



Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation / www.lewisandclark.org

May 2005 Volume 31, No. 2

WIRELESS IN THE WILDERNESS • MISERY AND TRIUMPH
ON THE COLUMBIA • SACAGAWEA'S VOTE

CHARLES FRITZ, Addressing the Corps and Missions at Council Bluffs—August 3, 1804



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On the cover

Charles Fritz's painting *Addressing the Otos and Missouris at Council Bluffs—August 3, 1804* depicts the first of many such councils during the 28 months of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis, in full dress uniform and clutching his pike-like spontoon, a traditional symbol of rank, makes a speech before an assembly of tribal leaders. But here and at similar gatherings, much of the communication was by nonverbal means—presenting gifts, parading troops, showing the flag, passing the pipe. For a discussion of these and other means of conveying messages and collecting information on the trail, see Robert R. Hunt's "Wireless in the Wilderness," beginning on page 20. More Fritz art can be found on page 24 and in his book *An Artist with the Corps of Discovery* (Farcountry Press and University of Montana Press, 2004).



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Bandaloop, p. 40



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E. G. Chuinard, M.D., *Founder*
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Editor

J. I. Merritt
51 N. Main Street
Pennington, NJ 08534
609-818-0168
wpo@lewisandclark.org

Volunteer Proofreaders

H. Carl Camp
Jerry Garrett

Printed by PRISM Color Corporation,
Moorestown, New Jersey

EDITORIAL BOARD

James J. Holmberg, leader
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Letters

Spare us "postmodernist" takes on Lewis & Clark

I disagree strongly with Landon Y. Jones's review of *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness*, by Thomas P. Slaughter (WPO, May 2003). Slaughter's book, which I recently read, attempts to rebuke what the author sees as the biased views of previous writers toward the expedition, but his critique merely replaces one set of biases with another.

Jones admits to being exasperated at times by the author's postmodernist ideology, and the speculation and assumptions based on it, but in the end he gives Slaughter a pass. He writes, "It is too easy to find fault with some of Slaughter's most iconoclastic judgments. His tendentiousness should not diminish his real contributions." Jones asserts that Slaughter has read the journals "with an eye unbiased by the romantic version of Lewis and Clark and is willing to see the captains and their men as the fallible mortals they most assuredly were." This may have been Slaughter's goal, but his book is ultimately an insult to the members of the Corps of Discovery and most Lewis and Clark historians (including Gary Moulton, the most recent editor of the Lewis and Clark journals). A "real contribution" it is not.

I have read two other recent books on the expedition whose authors also indulge in postmodernist speculation, although not so blatantly as Slaughter. More may be coming. Readers should be alert to such biased accounts, and any reviews of them in WPO should include the disclaimer, "Not recommended reading for anyone who has not read the journals."

For a critique of Slaughter's book that's more on the mark, see "Unmitigated Gall? Lewis and Clark encounter a different savagery: postmodern correctness," by Maurice Isserman, in the January/February 2003 *Preservation*, the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

EVELYN ORR
Omaha, Neb.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For another recent review of Slaughter's book (one more in line with Jones's critique), see "The Ordeal of Thomas Jefferson: Whirl is King," by Clay S. Jenkinson, in the Fall 2004 *Oregon His-*

torical Quarterly. The issue is devoted to Lewis and Clark. It can be purchased online at www.ohsstore.org.

John Ordway's "infant" children

In endnote 16 of Jane Randol Jackson's "Cape Girardeau and the Corps of Discovery" (WPO, February 2005) the author mentions being confused by the term "infant children" in a November 1821 court order concerning the family of John Ordway because the children in question were not infants at the time. "Infant children" is a legal term used in the 19th century for any children under the age of maturity, usually 18 or 21, for purposes of guardianship. The court typically appointed a male relative or family friend as guardian because a woman (even if the mother) was considered legally inappropriate. The guardian looked out for the children's property until they reached maturity.

CYNTHIA BROTT BIASCA
Los Gatos, Calif.

Protecting the Missouri Breaks

Readers of WPO will be interested to know about the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument. Our organization was founded several years ago, following the monument's designation, in January 2001, to protect this historic section of the Missouri River in central Montana. The 149 miles of river in the Breaks area include the White Cliffs that so inspired Meriwether Lewis when the Corps of Discovery first saw them in the spring of 1805.

The appearance of this remarkable landscape remains essentially unchanged since Lewis and Clark first saw it, and we seek to ensure that this natural and historical legacy will be protected for future generations. Our members are business people, hunters, anglers, hikers, river users, outfitters, farmers, ranchers, and recreationists from Montana and other states. It is important that local communities and the American public have a voice in decisions pertaining to the monument. We are working to inform others about the monument's values and what it

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Note: This ad is a pdf file (Dest_Pac_ad5.05.pdf) located in the “art and ads” folder included in the materials sent to PRISM. I think it needs converting in Photoshop to some other format (eps or tif). One way or another, please make sure it prints properly so the type and images are clear. If any problems, contact Karen Rickert, the advertising director, at 888-701-3434. Don’t call the editor.

Letters (cont.)

can do for the small towns and communities of central Montana.

The monument is managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (B.L.M.) as part of the new National Landscape Conservation System. The B.L.M. has developed a management plan for the Breaks and seeks input from those who care about this national treasure.

For more information, please visit our Web site, www.missouribreaks.org, or write or call Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument, 224 W. Main St., Suite 280, Lewistown, MT 59457 (406-538-8506).

DENNIS TIGHE
Great Falls, Mont.

Larry Morris's *Fate of the Corps*

I was pleased to read your review in the November 2004 WPO of Larry Morris's *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition*. Morris has unearthed a wealth of fascinating information. A reader learns, for example, that Lewis's dog, Seaman, made it back to civilization with the party and may have been with Lewis when he died, in October 1809. Another interesting detail is that Mrs. Grinder served Lewis a dish of turkey and turnip stew with corn bread.

LARRY JANOFF
Bigfork, Mont.

Three Forks volunteers needed

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking help with its interpretive work this summer at Missouri Headwaters State Park. Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, direct them to points of interest, and distribute historical materials. The hours are 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. daily, June through August. Those interested should contact me at 406-994-6934 (rheagney@montana.edu).

RAY HEAGNEY
Park Manager
Three Forks, Mont.

WPO welcomes letters. We may edit them for length, accuracy, clarity, and civility. Send them to us c/o Editor, WPO, 51 N. Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534 (e-mail: wpo@lewisandclark.org).

President's Message

Looking beyond September 2006

During a recent conversation I had with an organizer of the "Journey Fourth" Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Event, held last year in Kansas City, Missouri, and in Atchison, and Leavenworth, Kansas, he commented that there was indeed life after one of these major Lewis and Clark happenings.

The greater Kansas City area was tremendously supportive of this effort, as other communities have been of their own signature events. We've had nine such events since the start of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, in January 2003, with six to go. The next will be in Great Falls and Fort Benton, Montana, June 2-July 4, and the last will take place in the St. Louis area September 23-24, 2006.

After that, what?

I've been privileged to participate in many Lewis and Clark events (signature and otherwise) during the past five years, and at every gathering I've been amazed and humbled by the depth of knowledge exhibited by professional and armchair historians alike—people who seem to know everything in the world about one aspect or another of the expedition, from the locations of particular campsites to details of the explorers' clothing, firearms, boats, or whatever.

The expedition goes on

This fascination with Lewis and Clark reminds me yet again of the open-ended nature of this great national saga. Although the expedition nominally ended when it returned to St. Louis in September 1806, in a larger sense it will go on for as long as we exist as a nation. The current bicentennial is just another significant chapter in a timeless story. It has given the foundation and its sister organization, the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, the opportunity to help Ameri-

cans rediscover the importance of their history. By emphasizing the multi-ethnic nature or the Corps of Discovery and the vital role of Native Americans to the expedition's success, the bicentennial has also underscored the need for cultural understanding and acceptance of diversity.

At its March meeting, the foundation's board enthusiastically embraced requests from three federal agencies—the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management—to partner with them in ways that will give the foundation an increased role in the main-

tenance and management of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. This important step will enable us to engage foundation members in an ongoing stewardship effort with measurable results.

Preserving cultural legacies

At least as important will be our ongoing efforts to foster cultural diversity and tolerance. Among other efforts we expect to undertake, the board recognizes the foundation's need to develop a long-range plan for working with tribes along the trail to help them protect their cultural legacies. We cannot forget the critical contributions to the expedition made by Indians and by a black man, Clark's slave York, who appears to have been treated as an equal during the expedition yet continued in slavery after its return. (Clark did eventually free him.)

As a nation we've come a long way since then, but our journey—and the expedition's—won't be complete until the last vestiges of bigotry and racism are eliminated from our society. The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation can do its part, however small, in fulfilling that goal.

—Gordon Julich
President, LCTHF



**LCTHF
NOTUS
(HOUSE AD)**

Gazing into the future from Fort Mandan

From the windows of the Missouri History Museum I can look out over Forest Park, in St. Louis, as it wakens into bud and bloom and feel a stirring in the blood. It's a call to come out and explore a world newly refreshed and becoming alive again, and I know those explorers two hundred years ago felt it even more strongly than I in my urban park.

In the early spring of 1805, the Corps of Discovery was preparing to leave Fort Mandan, where it had spent a peaceful winter among the people whom William Clark described as "the most friendly, well-disposed Indians inhabiting the Missouri ... brave, humane, hospitable." The explorers' impatience to get going must have quickened as the ice broke up and tumbled down the river, as ducks and geese made their way in the opposite direction, as the Indians set fire to the plains as an incentive for early grass to grow and buffalo to come.

Mandan hospitality had insured that the expedition would make an auspicious start to the next part of its journey. Well rested, eager and anxious to move on, and seemingly well prepared, most of them were embarking into territory as far from home as any of them had ever been. Little did they know what lay ahead. They had no maps to speak of—their only source of information was from the natives, whose perceptions of geography were so different from their own. With no means of communication with the world back home, they had no way of knowing how their families and friends were faring or whether the documents and specimens they sent downriver aboard the keelboat would ever reach Thomas Jefferson (if indeed the president was still alive and in office).

They did have certain advantages. Nearly a year into their journey, they had learned to work as a team and to read the ways of captains Lewis and Clark. That the winter had passed with no major conflicts or disturbances in-

dicates the effectiveness of the captains' authority and the regard in which this crew held its leaders. By this time, too, a baby had been born to Sacagawea, their interpreter's wife, and both mother and baby would be traveling with the expedition. A mother and child was a sign of peaceful intentions, for, as Clark later noted, "No woman ever accompanies a war party of Indians in this quarter."

I think their most notable advantage was simply this: they were on their way again. Enforced idleness, even in comfort among friendly people, would have begun to fray the nerves of men accustomed to rough and active living.

The captains had more to do during the winter than the men. Lewis prepared his geographical treatise on the Missouri River. This document, sent with other writings, drawings, maps, and specimens back to Washington, D.C., is a detailed, carefully measured description of the mighty river they had traveled for the six months of last year's journey. Even today, it conveys the power and fascination of this river. Clark had polished his "Estimate of Eastern Indians," a catalog of the indigenous tribes they had met and those whose ways and culture other Indians had related. They had conscientiously selected and packed a host of floral and faunal specimens, many new to science. The inventory is a naturalist's litany of delight: wild rye and purple currant; leaf willow and dwarf cedar; wild ginger, white sage, and yellowroot; a rattlesnake fang and a piece of antelope fur.

These were important, indeed mandated, tasks, satisfying and interesting—but it was time to proceed on. On April 7, they sent down the river the loaded keelboat under the command of Corporal Richard Warfington, whose "crew" included a live prairie dog, four magpies, and a grouse.

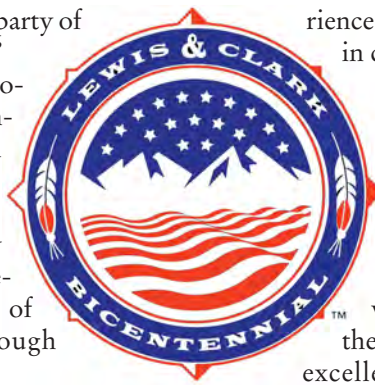
On the same day as Warfington's departure, the remaining explorers were on their way in the opposite direction. Ahead lay a lengthy portage; the awe-inspiring and unexpectedly dangerous Rocky Mountains and the raging torrent of the Columbia; and more than three months of miserably wet winter on the coast—a landscape and experience that remained shrouded in conjecture and hope.

The expedition was an adventure beyond parallel for the people who accomplished it. Reading the journals, commemorating the L&C Bicentennial, and visiting the sites along the trail constitute our own excellent adventure. But we

know that our personal experience with Lewis and Clark goes deeper than thrills and enjoyment. The bicentennial asks us to consider not just the past but the way it has shaped the present and the way we will shape the future.

From what we know now, what would we have changed? The Lewis and Clark Expedition profoundly affected the history of America, the lives of Americans, the landscape and geography of the lands west of the Mississippi, and more tragically, the whole existence of Indian nations. How can we make up for poor choices of the past, and how can we build on those decisions of our predecessors that have proved healthy and beneficial for the world and all its peoples? To ask these questions and seek affirming answers, that is how we join the journey.

—Robert R. Archibald
President, Bicentennial Council



2005 Portland meeting

Information on the LCTHF annual meeting in Portland, Oregon, August 6-10 can be found on the foundation's Web site, www.lewisandclark.org. ■

Is this a L&C artifact? We can help you find out

Most people probably think of the William P. Sherman Library and Archives as a facility devoted to working with historians and students on their research projects. But it assists many types of patrons, including those seeking information about the Lewis and Clark Trail.

This March, for example, a patron e-mailed me several photos of an iron object he had found near the trail. It appeared to be an axe head. He wanted help identifying the object because he was sure it was an artifact from the Lewis and Clark era and thought it might have been something carried by the explorers.

He also explained that he had found it on Bureau of Land Management (B.L.M.) property while hunting pheasants in Montana. That concerned me. I realized that if he had found the object on B.L.M. land and then had removed it, he might be in violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). If you find an object or artifact on government land, the best course is to notify the appropriate authorities and leave it in place. There are a host of federal or state regulations you can violate by removing such items from public property.

I contacted a B.L.M. official, Dick Fichtler, and forwarded the photos to him. I also sent the photos to several experts, who confirmed that the object was indeed an axe head. They identified it as a "round-eye" axe head, a type common in Lewis and Clark's day and throughout the 19th century. Further research, however, indicated that the expedition did not carry round-eye axes. (See Lewis's journal entry for July 10, 1805, which states in part, "had the eyes of our axes been round they would have answered this country much better.")

Fichtler forwarded the photos to the B.L.M. regional staff person responsible for cultural resources. The B.L.M. staffer noted that round-eye axe heads are often found in the West, so this was



JILL JACKSON

The artifact that wasn't: side and top views of round-eye axe head found on the L&C Trail.

not a particularly rare artifact. The B.L.M. decided to take no action.

In another recent search, the Sherman Library worked with Mel Yost of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency to determine the exact location of a Lewis and Clark campsite in Montana. The Farm Service Agency receives property from time to time as a result of foreclosures and bankruptcies. It then becomes the agency's responsibility to dispose of the property through sale or other means. When notified that a particular property might include the expedition campsite for May 7, 1805, Yost turned to us for help. We, in turn, confirmed that the campsite was indeed on the property, and we were able to give Yost its exact coordinates. We then referred him to Steve Adams, the superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the lead agency for land and resources along the trail. Both agencies wound up thanking us for helping to protect this historic site.

If you have similar issues, the Sherman Library is a good place for doing background research and locating other resources that can help you. We don't have all the answers, but we usually know where to find them.

—Jill Jackson

Librarian and Archivist, LCTHF

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.

P.O.B. 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403

406-454-1234 / 1-888-701-3434

Fax: 406-771-9237

www.lewisandclark.org

The mission of the LCTHF is to stimulate public appreciation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's contributions to America's heritage and to support education, research, development, and preservation of the Lewis and Clark experience.

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Partnering with Congress and federal agencies to preserve the L&C Trail

When Congress established the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Caucus, one of its primary goals was to ensure adequate funding for the bicentennial commemoration.

At this year's annual caucus briefing, held in Washington, D.C., in early April, several things were clear. One was the "leveraging effect" of federal dollars on state and local organizations and agencies, which have used their grants to attract additional financial and nonmonetary contributions to fund their bicentennial projects. Another was the impact these projects—thanks to Congress's initial investment—are making on this national commemoration and the lasting legacy they will bequeath to future generations.

The briefing is an annual report to the bicameral 75-member caucus on what federal agencies are doing in behalf of the bicentennial. Some agencies have received significant funding from Congress for these efforts and others are carving money out of their own budgets. Either way, the list of contributions and achievements is impressive.

The U.S. Mint, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Army Corps of Engineers, and Fish and Wildlife Service are among the 32 federal agencies participating in the Lewis and Clark Federal Interagency Partnership. These agencies are working together to ensure a successful bicentennial, one that tells the story of the expedition from all points of view and protects the many special places along the L&C Trail. Many of these agencies also are working with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation through both formal and informal partnership agreements. Even more are working with state and local bicentennial commissions, state agencies, local governments, Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and community groups.

The benefits of these partnerships include an increased awareness of, and attention to, the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Thanks to partnerships with the Bu-

reau of Land Management and the Forest Service, two of the foundation's trail-stewardship programs will mark their first full year of operation in 2005. The recruitment of volunteers for the Lewis and Clark Trail Watch program, developed with the B.L.M., is well underway, and training for this season's activities begins this month.

The foundation is also in its second season of assisting the Forest Service with efforts to protect natural, cultural, and historical resources on the Lolo Motorway.

Volunteers with the B.L.M.'s Trail Watch program aid land managers in providing services, education, and interpretation to the visiting public. They also serve as "eyes and ears" for the B.L.M.'s law-enforcement officers in Montana and Idaho in their efforts to deter vandalism. The program fosters a strong sense of ownership of our public lands and irreplaceable resources.

If you want to help out on the trail but live some distance from it, consider volunteering for the Forest Service's resource-protection project on the Lolo Motorway. The Forest Service provides meals and transportation to the Lolo Motorway from the Powell and Kooskia Ranger Stations. Volunteers need to furnish their own tents, bedding, and weather-appropriate clothing, including rain gear and boots. Volunteers help with trail clearing, sign installation, and campsite monitoring and cleanup. Last year, they shared stories around the campfire, read from the Lewis and Clark journals, and received a visit from Meriwether Lewis's mother, Lucy Marks.

Volunteers can participate the week of July 11 and again during a week in mid-September (exact dates still to be determined.)

For more information on these pro-

grams, please call or e-mail me (888-701-3434, wraney@lewisandclark.org). Whichever program you choose, think of it as a working vacation and an educational experience that will allow you to make a lasting contribution to preserving and protecting the L&C Trail.

The foundation is developing additional stewardship programs with other agencies, including the National Park Service and the Corps of Engineers. Programs like these enable foundation members to make a hands-on contribution to trail stewardship while stretching limited government funding for this important effort. Volunteers experience the beauty and splendor of the trail while enhancing their knowledge of, and appreciation for, the Lewis and Clark story by living and working along the route the explorers traveled. They make a significant contribution to protecting the land and ensuring its resources will be available for their children and grandchildren.

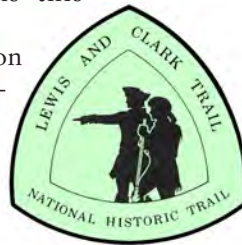
Last but not least, they will help the foundation continue to fulfill its mission as "Keepers of the Story, Stewards of the Trail" in the third century of Lewis and Clark.

—Wendy Raney

Director, Field Operations

Pacific art exhibition

Journey's End National Art Exhibition (JENAE) will hold its 2005 art show in conjunction with "Destination: The Pacific," the L&C National Bicentennial signature event November 11-15 in Astoria, Oregon. The exhibit highlights works by painters, sculptors, and artists in other media inspired by the Corps of Discovery during its time in the Northwest. The exhibit will have two venues: the Clatsop County Heritage Museum (November 11-27) and the Holiday Inn Express (November 11-14). More information can be found on the Web site www.jsend.org. ■



St. Joseph
(new ad, not a pickup)

SEVEN DAYS ON THE LOWER COLUMBIA

*The last week of Lewis and Clark's westward journey
was one of misery and ultimate triumph*

BY REX ZIAK

The following article, which covers the Lewis and Clark Expedition during a particularly bleak period—November 10-16, 1805, when it was marooned on the north shore of the Columbia River estuary at the end of the outward-bound journey—has been abridged and adapted from Rex Ziak's *In Full View: A True and Accurate Account of Lewis and Clark's Arrival at the Pacific Ocean, and Their Search for a Winter Camp along the Lower Columbia River*, published in 2002 by Moffitt House Press, of Astoria, Oregon.—ED.

By Sunday morning of November 10, 1805, the Columbia's waters had flattened out smooth. Without hesitation the men loaded their five canoes and set out. It must have been a tremendous relief to be moving forward once again. The members of the Corps of Volunteers for North Western Discovery were on their way, confident that in just another couple of hours they would arrive at the Pacific Ocean.

As they paddled along the steep, forested shoreline, the men could easily see what lay ahead. This shore was actually a series of coves, each divided from the next by a small point of land that projected slightly out into the river. It was an ideal situation. Each cove provided a stretch of smooth, sheltered water. The men paddled close to shore, their canoes gliding along effortlessly.

Up ahead they could see a prominent point sticking out from the shore. This dark, rocky headland would one day be known as Point Ellice, but the captains would name

it Point Distress. It extended out into the water farther than any other point on the north shore and completely blocked their view downriver. It seemed clear that once they passed it, they would be very close to the ocean.

Simultaneously, however, they were drawing nearer to the dreadful mouth of the Columbia. The wild and tumultuous waves from the Pacific Ocean were out of view, but the men undoubtedly began to feel the pulse of the powerful surf lifting and dropping the water beneath their canoes.

What occurred next is one of the most surprising moments of the entire expedition. As they drew nearer to the point, they saw a terrible and threatening sight. Waves pounded against the rocky shore, then swirled around, causing the river's current to boil into a whitewater chop. Huge driftwood logs floated among these waves, plunging below the surface, then suddenly rising into view, like breaching whales. Water surged from every direction,



Lashed by wind and rain and menaced by wave-tossed driftlogs, the Corps of Discovery spent three miserable days and nights at "Dismal Nitch," a campsite on the north shore of the Columbia estuary. Michael Haynes's painting shows Clark, with sign talker George Drouillard's help, negotiating with Chinook traders.

pounding their blunt canoes. In the distance, the roar of the ocean sounded like an enormous waterfall warning that the worst was yet to come.

Lewis and Clark could see that if a canoe overturned, even their best swimmers would drown. Every impulse told them to keep going, to finish this journey, and yet all their common sense told them to wait. They had come too far to make a hasty, risky decision. In the end they decided to play it safe. Wisely, and for the first time since leaving St. Louis eighteen months before, Lewis and Clark ordered the party to turn around.

The men retreated upriver to a small cove they had passed moments earlier. They unloaded the canoes and built large fires. There was nothing to do but wait. On top of this unexpected setback, they endured a cold, steady rain.

Several hours later, the captains noticed the river flattening again into a glossy, mirror-smooth surface. This was exactly the break they had been waiting for. The canoes were loaded and launched, and the party set out downriver again. As Clark recorded in his journal, they were soon “obliged to return finding the waves too high for our Canoes to ride.”¹

People unfamiliar with tidewater can be fooled by its constantly changing conditions, and this is exactly what happened to Lewis and Clark. Their view upriver had revealed only a temporary calming of the waves, known as highwater slack. This natural phenomenon, which lasts just a few minutes, occurs after the flood tide reaches its maximum and before the ebb tide begins pulling the water in the opposite direction.

As the explorers approached the point for the second time, they saw to their surprise and horror that the waters were as menacing as before. Waves were rolling and breaking with great force and fury. The captains realized it would be impossible to paddle their canoes any farther without risking lives, so once again they were forced to turn around.

Now what should they do? Evening was upon them; darkness was less than two hours away. Obviously, they would have to find a campsite for the night, but where should they go? If they went too far upriver, and out of sight of this point, how would they know when the waters had become calm?

It made more sense to keep the party within sight of the point. Fortunately, there happened to be a protected cove close at hand. A spring trickled down the steep rocky hillside, supplying drinking water. The site was exposed and barely adequate, but it would do for one night. They



Top: Detailed view of Point Ellice (“Point Distress”) and vicinity. **Middle:** Wider view of Washington side of the lower Columbia. **Bottom:** Clark’s map of the lower Columbia showing the explorers’ campsite for November 15-25, 1805 (labeled November 16-25 by Clark). Clark pinpointed the campsite — called Station Camp — by triangulation, recording the bearings to Cape Disappointment, Point Adams, and “Point William” (today’s Tongue Point, not shown).

landed and again unloaded the canoes, placed the baggage on a rock above the high-tide line, made a fire of driftwood, and wrapped themselves up against the unremitting rain.

The turbulent, unpredictable waters of the mouth of the Columbia River had brought the expedition to a standstill, and the next several days would be among the most grueling and depressing of the entire journey.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

In the Pacific Northwest the winter nights are 14 hours long. What made these nights seem even longer for Lewis and Clark's men was the fact that their tents had completely rotted. Perhaps the captains themselves slept beneath some sort of awning, but most of the men simply curled up like beasts, trying to ignore the hard, cold, drenching rain.

Daylight revealed their worst fears. The waves in the river were too rough for their canoes. The morning, Private Joseph Whitehouse wrote, "continued wet & rainy," with lashing wind and high swells on the river. "We did not attempt to move from this place."²

Three days had passed since the men had eaten their last meal of fresh meat, so Clark sent hunters into the surrounding hills to shoot deer, elk, bear, or anything else they could find. After a brief absence, the hunters returned to camp empty-handed. The thick coastal rainforest, which requires as much climbing as it does hiking, had turned them back.

It appeared as though this would be another day of hunger, but luckily a canoe full of Indians came paddling downriver with a load of fish (probably bull trout caught on their spawning beds). The captains purchased 13 of them.

Even more exciting than the prospect of a fresh meal, Clark's journal tells us, was the news, delivered by sign language, that the Indians had been "on their way to trade those fish with white people" who "live below round a point." The party had heard rumor after rumor about fur traders near the ocean (either on a ship at anchor, they presumed, or at a trading post). Now they had a seemingly reliable report about white people less than a mile away.

Lewis and Clark knew that once they made contact with white traders their situation would dramatically improve. Traders would have a variety of supplies that would enable them to re-outfit the party with new tents, clothes, food, tobacco, and maybe even whiskey.

Having sold their fish, the Indians set out to return to their village. But instead of hugging the shoreline, they paddled straight out into the middle of the vast Columbia and proceeded to cross to the opposite side through the horrific waves. Lewis and Clark had admired these Indians' elegant canoes, but until this moment they had never seen them used in challenging waters by the natives themselves. Instead of rolling over and capsizing, they sliced easily through the whitecapped waves.

The Columbia was five miles wide here, and the Indian canoe was soon out of sight. The men were dumbstruck. Clark, never one to lavish praise on the Indians of the lower Columbia, declared them "the best canoe navigators I ever Saw."

As the afternoon wore on, the rain increased to a steady downpour. The saturated hillside softened, loosening the rocks and sending them tumbling directly into the party's camp. Rocks flew past the explorers, ricocheting off the driftwood with the force of cannonballs. The pumpkin-sized rocks were easy to avoid, but the smaller ones, the size of apples, were a greater problem. It was nearly impossible to see them coming, and they hit with enough force to break bones.

It was too risky to keep everyone together, so the men split up and crawled into any small space they could find to avoid the falling rocks. There would be no campfire tonight. As darkness approached, it was every man for himself.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

The good luck that Lewis and Clark had enjoyed throughout most of the expedition seemed to have vanished. Everything was going wrong; every day their predicament became gloomier than the day before.

Just when they most needed a break, their situation took another turn for the worse. In the middle of the night they were awakened by a rare thunderstorm. The sky rumbled with thunder while lightning flashed and buckshot-sized hailstones pelted the earth. When hail falls on the wide Columbia the river hisses like high-pressure steam.

The hailstones stung like wasps and brought a numbing chill into the air, but the men didn't dare move around. The falling rocks were far more dangerous than the shivering cold temperatures. After several hours of this agonizing predicament, the storm passed, dawn came, and the sky brightened. The worst seemed to be over, but what looked like the beginning of good weather was merely the calm before an even worse storm.

Now, for the first time, the explorers experienced a full gale directly from the ocean. The wind drove the rain sideways and pushed the waves into the shore with such force that the spray showered down upon them. At any moment the force of this water could roll a driftwood log and crush them to death; or worse yet, a huge wave might sweep them into the water where they would perish in seconds.

If they backed up from the waves, they were beneath the falling rocks; if they moved away from the steep hill-



CHARLES FRITZ, CHINOOK TRADERS ON THE COLUMBIA

Lewis and Clark were deeply impressed by the quality of the Chinook Indians' canoes and their ability to navigate the rough waters of the lower Columbia. Charles Fritz's painting shows three Chinook canoes approaching the Corps of Discovery on November 5, 1805.

side, they were within range of the waves. They were vulnerable on every side, and there was no place to hide.

It was clear they had to abandon this camp, but where would they go and how would they get there? It would be impossible to launch their canoes—the huge waves would flip them over in seconds and drown the entire party. Behind them, the hills were too steep and rocky for even their best hunters, carrying only rifles, to find or negotiate a path. There seemed to be nothing to do but wait.

Then, at what seemed to be the darkest moment, their luck returned. The tide was ebbing, and despite the hard wind blowing in from the ocean, the level of the river dropped several feet. A narrow, rocky toe of shoreline emerged at the bottom of the steep cliffs, and the captains instantly saw it as a possible way out of their predicament. If the water level kept dropping, they could abandon this sorry camp, dash on foot along the edge of the shore, and perhaps find refuge in another cove.

This was a fine plan except for one problem. If they abandoned this camp, what would they do with the canoes? There were five in their flotilla—four heavy dugouts they had carved from tree trunks along the Clearwater River and a sleeker, lighter canoe purchased from Indians near Celilo Falls. Several days earlier, the canoes had nearly been crushed by the driftwood logs, and the same thing could happen again if they were left unattended. Yet there was no way the men could drag the huge, heavy

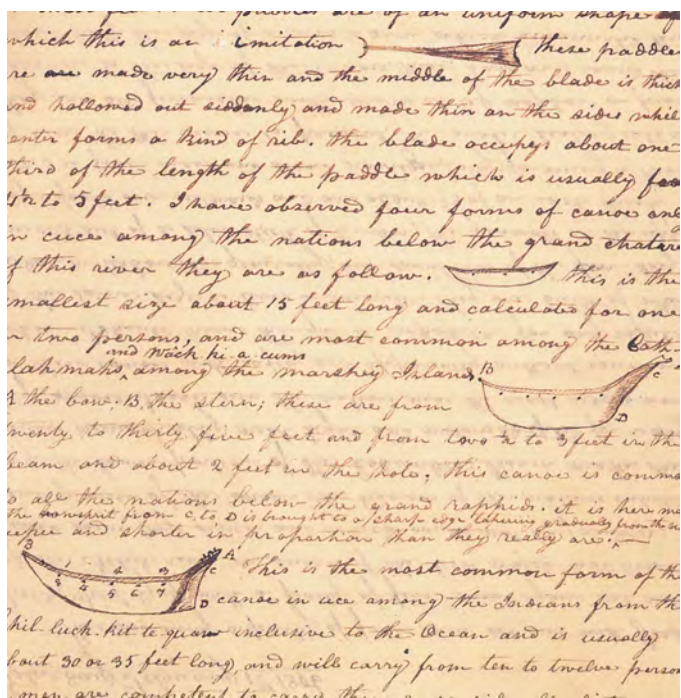
dugout canoes high enough up the steep bank to be out of harm's way.

There seemed only one solution, and it was risky. They would bury the dugouts: bury them beneath tons of rock, "to prevent the emence waves dashing them to pices," wrote Clark. If each dugout were weighted securely, perhaps when the tide came in the waves and driftwood would pass safely over them.

Large stones were lying everywhere, and it must have taken Lewis and Clark's men only a couple of minutes to fill each dugout full of rocks. They now turned their attention to the thin cedar Indian canoe. This relatively delicate craft—far and away their best—would probably split down the middle if filled with rocks, so the captains decided it should not be left behind. Keeping some means of transportation was a good idea. The canoe was light enough for four men to carry.

Now the only remaining concern was their baggage. Since there was too much of it to carry, the men selected only the bare essentials, such as axes, blankets, and kettles. The rest—medicines, smithing tools, survey instruments, trading goods—they stowed high up on the hillside, above the reach of the crashing waves. They could come back for these items later.

The party watched and waited. When at last the ebbing tide seemed to reach its lowest point, they set out, moving "our camp," wrote Clark, "around a point to a Small wet bottom at the mouth of a Brook."



In his journal entry for February 1, 1806, Lewis's discussion of the Chinooks includes drawings of three Indian canoes and a paddle (top).

With waves crashing all around them, the captains led the party along the narrow shore. The force of the water occasionally knocked them to their knees. The wind howled, and the steady barrage of driftwood thumping against the rocks sounded like a herd of horses galloping across a bridge. They struggled along the slippery rocks, past a steep cliff, and stepped into the mouth of a small stream. The entire move probably took less than fifteen minutes.

They were now entering a narrow, dim canyon between two hillsides of dark, enormous trees. The air felt as cold as ice, and with every step the saturated ground squished beneath their feet. Little sunlight penetrated the thick canopy of gigantic trees—spruce and cedar reaching two hundred feet into the air, with trunks seven or more feet in diameter. This was their first contact with a Northwest rainforest, and it was no doubt the dampest, darkest forest they had ever seen.

As inhospitable as it might have first appeared, there was indeed plenty of room to camp in this narrow little canyon. They were out of immediate danger. Nothing was tumbling down the hillsides, and the crashing waves could not reach into the ravine.

Food was their first priority, so the captains sent out hunters to shoot deer or elk, but they soon returned with disappointing news and complaints about the rugged, inaccessible woods. In the meantime, Clark and some of the men chased spawning salmon up and down the shallow

creek. The meat from these overly mature fish might have been soft and bland, but it was still better than the dried fish they usually purchased from Indians.

Hail from the night before remained scattered on the ground, which meant that the temperature of the air could not have been much above 38 degrees. These men were not strangers to snow or frost, but this cold, wet coastal climate affected them differently. The frigid rain trickled down the men's faces and dripped from their soggy clothing, bringing on a chill that penetrated deep into their joints. Old injuries, bumps, and bruises throbbed. Their knuckles swelled, causing their fingers to curl into useless fists. They needed warming fires, but holding an axe handle tight enough to cut was practically impossible. Not that it mattered, since every chunk of wood was so wet that whenever they tried to make a fire it hissed and smoldered, then eventually went out.

Clark looked at his men. He saw the uncontrollable shivering, the chattering teeth, the grimaces on every sunken face. He realized they had reached a new low point. The men had never suffered more. "It would be distressing to a feeling person," wrote Clark, "to See our Situation at this time all wet and cold with our bedding &c. also wet, in a Cove Scercely large nough to Contain us." What, indeed, would Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues at the American Philosophical Society say if they could see them now?

This was a setback, but the captains were not giving up. They immediately laid out a plan to get a few members of the party downriver. Their small cedar canoe was the same style as the one used by the Indians who had brought the fish. It seemed reasonable that if the Indians could navigate through high waves, so could they. Three men—George Gibson, William Bratton, and Alexander Willard—were selected to take this canoe downriver to search for the white men below.

They set out with high hopes, but within moments, wrote Clark, the waves were tossing the canoe about "at will." The swells were too high, the current too strong. This third attempt to get around Point Distress proved an utter failure, and the three men were lucky to return alive.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Following another miserable night, the explorers awoke the next morning to see waves breaking from shore to shore. Once again it would be impossible to launch the canoes in such dreadful conditions.

At some point during the day, they returned to their previous camp to retrieve the rest of the baggage as well

as the four big dugout canoes, which they probably dragged along the shore while the tide was out.

Instead of wasting the day waiting for the weather to change, Clark decided to hike up a hill for a better view of the lower river. This was his first attempt to walk deep into the rainforest, and it did not go well. He became entangled in the brush and often had to pull himself hand over hand up the steep embankment. Finally he reached the top, but it was socked in by clouds and he could see nothing. The trip ended up being a complete waste of time.

Clark had now experienced what his hunters had been complaining about; it would be impossible for the party to travel on foot. Those steep, rugged hills were for all practical purposes impenetrable. The captains might not have wanted to admit it, but both knew they had gotten themselves into a terrible fix.

Making contact with the traders reportedly around the point seemed to offer the only hope of getting out of this miserable cove, so despite the three previous failures the captains determined to try again. Another crew was assembled and the indispensable Indian canoe made ready. Willard, who had been part of the crew that had failed the day before, was willing to try again. John Colter and George Shannon rounded out the crew.

They launched the canoe and paddled hard into the treacherous waves. Soon they were out of sight. The party waited and waited for the three men to return. Evening came, then darkness.

The captains had no idea what had become of them. It was entirely possible that they had found a camp of fur traders and were assembling a rescue party to return early the next morning. It was equally possible that the waves had driven them into the rocks, that they had capsized and drowned. The uncertainty about their fate must have made the nighttime feel blacker, colder, and longer than ever before.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

The morning light revealed an unchanged Columbia River. Its waters churned and heaved in a most threatening manner. For good reason, mariners would eventually call the lower Columbia, with its fearsome winds, currents, and shifting shoals, “the Graveyard of the Pacific.” During the night, one of the four large canoes had been severely damaged. Now they were stuck here, even if the river became flat calm.

Three men were missing without a trace. The seawor-

thy Indian canoe was gone, and now one of the large canoes had cracked open. Little by little the expedition seemed to be falling apart. Something had to be done immediately to reverse this situation, so Lewis stepped forward with a plan.

Realizing it was useless and foolish to risk another canoe on a fifth attempt around Point Distress, Lewis announced his intention to hike overland past the point in hopes of locating the white traders.

While Lewis began to prepare for this challenging hike through the rugged rainforest, several men applied their carpentry skills to repairing the damaged canoe. During their journey down the Columbia, these men had become expert at such repairs and knew exactly what to do. Their work was interrupted when a canoe with five Indians—



Storm-tossed driftlogs like these washed ashore near Chinook, Washington, could overturn a canoe. In the distance is Point Ellice (Lewis & Clark's "Point Distress").

three men and two women—was sighted coming upriver around the point.

No one, at this moment, could have imagined what an unlikely series of events was about to unfold. The Indian men landed, while the women paddled the canoe out into deeper water, apparently to keep it away from the shallow, rocky shore. Unable to speak English, the Indians used hand gestures to communicate that they had seen the three expedition members sent downriver the day before. Everyone's spirits must have lifted upon hearing that Colter, Willard, and Shannon had survived their trip around Point Distress. They had taken an enormous risk and survived! If there were a trading post somewhere near the ocean, or a ship, they would surely find it.

Now the encounter took an unexpected turn. The Indians remained in camp, presumably answering more of the captains' questions, when rustling on the hillside above

drew the explorers' attention. Moments later, John Colter tumbled through the bushes. His rifle had broken, so he had left Willard and Shannon and returned to camp. He was also in hot pursuit of the same Indians who were now conversing with the captains. Colter explained that Indians had stolen his fishing gear—a gig, or barbed spear, and a basket—and he was certain these particular Indians were the thieves.

Of course, everyone could see that the three half-naked Indian men were not hiding anything beneath their small cedar-bark capes, so Clark turned his attention to the two women in the canoe. Perhaps they were hiding the stolen goods. When Clark called to the women to surrender them, they ignored him. The women changed their minds when one of the men grabbed a rifle and threatened to shoot them.

They paddled ashore, and exactly as suspected, Colter's gig and basket were found in the canoe. The items were recovered, and Clark rudely dismissed the thieves.

With this unpleasant encounter behind them, Lewis and Clark now turned their attention to Colter. They had many questions. Where had he been? What had he seen? What lay farther ahead? Colter told the captains that a "butifull Sand beech" lay just beyond the point and assured them that a canoe could make it there. So Lewis now abandoned his plan to go on foot and ordered the best remaining canoe made ready. Realizing it would require a lot of manpower to paddle against the ocean's surge, he selected nine men to accompany him. If they made it around the point, he would split up the party and send the canoe back with five men. They set out at three o'clock and were soon out of sight.

Clark and the others waited and watched. One hour passed, then another. Finally, just before nightfall, the canoe returned with its five-man crew.

It had been a harrowing trip back upriver and around the point. The canoe was repeatedly hit by waves that splashed over the side. Water partially filled the canoe and swirled around the men's legs. Knowing that at any moment the canoe could swamp and capsize, they paddled harder and harder to stay in front of the next surging wave.

Lewis's detachment—which included George Drouillard, Joseph and Reuben Field, and Robert Frazer—was now around the point. Even though most of the party remained penned down in the same little cove, they must have been elated to know that the expedition was again advancing.

Clark realized he had to get his men out of there as soon as possible. They were suffering terribly from the

ceaseless rain and sleepless nights. They were hungry, as usual, and now their leather clothing was falling apart. Leather rots if it remains wet, and their clothes hadn't seen a moment's dryness in more than a week. Sleeves detached from shirts, and pant legs ripped from cuff to waist. Chunks of decomposing leather lay strewn about the dreadful campsite.

The expedition was now separated into three different groups, with miles between them. The explorers were tantalizingly close to the Pacific, but their efforts to go those last few miles had been fraught with more grief and disappointment than they had experienced during any part of the journey. They had never spent so many days advancing so few miles.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15

A single droplet of water is practically silent. But when billions of raindrops fall hour after hour in the middle of the woods, each one dripping though the branches and splashing onto ferns and fallen leaves, the combined effect sounds like a chorus of toy drums. Lewis and Clark's men had lived with this constant drumming for the past ten days, but on this night it finally came to a stop. The resulting eerie silence would be enough to startle anyone awake. Without that steady noise, the unexpected stillness of the night puts one on high alert, wondering at the meaning of each distinct and distant sound.

Calm weather had finally arrived. This was exactly what Clark had been hoping for. In the morning he ordered the canoes repaired and loaded, but once again the mood of the Columbia turned and stopped the explorers in their tracks. The sudden change in conditions must have dumbfounded Clark. He tried the point alone in a canoe, exactly as Lewis had done, but the waves slapped him sideways and forced him back to camp.

It was as if the Columbia were trying to lure them into an ambush. One moment it was calm, then suddenly it turned rough and violent. Clark grew frustrated and perhaps a little testy. They had been in bad spots before, but surely this was the worst.

While all this was occurring, miles away Willard and Shannon were having a bad morning as well. The night before, they had camped with friendly Indians and had taken every precaution to guard themselves against theft. They had even placed their rifles beneath their heads. Yet somehow, in the middle of the night, the weapons disappeared. When they awoke and discovered them missing, they confronted the Indians and warned that if they didn't return the rifles, other whites would arrive to punish them.

The Indians were unmoved by idle threats from these two harmless, and now unarmed, men. Dejected and defenseless, Willard and Shannon retreated, walking back upriver along the shore.

They faced an eight-mile hike back to Point Distress. Willard and Shannon assumed the Indians would make their escape, and they would never see their rifles again. Before too long, however, they saw Lewis's party coming their way. The two groups met in what must have been a joyful reunion.

Upon hearing their story, Lewis and his four men, joined by Willard and Shannon, hastened ahead. They charged into the Indian camp, caught the culprits, and made them give back the rifles. Whether this was done by threat or diplomatic persuasion isn't recorded, but the weapons were returned.

This was a dicey moment for Lewis. He didn't know whether this robbery was an isolated bit of mischief or the start of a wave of thievery. He wanted to continue his search for a sailing ship or trading post at Cape Disappointment, but at the same time he wanted to warn Clark to stay on his guard. Lewis decided to send Shannon back to warn Clark, while Willard stayed with him.

Clark and his men, meanwhile, remained stuck in the campsite upstream of Point Distress, but with the arrival of decent weather at least they could dry their clothes. The captain also kept the party busy cleaning their rifles and inspecting supplies.

While they worked, the great Columbia River was beginning to ebb. Hour after hour, billions of gallons of water poured out into the ocean, lowering the level of the river inch by inch. Finally, after six hours, the current slowed, then stopped. It was low-water slack, and the Columbia

flattened into a smooth, blue sheet. Clark saw his chance to quit this "dismal nitch" for good.³ Seizing the moment, he ordered the men to load the canoes. They set out and within minutes rounded the "blustering point." The mouth of the Columbia came into sight. And there, immediately beyond, was the ocean—the explorers' first close-up view of the great Pacific.

Exactly as Colter had described, they encountered a long sandy beach, and above it an Indian village of 36 wooden houses. It was the largest village they had seen along the entire lower Columbia, but, oddly enough, every house was empty—"uninhabited by anything except flees," noted Clark.

Even more surprising was the sudden appearance of George Shannon walking along the shore. With him were five Chinook Indians he had met along the way and who, perhaps seeing a trading opportunity, had decided to accompany him back to camp.

Clark pulled in close to the beach and soon learned about the thefts of Shannon's and Willard's rifles the night before and of Lewis's timely intercession that morning. Clark's patience had been worn razor-thin by the weather, hunger, and misery of these past few days. He had not slept an entire night in more than a week. News of the theft sent him into a rage. He confronted the five Chinooks, all of whom "understood Some English," and made it emphatically clear that the next Indian who stole anything would be shot.

It is unlikely these Chinooks knew anything about the theft. Now, suddenly, they were confronted by a white man threatening to kill them! They must have found it completely baffling.

Daylight was slipping away. The tide had now switched

Timeline, Nov. 10-17, 1805

November 10
The Corps of Discovery's first attempt to round "Point Distress" (Point Ellice) fails. The explorers retreat to a "small cove." A second attempt to round the point fails. They return to the small cove and camp for the night.

November 11
Indians visiting camp mention that white traders are west of Point Distress. Wind and rain keep the expedition pinned down a second night in cove.

November 12
Storm's fury increases. Explorers secure four big canoes with rocks and portage lighter Indian canoe around small point to "Dismal Nitch." Three men (Bratton, Gibson, Willard) in Indian canoe make third attempt to round Point Distress but are driven back. First night at Dismal Nitch.

November 13
Clark climbs a hill but low clouds obscure view. Men

portage baggage and big canoes from previous campsite. Three men (Colter, Shannon, Willard) in Indian canoe make fourth attempt to round Point Distress. They succeed. The rest of the party remains at Dismal Nitch for a second night.

November 14
Five Indians appear in a canoe. Colter returns overland. Clark confronts Indians over theft of Colter's fishing tackle. Lewis and nine men

round Point Distress in a canoe. Five men return with canoe after dropping off Lewis and four others. Main party spends third night at Dismal Nitch.

November 15
Storm abates. Clark tries to round Point Distress in big canoe but fails. Indians steal Shannon and Willard's weapons. Willard heads back toward main camp, meets Lewis's party. Lewis confronts Indians and gets weapons

and was again flooding in from the ocean. Clark led their canoes downriver, lumbering through the heavy surf until they arrived at a low, sandy point (later known as Chinook Point). From here, Clark had a commanding view of the ocean, which was framed on the north by Cape Disappointment and on the south by Point Adams. From this exact spot he could also turn eastward and see miles and miles upriver. This place offered an extensive view of the entire lower river and was an ideal location for what the captains would call Station Camp.

The men unloaded the canoes and set up camp. Lumber from the village was reassembled into crude shelters where they could sleep. The weather was gradually improving, but it still felt good to have a roof over their heads.

Several more Chinooks arrived, offering roots for sale, but Clark would have nothing to do with them. For good measure he harangued the Indians again, warning that “if any one of their nation stole any thing” the guard keeping watch over the baggage “would most certainly Shute them.”

These Indians didn’t want trouble. They were merchants who were only interested in trading, and turning a tidy profit. So in order to appease this angry white man and get on with business, they acknowledged Clark’s threat and agreed to punish any wrongdoers.

The relationship between Clark and the Chinooks had been poisoned. There was nothing the Indians could do or say that would ever mend this rift.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

It was here at Station Camp that Clark and his men enjoyed the first dry night of uninterrupted sleep in more than a week. Clark’s first thought the following morning

back. Lewis sends Shannon back to main camp and with remaining five men proceeds to Cape Disappointment in search of white traders. Clark and rest of party succeed in rounding Point Distress, disembark on sandy beach. Shannon appears with Indians, tells Clark about theft of weapons. Clark twice threatens Indians. Explorers establish “Station Camp,” where they will remain ten days. Lewis’s party explores Cape Disappointment.

November 16
Clark and the main party at Station Camp dry out clothes and supplies. Lewis and his party continue their exploration of Cape Disappointment but find no trace of white traders.

November 17
Lewis and his party return to Station Camp after two days. Clark leaves camp with another party to conduct his own exploration of Cape Disappointment.

was to get the camp in order. He directed the men to have all supplies unpacked and inspected. As one might expect after so many days of constant rain, everything was found to be soaking wet. The men sorted through the packets of medicine, navigational instruments, tools, blankets, books, and scientific specimens. It must have been a mess. The blankets and clothes strewn across every driftwood log must have resembled flotsam washed up from a shipwreck. Breakers curled and crashed along the beach, tossing salty spray into the air.

Lewis and his detachment were at that moment exploring Cape Disappointment in search of the white traders mentioned by the Chinooks; they would return the next day to report that none were found. Over the next several days, Clark, the expedition’s cartographer, would work on his map of the Columbia’s mouth and make his own reconnaissance of Cape Disappointment. The men would carve their names in trees, adding to the graffiti left by mariners who over the last dozen years had anchored in a nearby cove to trade with the natives. On November 24, they would make the decision to venture across the bay and build a winter post—Fort Clatsop—on the south shore, which reputedly had more game.

All this was in the immediate future. For now, they rested in the certainty that they had fulfilled their primary mission. They had reached the Pacific.⁴

Rex Ziak (pronounced “Zeek”), an author and filmmaker who has devoted much of the last decade to research on Lewis and Clark on the Pacific, lives in Naselle, Washington. He will speak about the expedition’s experiences on the lower Columbia at this year’s annual meeting of the LCTHF, to be held August 6-10 in Portland, Oregon. His book In Full View, from which this article is abridged, was reviewed in the February 2004 WPO. It is available from Moffitt House Press (P.O. Box 282, Astoria, OR 97103; \$38.50, postage paid; Washington residents add sales tax).

NOTES

¹ Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 6, p. 39. All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, by date, unless otherwise indicated.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 392.

³ Clark’s actual spelling was “dismal nitich.”

⁴ For other recent WPO articles about Lewis and Clark on the lower Columbia, see “The Illusion of Cape Disappointment,” by David L. Nicandri (November 2004); and “Decision at Chinook Point,” by Martin Plamondon II, and “The ‘Stupendious’ Columbia River Gorge,” by Glen Kirkpatrick (May 2001).

WIRELESS IN THE WILDERNESS

**How did Jefferson's explorers communicate with each other
and the wider world? How did they collect and record data
about the country they saw and the people they met?
A look at the Corps of Discovery through
the lens of information theory**

BY ROBERT R. HUNT

It's been said that an army travels on its stomach, but any military unit on the move also requires a system of communication to maintain command cohesion and discipline. This was certainly true for the Corps of Discovery. How did captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark communicate with, and control, individuals and groups of men who were often separated from each other while traveling through unexplored wilderness? Field officers have faced this challenge from ancient times to the present and have relied on everything from runners and courier pigeons to walkie-talkies and satellite phones.

Today we live in an era of computers and warp-speed global communications. History itself has been "digi-

tized," and we can "virtually" experience the expedition through the Internet and its proliferation of Lewis and Clark Web sites. Many of these sites mention scholar Elijah Criswell and his seminal work, *Lewis and Clark: Linguistic Pioneers*.¹ Criswell created a lexicon of terms used by the explorers, showing how they adapted words from the everyday language of Jeffersonian America to describe the new world they encountered. In a similar vein, for discussing expedition communications we can create a lexicon that pairs terms and phrases used by historians with equivalent terms from the information and computer sciences. Instead of command post, think *control center* or *data processing center*. Course and distance records, re-



Todd Connor's painting shows Lewis, his dog Seaman, and another explorer on reconnaissance in the rugged Missouri Breaks. The main party is somewhere on the river below. Lewis and others routinely traveled on shore ahead of or flanking the boats, thereby extending the expedition's eyes and ears.

corded observations of weather and celestial objects, and measurements of plant and animal specimens can all be subsumed under the term *data*. The Corps of Discovery comprised a *system* for collecting, storing, and analyzing data; the journals themselves can be thought of as a *data bank* or *database*. Terms such as *input*, *output*, *printout*, *downtime*, and other techspeak borrowings are also applicable—readers can add indefinitely to the list. With this hypothetical lexicon in hand, proceed on.

COLLECTING AND SECURING INFORMATION

Let's begin with the Corps of Discovery during a typical day on the move. Security is vital to an information sys-

tem and was never far from the captains' minds. Following standard military doctrine, they deployed their troops in a pattern composed of a vanguard, flankers, and the main body. This was generally the case whether they were moving upriver by boat or cross-country on foot or horseback. Hunters were sent out daily, seeking game and information ("data") about the route ahead, including information about possible threats. In his journal entries Sergeant John Ordway often mentions "our flanking party," suggesting it was a routine feature of life on the trail.² Trusted men like George Drouillard, John Shields, and Reuben and Joseph Field frequently appear on duty as flankers. Lewis, walking ahead of the corps' flotilla by



In this painting by Michael Haynes, Sergeant John Ordway writes in his journal by lantern light during a typical night on the Missouri. In addition to Lewis and Clark, at least four other members of the Corps of Discovery kept journals, the “data banks” of the expedition.

himself or with a few chosen men, often served as the vanguard, especially on the outbound journey.

Frederick the Great called for the vanguard “never to operate more than two miles in front of the main body,” and we can assume that the corps usually operated within similar limits for both its advance and flanking parties.³ There were times, however, when the captains ignored such protocol and divided the group into subunits that were sent off in different directions, over much longer distances, in search of information or game. On the home-ward-bound voyage up the Columbia, in the spring of 1806, Clark was intent on scouting the Multnomah River (today’s Willamette), which the explorers had missed on the westbound journey. On April 2, 1806, he and seven men set off “in a large canoe” with a local Indian pilot while the main party remained in camp on the Columbia. Along the way he saw a band of Indians in “4 large Canoes at some distance above” him “bending their Course towards our Camp.” Clark says he “hesitated for a moment,” wondering “whether it would not be advisable for me to return . . . to add more Strength to our Camp.” But “on a Second reflection and reverting to the precautions always taken” on such occasions (i.e., maintaining a secure site, posting a guard, and keeping weapons ready), he “banished all apprehensions” and kept on.⁴

Clark’s hesitancy underscores the captains’ concern for

the integrity and security of their base camp—or, for our purposes, their “data processing center.” As for obtaining the “data” to be “processed,” several sources stand out. First was the landscape itself. As noted, the flanking and advance parties were constantly probing the terrain. In his journal entry for June 5, 1804, for example, Clark reports that “our Hunters or Spies [spies] discovered the sign of a war party of about 10 men.” On many occasions the captains themselves personally reconnoitered the territory. When the party came to the confluence of rivers or passed an accessible high point of land, either Lewis or Clark (and sometimes both) invariably surveyed the surroundings. On June 3, 1805, arriving at the junction of the Missouri and the Marias, Lewis wrote that “Capt. C & myself strolled out to the top of the heights in the fork of these rivers from whence we had an extensive and most enchanting view.” They found similar vantage points at the mouths of the Kansas, Platte, Yellowstone, Musselshell, and other Missouri tributaries. Clark made similar visual reconnaissances from Cape Disappointment at the mouth of the Columbia and from Tillamook Head on the Oregon coast, sites that provided him with sweeping views of the surrounding country.

After the westbound explorers departed the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on April 7, 1805, they did not encounter Indians until reaching the Continental Divide four

months later. But the land yielded lots of Indian “sign,” a second source of information, including tipi rings and fire pits at recently abandoned campsites and a great pile of buffalo carcasses at a presumed kill site.⁵ The river itself offered clues—debris such as lodgepoles and even a football—to the presence of Indians camped upstream.⁶

A third source of data was people on the trail—mainly Indians but also white traders and trappers whom the explorers met on the Missouri. These encounters yielded information about geography and the abundance or scarcity of game, warnings of obstacles and dangers on the trail, and, on the return trip, news of events back home.

All such information was stored and evaluated—“processed”—at the “control center,” i.e., wherever the captains happened to be at any point in time.

There were times when the captains collected data but neglected to process it, to their later regret. While heading up the Missouri in September 1804 they encountered Pierre Dorion, a trader residing among the Yankton Sioux who they learned was fluent in the Sioux language. The Yanktons were friendly, but the captains also knew that farther upriver they would face the more mercurial and dangerous Teton Sioux. Yet they apparently were not sufficiently mindful that Dorion’s language skills would be needed again. They left him at the Yankton camp and proceeded on to their near-disastrous encounter with the Teton. Clark rued “the want of a good interpreter.”⁷

DATA PROCESSING CENTERS

When not on the move, the corps held up at rest stations or encampments for periods that could last for days, weeks, or months. These were times for transferring information (“downloading data”) from field notebooks to journals (“data banks”). Evaluating (“processing”) that information produced “output” that might take the form of maps, reports, or plans of action. At Camp White Catfish on July 22, 1804, Clark wrote of their plan “to Stay here 4 or 5 days” to refresh, take observations, and “Send Despatches [“hardcopy”] back to govemment.” During the bitterly cold days at Fort Mandan, Clark busied himself

“drawing a Connection of the Countrey from what information I have recvd” from the Mandans and Canadian traders.⁸ At the Great Falls on July 4, 1805, near the end of their month-long portage, Lewis noted that he and Clark had previously thought of sending some of their men back home at this juncture. However, they had not yet seen the Shoshone Indians and could not “calculate on their friendship or hostility.” They regarded their party already as “sufficiently small”—reducing their numbers would lessen their strength, and the sight of their companions departing downstream could discourage those remaining. The captains therefore “concluded not to dispatch a canoe with a part of our men to St. Louis as we had intended early in the spring.” At Travelers’ Rest on

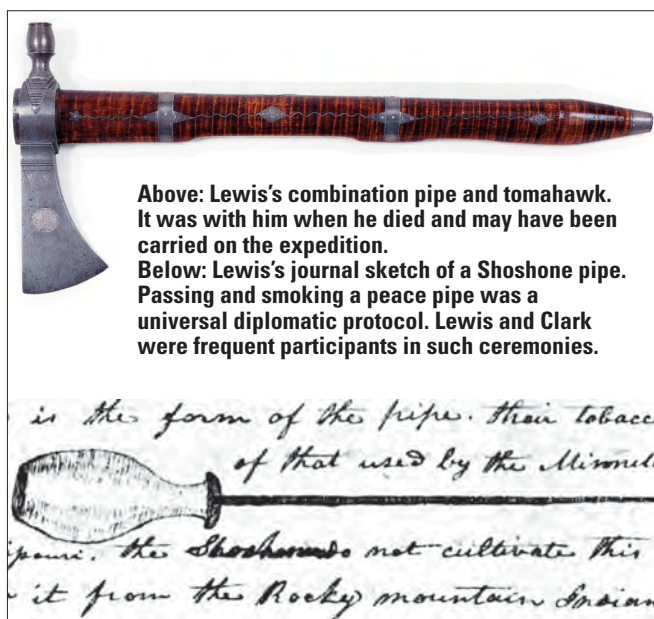
July 1, 1806, wishing to maximize geographical “input,” the eastbound explorers divided into smaller groups to explore the Yellowstone River and the upper Marias.

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

Vehicles of communication (“media”) took various forms, both visual and audible. Visual media included written notes and orders. The Corps of Discovery spent its first winter at Camp River DuBois, in Illinois. Clark was usually in camp while Lewis passed much of the time in St.

Louis, on the opposite bank of the Mississippi, and most of the communication between the two captains—mainly about the procurement of supplies and equipment—was via notes carried back and forth (“transmitted”) by couriers. Later, at Fort Mandan, Lewis and Clark wrote lengthy reports and letters to Thomas Jefferson, family, and friends, to be dispatched in the spring aboard the keelboat. At the Great Falls the captains exchanged notes carried by couriers between the Lower and Upper Portage Camps. At the Three Forks of the Missouri, the confluence of the Jefferson and Beaverhead rivers, and (on the return journey) at the mouth of the Yellowstone they left each other notes attached to trees or stakes or written on the skins of elk or other game.⁹

In August 1805, two notes written by Lewis for Clark which he left on a stake at the forks of the Beaverhead became what an electrical engineer might think of as a





CHARLES FRITZ, CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETING THE SHOSHONES

August 13, 1805, on the Continental Divide west of Lemhi Pass: with the American flag flying, Meriwether Lewis approaches a band of Shoshones. Throughout the 28 months of the expedition, flags were an important form of visual communication between the explorers and native groups.

“switched channel.” Lewis, scouting ahead, had made contact with the Shoshones and was now proceeding back down toward the forks with a group of warriors, hoping to rendezvous with the main party. The Shoshones feared that Lewis might be leading them into a trap and were getting increasingly nervous. When they reached the forks and the main party still wasn’t in sight, Lewis, in a desperate ruse, allayed the Indians’ suspicions by pretending to read the notes he had left for Clark. He told them a note had been written by Clark and placed there by a courier to inform him that the main party had been delayed. The deceit left the captain feeling “awkward” but also pleased that “it had its desired effect.”¹⁰

Commands—military orders—could be written or spoken. Written orders applied to the corps as a whole. They were typically read to the men while assembled in military formation, then were posted in front of the command post (“control center”)—that is, the captains’ quarters. Such standing orders were the “menus” or “protocols” governing daily conduct, squad organization, mess and cooking procedures, travel routine, discipline, security,

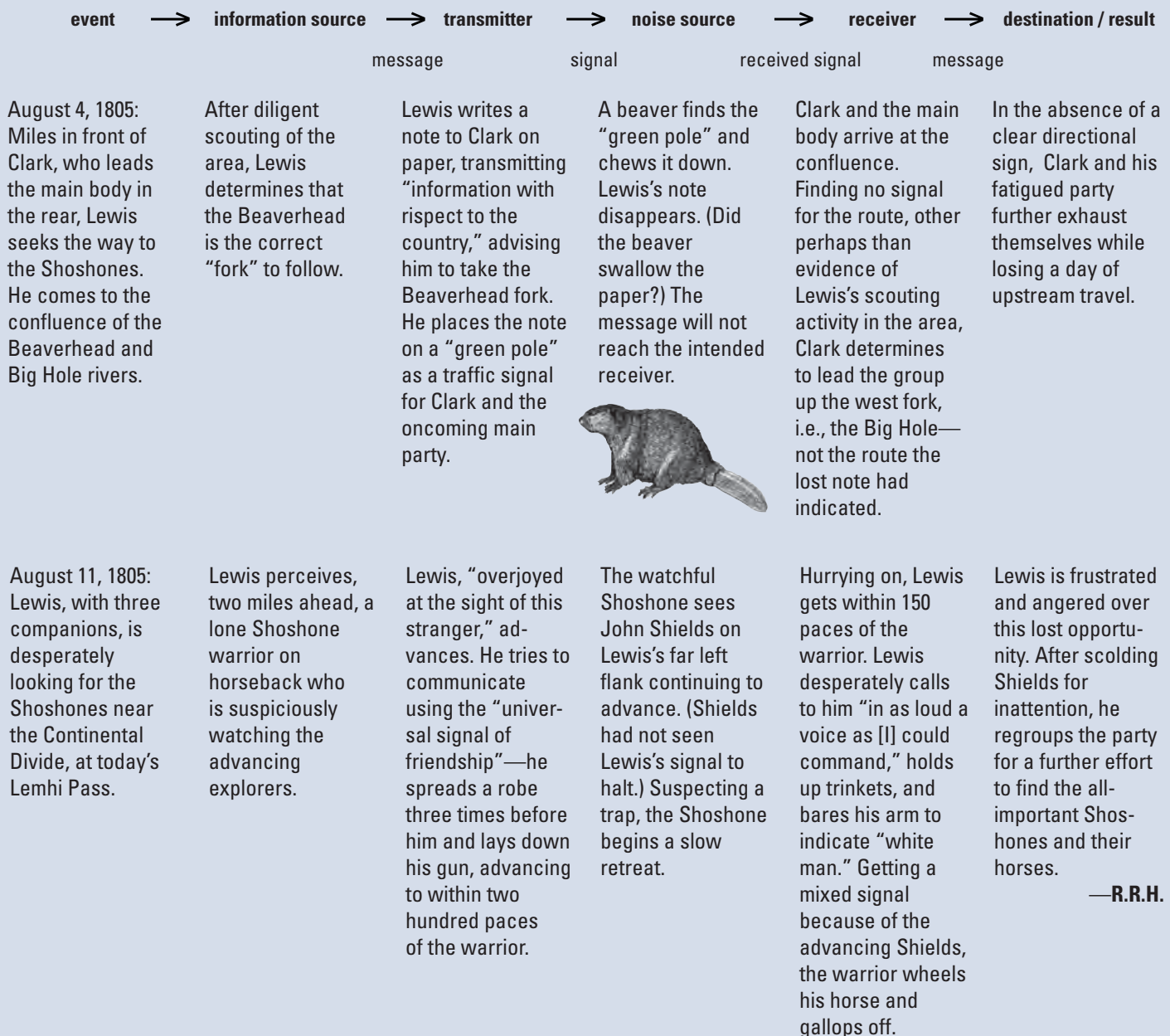
guard duty, and the like—all the normal expectations of soldierly life. By contrast, spoken orders tended to be ad hoc in nature, conveying instructions for immediate tasks performed by individuals or groups.

Visual communication was also by unconventional media such as flags, peace medals, graffiti, trail markings, smoke and fire, and various other “signs” in the broad sense of the term.

Flags in particular carried important symbolic value. On August 11, 1804, on a bluff overlooking the Missouri, the captains in a diplomatic show of respect raised a white flag over the grave of Blackbird, a powerful Omaha chief. They made gifts of U.S. flags to Indian leaders and routinely flew the flag at encampments and on the keelboat (their “flagship”) as an emblem of the new authority of the “Great American Father.” A flag could also signal a desire to parley. Ordway describes how, approaching the Three Forks of the Missouri in hopes of seeing the Shoshones, on Lewis’s order “we hoisted up our flags [on each of the canoes] expecting the natives would see them and know the meaning of them.”¹¹ Flags could indicate other

Diagram of a general communications system

with two illustrations from the Lewis & Clark journals



intentions or attitudes. When the corps left the camp of the Teton Sioux, according to Ordway, "the Indians assembled on S. Shore hoisted a white flag. We then took down our red flag directly after they hoisted another." Ordway assumed the Tetons were trying to convey that they were friends.¹²

European explorers tried to forestall hostile encounters with Indians by the longstanding diplomatic custom of presenting symbolic medals (bearing the sovereign's im-

age) to chiefs on initial contact with aboriginal groups. Lewis and Clark routinely observed this custom. They presented more than sixty Jefferson peace medals, with the familiar profile of the president on one side and clasped hands with pipe and tomahawk on the other, to chiefs across the continent. Their meeting with the Oto and Missouri tribes on the Missouri at Council Bluffs on August 3, 1804, exemplifies the pattern for these ceremonies: assembling in council with chiefs, smoking the pipe, pa-

rating near the flag, making speeches extolling the importance of “peace and friendship” with the new “Great Father,” then draping the medals around the necks of the attending chiefs.

Such meetings were generally effective and well received, with one terrible exception, when Lewis and three other men (Drouillard, and Joseph and Reuben Field) on the return journey explored the upper Marias River and encountered a party of Blackfeet Indians. Lewis gave one of them a peace medal and another a flag. In a scuffle at dawn over stolen rifles and horses, Reuben Field stabbed and killed the man who had been given the medal. Before fleeing the scene, Lewis says, he “retook the flagg but left the medal about the neck of the dead man that they [the Blackfeet] might be informed who we were.”¹³ It was a sorry message and one of grave consequence for future U.S.-Blackfeet relations.¹⁴

Graffiti are signs saying, in effect, “I was here.” The Corps of Discovery’s graffiti carried geopolitical import. After reaching the Columbia estuary the explorers carved their names in the bark of trees, and for good measure Clark included the phrase “by Land from the U. States”—his message to British Canadians and the world that Americans got there first.¹⁵

The captains employed makeshift traffic signs of various sorts. At the Great Falls, Clark marked the 18-mile portage trail with stakes tall enough to be seen at a distance over the broken terrain.¹⁶

Farther west, on the snowbound Lolo Trail, the explorers followed tree rubbings made by the packs of Indian horses traversing the trail over many years. The advance party, led by Clark, also hung freshly killed meat from trees to mark the way for the rest of the group. On the return trip, the captains directed an advance party to use tomahawks to mark the route with tree blazes.¹⁷

Clark refers to smoke signals in his journal entry for August 17, 1804: “Set the Praries on fire to bring the



The presentation to tribal leaders of peace and friendship medals, like this one bearing the profile of Thomas Jefferson, was a longstanding diplomatic custom practiced by Americans and Europeans alike. Lewis and Clark distributed more than sixty.

Mahars [Omahas] & Missouries Soues if any were near, this being the usual Signal.”¹⁸ In open country where bands might be separated by many miles, Indians used smoke to communicate potential trouble. On July 20, 1805, while searching for the Shoshones, Lewis saw the prairie burning in the distance and guessed that Indians had “set the plain on fire to allarm the more distant natives and fled themselves further into the interior of the mountains.” A year later, on the Yellowstone, Clark observed “a Smoke rise ... in the plains towards the termination of the rocky mountains.”¹⁹ The context makes it clear that Clark believed Indians (probably Crows) had fired the prairie to inform fellow tribesmen of his party’s presence. Should he have been more cautious about this signal, regarding it as a warning of possible hostility? A few days later, the Indians robbed the explorers of most of their horses, and a few days after that they stole the remainder.

On many occasions body language was a form of communication. A vocabulary of gestures and

physical movements would include Lewis’s exposure of his bare white arm on his first encounter with a Shoshone, a gesture that reinforced his repetition of “the word *tab-ba-bone*, which in their language signifies *white man*.”²⁰ Later, the Shoshone headman Cameahwait embraced Lewis in what the captain called the tribe’s “National Hug”—a universal gesture of friendship.²¹ Removing moccasins, sitting in a circle, and passing a peace pipe was yet another way of professing friendship.²² So too was waving a robe or blanket.²³ Pointing with a staff or finger, of course, indicated direction or place, as when Sacagawea on the return journey pointed the way to Bozeman Pass.²⁴ (Sacagawea was an interpreter, not a guide, and this may have been an occasion when she actually gestured in the way so often depicted by artists.) Dancing could be an expression of individual heroics, a ritualized entreaty for

success in the hunt or battle, or a spontaneous act of joy—Sacagawea literally jumped with happiness when reunited with her people.²⁵ Dancing could also be an act of diplomacy—accompanied by Pierre Cruzatte’s fiddle, the explorers docey-doeed at the request of native hosts on both sides of the Continental Divide.²⁶

The most elaborate and advanced form of body language involved what Lewis called “signs of jesticulation.”²⁷ Signing, according to Lewis, was “the common language of all the Aborigines of North America, and appears to be sufficiently copious to convey with a degree of certainty the outlines of what they wish to communicate.”²⁸ Elsewhere he wrote that “the strong parts of the ideas are seldom mistaken,” even if certain gestures might be misinterpreted in the course of a dialogue.²⁹ “Sign talker” George Drouillard was the invaluable practitioner of this art.

Sign language has long been identified with the Indians of the Great Plains.³⁰ Although employed beyond the borders of this geographic region, contrary to Lewis’s assertion it was not some sort of transcontinental native Esperanto. West of the Continental Divide the explorers used it to communicate with the Flatheads (Salish) and Nez Percés (whose names derive, respectively, from the sign-language designations for “flat-head” and “pierced-nosed” peoples); but like the Shoshones, these Indians of the Columbia Plateau made annual forays east of the Divide and had adopted many cultural attributes of plains tribes. Clark reported at least some success sign-talking with two native groups, the Chimnapams and Sokulks, known today, respectively, as the Yakimas and Wanapams, at the junction of the Columbia and Snake rivers. This was through two Nez Perce guides whom the Yakimas and Wanapams “understood.” These two groups belonged to the same Shahaptian language family as the Nez Percés, which is probably why the Nez Perce guides proved so helpful to the captains’ diplomatic efforts toward them.³¹ It was through signing that Clark also learned at what was probably a Palouse village that one member of the tribe, a blind woman, was more than a hundred years old.³² It’s unclear from the journals, however, whether signing was of much use communicating with Chinooks, Clatsops, and other Indians of the Northwest Pacific coast, where Chinook trade jargon, a form of pidgin based on the Chinookian and Nootkian languages, held sway.³³

AUDIBLE COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to English, the Corps of Discovery’s repertory of languages included French (spoken by Drouillard, Pierre Cruzatte, François Labiche, and Toussaint Char-

bonneau), Shawnee (Drouillard), Omaha (Cruzatte), Shoshone (Sacagawea), and Hidatsa (Sacagawea and Charbonneau). Although the corps’ interpreters appear to have been adequate, one wonders what must have been lost in translation, particularly when the translating involved more than two languages. At least twice the explorers cobbled together translation chains in which the questions and answers passed through five languages—from Salish to Shoshone to Hidatsa to French to English (on September 5, 1805) and from Nez Perce to Shoshone to Hidatsa to French to English (on May 11, 1806). The latter parley, wrote Lewis, “occupied nearly half the day before we communicated to them what we wished.”

At times the explorers and their interlocutors resorted to shouting to get their messages across. While moving up the Missouri, Clark wrote, “we were frequently Called to by parties of Indians & requested to land and talk.”³⁴ Once, when the hunters had not been heard from for several days, Lewis reports, “we landed and walked ... frequently hooping as we went on” to find them.³⁵ Above the forks of the Beaverhead, Lewis, searching for the rest of his party, “heard the hooping” of his men and headed in their direction.³⁶ Near Fort Clatsop one day, Reuben Field’s whooping conveyed the happy news that he had killed six elk.³⁷

Alarm calls of one sort or another may have saved the day on several occasions. On the night of May 17, 1805, the sergeant of the guard’s shout alerted the sleeping captains that a burning tree might fall on their tent. Once during the explorer’s winter on the Pacific, a Chinook woman’s shriek may have foiled a plot by other Indians to rob and kill Private Hugh McNeal.³⁸ The barking of Seaman, Lewis’s Newfoundland dog, warned the explorers of grizzlies and chased off a buffalo that rampaged through camp.³⁹

The far more pleasant sound of song was a medium of communication on the Beaverhead River when Lewis, Cameahwait, and their party finally rendezvoused with Clark and the rest of the corps, which included John Ordway. The sergeant was coming up with the canoes toward Lewis’s rendezvous camp at the forks of the Beaverhead when he learned of the dramatic meeting from Indians’ voices “Singing on shore.”⁴⁰

Firearms were often the medium of choice when seeking lost members of the party. Ordway’s journal entry for May 30, 1804, tells us that “a little after dark last night Several guns were fired below we expect the Frenchmen were firing for Private Joseph Whitehouse who was lost in the woods.” Lewis, on July 30, 1805, while scouting

alone on the Jefferson River, “fired my gun and halloosed but could hear nothing” of the other men in the party.

On at least one occasion the explorers may have fired Lewis’s air gun to signal a lost member—a curious use of a weapon noted for its silence. The incident occurred on August 7, 1805, near the junction of the Beaverhead and Wisdom (today’s Big Hole) rivers. The lost man was Private George Shannon. In his journal entry Whitehouse states that Lewis “fired off his air gun several times ... in order that [Shannon] might hear the report.” The journals of Lewis and Ordway also mention shooting the air gun that day, but as Michael Carrick, an authority on the expedition’s firearms, points out, neither man relates the shooting to alerting Shannon to their location. Carrick believes that Whitehouse simply erred in linking the two.⁴¹

The report of gunfire could mark both sad and happy events. On August 20, 1804, the sound of repeated volleys, a ceremonial salute with the “Honors of War,” pealed across the Missouri at the funeral of Sergeant Charles Floyd, the Corps of Discovery’s single fatality. More often, however, guns were fired in celebration—of holidays like the Fourth of July, Christmas, and New Year’s or on special occasions such as the reunion of separated parties. On the Missouri above the mouth of the Marias on July 28, 1806, at the end of a pell-mell dash across the plains following their deadly encounter with the Blackfeet, Lewis, Drouillard, and the Field brothers heard the “joyfull sound” of rifle reports and had the “unspeakable satisfaction” of seeing Sergeant Ordway and his party descending the river in canoes from the Great Falls.⁴² Eight weeks later, on September 21, the Corps of Discovery saluted the residents of St. Charles, Missouri, with a spontaneous barrage of gunfire. A similar salute had been fired the previous day at Chariton (La Charette), when they’d seen cows on shore; a final salute would be fired to alert the townspeople of St. Louis when the explorers arrived there on September 23, 1806, the final day of travel.

The corps’ equipage list included four tin “blowing trumpets” (also called “sounden horns”).⁴³ These instruments were employed, along with guns, to signal lost mem-

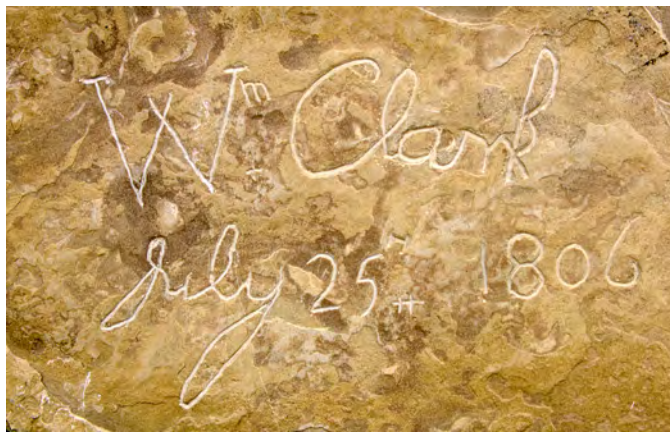
bers of the party and were also intended for military purposes. During the winter at Fort Mandan, Lewis led a retaliatory (although ultimately unsuccessful) pursuit of the Teton Sioux after the latter stole two of the explorers’ horses. Ordway tells us that the standing orders for the day included sounding a horn as “the Signal for us to fire in case of an attack.”⁴⁴

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Severe weather could generate “static” that at times could “short-circuit” the corps’ communications systems. Clark tells us that on July 10, 1804, while ascending the Missouri on the first leg of the expedition, “the Course of the Wind” drowned out the yells of the men from shore. Three days later, while the corps’ flotilla navigated through a storm, a gust blew Clark’s field notes into the river (“a

Most unfortunate accident”), forcing him to rely on memory and the sergeants’ journals to record the day’s events. When Lewis was camped in the mountains on the bitterly cold morning of August 21, 1805, the frigid conditions froze the ink on his pen.

Another of nature’s vagaries—hungry critters—could also short-circuit communications. Clark never found a note left by Lewis at the junction of the



Graffiti, including William Clark’s famous inscription on Pompey’s Pillar, on the Yellowstone River near today’s Billings, Montana, are an age-old way of saying, “I was here.” Graffiti left by the expedition also carried an implicit message of national sovereignty.

Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers because a beaver cut down the “green pole” on which it was attached.⁴⁵ [See diagram, page 25.] Another time, either a panther or wolves absconded with three skins left on a tree as a directional sign.⁴⁶

LONG-DISTANCE CALLS

In late March of 1806, on the eve of their departure from Fort Clatsop, the captains drafted a brief account of their journey to date and posted it along with a roster of the Corps of Discovery on the wall of their abandoned quarters. “The Object of this list,” they wrote, “is that through the medium of Some civilized person who may See the Same” their voyage “may be made known to the informed world.”⁴⁷ Six months and four thousand miles later, at the end of the line in St. Louis, they sat down and “Commenced wrighting our letters”—to families, to Jefferson, and ultimately to us, their legatees of the information age.⁴⁸ ■

Robert R. Hunt, a long-time member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, lives in Seattle. His many contributions to WPO include, most recently, "Fire Paths on the Lewis & Clark Trail," in the May 2004 issue.

NOTES

¹ Elijah Harry Criswell, *Lewis and Clark: Linguistic Pioneers*, University of Missouri Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1940).

² Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), e.g., Vol. 9, p. 17 (June 26, 1804). All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, by date, unless otherwise indicated.

³ Brent Nosworthy, *The Anatomy of Victory* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), p. 283; cf. Thomas R. Phillips, trans., *Frederick II (the Great) Instructions for His Generals* (Harrisburg, 1944).

⁴ Moulton, Vol. 7, p. 57.

⁵ Moulton, Vol. 4, pp. 216 and 219. Entries for May 29, 1805.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 211. Entry for May 28, 1805; see also Whitehouse's journal, re "dog poles" (Moulton, Vol. 11, p. 176).

⁷ Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 112. September 25, 1804.

⁸ Ibid., p. 268. January 5, 1805.

⁹ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 407. July 20, 1805; also Vol. 4, p. 427, July 25, 1805; Vol. 5, p. 40, August 4, 1805; Vol. 5, p. 46, August 5, 1805.

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 105. August 16, 1805.

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 188. July 23, 1805; also Vol. 4, p. 420, re Lewis's order.

¹² Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 73. September 30, 1805.

¹³ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 135. July 27, 1806.

¹⁴ For more on peace medals, see Moulton, Vol. 2, p. 443n.

¹⁵ Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 106. Entry for December 3, 1805.

¹⁶ "Stakes to be Cut to Stick up in the prairie to Show the way for the party to transport the baggage." Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 318. June 20, 1805.

¹⁷ Meat hung from trees: Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 280; Vol. 5, p. 216; Vol. 8, p. 26; tree blazes: Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 275; Vol. 6, p. 68; Vol. 8, p. 39; Vol. 9, p. 22.

¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 488.

¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 201. July 18, 1806.

²⁰ Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 69-70. August 11, 1805.

²¹ Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 79. August 13, 1805.

²² The captains passed the pipe on various occasions with the Mandans and Shoshones, e.g., Moulton, Vol. 3, pp. 311 and 252, and Vol. 5, p. 79. At a Palouse village on the Columbia, Clark found his hosts "but little accustomed" to the pipe ceremony. Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 288; October 7, 1805.

²³ Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 69. August 11, 1805. Lewis describes making this signal "by holding the mantle or robe in your hands at two corners and then throwing [it] up in the air higher than the head bringing it to the earth as if in the act of spreading it, thus repeating three times."

²⁴ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 167. July 6, 1806.

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 114. August 17, 1805.

²⁶ Robert R. Hunt, "Merry to the Fiddle," WPO, Vol. 14, No. 4 (November 1988), pp. 10-17.

²⁷ Moulton, Vol. 5, pp. 196-197. September 10, 1805.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 88. August 14, 1805.

³⁰ William Tomkins, "Sign History," in The Inquiry Net, www.inquiry.net/outdoor/native/sign/history/.htm (2003). This Web site provides a brief summary discussion of the origin and wide dissemination of Indian sign language in North America. It notes the possible use of sign language by tribes in coastal British Columbia.

³¹ Moulton, Vol. 5, pp. 278 and 284, note 8.

³² Ibid., p. 289. Entry for October 17, 1805.

³³ Ibid., e.g., Vol. 6, p. 122, note 3; p. 164, note 1; and p. 179, note 11.

³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 196. March 17, 1804.

³⁵ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 327. June 23, 1805.

³⁶ Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 52. August 6, 1805.

³⁷ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 278. February 5, 1806.

³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 181, 189, and 194. January 8, 1806. The most lucid account of this confusing incident appears in Elliott Coues, ed., *The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark*, 3 volumes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965; reprint of 1893 edition), Vol. 2, p. 752.

³⁹ Seaman's barking at grizzlies: Moulton, Vol. 4, p. 336. (June 27, 1805); also Vol. 4, p. 338 (June 28, 1805). Buffalo references: Moulton, Vol. 4, pp. 215, 218 (May 28, 1805); also, Vol. 4, p. 309 (June 19, 1805).

⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 204. August 17, 1805.

⁴¹ Michael E. Carrick, e-mail to author, May 16, 2003. For detailed discussion of the air gun, see Carrick, "Meriwether Lewis's Air Gun," WPO, November 2003, pp. 15-21. Concerning Whitehouse's entry of August 7, 1805, Carrick comments, "In the literature of air gun history, the 'quietness' of the shot is almost always mentioned. That is the prime reason that they were used for poaching game. ... Lewis mentions the shots to be the result of having the gun repaired and needing some test shots. If Lewis wanted to alert Shannon, he had ... the blunderbusses, the muskets, the rifles, and the horse pistols."

⁴² Moulton, Vol. 8, p. 138.

⁴³ Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with Related Documents, 1783-1854* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2nd edition, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 71 and 95 (June 30, 1803); Moulton, Vol. 2, p. 72, text and note 2.

⁴⁴ Moulton, Vol. 9, p. 115. Entry for February 16, 1805.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 46. August 5, 1805. By "green pole" Lewis presumably means a freshly cut limb or sapling.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 53 and 55. August 6, 1805.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 431.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 371. September 24, 1806.

Mary Reeves

Recovering the lost voices and vocabularies of the Corps of Discovery

Lewis and Clark
Lexicon of Discovery

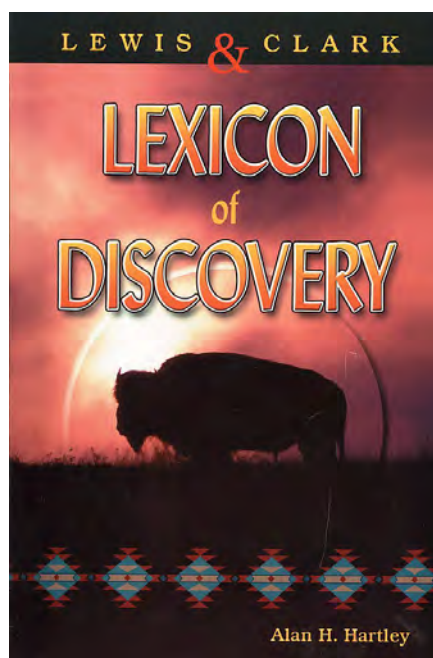
Alan H. Hartley

Washington State University Press
234 pages / \$24.95 paper

One of the most important legacies of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial has been a resurgence of interest in preserving and revitalizing Native American languages. Many of the tribes the expedition encountered have only a few fluent speakers left, and when they die the verbal DNA of an entire culture may disappear with them.

But what about the language of the explorers themselves? What can their words tell us about their world? The hundreds of thousands of words published in their journals not only describe the expedition in exhaustive detail but open a window on a 19th-century American culture that today can seem remote and even baffling. It is not simply that the explorers used charmingly archaic words and phrases such as *bubby* or *frizzen* or *chapter of accidents*. Nor is it that their nonstandardized spellings—especially those *watermillions* and *mockersons* spilling from Clark's pen—can distract a modern reader.

The truth is that the vocabularies of Lewis and Clark and the other journal keepers preserve the details of their culture as faithfully and accurately as am-



ber can preserve ancient insects.

When Clark writes during the Bad River confrontation with the Lakotas that “the Indians were pointing their arrows *blank*,” we better understand his imminent danger if we know that his reference is to firing a rifle point-blank—that is, the Indians were standing so close to him that they did not need to take into account the falling of an arrow in flight when aiming. This use of *blank* originates with the French “blanc” (white), the area at the center of a target.

That definition and more than 1,100

other entries are the heart of Alan Hartley's scrupulously researched *Lexicon of Discovery*, a fascinating compendium of words used by, invented by, important to, and sometimes unique to Lewis and Clark. As expected, we find historical and cultural oddities—why a *clyster* is unpleasant, what to do with a *catapasm*, and the usages of a *pogamoggan*. (For those definitions, see the end of this review, page 34.)

Hartley, an independent scholar and lexicographer who has contributed to both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, supports his entries with two thousand illustrative quotations, most citing the University of Nebraska edition of the journals but others amplifying them by drawing on contemporary books and letters.

Here we learn not only that Meriwether Lewis is credited with the first-recorded use of *freestone water* (containing few dissolved minerals) but that the sometimes-neglected Joseph Whitehouse is credited by the O.E.D. with the first use of both *hardscrabble* and (amazingly) *razor blade*.

The entries are richly detailed. Did you know, offhand, that the word *off-hand* draws on the practice of firing a rifle without the use of a rest? Lewis tells his riflemen at Camp River Dubois that they will practice “at the distance of fifty yards off hand.” The vocabu-

The land as the captains viewed it

Richard Mack's 248 mostly large-format color photographs in *The Lewis & Clark Trail: American Landscapes* (Quiet Light Publishing, 244 pages, \$90, cloth) offer striking vistas of the country traversed by the Corps of Discovery. Mack, a Chicago-based photographer who spent two years on the trail, composed his shots to minimize modern intrusions, so what you see is close to what Lewis and Clark saw too. (The happy exception are those shot from the air.) This handsome book's \$90 price tag reflects its exceptional production values. Copies purchased online at the publisher's Web site, www.quietlightpublishing.com, come inscribed. — J.I.M.



Mack's photo of geese on the Missouri near Fort Mandan

lary of Lewis and Clark's firearms lives on in that and many other metaphors we still use today: "primed and ready" ... "flash in the pan" ... "half-cocked" ... "ramrod-straight" ... "misfire," etc.

Did you know that when the explorers wrote *Quaker color* they meant the gray worn by the devout Pennsylvanians? Or that the present vernacular use of "flack" for public relations could derive from their use of *flack* for "splash"? (Clark: "The beaver was flacking in the river about us all the last night.")

In one sense, the expedition was traveling on two river systems—those on the landscape and those of the language. The main stem of the latter was English, constantly supplied and replenished with tributaries bearing contributions from the world's languages. For instance, a word that might seem as thoroughly American as *jerky*, meaning dried strips of meat for preservation, comes into English through the Spanish *charqui* from Quechua, the language of the Inca Empire.

The French fur trade is represented with words like *embarrassment* (for a river obstacle), *loup* (for wolf), *pirogue*, and *batteau*. The China trade is here, too, with *mace*, a small coin of Malay origin. Of course, dozens of Native American place names and words like *pemmican* peppered the explorers' vocabularies. One favorite: *kinnikinnick*, a mixture of bark and leaves for smoking in pipes.

Hartley makes perhaps his most significant scholarly contribution not in

his glossary of written words, however, but in his introductory discussion of the spoken language of Lewis and Clark. This is invaluable not only to Lewis and Clark re-enactors but to anyone interested in the growth of American English.

What did the English of the explorers actually sound like? We might expect from the backgrounds of the men on the journey to hear a rich mélange of Virginia drawls, Kentucky backwoods accents, and New Hampshire twangs (not to mention the French-Canadian patois of the *engagées*, the native German of John Potts, and Sacagawea's Shoshone and adoptive Hidatsa).

What Hartley discovers through his close analysis of the explorers' phonetic misspellings (especially Clark's) is that the dominant accents on the expedition were those of the plantations of eastern and central Virginia, not the Midland English of Pennsylvania and Kentucky backwoods. That is, despite the army service of both Lewis and Clark—and Clark's relocation as a teenager to Kentucky—they never lost their coastal Virginia (a.k.a. Tidewater) accents.

The strongest characteristic of this accent is the dropping of *r*'s after vowels. Thus, when Lewis and Clark talked to one another, they said "had" for "hard," took a "fok" in a road (not a "fork"), sawed "bods" (not "boards"), carried their boats on a "potage" (not "portage"), and wore a "shit" (not a "shirt").

(This is *not* what we think of as today's "Southern accent," which had not yet developed. Hartley points out that the distinction in pronunciation that exists today between New England and Southern dialects was less marked two centuries ago.)

Hartley is less interested in using language as a means of gaining insight into the characters of the captains or the folkways of the early 19th century. That was done well in by Elijah Harry Criswell's book-length study, *Lewis & Clark: Linguistic Pioneers*, first published in 1940 by the quarterly *University of Missouri Studies* and reprinted in 1991 by the Headwaters Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and in 2000 by Martino Publishing.

In addition to listing the 700 "new words ... unrecorded by any dictionary," Criswell discussed the captains' writing, with special attention to contrasting Lewis's often-ornate circumlocutions ("imps of Saturn") to Clark's spare and more prosaic style ("He did not hurt me any").

Lewis's occasional flights into flowery rhetoric unfortunately have come to detract from his meticulous use of scientific language and, at times, his engaging vernacular. On August 15, 1805, Lewis began with a vigorously stated, "This morning I arose very early and as hungary as a wolf." But in his later reworking of Lewis's concise entry, Nicholas Biddle rendered it as, "Captain Lewis rose early, as having

Leadership lessons from Lewis & Clark

The leadership qualities of Lewis and Clark are explored in depth by business writer Jack Uldrich in *Into the Unknown: Leadership Lessons from Lewis and Clark's Daring Westward Expedition* (American Management Association, 245 pages \$24.95, paper).

The author details the captains' key leadership abilities and from them draws lessons for 21st-century managers. He devotes a chapter each to their 10 leadership principles: higher calling,

shared leadership, strategic preparation, diversity, compassionate discipline, leading from the front, learning from others, positive thinking, aggressive analysis, and developing team spirit.

Regarding shared leadership, or "productive partnering," as it is called in the chapter title, Uldrich examines the trust, respect, and complementary skills that underlay this joint,

but always unified, command. Contrary to conventional management theory, "Lewis and Clark, by their example, show that not only can shared leadership work, it can actually enhance the prospects for success for virtually any venture."

In summary, concludes Uldrich, "Lewis and Clark may well be the greatest leadership team in our nation's history."

—Bill Lauman



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Louise O. Fisher

Reviews (cont.)

eaten nothing yesterday except his scanty meal of flour and berries, felt the inconveniences of extreme hunger."

Perhaps Biddle was wise to leave editing and go into banking.

Criswell devotes more attention to categorizing the explorers' vocabularies by subject, which can be revealing. If clusters of words reveal priorities, the captains were extraordinarily close to the varied forms of water and land. The water can *roil* or be *roily*; *bold* or *shoaly*; can be of a *goslin-green color* or have a little *tinge*; can flow in a *long reach* or a *fresh*; can be filled with *sawyers* or can spin a boat *aback*. Similarly, the landscapes Lewis and Clark saw are fantastic places, filled with *blowing caverns*, *bottoms*, *burning bluffs*, *burnt plains*, *glades*, *shaved prairies*, *copses*, and *greenswards*. While Hartley offers a subject index, his most careful attention goes to pronunciation.

No one who reads Hartley's *Lexicon of Discovery* can ever read the journals quite the same way again. For now, instead of reading only for literal meaning, we can hear the captains and sergeants whispering in our ears. This book deserves a place next to the journals on your bookshelf so that if you *take time by the forelock* you will know what Meriwether Lewis meant when he said it.

—Landon Y. Jones

Definitions of words mentioned at beginning of this review

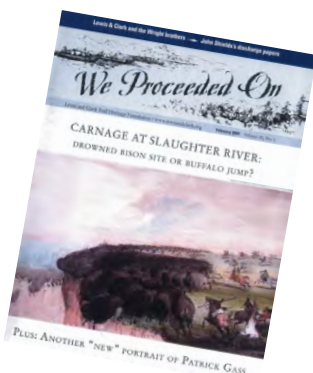
CLYSTER: An enema, administered with a syringe.

CATAPLASM: A warm, soft, moist dressing applied to ease pain or heal an injured or diseased part of the body.

POGAMOGGAN: An Indian war-club with a wooden handle and a leather-wrapped stone at one end.

Robert Rickards

Yellowstone Safari pickup 2/05, p. 34



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For the Record

Unraveling the Salish-to-English translation chain

Recently I was rereading Charles R. Knowles's article "Indispensable Old Toby," about Lewis and Clark's Shoshone guide, in the November 2003 WPO when something in the piece jumped out at me. It was an insertion I had made during the editing which on reflection seemed almost certainly wrong. Trying to resolve the matter sent me back into the journals and secondary literature of the expedition.

The description at the top of page 31 concerns a Salish-to-English translation chain cobbled together by Lewis and Clark during their brief stay with the Salish Indians (a.k.a. Flatheads or Tushepaws) on September 5, 1805. The passage reads in part, "Because the Salish and Shoshones spoke markedly different languages, communication would have been by sign language, and we can assume that Toby was part of a long translation chain that went from Salish to sign to Shoshone to Hidatsa to French to English. (Toby knew sign language and Shoshone. Sacagawea spoke Shoshone ... and Hidatsa. ... Her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, spoke Hidatsa and French, and several of Lewis and Clark's men were fluent in both French and English."

The problem with this statement is the inclusion of Indian sign language in the chain. If Lewis and Clark communicated with the Salish by sign there would have been no need for a chain—the captains could have depended on their ace "sign-talker," George Drouillard, to speak directly to their Indian hosts. The journals, as is often the case, are vague on what actually took place. Clark states that communication was difficult because it "had to pass through Several languages before it got to theirs." In his 1814 paraphrase of the journals, Nicholas Biddle formalized Clark's prose, noting that the captains' words were "conveyed to them through so many different languages that it was not comprehended without difficulty."

Neither Clark's journal entry nor the Biddle paraphrase explains who ren-

dered the Salish into Shoshone. I turned next to the two enlisted men's journals referring to this exchange, but they shed little light. John Ordway and Joseph Whitehouse mention the difficulty of communicating through a chain of "six" languages, although as editor Gary Moulton points out in a footnote, the actual number was five—Salish, Shoshone, Hidatsa, French, and English.

In another footnote, Moulton says that the Salish-to-Shoshone translation was rendered by "a Shoshone boy among the Flatheads." But Moulton doesn't give a source for this statement, and I could find no reference to a Shoshone boy in any of the journal entries.

I next went to James Ronda's *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (1984) and found the following: "As luck would have it, among the Flatheads was a Shoshoni boy who had been taken captive by some northern raiding party, was later freed by the Flatheads, and now lived with them." Ronda does give a source—the notes of Nicholas Biddle, compiled during a fact-gathering visit to Clark in Virginia in 1810, before he got down to paraphrasing the journals. Biddle's notes are found in Donald Jackson's *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854* (1968), Volume 2, pages 497-545. The key passage is found on page 519: "Sept. 5. 1805. Our convn. with the Tushepaws was held thro' a boy whom we found among them; a boy a Snake (Shoshonee) by birth who had been taken prisoner by some northern band retaken by the Tushepaws whose language he had acquired. I spoke in English to Labiche in English—he translated it to Chaboneau in French—he to his wife in Mennetarée [Hidatsa]—she in Shoshoné to the boy—the boy in Tushepaw to that nation."

So there you have it: a five-language chain built on the bilingual skills of a young unnamed Shoshone, Sacagawea, Charbonneau, and François Labiche.

—J.I. Merritt
Editor, WPO

CAMERA ONE

A nameless creek gets it due; L&C in other journals

When Lewis and Clark visited Spirit Mound on August 25, 1804, they apparently failed to notice (or at least neglected to record in the journals) the existence of a nearby creek. The little stream, which now bisects the 320-acre Spirit Mound Historic Prairie, near Vermilion, South Dakota, never made it onto Clark's map and remained nameless for two centuries. No more. On January 13, at the recommendation of the Spirit Mound Trust, the national Board of Geographic Names gave it a name: Spirit Mound Creek. George Berndt, a park ranger with the Missouri National Recreational River, speculates that the captains ignored the creek because it may have been dry during their late-summer visit. The captains probably crossed it when they climbed to the top of the mound, which Indians had warned them was inhabited by "little people." Clark called it the "resi-



Spirit Mound Creek

dence of Deavels." Visitors today follow a similar route to the top, crossing a footbridge over the stream.

Lewis and Clark in other journals

"La Charette: Was It a Winter Encampment Objective of the Lewis and Clark Expedition?," an article by Donald L. Hastings, Jr., in the Spring 2004 *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, discusses the captains' original

plans to spend the expedition's first winter on the Missouri River west of St. Louis near the village of La Charette. Because the transfer of Louisiana Territory was not complete by the fall of 1803, they instead located the encampment at River Dubois, in Illinois.

The March/April 2005 *Yale Alumni Magazine* includes "The Map that Changed the West," an article by Bruce Fellman about William Clark's great map of the West, the original of which is in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. (www.yalealumni-magazine.com)

"Paddling Through Time," an article by Earle F. Layser in the November/December 2004 *Paddler Magazine*, describes kayaking in the Missouri Breaks in the wake of the Corps of Discovery. It is part of an extended section on Lewis and Clark. (www.paddlermagazine.com) ■

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Big Sky-Great Falls
(Bannick Communications)
pickup 2/05, p. 5

Brenda Yirsa

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Lewis & Clark's journey inspires aerial dancers to new heights

Intestinal fortitude would seem a requirement for hanging by nylon rigging off the sides of mountains, cliffs, skyscrapers, and bridges. That is precisely what director Amelia Rudolph and the members of Project Bandaloop have been doing since 1991 in their artful, aerial blend of rock climbing, diving, gymnastics, and postmodern ballet.

Their performances for close to half a million people around the world have included a "vertical adaptation" of *Romeo and Juliet* on the side of a 23-story skyscraper in Houston. They have danced and bounded on El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, on Seattle's Space Needle, and (closer to earth) on the *Late Show with David Letterman*.

Last summer in Montana, I watched them dangling and dancing in black leotards from the Hardy Creek Bridge, on the Missouri River downstream from the Gates of the Mountains, while bemused fishermen gawked in disbelief from drift boats. As I found out later, they were rehearsing a new program called *Portal*, an adaptation of their gravity-defying choreography to the story of Lewis and Clark.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts–Rural Arts Initiative, the Montana Arts Council, the National Performance Network, and the Allen Foundation for the Arts, and produced by the Myrna Loy Center, in Helena, Montana, *Portal* will be performed from the Hardy Creek Bridge on Sunday, July 17, and from the St. John's Bridge on the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon, on Saturday, September 17. The music is from *A Métis Legacy*, by Philip Aaberg, Darol Anger, and Jimmie LaRoque.

Rudolph and her six-member troupe of dancers and riggers seek to honor nature, community, and the human spirit through a blend of dance, sport, ritual, and environmental awareness. To one observer, Bandaloop (the name derives from an immortality-conferring dance in the Tom Robbins novel *Jitterbug Perfume*) recalls a time when nature

and culture were celebrated together.

Three years ago, when Rudolph began thinking about a program devoted to the Corps of Discovery and where to perform it, she initially set her sights on the cliffs at the Gates of the Mountains, near Helena. "But there were some problems," she recalls. "The audience would have to be ferried in on boats, and the rock at the Gates is not ideal for our type of dancing, so the dancers would have to be stationed at different spots throughout the canyon."

She remembers talking about potential locations with a woman from the Forest Service who inadvertently suggested a title for the yet-unnamed piece. "Portals," the woman told her, was what native peoples called the places where they painted pictographs. Hearing that, Rudolph said, "a tingle went up my spine. I was captivated by that image."

Rudolph, who lives in Oakland, California, sees herself as both "an artist and a political person," and she wants *Portal* to reflect a nuanced perspective. "I want to include voices like that of a Blackfeet tribal member who told us he didn't think the Lewis and Clark Expedition should be celebrated or commemorated in any way. I want to consider voices like his as we develop this project. I see Lewis and Clark as symbolic of a transition, one which had a negative impact on indigenous peoples." Rudolph sees *Portal* as a gateway or bridge, a "way of moving beyond negative ideas and relationships and toward a future where everyone will be respected and supported." At the same time, she says, *Portal* will also try to do justice to the "adventure, greatness, and strength of the Corps of Discovery."



Bandaloop troupers practice on the Missouri River.

STEPHEN AMBROSE TUBBS

Asked what her troupe and the Corps of Discovery have in common, Rudolph is emphatic. "We are a team with an intense sense of trust. I understand they had the feeling of team, family, tribe, and we definitely have that." Other shared characteristics might include courage undaunted, what Randolph calls "core body strength," and as one reviewer noted, a "triumph over limits." Rudolph says she can't imagine the kind of effort it took for Lewis and Clark to get to the Pacific. Her dancers work out constantly in addition to rehearsing, but "the work itself trains us. You can do a million sit-ups and it still doesn't compare."

Grand gestures

Rudolph draws inspiration from a range of sources, from peregrine falcons to the Sierra Nevada mountains. "You cannot help but be inspired to dance grand gestures when you're dancing on El Capitan. I feel blessed to be able to do the work that I do outdoors." Part of her inspiration for *Portal* comes from wildlife encountered by Lewis and Clark and from the majestic flow of the Missouri and Columbia rivers.

Some observers compare Bandaloop to the wildly successful *Cirque de Soleil*, but Rudolph is quick to point out the differences. "Dancing is not acrobatic; it is not a series of tricks or in-your-face movements. My motivation as a dancer is to create an image that lasts in the audience's mind, that stays in the imagination. Dance is meant to evoke through nuanced gestures. Sometimes those nuances might take you years to understand. It is much different from a circus performance, which is meant to entertain—to *wow* and *ta-da* an audience. Dancing is much more human and subtle. One of our missions is to draw people into the audience of dance. Most people won't make the effort to go see a classical ballet, but they might want to see some dancers hanging from a bridge. For me, it is fine if the only thing the audience takes away is the beauty of the place, the river, the bridge."

And what's it like to sail tens or hundreds of feet above the earth?

"You dream about the way it felt when you jump off the cliff or building and before the rope pulls you back in," she says. "It's a wonderful feeling of floatiness that stays with you but at the same time can leave you drained when you come back to the ground." Rudolph adds that she has the highest respect for gravity. "We do not defy gravity; we respectfully request the chance to play with it, at the same time obeying all of its rules. The collected experience of our company is what makes it safe. We check everything three times. Our riggers have been climbing for some 30 years."

Rudolph works with youngsters on instilling a respect for gravity. She tells them, "You'd be surprised by what you can do, there really are no limits—the world is not only what you've been taught. I teach them that art is bringing new things together in unusual combinations you haven't thought of before. I want them to understand that the rules of success are ultimately written by you."

—**Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs**

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each person earnestly and importunately expressed his or her preference. Again, we just don't know, but this sounds to me more like opinion polling than balloting per se.

Several of the journal keepers seemed to see the proceedings in the same light. Joseph Whitehouse's journal entry gives us a little more insight into the exercise. He says, "*In the Evening* our officers had the whole party assembled *in order to consult* which place would be best, for us to take up our Winter Quarters at. The greater part of our Men were *of the opinion* that it would be best, to cross the River, & if we should find game plenty, that it would be of an advantage to us to stay near the Sea Shore on account of making Salt."⁵

Ordinarily, "evening" referred to afternoon in the journals, but Sergeant Patrick Gass on the occasion says explicitly, "*At night*, the party were *consulted* by the Commanding Officers."⁶ So, after the fashion of a New England town meeting, the whole party was brought together at night, around a campfire one imagines, at the captains' bidding and "were consulted."

Notice that Whitehouse says nothing about ballots or voting; rather, he characterizes the meeting as a consultative one; i.e., "in order to consult." Gass says, "the party were consulted." And Sergeant John Ordway says of that same meeting, "our officers conclude *with the oppinions of the party* to cross the River," which surely means they concurred with the opinions expressed by members of the corps.⁷

The three sergeants' preferences are recorded first in the tally, thus suggesting adherence to the chain-of-command protocol. However, the remainder of the tally does not seem to reflect any particular order of response—neither alphabetically nor by mess assignment. (At least, not as reflected in the Detachment Orders for May 26, 1804. Admittedly, shifts in those initial mess assignments likely occurred as time went by.)

Looking back on a similar decisional moment at the junction of the Marias and the Missouri in June of 1805, one

wonders if the deliberations there may have set a precedent for those on the Pacific coast. Lewis says of that time, "Those ideas as they occurred to me I endeavoured to impress on the minds of the party *all of whom except Capt. C. being still firm in the beleif that the N. Fork was the Missouri* and that which we ought to take."⁸ He does not indicate the basis for his "all of whom" statement—whether it was just his general impression or resulted from a consultative meeting, much like the one on the Pacific coast, at which opinions had been formally solicited. In any case, we do know the precedent was set at the time that the commanding officers' perceptions and preferences trumped the opinions of the rank and file—even if those opinions were unanimous. And that experience may well have colored the politicking and deliberations later on the coast.

Like so many aspects of the Lewis and Clark saga, the decision at the mouth of the Columbia has been romanticized and idealized at the hands of various commentators and interpreters. It has been made out to be a shining example of the early extension of democratic voting rights to blacks and women—all because York and Sacagawea participated in the meeting to decide the location of the corps' winter quarters.

But the available evidence does not unequivocally document the taking of a formal vote as commonly understood in democratic political practice. The participants' journal accounts speak in terms of "solicitations," "in order to consult," "were consulted," and "opinions." These terms are clearly more akin to opinion polling than to balloting or voting. That preferences were registered in this instance is evident; that a vote was taken is not.

To say as much, however, is not to denigrate the altogether laudable actions taken by the cocaptains to include both York and Sacagawea in the Corps of Discovery's decision-making procedure. Whether a vote was or was not taken, given the prevailing customs and usages of that era, the solicitation of their honestly expressed opinions and preferences was precedent-setting in and of itself. ■

Foundation member H. Carl Camp is an emeritus professor of political science at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. For another examination of the "vote," see Martin Plamondon II, "Decision at Chinook Point," WPO, May 2001, and a response to that article by Dayton Duncan in the August 2001 Letters department.

NOTES

¹ The candidates were a location on the south (Oregon) shore of the lower river and two other locations higher upriver. The lower river won out, and on November 25 the explorers crossed over to the Oregon side. Soon afterward, they began construction of Fort Clatsop.

² Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 6, pp. 83-84. All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, by date, unless otherwise indicated.

³ Ibid. Janey was Clark's pet name for Sacagawea. "Potas" refers to edible roots.

⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 398.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 10, p. 177.

⁷ Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 256.

⁸ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 271. Entry for June 9, 1805. The decision concerned which of the two forks was the "true" Missouri.

Navy to honor captains

On May 21, the *U.S.S. Lewis and Clark* (AKE-1) the U.S. Navy's newest auxiliary dry-cargo ship and the first in its class, will be christened in San Diego, California. The new vessel will be the first of 12 AKE's placed in service. Jane Henley, a former LCTHF president and a collateral descendant of Meriwether Lewis, will preside at the christening, along with Lisa Clark, a direct descendant of William Clark and the daughter of Peyton C. "Bud" Clark, well known at LCTHF annual meetings for his dapper appearance in a replica of his ancestor's uniform. The ships in the Lewis and Clark class are being built by the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, a subsidiary of General Dynamics. ■

Sacagawea's "Vote"

*Did the captains intend to include her in their decision about wintering on the Columbia?
And was it a vote, a poll, or a consultation?*

BY H. CARL CAMP

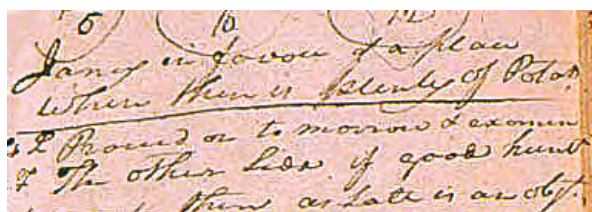
In his essay "Sacagawea and Susan B. Anthony" (Soundings, February 2005), Bill Smith called our attention to Sacagawea's precedent-setting participation in the Corps of Discovery's "balloting" on the location of its winter quarters on the Pacific. Several weeks before I read Smith's essay, Chet Worm (a fellow member of the Mouth of the Platte Chapter of LCTHF) had pointed out to me a peculiar feature of the reported outcome. He said, in effect, that Sacagawea may have voted but her vote was not included with those of other members of the expedition in the written tally. I had never noticed that and subsequently took a closer look at the relevant journal entries.

The decision on where to spend the winter was made on November 24, 1805, when the corps was at Station Camp, on the north (Washington) shore of the lower Columbia. The tally reported by Clark lists a total of 29 names but shows a total of 28 "votes" for the various options for a winter camp.¹ Although his name is listed, Toussaint Charbonneau apparently did not express a preference—one assumes because he was not present at the time or chose not to speak up. The name and preference of Clark's slave York are included in the tally, appearing last on the list.² (The captains themselves expressed their preferences separately from the rank-and-file members of the expedition.)

Interestingly, Sacagawea's preference ("Janey in favour of a place where there is plenty of Potas") is singled out and listed separately from the others.³ Why? We know from Clark's entry that she was allowed to take part in the decision, but one wonders if her participation was in the nature of an afterthought—perhaps after she raised a ruckus about being excluded. Recall that the following January she was permitted to journey to the Pacific coast to see a beached whale—but only after she persisted in arguing her case to be included in the planned trek to the seacoast. Given all her



Top: Clark's elkskin-bound journal open to the pages indicating the November 24, 1805, "vote." Bottom: Detail of tally and Clark's remark about the preference of "Janey" (Sacagawea).



experiences along the trail, Sacagawea was no longer a meek and voiceless possession of her husband, Charbonneau.

Vote or poll?

Upon further reflection, I believe this decisional moment was less than it is often made out to be—in effect, the granting of the franchise to a woman and a black man many decades before women and blacks could legally vote in the United States. Was the procedure really a vote by individual ballot in the traditional sense (either written or *vive voce*), or was it more informal, in the nature of an opinion poll or nonbinding referendum? We, of course, have no way of knowing for sure just how the "votes" were registered because the journal entries are so tersely worded. (In that water-

logged environment, I doubt that paper ballots would have been employed anyway.) What we do know is that each person's preference is recorded by his (or her) name. That is more consistent with procedures commonly associated with opinion polling than with balloting. While this may have been an exercise in participative democracy, it clearly did not embrace the notion of a secret ballot.

Neither Lewis nor Clark provides much information that would enable us to determine just how this decision-making exercise was conducted. At one point in his journal entry for November 24, Clark says: "together with the Solicitations of every individual, except one of our party induced us Conclude to Cross the river and examine the opposit Side, and if a Sufficent quantity of Elk could probably be precured to fix on a Situation as convenient to the Elk & Sea Coast as we Could find."⁴ [Here and in subsequent quotations, emphasis added.] It isn't clear in this context whether the word "Solicitations" is used to denote the captains' act of inquiring into each person's preference on the matter or rather signifies that

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