through,” says Steve Pilcher, the association’s executive vice president. “Family ranching over the course of generations is one of the reasons for this, not just along the Missouri Breaks but all over the state.” This is so in part because livestock grazing if properly managed “mimics the effects that bison herds once had on rangeland. We’re celebrating the fact that ranch families preserve natural landscapes and are working to help ranching continue as a sustainable business so these beautiful places can persist for generations.”

In the last two years, Undaunted Stewardship has reviewed and certified stewardship plans for 20 ranches with total holdings of more than 300 square miles. By later this fall, the program expects to certify the plans of another 27 ranches encompassing an additional 300 square miles.

The plans, which must be re-certified every five years, encourage agricultural practices that are compatible with environmental values by addressing issues such as overgrazing, pollution runoff, and balancing the needs of livestock and wildlife. Certification is done by range-management scientists at MSU, in Bozeman. Before a ranch can be certified as an “Undaunted Land Steward,” explains Jeff Mosley, the certification program’s director, “it must use a grazing management approach that is documented and monitored, with a written prescription for land management that conserves natural resources. A team of range scientists visits and studies the ranches and helps the ranchers develop written grazing plans. They also help each ranch establish a range-monitoring program to collect baseline data that can be used to judge, refine, and continually improve land management.”

Displays highlight history
Interpretive displays now in development will be erected on many properties taking part in the program. Those related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition are expected to be in place by the 200th anniversary of the events they describe. A display on the Pavlovick Ranch, at Judith Landing, one of the busiest take-out points for floaters through the White Cliffs and the Missouri Breaks National Monument, will tell what happened in the early hours of May 29, 1805, when a lone buffalo charged through the Corps of Discovery’s camp and came close to trampling several of Lewis and Clark’s men while they slept. (Seaman, Lewis’s Newfoundland dog, chased it off.)

Another display will be installed overlooking the Ayrshire Dairy Farm on the southern edge of Great Falls. This is the site of the expedition’s Upper Portage Camp, next to the White Bear Islands, two of which remain. The explorers spent nearly a month in this area while portaging the Great Falls, constructing Lewis’s iron boat, fending off grizzlies, and stockpiling meat.

“The time the expedition spent around here is one of the most profound and fascinating phases of the entire Lewis and Clark story,” says Harry Mitchell, who was born and raised, and still lives, at the dairy farm his grandfather started in 1906. “We would like to
see the campsite land area preserved as open space forever, perhaps as a public park or a place children could come to learn and play.”

At least two displays will be at ranch sites accessible only to floaters through the Missouri Breaks. The ABN Ranch lies just downstream from Coal Banks Landing, and the Terry Ranch is about five miles upstream from the BLM’s Eagle Creek Campground, where Lewis and Clark camped on May 31, 1805. Other display sites include Gates of the Mountains, off Interstate Highway 15 north of Helena (the Sieben and Hilger Hereford ranches); Beaverhead Gateway Ranch, by Beaverhead Rock, north of Dillon; the Hamilton Ranch, near Bannack (where Lewis and Clark met the Shoshones); and the Mission Ranch, east of Livingston (immediately across the Yellowstone River from one of Clark’s east-bound campsites). A possible ninth display site is along the Missouri River at the Crawford Ranch, which lies inside the White Cliffs area.

Finding common ground

Undaunted Stewardship draws on the support of a 19-member advisory council with representatives from a range of agricultural and environmental organizations, from the Montana Farmer’s Union and Montana Grain Growers Association to American Rivers and the Montana Wilderness Association. Some of these groups hold sharply different positions on land-use issues but manage to work together in furthering the goals of Undaunted Stewardship. Bruce Bugbee, who represents the Conservation Fund, a national group that encourages private-land stewardship, credits the organization for expanding “common ground and strengthened partnerships between conservation and agriculture.”

For more information about Undaunted Stewardship and the locations of interpretive displays, visit the Web site www.undaunted stewardship.com or contact Tamara Beardsley at the Montana Stockgrowers Association, 406-442-3420.

— Tom Daubert

Corps of Discovery: “A Most Perfect Harmony”

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following essay, by Stephanie Craton of Mansfield, Massachusetts, won the Judges’ Choice Award at the 2004 U.S. Academic Decathlon, held April 14-17 in Boise, Idaho. Some 370 high-school students participated. The decathlon’s theme was “Growth of a Nation,” and in the essay category, Lewis and Clark was one of the subjects students could choose to write about. The competitors were given James Ronda’s essay “A Most Perfect Harmony,” then had 50 minutes to compose their own essays based on it. Stephanie will be a junior this fall at the Wheller School, in Providence, Rhode Island. The essay judges included Ron Laycock, the president of the LCTHF, and Joe Musselman, a former board member. “A Most Perfect Harmony” was originally published in the November 1988 WPO and is included in James P. Ronda, ed., Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Montana Historical Society Press, 1998).

The year is 1805 and it is daybreak on the Columbia River. The Corps of Discovery begins this day as a whole, each member fulfilling his assigned duty, each helping ready the group for departure. They are like a well-oiled machine; each gear in place and the motor humming. Today they have rapids, and tomorrow, more unexpected obstacles. They proceed on.

The Corps of Discovery was indeed a group of powerful individuals, led by unfailingly reliable captains. Remarkable leadership in combination with the strength and camaraderie of the men allowed these individuals to conquer a continent.

Lewis and Clark led the way, unifying an expedition of soldiers and trappers, fiddlers and translators, a black slave and a Shoshone woman, who together blazed a trail that generations of Americans soon followed. This is no small feat. The character traits of these two men balanced in perfect harmony.

Lewis’s “melancholia,” or severe depression, was complemented by Clark’s unflagging optimism and friendliness. They aided each other in scientific discovery as well, with Lewis cataloging flora and fauna, and Clark using the skies to map an unknown land. Together, these men took all the right risks, made all the right choices. From the forks of the Missouri to the vote at Station Camp, they increased morale by involving the men in decisions. Lewis and Clark were valuable leaders, but assuredly these two men would never have gotten to the Pacific Ocean without the other individuals of the corps.

As the vote was being held at Station Camp to decide where to spend the winter of 1805-06, there were two memorable “firsts.” A black man and an Indian woman took part in what historian Dayton “Duncan calls “democracy exemplified” west of the Appalachian Mountains. These two minorities accomplished more than just expressing their opinions during the vote. York, a strong man with deep black skin, was key to the success of the journey. He was entrusted with important missions and helped immensely with the piloting of canoes down the Great Chute of the Columbia. In addition, he is one of the more memorable individuals of the corps for his dancing humor.

Ron Laycock, LCTHF president, presents Stephanie Craton with the Judges’ Choice Award, a replica of a Jefferson Peace Medal.
Passages

L&C cartographer and author Martin Plamondon II

Martin Plamondon II, a noted Lewis and Clark historian and author of a three-volume reconstruction of the explorers’ maps, died May 28 at his home in Minnehaha, a suburb of Vancouver, Washington. He was 58 years old and had long suffered from heart, lung, and digestive ailments.

A cartographer by trade who spent most of his working life with the Clark County, Washington, Map Department, Plamondon devoted some thirty years to researching the Lewis and Clark Expedition and creating a series of 530 annotated maps of its route across the continent. Volume 1 of Lewis and Clark Trail Maps: A Cartographic Reconstruction, was published in 2000 by the University of Washington Press and was followed by Volume 2 in 2002. The third and final volume is due out this year. By correlating Clark’s field maps and course and distance records with known landscape features he was able to chart the trail with greater precision than previous cartographers.

“Many people have done maps of the route and tried to locate places, but never with the skills and the technical detail that Martin brought to it,” Gary E. Moulton, the editor of Lewis and Clark’s journals, told the Portland Oregonian. In his introduction to Volume 1, Moulton wrote, “We find our way with the Corps of Discovery because we now know exactly where they were. William Clark would love these maps.”

Plamondon, who was born in Portland and moved across the Columbia River to Clark County as a child, became interested in Lewis and Clark after visiting the reconstruction of Fort Clatsop, the Corps of Discovery’s winter encampment of 1805-06, near Astoria, Oregon. His lifelong project put him on intimate terms with the explorers. Working on his maps late into the night at his home, he recalled in Volume 1, “Many were the times … that, as I wrote or mapped, it seemed as if the two men were seated in the room with me.”

A longtime member of the LCTHF, which partially funded his work, Plamondon was the 2003 recipient of its Distinguished Service Award. Over the years he contributed four articles to WPO, including “The Columbia River Gorge” (November 1996) and “Decision at Chinook Point” (May 2001). He was also a former chair of the Washington Governor’s L&C Trail Committee. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn, and by his father, two daughters, two sons, a sister, four brothers, and a granddaughter.

New Web site has it all

The LCTHF has a new and vastly improved Web site—complete with links to the best and most authoritative of other Internet sites devoted to L&C, a timeline of the expedition, genealogies, and a searchable library catalog and WPO index. Visitors can access information about chapters, tribal resources, trail stewardship, and education. They will also find a kid’s page and an e-mail feature that allows them to ask questions and receive answers about the expedition. These are only a few of the many features available. Jill Jackson, the foundation’s librarian, archivist, and Web master, says it has “lots of cool things.” She’s right. For more information or to give it a spin, check out www.lewisandclark.org.
Key to May 2004 Lewis & Clark crossword

CORPORAL COLT
A HE I USA
CHEAP ROOTS F
HU HUG R I I
ELMS UNION A
AE IN GRIZ
KETTLE I BC
NOISE UNBOLT
INSECTS A I
V M T BL NUT
ECMETO
SACAJAWEA TEA
REAPER LTD
The William P. Sherman Library and Archives of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation has received a major donation of Lewis and Clark–related first-edition books. Several of the major books in the donation are currently part of Literature of an Expedition: The Journals of the Corps of Discovery, an exhibit showing now through December 31.

The family of the late Earle B. Barnes, contacted the library almost a year ago to inquire about making this donation. I picked up the books in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the first week in April. When I drove there from Great Falls, Montana, I had no idea of the scope of the collection. What a wonderful surprise to receive such significant items!

Included in the donation is a copy of Sergeant Patrick Gass’s journal. The first edition of this journal was printed in 1807 in Pittsburgh. The library received a copy of the 1808 edition, printed in London. Gass’s journal was the first in print, even before Captains Lewis and Clark, a fact that dismayed Lewis. The first edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, edited (actually paraphrased) by Nicholas Biddle, was printed in Philadelphia in 1814. Thanks to the generosity of the Barnes family, the Sherman Library now has a copy of this first edition as well.

In 1893, Elliott Coues produced another edition of the Lewis and Clark journals. This heavily annotated four-volume update of the Biddle paraphrase was printed in a limited edition of 1,000 copies. The Barnes donation included a set of the Coues volumes. We think the great Montana artist Charles M. Russell may have read the Coues edition soon after it was published, for his interest in painting the Lewis and Clark Expedition dates from this period.

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Earl B. Barnes was born July 14, 1917, in Pueblo, Colorado. He joined Dow Chemical Company in 1940 and progressed to general manager of its Texas division. In 1971 he became president of Dow Chemical U.S.A. He retired in 1982. He and his wife, Lucile, owned the Dead Shot Ranch near Boudurant, Wyoming, where they raised Arabian horses and Red Angus cattle. He was a long-time member of the LCTHF.

The William P. Sherman Library and Archives is housed at the L&C National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, located at 4201 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls. It is a hidden gem in this nationally known facility. Its collections include books, videos, journals, and other materials related to the L&C Expedition, westward expansion, trappers and traders, mountain men, Indians, and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The Sherman Library is open to the public. It is a research facility used by students, the press, nationally known authors, researchers, genealogy buffs, and many others interested in the expedition and related topics. Hours are by appointment. Call 406-761-3950 or visit www.lewisandclark.org for more information.

— Jill Jackson
Librarian and Archivist, LCTHF