

We Proceeded On

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ENCOUNTER WITH THE TETON SIOUX



CHARLES FRITZ, EVENING OF CEREMONY WITH THE TETON SIOUX—SEPTEMBER 26, 1804, 36" X 54", OIL ON CANVAS, ©2008

What Lewis and Clark didn't write
about their 1804 experience

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On the cover

Perhaps the moments of highest drama during the entire Lewis and Clark Expedition occurred in the last days of September 1804. Tensions ebbed and flowed over the course of four days spent with the Teton Sioux. At one critical point on September 25, hostilities nearly broke out at the river's edge. At other times, as on the evening of September 26, ceremony and cordiality prevailed as the captains and chiefs attempted to negotiate and understand one another inside a huge council lodge. The captains' minimal understanding of tribal dynamics on the northern plains caused them to inadvertently promote trade proposals that were threatening to the Teton Sioux. The Tetons were the most powerful tribe in the region and were able to control the flow of trade goods for their benefit. Confronted now with Captain Lewis's proposal of peaceful trading with all tribes, the Teton Sioux felt their dominant position was in jeopardy.



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President's Message

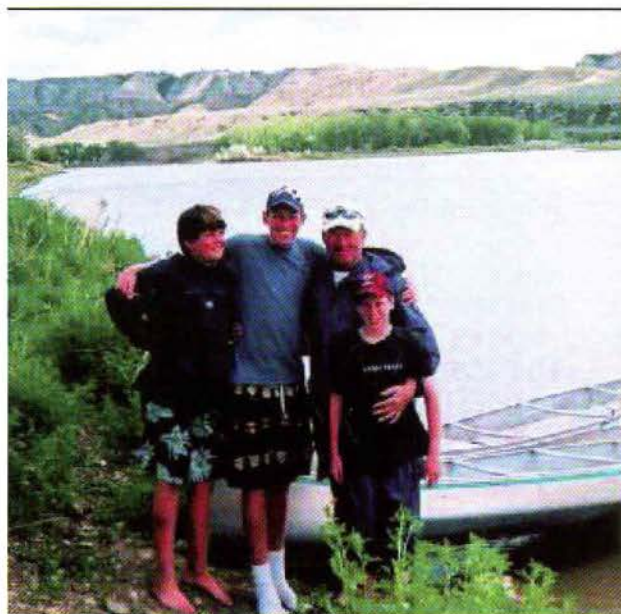
Membership and WPO: Have you shared either?

I love this magazine. It is truly the cornerstone of our Foundation's offering to the public. I do believe it is the only publication dedicated solely to Lewis and Clark scholarship. For that fact alone it is worthy to be read, shared and passed around. My youngest son Peter, at the time an eighth grader and admittedly more interested in the latest video game and snowboarding than history, used articles and references in WPO to enter his junior high school poster contest to "describe the most important historical event in our country." He would not have been able to complete the assignment without the information he found in WPO.

We Proceeded On is but one element of our membership benefit package, but in our membership surveys it is always the most valued. Our WPO editor Wendy Raney, a history major from Vassar College who also has a degree in journalism from Northwestern University, does an exceptional job compiling a collection of articles that are rich and diverse in nature. The success and distribution of this fine publication is linked directly to the success of our ability to grow our membership. WPO

is not only fun to read, but it also is a networking tool, sharing history related to the Corps of Discovery.

You may remember that membership is one of the four pillars of our Foundation's success that I described in my last WPO column, and it just may be the most important. There is



Jim Brooke floated the upper Missouri River through the White I has been passionate about the trail and the Foundation ever since.

the obvious reason: Membership dues help sustain our operating expenses to successfully complete our Foundation mission. As members of the LCTFH, we all must take responsibility to do what we can to grow our membership.

The Foundation's board of directors has embarked on a project we are calling "Project Reacquire." This is an effort led by Rebecca West, our director of member and chapter services, and Jim Rosenberger, our Membership Committee chairman, to reach out to those we have

lost contact with in recent years and invite them to become engaged once again with our Foundation. Each board member has committed to calling former members to reestablish communication. We've had good success and are planning a "Phase Two" that will more fully involve our chapters.

I think a key ingredient in our focus on membership is creativity. ... We need creative ideas from all of you on initiatives, projects and activities that will reach others with the Lewis and Clark stories. ... I've heard from many of you. Keep the good ideas coming!

I think a key ingredient in our focus on membership is creativity. Project Reacquire is the result of one person's

good idea. We need creative ideas from all of you on initiatives, projects and activities that will reach others with the Lewis and Clark stories. For instance, related to my previous discussion on WPO, have you considered giving a gift membership to your local high school, college or library? Remember that when you give a gift membership, your recipient receives much more than WPO, and you

pave the way for kids to possibly use the publication and become interested in the Corps of Discovery. An annual library/not-for-profit gift membership is \$49 and a student gift membership is \$30. What a bargain! Just think of the possible light you may be turning on in some young student's mind.

After I gave a gift membership to the school my sons attend, the history teacher downloaded the Lewis and Clark maps he found on our Web site, framed them and hung them in his classroom as a daily reminder of the Corps of Discovery for his American history classes.

To the extent that we can share what keeps us locked into this wonderful, fascinating saga through networking with WPO or other means, we will be carrying out our mission and helping sustain our membership levels.

Thanks you to all of you for your continued support and ideas. I've heard from many of you. Keep the good ideas coming!

—Jim Brooke

President, LCTHF

jamesbrooke@aol.com



region with his sons and

Fritz exhibit includes 100 paintings of expedition

The exhibition, *An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark* by Charles Fritz, will open to the public at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, on June 6, 2009, and will remain on exhibit through August 30, 2009. The exhibition brings to life the many facets of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, effectively illustrating the journals for the first time since their original publication by Nicholas Biddle in 1812. Noted for his historical accuracy, Fritz traveled the expedition's entire route twice, painting on site at the locations noted in the journals. The finished collection, nine years in the making, captures the geography and the grandeur of the Louisiana Territory and the Columbia River basin as well as the history and significance of the expedition.

During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the collection, which then numbered 70 paintings, traveled to seven museums across the country. Fritz now has completed all 100 paintings, comprehensively exploring both the major events and the nuances of this fascinating American adventure.

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is pleased to be the first venue to exhibit the finished collection, *An Artist with the Corps of Discovery: One Hundred Paintings Illustrating the Journals of Lewis and Clark*, from the collection of Timothy Peterson of Boston.

Fritz will be on hand to share his experiences with visitors on June 26 and 27. He will sign books, present a lecture and attend a reception on the afternoon of the 27th.

—Lee Haines

Buffalo Bill Historical Center

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Letters

Runners race along path of Colter's famous route

In the fall of 1808, John Colter ran his now-famous race for life from the Blackfeet Indians near present-day Three Forks, Montana. A seven-mile, cross-country race that roughly traces Colter's path beginning at the Missouri Headwaters State Park has commemorated the historic event for the past 32 years.

In this bicentennial year of Colter's run, direct descendants Josh Coulter of Kansas City, Missouri (fifth great-grandson), and I, Tim Coulter, of Evansville, Indiana (fourth great-grandson), decided to run this race as a way of honoring our famous ancestor. Also present were Colter's fourth great-grandchildren Sue Ellen Colter and John Coulter. We all realized that if John Colter had not been successful in his race for life, we would not be here.

There is no question that this is a very challenging cross-country race in terms of its distance, rugged hills, rocky terrain filled with prickly pear, railroad crossing and finally, fording the Gallatin River. At least we did not have to fear for our lives.

My thanks go out to Universal Athletics and to all participants in making this a great racing event, which I hope to run again in the future.

TIMOTHY FORREST COULTER
Wadesville, Ind.

Genealogy resource wanted for library

The Sayhun Library in Santa Barbara, California, is dedicated solely to genealogical research. It has more than 10,000 books and periodicals and a complete collection of the New England Historic Genealogical Society's journals and maps. It has become a "destination library."

We would like to obtain the two-volume *The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery: Their Lives and Their Lineage*, published by the Clatsop County Genealogical Society, for our collection. The volumes would be carefully preserved and available for public use.

I am a former president of the California Chapter and a lifetime member of the LCTHF. Please contact me at 805-569-5810, enbward@juno.com or 2661 Tallant Rd. ME 616, Santa Barbara, CA 93105.

ELEANOR R. WARD
Santa Barbara, Calif.

WPO welcomes letters. We may edit them for length, accuracy, clarity and civility. Send them to us c/o Editor, WPO, P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403 (e-mail wpo@lewisandclark.org).



Runners cross the Gallatin River near the finish line of the 32nd annual John Colter Run at Headwaters State Park near Three Forks, Montana.



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READING BETWEEN THE LINES

*A look at what Lewis and Clark did not write
about their encounter with the Teton Sioux may offer
more information than their journals*

BY BRAD TENNANT

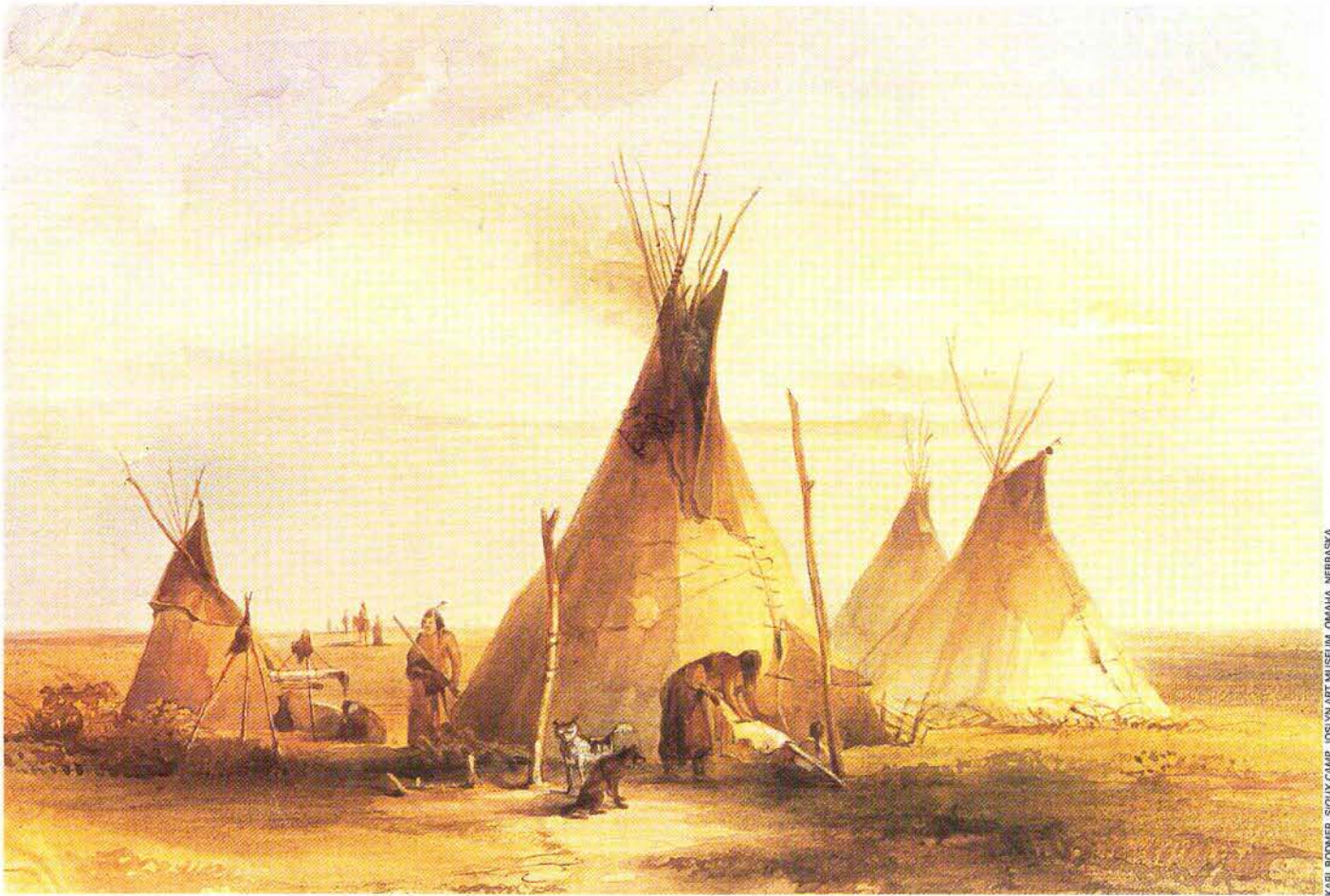
On September 23, 1804, three boys swam out to greet the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition as they proceeded up the Missouri River in present-day central South Dakota. William Clark recorded that the Sioux boys belonged to the Teton (Lakota) band and that they informed the expedition of an encampment of eighty lodges nearby.¹ Having already heard a great deal about the Tetons, Lewis and Clark anxiously prepared for an eventual council. Beginning September 25, 1804, expedition members spent four days with the Tetons. Journal entries detail moments of confusion, tension and fear, but they also describe times of friendliness, feasting and dancing. However, this event often is interpreted based on what was not recorded in Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's journals.

In June 1803, President Thomas Jefferson instructed Captain Meriwether Lewis to gather a wealth of information about each Indian nation that the expedition encountered. While Jefferson emphasized that the Indian nations should be treated "in the most friendly

& conciliatory manner," he added, "which their own conduct will admit."² This provision to be as friendly as the Indians permitted often is evaluated in discussions regarding what Lewis and Clark historian James Ronda called "The Teton Confrontation."³ Indeed, Ronda's use of the word "confrontation" says a lot about how he perceived the encounter.

Uncertainty about what to expect from the Tetons surely contributed to Lewis and Clark's apprehension about a meeting long before the actual encounter. Additional pressure came from the fact that Jefferson understood the significance of the Teton Sioux's stronghold over trade and realized how important it was to establish friendly ties with this nation. According to Ronda, the Teton encounter was "perhaps the most demanding piece of Indian diplomacy assigned to Lewis and Clark."⁴

While wintering at Camp River Dubois in 1803-1804, Lewis and Clark visited with many St. Louis merchants and fur traders who warned them that the Tetons often



KARL BODMER, SIOUX CAMP, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Sergeant John Ordway wrote of the Teton Sioux village on September 26, 1804: "their lodge is verry handsome in a circle and about 100 cabbins in nomber and all white, made of Buffalow hides dressed white one large one in the center, the lodge for the war dances.—"

harassed traders and demanded heavy tolls for traveling through Teton Sioux country.⁵ In addition, while holding council with the Yankton Sioux on August 30-31, 1804, one of the Yankton chiefs warned that the Tetons would not "open their ears" to listen to Lewis and Clark.⁶ Such counsel contributed to a negative opinion of the Tetons by Lewis and Clark. The captains' apprehensive mindset was reinforced when a group of Teton braves took John Colter's scout horse from him as the expedition's flotilla arrived at the Teton encampment.⁷ Consequently, the stage was set early for a tense meeting between the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Teton nation.

"FOR WANT OF A GOOD INTERPRETER"

Much of the tension may have resulted from the two parties' inability to communicate with each other. Lewis and Clark originally hired an interpreter who perhaps could have eased this tension, but they had left him downriver. The expedition first met Frenchman Pierre Dorion as he was heading down the Missouri River to St.

Louis in June 1804. Upon learning that Dorion had lived and had family among the Yankton for nearly twenty years, Lewis and Clark quickly hired him to serve as a translator for the council with the Yankton Sioux. He not only spoke the language, but he also had a great deal of influence among the Yankton leaders.⁸

Upon the conclusion of the two-day meeting with the Yankton Sioux, Lewis and Clark felt that all had gone well. The Yankton were committed to a peaceful relationship with future American traders, which was among the expedition's main objectives for meeting with the various Indian nations. A Yankton chief, Half Man, warned Lewis and Clark that the Tetons would not be as receptive to their words. Half Man said other bands of Sioux might listen to Dorion, but he requested the captains leave Dorion with the Yanktons, which they did.⁹

Perhaps Lewis and Clark felt that expedition member Pierre Cruzatte, whose father was French and his mother Omaha, would be capable of translating adequately.¹⁰ Much to their disappointment, however, they quickly



The Sioux likely obtained horses during the seventeenth century (although some historians date the arrival of horses in South Dakota to 1720). The Tetons emerged as a result of this introduction. Dominating the northern Great Plains with their light cavalry, they quickly expanded their territory to the Rocky Mountains.

realized how much of an asset Dorion would have been. Clark noted several times that Cruzatte did not speak the language well. At one point, Clark lamented, “we feel much at a loss for the want of an interpreter the one we have can speak but little.” He also mentioned that Captain Lewis began to deliver his speech to the Tetons only to curtail it “for want of a good interpreter.”¹¹ The results of this inability to communicate were dismal. For four days, Lewis and Clark failed to convey their message of peace and trade to the Tetons. Meanwhile, tensions flared and a violent confrontation barely was avoided.

A BATTLE OF WILLS

Along with the lack of a translator, the tension of the Teton encounter could be explained by the strong will of both parties. Quite simply, neither side was willing to let the other gain an advantage.

Clark recorded on September 25, 1804, that three Teton chiefs—Black Buffalo, Buffalo Medicine and the

Partisan—were invited to join Lewis and Clark on the keelboat. In addition to showing the three chiefs some of the expedition’s “curiosities,” each was offered whiskey, which they quickly consumed. Clark wrote that the Partisan feigned drunkenness and became so offensive in demanding more goods that Clark, feeling threatened, finally drew his sword. The Teton warriors along the riverbank and the expedition members prepared their weapons.¹²

Although tensions subsided on September 26 and 27, the will of both parties remained evident as the expedition party prepared to leave the Tetons on the morning of September 28. Three Teton warriors sat on the keelboat’s bow cable to prevent the boat from casting off as expedition members prepared for departure. The warriors refused to release the rope until they received a carrott of tobacco.¹³ Lewis did not want the Tetons to think they could easily demand tolls from them or future American traders. Lewis and the Partisan both were losing

their patience. Even Black Buffalo was upset that Lewis would not produce a small amount of tobacco so that the expedition could proceed. Eventually, Clark threw a carrot of tobacco onto the shoreline and challenged Black Buffalo to use his authority to make the men release the pirogue.¹⁴ Black Buffalo diffused the situation by promising Lewis and Clark safe passage if they would give tobacco to the warriors holding the cable.

Finally, Lewis tossed them another carrot, and Black Buffalo grabbed the cable from his men and released the vessel.¹⁵ These examples of strong temperaments offer valuable insight into the personalities and convictions of Lewis and Clark and the Teton leadership.

POLITICS AS USUAL

Another factor that may have led to tension and confusion during the encounter was an intra-tribal political rivalry. In essence, the Teton encounter was not so much an incident between the Tetons and the Lewis and Clark Expedition as it was a contest for political dominance between Black Buffalo and the Partisan. James Ronda wrote that when Lewis and Clark acknowledged Black Buffalo with gifts as the principal chief, they neglected the Partisan, which caused resentment.¹⁶

The Partisan perhaps saw an opportunity to demonstrate his leadership and gain political influence with Lewis and Clark visiting the Tetons. Black Buffalo, however, repeatedly stood in his way. Ronda believes that on September 25, when the Partisan feigned drunkenness and tried to intimidate Clark, it may have been an attempt by the Partisan to assert his leadership skills when confronting strangers. Nonetheless, in the end, Black Buffalo defused the standoff by grabbing the keelboat's cable from the warriors on shore and ordering them to step back. As if this demonstration of his authority at the peak of such tension was not humiliation enough for the Partisan, the captains granted Black Buffalo permission to sleep aboard the keelboat that night.¹⁷

On the second day of the encounter, Lewis and Clark were treated to a night of dancing, singing and feasting as the honored guests of Black Buffalo. Both men ceremoniously were carried into the encampment on buffalo robes and seated next to Black Buffalo. Having Lewis and Clark seated by him greatly enhanced Black Buffalo's political prestige among his people.¹⁸

A final example of the political rivalry between Black Buffalo and the Partisan came as Lewis and Clark were preparing to depart on September 28. Once again, some of the Partisan's men, presumably at his direction, held

the cable to one of the boats and demanded additional presents. However, it was Black Buffalo who promised that the expedition could continue safely if the men were given some tobacco. When Lewis and Clark finally agreed, Black Buffalo took charge of the cable and released it, countermanding the Partisan yet again.¹⁹

Even after the Lewis and Clark Expedition left the Tetons, Black Buffalo's prominence remained clear. For two days after they left the encampment, Black Buffalo accompanied Lewis and Clark to ensure their safe passage through Teton territory. Finally, Black Buffalo asked to be let off on the shoreline and assured Lewis and Clark that they would not see any more Tetons.²⁰

Even if an intra-tribal power struggle was at the heart of the tension between Lewis and Clark and the Tetons, another theory questions whom the struggle involved. While there may have been hard feelings between Black Buffalo and the Partisan, perhaps neither of them was the rightful tribal representative during their encounter with the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Traditionally, the Teton nation is divided into extended family units known as *tiyospaye*. Lewis and Clark considered Black Buffalo the overall tribal leader because of his leadership over the largest *tiyospaye*. The Partisan was the leader of the second-largest *tiyospaye*. However, what Lewis and Clark did not realize about Teton tribal government is that a different political arrangement existed when several bands gathered together, as was the case in the Teton encampment they encountered.

Harry Anderson, a former staff member of the South Dakota State Historical Society and retired historian, wrote that in a multi-band gathering, a tribal council assumes the political leadership, even over *tiyospaye* leaders. Furthermore, the tribal council is responsible for choosing members from its ranks to serve as *wakincuza*. In Teton, *wakincuza* refers to individuals chosen to publicly represent the entire tribal gathering.²¹ Although the *wakincuza* was not prominently mentioned in the journals, Clark made various references to men that he described as principal, brave and considerable.²²

After the initial confrontation of September 25, when Clark drew his sword, he offered his hand to the first chief (Black Buffalo, who refused it), boarded the pirogue and began returning to the keelboat. Clark wrote that he "had not proceeded far before the 1st & 3rd Chief & 2 principal men walked into the water and requested to go on board." These men continued with the expedition to Bad Humored Island where they spent the night.²³ These principal men were noted in Clark's entries as "War zing

go" and "Ma to co que pan,"²⁴ however, their significance was lost among the more frequently mentioned names of Black Buffalo, the Partisan and Buffalo Medicine. If the principal men in fact were the *wakincuza*, the lack of acknowledgment by Lewis and Clark would have been a political blunder that would have contributed greatly to the tension of the four-day encounter.²⁵

THE "MARRIAGE" OF MERIWETHER LEWIS

Not surprisingly, no journal keeper ever mentioned Lewis or Clark having a sexual relationship with any Indian woman at any time during the expedition. However, there is an oral history among the Tetons that claims Lewis fathered a child. A grave marker at St. Alban's Cemetery on the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation identifies Joseph DeSomet Lewis as the "son of Meriwether Lewis."²⁶

In addition to a family oral history that has been passed down over several generations, a baptismal record at the Center for Western Studies in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, lists Joseph DeSomet Lewis's father as Meriwether Lewis. With the baptismal record in hand, Harry Thompson of the Center for Western Studies wrote an article for *North Dakota History* urging caution when using certain historical records as a means for writing history.²⁷ For example, the journals provide important information for the historical record, but one must question their accuracy and consider possible details that were not recorded at all.

Clark recorded at least three instances when he was offered women by the Tetons.²⁸ There are several instances when Lewis could have had an intimate relationship during the four-day encounter. The first opportunity was on September 26 when Lewis went ashore with five other men. Clark later wrote that after about three hours, he "became uneasy for fear of Some Deception & sent a Serjeant to See him and know his treatment which he reported was friendly, & thy were preparing for a Dance this evening."²⁹ Given the heated confrontation of the previous day, Clark's concern was understandable. Later that day, Lewis and Clark were carried into the Teton encampment on buffalo robes and

treated to an evening of feasting and dancing. The following night ended with similar festivities.³⁰ Descendants of Joseph DeSomet Lewis consider these the most likely occasions for Lewis to have fathered a child.

Joyzelle Godfrey, a Yankton Dakota humanities scholar, interprets these events as much more than opportunities for sex. After reading the journals and talking to Lakota elders, Godfrey believes that the festivities of September 26 and 27 may have been marriage celebrations. Those who resent the idea that Lewis's son was born out of wedlock endorse this theory. Granted, if a marriage did take place, it was not a Christian rite. Nevertheless, it may have been a true marriage according to Teton customs.³¹ If a marriage occurred, Lewis likely was unaware given the language barrier and his lack of Teton cultural knowledge, along with his desire to make peace with the Tetons.³²

CORPS MEMBERS INTIMIDATE AND DECEIVE

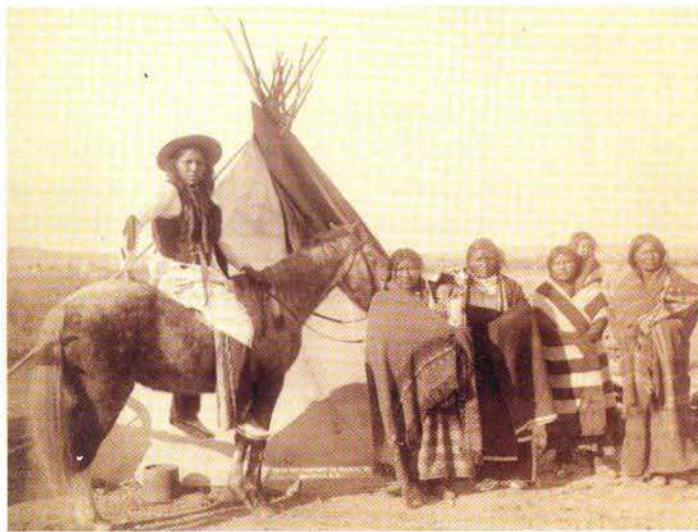
Craig Howe, an anthropology professor at Oglala Sioux Tribal College, provides another interpretation of what might have occurred during the Teton encounter. Though

many consider Howe's interpretation an exaggeration of circumstances, it demonstrates another attempt to read between the lines of the Lewis and Clark journals.

Howe's premise is that Lewis and Clark were not victims of the Tetons, but rather the explorers practiced deceit and heavy-handed tactics against the non-threatening Tetons. For instance, when John Colter lost his horse on September 24, 1804, ex-

pedition members accused five Teton men of stealing it. Furthermore, Lewis and Clark deliberately lied to the Tetons by claiming that the horse was intended as a gift from President Jefferson to the Teton chief.³³

Clark wrote that they invited Black Buffalo, Buffalo Medicine and the Partisan to the keelboat to see various items of interest. However, Howe believes that Lewis and Clark intended to get the chiefs drunk with whiskey. He wrote that Clark used the chiefs' intoxicated state to justify his call to arms against the Teton men, women and



Four Teton women and one Teton man in front of a tipi in 1891, probably on or near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in present-day South Dakota.

JOHN C.H. GRABILL, A PRETTY GROUP AT AN INDIAN TENT, 1891, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

children before Black Buffalo fortunately intervened as peacemaker. Although Clark's journal entries indicate that four Tetons including Black Buffalo and Buffalo Medicine were allowed to return to the keelboat for the remainder of the night, Howe interprets this event differently. He contends that Lewis and Clark held the men, particularly the two chiefs, hostage overnight as a means of preventing an attack on their crew.³⁴ Howe also wrote that the chiefs' sons were held hostage on the keelboat over the next few days as a safety measure to keep the Tetons at bay.³⁵

Another difference between Clark's journal entries and Howe's interpretations involves the events of September 28, 1804, the day Lewis and Clark prepared to leave the Tetons. Clark wrote that Black Buffalo willingly volunteered to escort the expedition out of Teton territory. Howe believes expedition members held Buffalo Medicine, not Black Buffalo, hostage until they passed beyond the last Teton encampment two days later.³⁶

The Lewis and Clark Expedition lasted roughly two years and four months. The events surrounding Lewis and Clark's encounter with the Tetons are among the most controversial four days of the entire expedition. Speculation about what was not recorded in the journals has led to more interpretations of this encounter than of any other aspect of the expedition. For readers of Lewis and Clark's journals, what happened during late September 1804 depends on how one reads between the lines.

Brad Tennant is an assistant professor of history at Presentation College. He is a member of the Foundation and its Encounters on the Prairie Central South Dakota Chapter. He has given numerous presentations on Lewis and Clark as a South Dakota Humanities scholar.

NOTES

¹ Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 3, p. 104. Clark's entry for September 23, 1804.

² Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, 2 volumes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 64.

³ James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ Moulton, Vol. 3, p. 30. Speeches of August 31, 1804.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 107-108.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 294-295. Clark's entry for June 12, 1804, and n. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 30-31. Speeches of August 31, 1804.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 114, n. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 111-112. Clark's entry for September 25, 1804.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 123-124. Clark's entry for September 28, 1804.

¹⁴ Jackson, Vol. 2, p. 518. Clark's letter to Nicholas Biddle of March 25, 1810.

¹⁵ Moulton, Vol. 9, pp. 71-72. Ordway's entry for September 28, 1804. Ronda, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶ Ronda, p. 32.

¹⁷ James P. Ronda, "Tough Times at the Bad," *We Proceeded On*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (May 2002), pp. 15-17. Also, Moulton, Vol. 3, pp. 113-114.

¹⁸ Ronda, "Tough Times," p. 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

²⁰ Moulton, Vol. 3, pp. 128-130. Clark's entry for September 30, 1804.

²² Harry H. Anderson, "The Diplomacy of Lewis and Clark among the Teton Sioux, 1804-1807," *South Dakota History*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2005), pp. 50-51.

²² Moulton, Vol. 3, pp. 112-122. Clark's entries for September 25-27, 1804.

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 112. Clark's entry for September 25, 1804.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 113. Clark's entry for September 25, 1804.

²⁵ Anderson, p. 54.

²⁶ Harry F. Thompson, "Meriwether Lewis and His Son: The Claim of Joseph DeSomet Lewis and the Problem of History," *North Dakota History*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (2000), p. 26.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁹ Moulton, Vol. 3, p. 117. Clark's entry for September 26, 1804.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 117-122. Clark's entries for September 26-27, 1804.

³¹ Radio interview with Joyzelle Godfrey by Brian Bull, South Dakota Forum, South Dakota Public Radio, February 11, 2004.

³² Radio interview with Sheldon Fletcher by Brian Bull, "Intimate Liaisons: Sex and the Lewis and Clark Expedition," National Public Radio documentary re-broadcast on South Dakota Public Radio, February 11, 2004.

³³ Craig Howe, "Lewis and Clark among the Tetons," *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

THE MAN HUNTER

George Drouillard, best known for his interpretive and hunting skills, was called upon regularly to track and return deserters

BY JOHN C. JACKSON



George Drouillard was a substantial man of three worlds: the retreating native people of the Ohio River country, the overwhelmed interior French and the onrushing United States. He was a facilitator, functionary, intermediary, the indispensable element on raw frontiers where cultures clashed. It was an exotic combination and totally North American.

Drouillard had established a solid reputation as a woodsman and interpreter by 1803, when William Clark recommended him for a critical mission related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition.¹ Meriwether Lewis hired Drouillard as an interpreter and gave him \$30 in advance to collect a detachment of eight soldiers who had been assigned to the Corps of Discovery and were stationed near South West Point, Tennessee.² His instructions were vague because Lewis and Clark were uncertain where the soldiers would settle for the winter.

Lewis's first choice for the expedition had been Delaware and Moravian fellow traveler John Conner, who ignored his invitation. At Fort Massac he met George Drouillard, who was half Shawnee, half French and spoke seven Indian languages.³ As their second choice for an interpreter and hunter, Drouillard (nearly always "Drewyer" in the journals) became the most valuable member of the expedition.

Drouillard's exact birth date and location are unknown. He likely was born near his uncle Louis Lorimier's trading post at the head of the Great Miami River where Shawnees were settling.

Pierre Drouillard, a British subject who served as an interpreter of the Huron language, may have left two-year-old George's mother among the Shawnees when he took the child to be baptized at the old Huron Mission church across the river from Detroit. On September 27,



On November 11, 1803, a small contingent of men led by Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark arrived at Fort Massac, situated on a promontory overlooking the Ohio River not far above its confluence with the Mississippi. The French built a fort at the location in 1757, and the Americans built another in 1794 near the ruins of the earlier structure. The frontier outpost was under the command of Captain Daniel Bissell at the time of the corps' arrival and was garrisoned by a company of the 1st U.S. Infantry. While at Massac, Lewis, armed with orders from Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, selected men for possible recruitment into the permanent party. In the painting above, Lewis and Bissell review potential candidates on the parade ground just outside the northern gates of the fort. Standing with them is George Drouillard, who was the most valuable addition to the corps recruited at Ft. Massac. Three native onlookers from the neighborhood watch the proceedings with interest. A total of 14 men in addition to Drouillard were acquired at Massac to navigate Lewis's boats up the Mississippi River; perhaps as few as two actually became members of the Corps of Discovery.

1775, his mother's name was recorded as Asoundechris Flat Head⁴, a derogatory term favored by Iroquois for southern victims of the extended Longhouse.⁵

Thirteen months later, on November 19, 1776, Pierre Drouillard married Angelique Descamps dit Labaddie. They had a son, François, and a daughter, Catharine, and George likely was raised with them in this French household and educated in Detroit where his father was a respected member of the community.

Drouillard established himself as a hunter, woodsman and interpreter by age 20. In 1794, when General Anthony Wayne sent Major Thomas Doyle to build the first American Fort Massac, Drouillard and four Canadian hunters met Doyle's party at the mouth of the Saline River and followed them to the army site where they built huts nearby.

Fort Massac was critical in a volatile region where

British, Spanish, French and struggling Indian tribes collided. Captain Zebulon Pike (father of the famous explorer) became commander of the fort with orders to intercept or deflect Americans descending the Ohio River with the intention of crossing to the Spanish side of the Mississippi River.

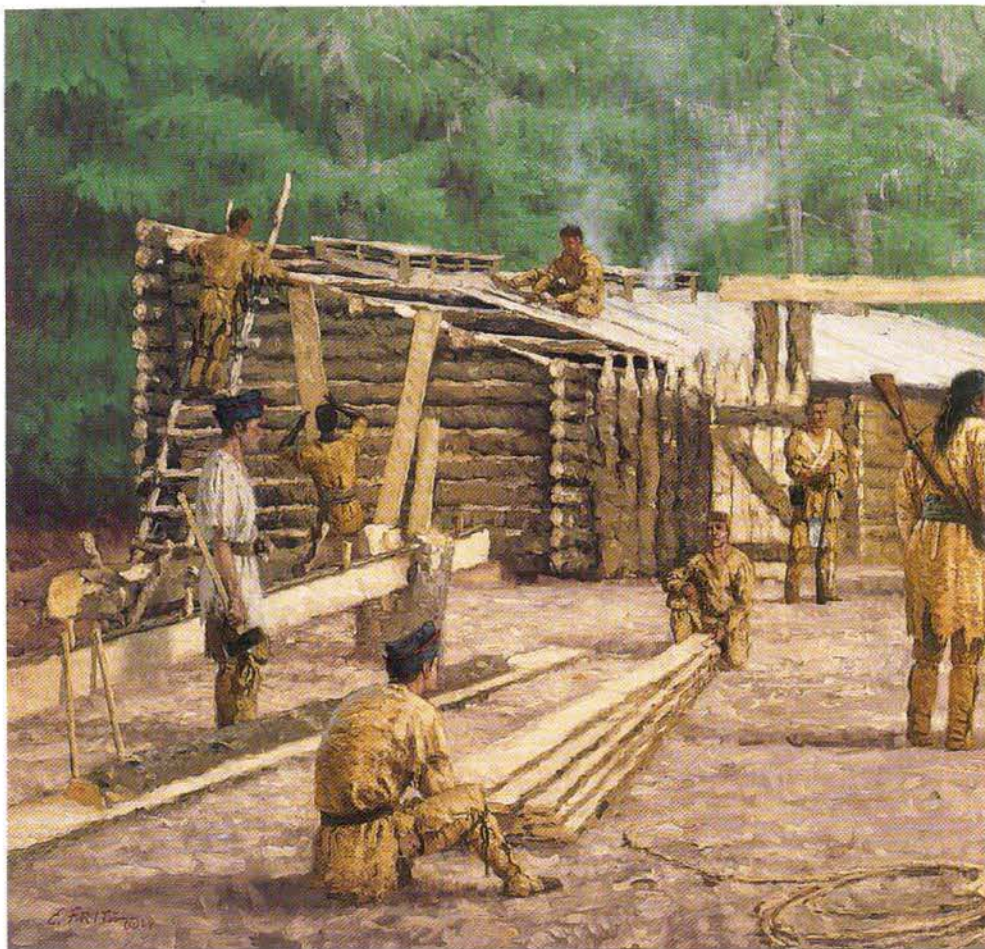
In July 1796, the dutiful Captain Pike stopped the party of French traveler and undercover agent General Victor Collot, whose mission was to gather intelligence about the Mississippi and Missouri river valleys. Pike arrested Collot for making unauthorized surveys of the Ohio River. The editor of Collot's journal wrote, "... Capt Pike logically created a difficulty by doubting the legality of the expedition, and found himself obliged to order Lt. Taylor to act as a guard as far as the limits of U.S. territory."⁶ Taylor escorted Collot to Spanish territory where authorities later arrested him in New Orleans.

Aware of the potential international implications of arresting Collot, and uncertain of Collot's status, Pike feared that he had committed a diplomatic blunder but initially dared not send his explanation to Wayne for fear of having important dispatches intercepted along the way.⁷ He was relieved when trusted courier George Drouillard returned in August from a visit to Limestone, Kentucky. On August 22, 1796, Pike sent Drouillard to deliver a message to General Wayne:

I have directed the bearer George, to go [sic] dispatch keeping [to] the woods, and if your Excellency thinks proper to order him to return as soon as may be convenient & by the same route it would be a pleasing circumstance. He is truly a useful man, the troops of this Garrison when disposed to desert take the advantage of his absence, otherwise, they are sure of being apprehended as they cannot evade his pursuit in the woods to which they have recourse when closely pursued by water. This is his second trip to Head quarters by my order and without fee or reward - the former cost him considerable going thro the settlement, bearing the dispatches brought by Lieut Terrusolo for Governor Blount to Cumberland. He is faithful & much attached to the Americans, in case of difficulty in this Country his services would be really valuable. I have now encouraged him that your Excellency would please to make him compensation, which I hope will be approved & that his services may be deemed adequate.⁸

Although the 23-year-old was living in one of the four or five rough cabins near the fort, he was more than a mere runner in the forest. His father's experiences had sensitized Drouillard to the significance of Spanish Louisiana, and to French pretensions to the recovery of Louisiana. The elder Drouillard had accompanied to Washington an Indian delegation that was feeling out the possibility of a return to French influence.⁹

There is a lack of documentary evidence regarding Drouillard's whereabouts and activities for the next seven years. However, it is unlikely that he spent those years in anonymity. Lewis and Clark immediately recognized Drouillard as a valuable resource, though they did not



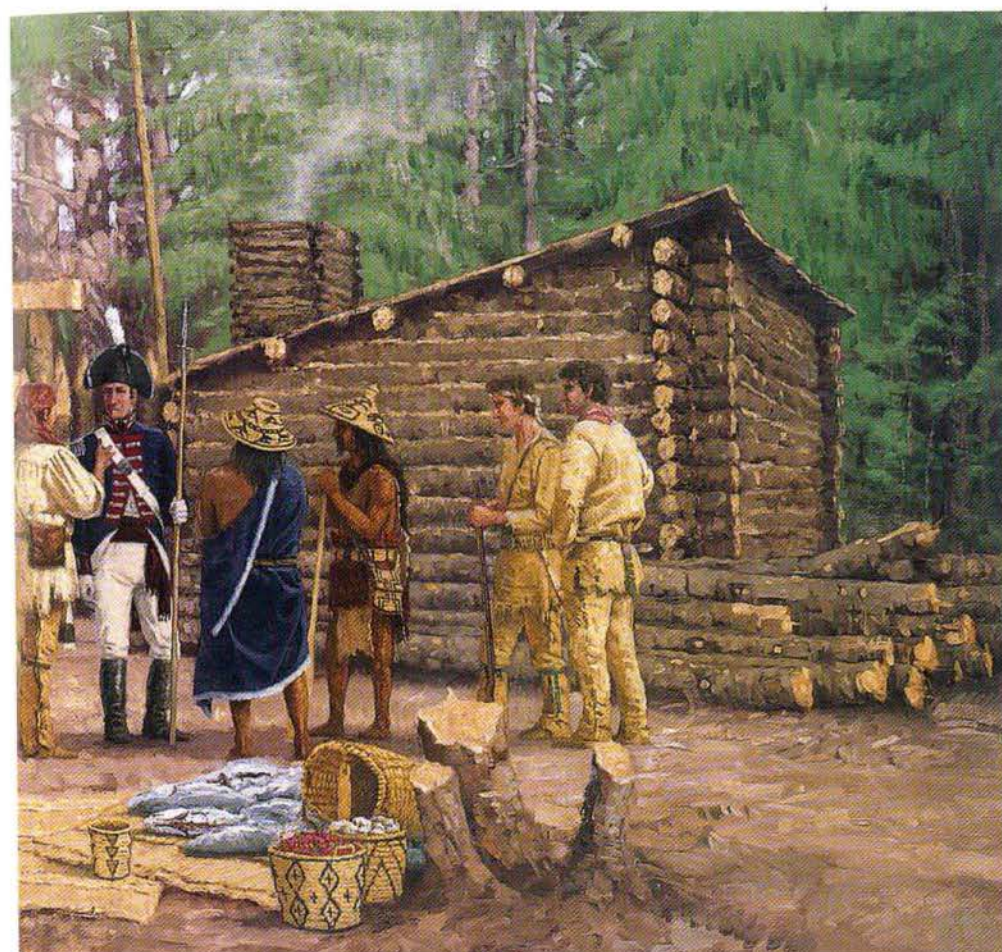
Drouillard's value to the Corps of Discovery is well established in the journals. During the dreary winter

officially enlist him in the expedition until he returned from South West Point.

Drouillard caught up with Meriwether Lewis at Cahokia, Illinois, on December 17, 1803, with disappointing news; there were no hunters among the Tennessee soldiers he had been sent to escort north. He helped Captains Lewis and Clark solve that problem by signing on with the expedition on Christmas Day at Camp River Dubois.¹⁰ He contracted with the Corps of Discovery as a hunter at a wage of \$25 per month, second only to the pay of the captains.

Drouillard returned to Fort Massac to settle his affairs before heading west with the Corps of Discovery.¹¹ On February 11, 1804, Drouillard signed a promissory note to the frontier merchant Frederick Graeter for \$301.03 1/3, which may have covered previous obligations or enabled him to outfit himself for the adventure ahead.¹²

The Corps of Discovery left Camp River Dubois in mid-May of 1804 and by August Drouillard had proved his talent as a man hunter. Private Moses Reed had failed to return after backtracking to the Council Bluff to look for his lost knife. French boatman Collin La Liberté



CHARLES FRITZ, CONSTRUCTION AND DIPLOMACY AT FORT CLATSOP, 25° X 34° OIL ON CANVAS, © 2008

Clatsop he facilitated trade with the local tribes and spent a great deal of time hunting and trapping.

also was missing. Uncharacteristically, Captain Lewis instructed Drouillard to bring back "the Deserter reid with order[s] if he did not give up Peaceibly to put him to Death; &c...."¹³

The group sent to assist Drouillard included Privates Reuben Field and William Bratton and boatman François Labiche, whose command of both Omaha and English was considered important since the fugitives were thought to be hiding among his kinsmen.

The group apprehended Private Reed and La Liberté, but the latter managed to escape. Reed confessed, was tried and then sentenced to run the gantlet four times. Each soldier wielded nine switches. Drouillard had witnessed similar humiliations of deserters during his service near Fort Massac, but some Indian leaders on this occasion petitioned the captains to pardon Reed.¹⁴

Throughout the journey, the Shawnee-French Canadian proved himself an invaluable member of the expedition. Drouillard lived up to his reputation by providing game to feed the party and hand signing to bridge communication barriers with tribes encountered along the way. Drouillard's name regularly appeared

in the journals when a difficult challenge was met.

The Corps of Discovery had been back from its journey to the Pacific Ocean less than a week when, on September 29, 1806, Drouillard used the expectation of his promised salary to buy expedition member Joseph Whitehouse's bond for the conveyance of his land warrant for \$280. He matched that price when he obtained John Collins's warrant on October 20 for an unknown amount of land. Drouillard spent \$560 venturing in land speculation, more than the \$400 he had earned.¹⁵

RETURNING WEST

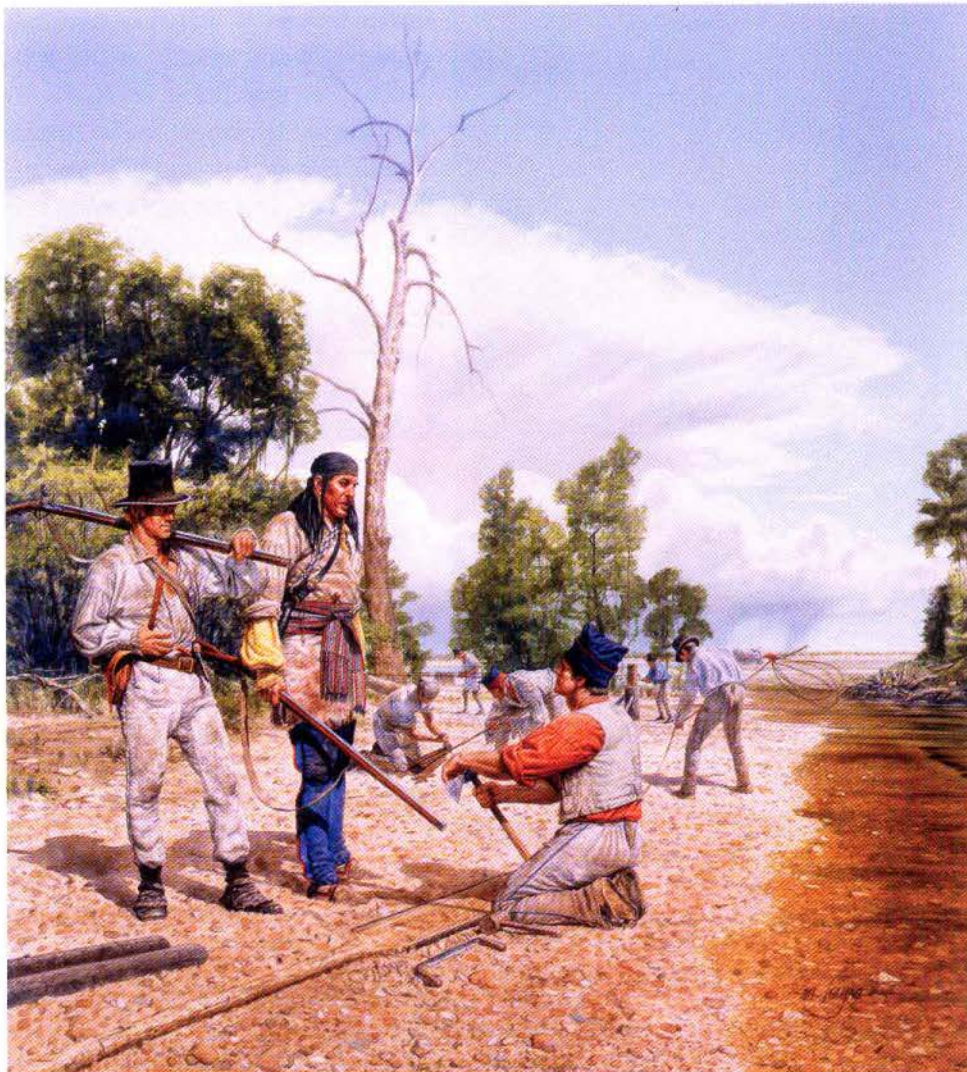
Excitement about the West permeated St. Louis. During the winter of 1806-1807, entrepreneur Manuel Lisa abandoned plans to open overland trade to Santa Fe in favor of a beaver trapping and trading business venture to the upper Missouri. Kaskaskia merchants William Morrison and

Pierre Menard provided a good deal of the capital to finance Lisa's plan. They hired George Drouillard as their representative and watchdog to accompany Lisa.

Just as Lisa's party was about to ascend the Missouri, Drouillard became a minor investor. On April 30, 1807, he conveyed the Whitehouse and Collins bonds along with his own to land board clerk Thomas F. Riddick and his associate, Alexander McNair, for \$1,300.¹⁶

Recruitment and retention were challenges that Lisa met by taking extraordinary measures. Many of the boatmen and trappers did not respect Lisa. Employee Antoine Bissonette only went as far as the Osage River before deciding to return home.¹⁷ Lisa ordered Drouillard to track Bissonette down and return him to the party, authorizing him to shoot the deserter if necessary. Drouillard did shoot and wound Bissonette, who died en route to receive medical attention in St. Louis.¹⁸ According to the charges filed against Drouillard and Lisa with the St. Louis Court of Oyer and Terminer:

George Drouillard and Manuel Lisa ... not having the fear of God before their Eyes, but being moved and seduced by the institution of the devil on the



MICHAEL HAYNES, THE ROPE WALK CAMP

After several weeks of cordelling the massive keelboat and two large pirogues upstream against the Missouri River's powerful current, the men were exhausted and some of the equipment was beginning to wear out. Both ropes and oars were in need of replacement and Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark decided to lay over a day not far from present-day Lexington, Missouri, to give the men a chance to recuperate and build new rope and oars. In the scene above, George Drouillard is shown returning from a hunt with another member of the expedition. Sergeant Patrick Gass, the corps' best carpenter, is making one of the 20 oars needed.

fourteenth of May in the year one thousand eight hundred and seven ... being feloniously, wilfully and of their malice of forethought did make an assault and that the said George Drouillard with a certain rifle gun of the value of thirty dollars ... made of iron and wood, then and there charged with gun powder and one leaden bullet ... did shoot and discharge ... with the leaden bullet aforesaid ... in and upon the back of him, the said Antoine Bazenais between the shoulders...¹⁹

The case of *The United States v. George Drouillard* was heard the following year. Drouillard's defense team was impressive and spoke for two hours and fifteen minutes. In a fur trade town where deserting engages were bad for business, the jury took just fifteen minutes to acquit

Drouillard. He was repentant in the letter he wrote his sister living in Sandwich, across the river from Detroit:

I would have you observe without trying to excuse myself, that this has not been done through malice, hatred or any evil intent. Thoughtlessness on my part and lack of reflection in this unhappy moment is the only cause of it. ... The recollection of this unhappy affair throws me very often in the most profound reflections ... That I have not lost the affection of my old friends proves that they did not believe me capable of an action so terrible through malice and bad intent.²⁰

Although Drouillard had an interest in the profits he and Lisa earned during the first fall and winter hunts at Fort Remon on the Yellowstone River, the Bissonette trial had "absorbed all my savings that I had made on the upper Missouri"²¹ and he was unable to visit his family during the winter of 1808-1809.

Despite the implications of the Bissonette trial, Drouillard remained on good terms with Captains Lewis and Clark. On August 5, 1808, he described an extensive tour he took through

the country of the Big Horn River the previous winter. The penciled sketch of his route appears to have been made by William Clark, but an ink copy dated September 6, when Clark was out of town, is in the hand of Governor Meriwether Lewis.²²

Governor Lewis remained willing to employ Drouillard. In his memorandum book under December 27, 1808, Lewis wrote, "borrowed of Genl Clark this sum [\$20] which was paid to Solomon on act. of G. Dreulliar who has undertaken to arrest Doct. Dunlop --"²³ Presumably Drouillard did not arrest Dunlop. On April 19, 1809, Lewis received \$140 dollars from John Hay of Cahokia to repay the money he spent pursuing the fugitive in Illinois.²⁴

Drouillard returned to the upper Missouri with the reorganized Missouri Fur Company. He wrote to his sister, "I do not think I can return from the Upper Missouri before three years and just as soon as I return I shall be delighted to see you all. ... My respects to our Mother, who I embrace well, also all my brothers and sisters who I would very much like to see."²⁵

After spending the winter of 1809-1810 at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages and at Fort Remon, the Missouri Fur Company pushed a trapping party up the Yellowstone River. About 30 men reached the Three Forks of the Missouri before the winter snow melted. They hastily constructed a stockade and storehouse, and then set out on a late-spring hunt. Trapper Thomas James and some companions floated down the Missouri, but most of the trappers moved up the Jefferson. *Kainaa* (Blood Blackfeet) and *Atsiina* (Gros Ventre) raiding south from the northern plains attacked the group on the Jefferson. Company principals Pierre Menard and Reuben Lewis, as well as James, left graphic descriptions of the gory attack.²⁶ The bodies of three men were recovered and the two who were missing were presumed captured. All Missouri Fur Company activity in the area ceased and the hunters remained at the fort for a month.

Danger loomed, but frustrating inactivity led Drouillard to set an example that would inspire the faint-hearted cowering behind the palisades. James described what transpired in May, when 21 trappers found the courage to return to work on the Jefferson. After two days of successful trapping:

One of our company a Shawnee half-breed named Druyer and two other Shawnees went ahead of the main body. ... We started forward in company and soon found the dead bodies of the last mentioned hunters, pierced with lances, arrows and bullets and lying near each other. Further on, about one hundred and fifty yards, Druyer and his horse lay dead, the former mangled in a horrible manner, his head was cut off, his entrails torn out and his body hacked to pieces. We saw from the marks on the ground that he must have fought in a circle on horseback, and probably killed some of his enemies, being a brave man, and well armed with a rifle, pistol, knife and tomahawk.²⁷

They were attacked by Blood Blackfeet and *Atsiina* who came south from the northern plains to raid. Members of the tribal party that killed Drouillard carried their gory war yarn to the British trading posts on the Saskatchewan River. James Bird of Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton House learned that his customers

"attacked three American settlements on Missouri last summer [or made three attacks on the same settlement] and killed most of the men, roasted the body of the principle American [Drouillard] and ate it with the most savage Exultation."²⁸

A North West Company trader at Rocky Mountain House on the upper Saskatchewan River confirmed what visiting Blood Blackfeet told him: "From the description the Bloods gave of the dress and behavior of one whom they murdered, he must have been an officer or a trader: they said he killed two Bloods before he fell. This exasperated them and I have reason to suppose they butchered him in a horrible manner and then ate him, partly raw and partly boiled. They said his skin was exceedingly white and covered with tattoos from the hips to the feet."²⁹

George Drouillard repeatedly turned up in the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at crucial times, always contributing a bit more than was expected of him. Beyond his talent as a man hunter, Drouillard appears to have been a trustworthy man of action. The captains' ability to communicate with Indians generally depended on Drouillard's skill as a "hand talker." His return from the trading post on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Big Horn River in 1808 contributed valuable geographical data to Clark's great map of the West, although the cartographer later attributed much of Drouillard's observations to John Colter. His return to the upper Missouri in 1810 represented a determination to realize the development of a region he had helped reveal to the downstream world. Tragically this resulted in the man hunter becoming the hunted.

Foundation member John C. Jackson is a researcher and published author with a broad background in western development.

NOTES

¹ The Drouillard family already was represented west of the Mississippi River. George's uncle, Louis Lorimier, had established his business in Spanish territory at Cape Girardeau.

² Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 2, p. 85. Lewis's entry for November 11, 1803.

³ Sheila Richey, "Lewis and Clark at Fort Massac," *Continuance Magazine* (Fall/Winter 2003-2004), reprinted on the Southernmost Illinois History Website at <http://www.southernmostillinoishistory.net/lewismassac.htm>.

⁴ Baptismal records of Assumption Church as cited in Larry E. Morris, *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 191. He was baptized at the Roman Catholic Assumption Church in Sandwich, Upper Canada.

⁵ The League of the Five (later Six) Iroquois divisions (the Great Longhouse) arrogantly manipulated people like the Shawnee.

⁶ Victor Collot, *A Journey in North America, Containing a Survey of the Countries Watered by the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and Other Affluent Rivers; with Exact Observations on the Course and Soundings of These Rivers; and on the Towns, Villages, Hamlets and Farms of That Part of the New-World; Followed by Philosophical, Political, Military and Commercial Remarks and by a Projected Line of Frontiers and General Limits. Illustrated by 36 Maps, Plans, Views, and Divers Cuts* (Paris: Printed for Arthus Bertrand, 1826), Vol. 1, introduction. The editor's name is not recorded.

⁷ Historian Annie Heloise Abel wrote, "The French designs on Louisiana by no means ceased with the failure of this [Collot's] expedition. Collot's investigations ... undertaken in 1796 ... constitute a link between the project of [George Rogers] Clark to invade Spanish Louisiana and the retro-cession of Louisiana to Napoleon, and the French activities show a continuity of interest in the plan of regaining Louisiana from 1789 to 1800." Annie Heloise Abel, ed., *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968, reprinted from 1939 edition), p. 14.

⁸ Captain Zebulon Pike to General Anthony Wayne, August 22, 1796, Indiana Historical Society Collection, M367, Box 1, Folder 16.

⁹ Pierre Drouillard's fortunes in Detroit must have declined. According to the Wayne County Tax List of 1802, he had no employees, horses or cattle. Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Miscellaneous Documents. He died in Detroit in April 1803, and it is possible George did not know of his death when he signed on with the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

¹⁰ James J. Holmberg, ed., *Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 67, n. 9.

¹¹ Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), p. 144 and notes.

¹² See the reproduction in M. O. Skarsten, *George Drouillard: Hunter and Interpreter for Lewis and Clark & Fur Trader, 1807-1810*, 2nd ed. (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2003), p. 25.

¹³ Bernard DeVoto, ed., *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997, reprinted edition), p. 18.

¹⁴ Moulton, Vol. 2, p. 489. Clark's entry for August 18, 1804.

¹⁵ Congress ultimately doubled the expedition members' wages so Drouillard, initially promised \$416.66, received \$833.33 1/3. Sergeant John Ordway also got involved in land speculation, purchasing the warrants of Private Silas Goodrich on September 29, Jean Baptiste LePage on October 20, and William Werner on October 29, all in 1806. Jackson, "Messrs. Lewis & Clarke's Donation Lands," Vol. 2, pp. 381-382.

¹⁶ On January 23, and May 17, 1808, before the expedition

returned, Riddick and McNair conveyed those land warrants to land commissioner Frederick Bates.

¹⁷ *Missouri Gazette*, October 12, 1808.

¹⁸ Affidavit of Antoine Dubreuil, *United States v. George Drouillard*, St. Louis Court Files, Missouri Historical Society.

¹⁹ Lillian Ruth Colter-Frick, *Courageous Colter and Companions* (Washington, Mo.: Privately published, 1997), p. 96; St. Louis Court Records, Manuel Lisa Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

²⁰ George Drouillard to Marie Louise (Madame Jacque Parrent), May 23, 1809. The letter, apparently written by a public writer or his friend Pascal Cerre, was preserved by Albert Drouillard of Windsor, Ontario, and a translation was published by Olin D. Wheeler, *The Trail of Lewis and Clark*, 2 volumes (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904) Vol. 1, pp. 110-111.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Both maps are described in Carl I. Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*, 5 volumes (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press for the Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957-1963), Vol. 2, pp. 209-210; John Logan Allen, *Passage Through the Garden: Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 378, n. 56. Drouillard provided William Clark with the first description of the country south of the Yellowstone River. During this conversation, it is likely that he also repeated what he had heard about American activities west of the Rocky Mountains.

²³ Meriwether Lewis Personal Account Book, April 1807-1809, Box 1, Folder 8, Meriwether Lewis Collection, Missouri Historical Society.

²⁴ Meriwether Lewis, Meriwether Lewis Memorandum Book, entries for December 27, 1808, and April 19, 1809, Meriwether Lewis Collection, Missouri Historical Society.

²⁵ Drouillard's letter has been published in Gordon Speck, *Breeds and Half-Breeds* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1969), pp. 91-92 and cited in Morris, *Fate of the Corps*, pp. 52-53 and 224 n. 3.

²⁶ Richard E. Oglesby, "Pierre Menard, Reluctant Mountain Man," *The Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, Vol. 24, pp. 16-18; Reuben Lewis to Dr. Brother, Three Forks of the Missouri. April 21, 1810, in Frick, *Courageous Colter*, pp. 106-107.

²⁷ Thomas James, *Three Years Among the Indians and the Mexicans* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984, reprinted from 1846 edition), p. 46.

²⁸ Edmonton House Journal, May 13, 1811, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, B60/a/9, folders 13-13d.

²⁹ Elliott Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Great Northwest, The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, Fur Trader of the Northwest Company and of David Thompson, Official Geographer and Explorer of the Same Company 1799-1814*, 2 volumes (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1965; reprinted from 1897 edition), Vol. 2, p. 736. In a personal discussion with the author, novelist James Alexander Thom took exception with the tattoo, claiming that the Shawnee did not indulge in this practice. However, the author has Delaware and Shawnee ancestors of a contemporary period who were conspicuously marked.

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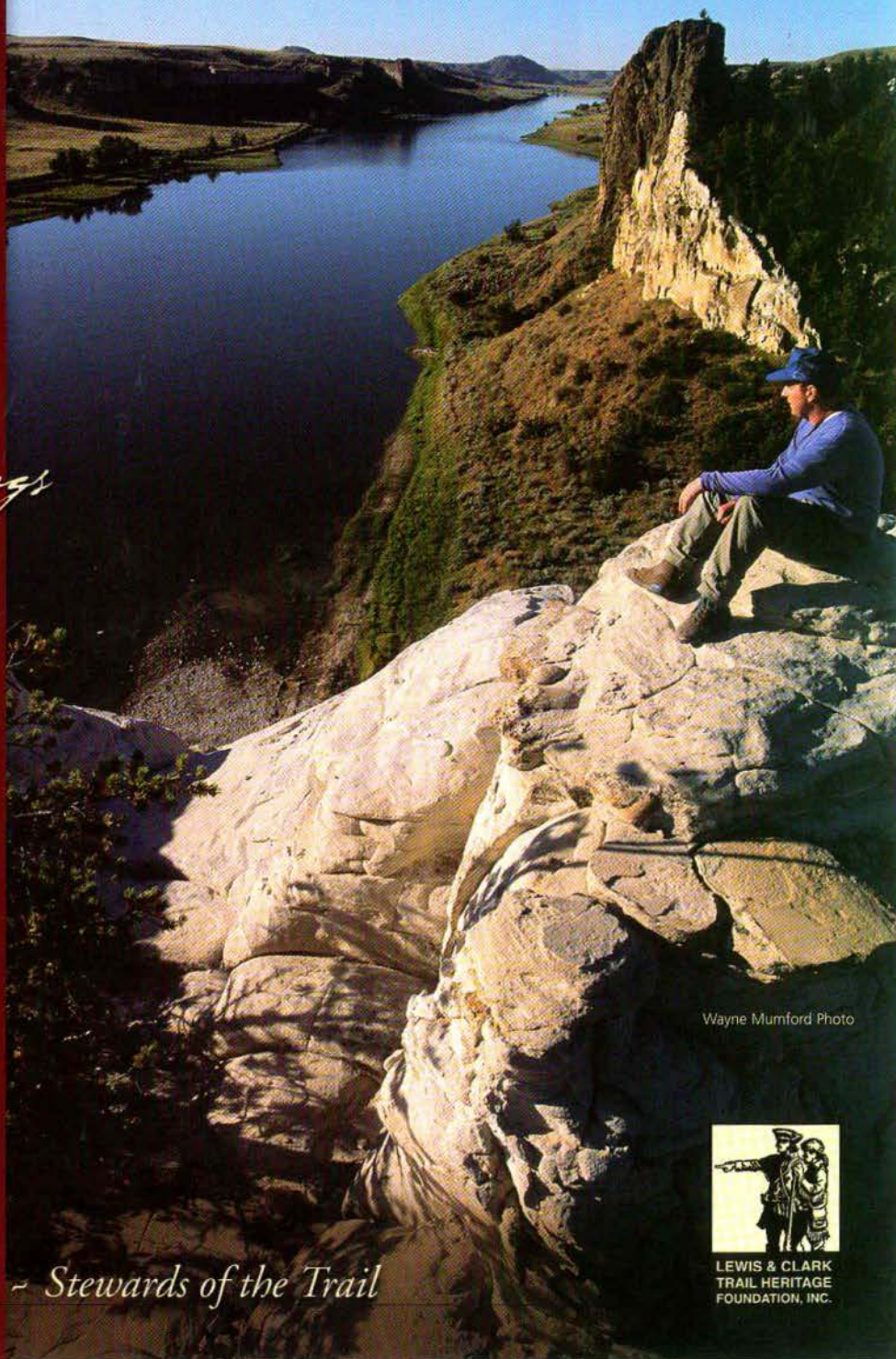
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A TASTE OF WHAT FOLLOWED

Early Euro-American influence on food and wine in the Northwest brought dining from bland boudin blanc to 15-course extravaganzas in a short period of time

BY PEGGY LUTZ

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark reached the Pacific Coast during the miserable, stormy November of 1805. The inescapable chill of the Pacific Northwest oppressed the expedition as they holed up for a depressing winter at Fort Clatsop. They patiently awaited their opportunity to return home in the spring. In the meantime, they made do with a meager and barely sufficient diet of roots, berries and dried fish for which they traded with the Clatsop Indians. The corps' meals included lean elk and deer meat when the hunters were lucky.

The late author and food historian Leandra Zim Holland described Captain Meriwether Lewis as highly erudite and civilized, a gourmet influenced by the cosmopolitan President Thomas Jefferson.¹ Perhaps during the dreary Fort Clatsop Christmas of 1805, Lewis's mind wandered to lavish celebrations back home. As Jefferson's secretary, he had known many intimate dinners with select guests and tables laden with the best of food and wine. Jefferson was renowned for collecting and serving fine cognacs, sherries, and wines including Madeiras, Burgundies and Sauternes.²

Members of the expedition endured their bleak situation in a rugged, distant place, but it didn't take long for Jefferson's extravagant lifestyle to reach the West Coast. Expedition members' diets differed greatly from those of the fur trappers, missionaries, pioneers and settlers who arrived on the coast a short time later.

Throughout much of their journey, members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition had dined heartily on wild game. On the coast, game was not plentiful and they had to look elsewhere for sustenance. Expedition members grew to consider dog meat a great delicacy, one which they consumed whenever possible. Lewis expounded on the salubrious qualities of the canine: "we were much more healthy strong and more fleshy than we had been since we left the Buffaloe country."³

They sometimes consumed other small animals such as beaver and harbor seal.⁴ They also occasionally ate fresh salmon, sturgeon and eulachon (known as smelt) during their stay on the Pacific Coast. Oftentimes, the fish were dried, as were most of the berries they ate.

One exception was the fresh bearberry, which comes from the *saccacommis* plant. Canadian engagés with the North West Company were known for smoking the leaves of this plant.⁵ A hospitable Clatsop chief served Clark and his exploring party "Cramberries & Sackacomey berris" on December 9, 1805.⁶ Lewis described the *saccacommis* shrub as an evergreen with leaves that "retain their verdure" throughout the winter. Its fruit ripened in September and remained on the bushes throughout the cold season. He said the mealy, tasteless berry was as dry as flour even in its most succulent state.⁷

By early 1806, members of the corps had procured three hundred pounds of whale blubber and a few gallons

of oil from the Killamox, or Tillamook, Indians who had stripped a 105-foot-long beached whale.⁸ Clark described how the natives produced the oil. The blubber was boiled in a big, square, wooden trough by means of hot stones. When extracted, the oil was secured in the bladder and guts of the large sea mammal. The Indians preserved part of the blubber by cutting it into "large flickes"⁹ which were partially rendered, dried and stored.¹⁰ As the pores of the oily flesh shrank and closed, an impenetrable, anaerobic self-seal resulted. Later, these "flickes" were exposed to fire, which reopened the cells making them plump and tender once again.¹¹

Lewis wrote that the whale blubber "was white & not unlike the fat of Poark, tho' the texture was more spongy and somewhat coarser." He found it very palatable, resembling beaver or dog in flavor.¹²

The cooked blubber was dipped in the whale oil, eaten alone or with the root of a rush the Indians called *Shaw-natâh-que*, also known by the corps as edible thistle or black root.¹³ Raw, the white bulb is nearly as crisp as a carrot. When roasted, the root caramelizes and turns black due to its high sugar content. Black root was sweeter than any other fruit or root the natives introduced to the corps.¹⁴

FINE DINING SOON FOLLOWED

The Corps of Discovery depended on wild game as its primary food supply for more than two years. Pioneers settling the West, on the other hand, brought most of the food they would eat during their six-month, one-way, cross-continental journey.

From 1825 to 1860, the Hudson's Bay Company housed its Columbia headquarters at Fort Vancouver, about 95 miles upriver from Fort Clatsop. Since the large Hudson's Bay Company was quite an important customer to French merchants, only superior red wines were received. The excellence of the alcoholic beverages served at this fur-

trading outpost illustrates the sophistication of the British establishment. Claret, Lisbon, Madeira, port, sherry and Spanish red wine were listed on early supply lists. Distilled liquors included brandy (cognac and Bordeaux), gin, rum (Demarara, Jamaica, mixed and Indian) and whiskey.¹⁵

In 1836, the Whitman missionary group arrived at Fort Vancouver. Narcissa Whitman, who along with Eliza Spalding were the first white women to cross the Rocky

Mountains, wrote about the elaborate food served at the fort. She wrote that for breakfast they consumed "... coffee or cocoa, salt salmon and roast duck, and potatoes. ... When we have eaten our supply ... our plates are changed and we made a finish on bread and butter." She described dinner with an even greater variety of food.¹⁶

As a member of the reinforcement party to the Whitman mission, Sarah Gilbert White Smith wrote about the trials and triumphs of her journey west in 1838. There was a decided contrast between the foods she ate on the trail and the lavish meals served at Fort Vancouver. Smith's party, like the men on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, found buffalo to be plentiful on the Great Plains. She wrote that they loved buffalo meat very much.

She added that the men prepared buffalo by boiling or frying, occasionally chopping it like sausage, and sometimes using it in soups.¹⁷

Lewis also was very fond of buffalo meat. During the expedition, Lewis's favorite meal was *boudin blanc*, a white pudding prepared by Toussaint Charbonneau. Charbonneau made this French-style sausage pudding by substituting buffalo meat for the favored white meat generally used. Obtaining fillets from the muscle under the shoulder blade, he cut the buffalo flesh into very small pieces. After adding kidney suet, flour, salt and pepper, he stuffed the mixture into the unwashed lower extremity of the large intestine.¹⁸ Members of the expedition also enjoyed and savored a



Lewis described the saccocommis plant in detail on January 29, 1806, and wrote that the fruit ripens in September and stays on the bush all winter. "the frost appears to take no effect on it."

sausage made from the buffalo's small intestine, complete with partially digested grasses and cooked without any cleansing or preparation.¹⁹ This delicacy was similar to spinach sausage because buffalo are herbivores.

CIVILIZING THE WEST

Following the wet winter at Fort Clatsop, western civilization arrived in the Northwest with surprising speed. The 49th parallel was established as the boundary between U.S. and British territory in Oregon with the Oregon Treaty of 1846. Lewis and Clark's exploration of the West helped make it possible.

Jefferson's vision of American dominion was perhaps a part of Lewis's thoughts as he consoled himself during their miserable Fort Clatsop Christmas. That celebration consisted of a small gift exchange and "pore Elk boiled, Spilt [spoiled] fish & Some roots, a bad Christmass diner."²⁰ His memory held images of fancy balls in St. Louis prior to their departure in 1804.²¹ He could not foresee that similar social events, though on a smaller scale, would burgeon in the Oregon Territory as Americans settled the area forty years later.

Among a number of gala affairs in the Oregon Territory was the 1846 ball celebrating the birthday of former President George Washington hosted by Captain H.M. Knighton, the proprietor of City Hotel in Oregon City.²² Another bountiful and festive event occurred on the day the first plank was laid for the Great Plank Road, which was intended to "pave" the way from Portland to the distant Tualatin Plains. The *Oregon Weekly Times* reported

on September 27, 1851, that a "spacious table" was set "(a) mong the dainties ... a large and well-roasted ox."²³

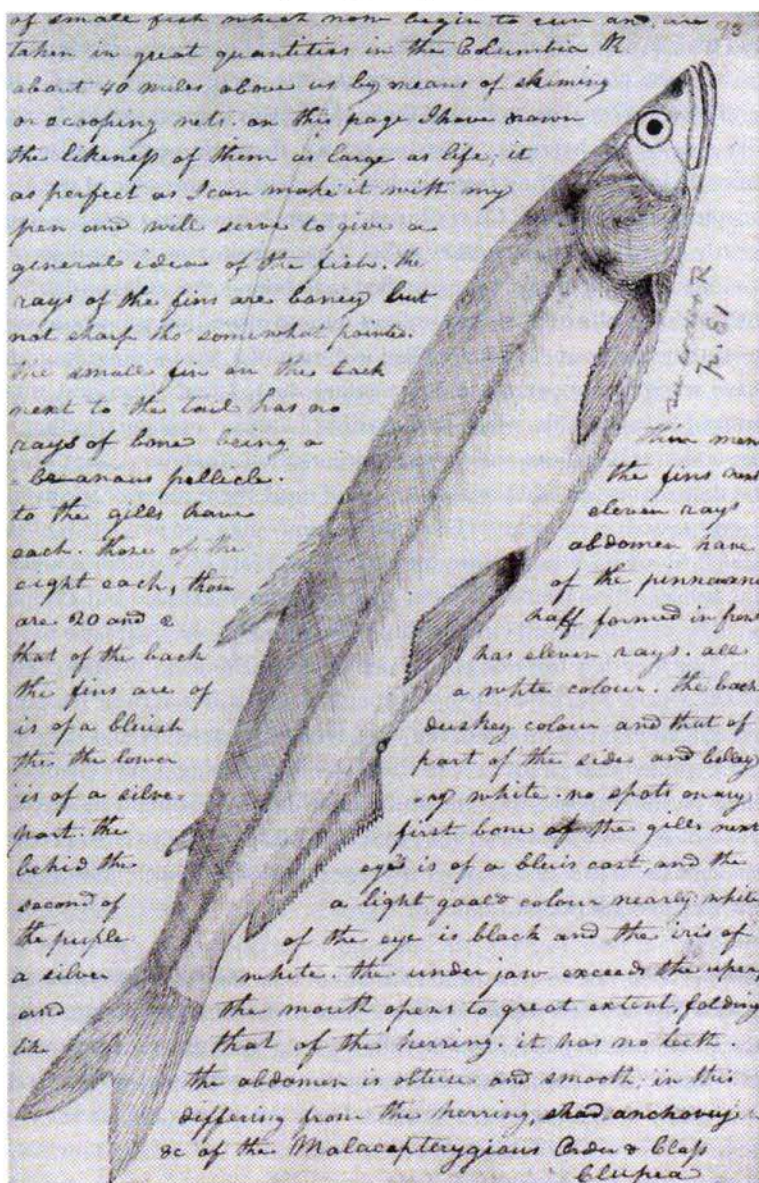
After clearing and cultivating the land that had provided such a meager diet for the Corps of Discovery, early American settlers produced an abundance of food. In her diary of 1867, E. Stevens recorded the pleasure of foods such as pies made from lemons, berries and apples, in addition to plums, squash, meat and chicken. She also expounded on the excel-

lence of beef with cabbage and turnips, pork and beans, pork steak, oyster fritters, fried cakes, boiled custard and crab apple jelly.²⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century, Portland would experience the refined dining that Lewis had known with Jefferson. An elaborate farewell dinner for railroad magnate Henry Villard exemplified the elegance of food in the city during this period. The sumptuous French fare that poured forth at Eppinger's Restaurant on September 16, 1883, featured 15 exquisite courses.²⁵

Today, instead of plank roads, modern freeways connect the Pacific Northwest to St. Louis. The British Hudson's Bay Company, the first Western influence of any magnitude in the Pacific Northwest, was an important forerunner of the area's current sophistication.

Nevertheless, it was the Christian missionaries and American pioneers, with their simple diets, who established the solid foundation of Euro-American settlement in Oregon. Western civilization spread quickly throughout the area after the dismal winter of exiguous fare spent by the corps within those smoky walls of Fort Clatsop.



Due to its natural oils, Lewis declared the small eulachon the best fish he had ever tasted. He drew the eulachon and described it in detail in his February 24, 1806, journal entry.

Peggy Lutz is a food historian who has her master's degree in Pacific Northwest history. She took the LCTHF membership on a journey of authentic foods of the Corps of Discovery at the 2005 annual meeting in Portland, Oregon.

NOTES

¹ Leandra Zim Holland, *Feasting and Fasting with Lewis and Clark* (Emigrant, Montana: Old Yellowstone Publishing, 2003), p. 5.

² Mary Gunderson, *Cooking on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Mankato, Minnesota: Blue Earth Books, 2000), p. 14.

³ Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 6, p. 162. Lewis's entry for January 3, 1806.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 13. Clark's entry for March 25, 1806. The corps originally mistook the harbor seal, *Phoca vitulina richardii*, for sea otter, *Enhydra lutris*, which never leaves salt water. Moulton, Vol. 10, p. 162, n. 4. Lewis wrote on February 23, 1806, concerning this mix-up, "the indians here have undeceived us." Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 340.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 236-237. Lewis's entry for January 25, 1806. The corps first encountered the smoking of these leaves in September 1804 when they met the Teton Sioux while traveling up the Missouri River. Corps members referred to it as the Teton's "tobacco." Paul Russell Cutright, *Lewis and Clark Pioneering Naturalists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 91. Bearberry, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, often mixed with *Cornus sericea*, red osier dogwood, was referred to as *kinnikinnick* and smoked ceremonially by the Indians of the plains. Moulton, Vol. 3, p. 305, n. 2. Many western tribes used the name *kinnikinnick* to refer to a mixture of bark, perhaps with some tobacco, used for smoking. *Kinnikinnick* comes from the Chippewa word *Kinikinigân*, meaning "something mixed by hand." Moulton, Vol. 3, p. 120, n. 7.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 118. Clark's entry for December 9, 1805. "Sackacomey berris," or bearberries, are edible and commonly used as groundcover along the Pacific Coast today.

⁷ Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 245-246. Lewis's entry for January 29, 1806.

⁸ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 183. Clark's entry for January 8, 1806.

⁹ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 185, n. 15. Clark wrote "flickes" for "flitches" to describe the strips of blubber. Today this word refers to a salted cured side of bacon.

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 183. Clark's entry for January 8, 1806.

¹¹ Holland, p. 12.



In 1806, the Corps of Discovery observed a beached whale (like this one on the Oregon Coast in 1892) that had been stripped by the Killamox Indians.

¹² Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 166. Lewis's entry for January 5, 1806.

¹³ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 183. Clark's entry for January 8, 1806. *Shaw-natâh-que* (the edible thistle) is *Cirsium edule*.

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 226. Lewis's entry for January 21, 1806.

¹⁵ Lester A. Ross, *Hudson's Bay Company Suppliers: Volume I, internal use document for the National Park Service, Region 4* (National Park Service, 1979), p. 230. The Hudson's Bay Company practiced a rigid policy of never supplying alcohol to the Indians. This was in stark contrast to Lewis and Clark, who initially used alcohol for diplomatic purposes, and later American pioneers who used alcohol to trade with the natives.

¹⁶ Narcissa Whitman, *My Journal*, ed. Lawrence Dodd (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1836), p. 55.

¹⁷ Clifford Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies, Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women of the Oregon Mission Who Made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* (Glendale, California: A.A. Clark Co., 1966), Vol. 3, p. 89.

¹⁸ Moulton, Vol. 4, p. 131. Lewis's entry for May 9, 1805.

¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 386. Lewis's entry for July 16, 1805.

²⁰ Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 137. Lewis's entry for December 25, 1805.

²¹ Holland, pp. 91-92.

²² W.G. T'Vault, ed. "Washington's Ball," *The Oregon Spectator*, July 9, 1846.

²³ Eugene Snyder, *Early Portland Stumptown Triumphant* (Portland, Oregon: Binford and Mort, Publishers, 1970), p. 152.

²⁴ E. Stevens, "Diary, 1867" MS. Clackamas County Historical Society, Oregon City, Oregon.

²⁵ Business, Miscellaneous—Restaurants. MS. Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.

New source on natural history of expedition; A study of syphilis along the trail

The Natural World of Lewis and Clark

David A. Dalton

University of Missouri Press
264 pages / \$29.95

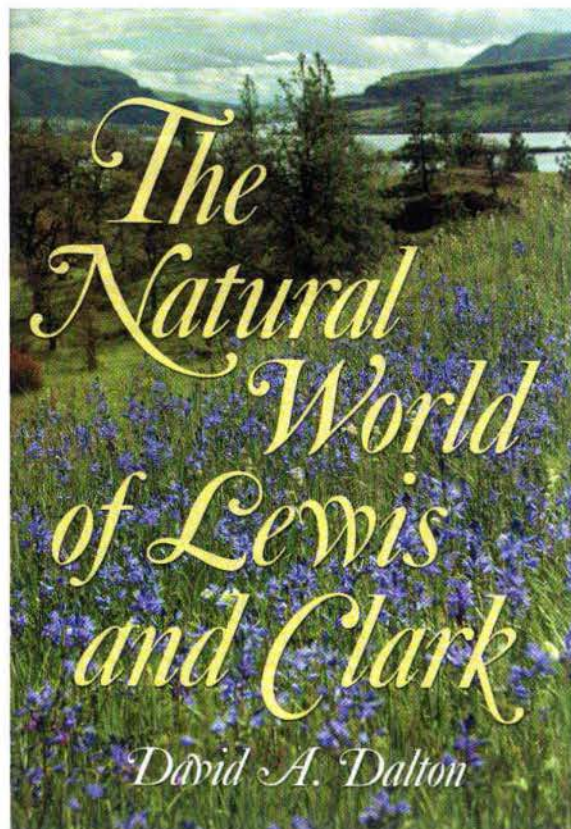
At first glance, the book under review elicits a reaction something akin to "been there, done that." After all, Paul Cutright's venerable *Lewis and Clark: Pioneering Naturalists* (1969 and 2003) covers the subject from a chronological viewpoint, while Raymond Darwin Burrough's *The Natural History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (1961 and 1995) treats the natural history observations of the Corps of Discovery topically. More recently there is *Lewis and Clark's Green World: The Expedition and Its Plants* (2003) by A. Scott Earle and James Reveal. Sometimes a more specialized approach actually expands the investigative field of natural history. That would be the case for: *Lewis and Clark Meet Oregon's Forests: Lessons from Dynamic Nature* (2001) by Gail Wells and Dawn Anzinger, *Lewis and Clark's Mountain Wilds: A Site Guide to the Plants and Animals They Encountered in the Bitterroots* (2002) by Sharon Ritter, and *Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains: A Natural History* (2003) by Paul A. Johnsgard. There are also relevant articles in journals, several having appeared in *We Proceeded On*. Let us not overlook *Herbarium of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (1999), Volume 12 in *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* edited by Gary Moulton. In short, the natural history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is not without its experts and its publications.

So what can Dr. David Dalton, a member of the Biology Department at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, contribute that earlier authors have

not? Well, lots, it turns out. Begin, for example, at the end of the book by examining the bibliography. The sources Dalton consulted come from magazines such as the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, *Nordic Journal of Freshwater Research*, *Weed Science*, *Nature Biotechnology*, *Pan-Pacific Entomologist* and the *Journal of Applied Bacteriology*. The application of the tools and techniques of science advocated in these journals has never before been used when analyzing the journal entries of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

One hundred maps, illustrations, charts and tables assist the reader to understand the complex world of science that they enter when they open this book. Dalton is an experienced college professor and has therefore made a career out of making difficult scientific concepts understandable to learners who come to him with basic intelligence and an open mind. Thus, when he writes that Lewis and Clark introduced the fruits of the Osage orange tree to science and notes that it is "the best example in North America of a fruit that now lacks its dispersers due to the disappearance of the megafauna" (p. 16), he will explain.

The dozen chapters that make up this volume are uneven in length, content and difficulty. Chapter 2, for example, has as its 27-page focus the two genera, *Lewisia* and *Clarkia*. Chapter 7, by contrast, is about "Clark's Nutcracker and Lewis's Woodpecker" and uses only 10 pages and half as many illustrations. The final chapter, "Climate Change and the Future of the American West," seems unnecessary and serves only



the author's personal need to take a political potshot at "the attitude of the current [presidential] administration" toward global warming (p. 218).

Dalton asks good questions. What did Seaman eat when he ran the Columbia River? Not salmon, because if a dog eats raw or improperly cooked fish, then a parasitic organism called a fluke "may burst open, releasing the microbe that then kills the dog." (p. 130) What then? Dalton cannot say. The answers he can provide to other questions are nothing less than fascinating. This reviewer particularly liked the in-depth examination of why the men of the expedition suffered "a Lax & heaviness at the Stomack" after feasting on camas roots at the Nez Perce camps near Weippe Prairie. It has to do with the Indian method of cooking, how inulin is a polymer of fructose and the rapid growth of intestinal bacteria. Dalton playfully

calls the malady "flatulogenesis" (p. 64) but he gives the process a thorough airing. In the end, his recommendation would have been for the expedition to eat cous biscuitroot rather than camas since it contains starch rather than inulin.

Admittedly, Dalton's book skips from topic to topic leaving the reader to apply his or her own organizational framework. However, it is exhilarating to read. "Who knew?" is a phrase that often will be scribbled in the margins. If your personal library needs one book on the natural history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, this is not that book. If you already have the classics, this one is a worthy auxiliary acquisition.

—Robert Carriker
History Professor
Gonzaga University

Mystery of the Bones

P. Willey and Thomas P. Lowry

Vallombrosa Press
196 pages / \$14.95

Authors P. Willey, a forensic anthropologist, and Dr. Thomas P. Lowry, a psychiatrist with diverse interests, attempt to answer the "mystery of the bones," which is: If some of the Arikara Indians had syphilis long before the arrival of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in October 1804, why were there no signs of acquired or congenital syphilis in the large number (300) of Arikara skeletons excavated from the Leavenworth Site cemetery (1915-1966)?

In the early sections of their book, they quote several traders and explorers (Trudeau, Tabeau, Bradbury, Brackenridge and Luttig) who were with the Arikara Indians before or shortly after the Corps of Discovery arrived at the Arikara villages. For the most part, the explorers and traders observed that the Arikara women

were sexually available and actively involved with white men. Willey and Lowry gave as reasons for their sexual availability: hospitality, prostitution, power transmission and simple biology.

Chapter Three, which is well documented and enlightening, filled a number of gaps on this subject that the Lewis and Clark Journals did not cover in depth. Some of the traders visiting the Arikaras noted that polygyny was common, with Arikara men having as many as four or five wives.

Chapter Four, "The Wages of Licentious Sex," concerned me most of all. My first trepidation came with the book's preface in which the authors wrote that the excavations at Travelers' Rest led to the discovery of a latrine pit with a high level of mercury and that the mercury almost certainly came from pills administered to the men to treat syphilis. This is not scientifically correct as mercury was used to treat many more common diseases than syphilis. For example, Lewis and Clark brought 50 dozen of Dr. Benjamin Rush's "Thunder Clapper" pills, an "explosive" laxative made of two potent purgatives, Jalap and calomel—a mercurous chloride compound. Expedition members used Rush's pills for a variety of symptoms including, if you can believe it, diarrhea. Therefore this mercury would be in the latrines due to a variety of treatments.

Mercury remained in the physician's armamentarium well into the twentieth century. Clark's journal entry of November 12, 1804, which said "3 men sick with ____" was quoted by the authors to indicate that expedition

members had venereal disease symptoms three weeks after coming into contact with Arikara women. Since Clark's entry did not say what disease they had or describe their symptoms, the authors cannot justify making such a statement. Since no evidence of syphilis was found in the Arikara bones, it would be my humble opinion that syphilis was rare in the Arikaras

and that gonorrhea most likely was the venereal disease acquired by members of the Corps of Discovery.

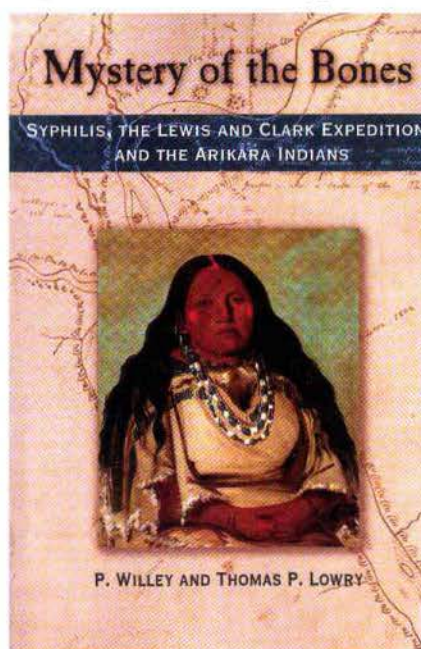
Mystery of the Bones includes discussion of some American Indian medicinal plants and what they were used to treat.

There is an interesting reference to the "ABO" blood typing system and the ability of humans with type "O" blood to show an increased resistance

to diseases and a better response to treatment. The Arikaras and some related tribes had a very high incidence of type O blood and may have been resistant to syphilis.

Though I disagree with the authors on a few points, I found the book to be very readable, though a bit repetitious. It offers new insight and knowledge about syphilis in relation to the Corps of Discovery and the Arikaras, including the authors' thoughts as to why the bones of the Arikaras did not show signs of syphilis. The authors have listed a number of references that will assist future researchers. It is always a treat to read and learn from the efforts of others. I thank the authors for taking their time and expertise to publish this work.

—White McKenzie Wallenborn, M.D.
Clinical Professor (ret.)
University of Va. School of Medicine



Personal essays read like a conversation with friends around the campfire

Why Sacagawea Deserves the Day Off and Other Lessons from the Lewis & Clark Trail

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs

Bison Books
144 pages / \$17.95

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs's new book, *Why Sacagawea Deserves the Day Off and Other Lessons from the Lewis & Clark Trail*, is like a good conversation with a friend around the campfire. The 11 essays in the book are the ebb and flow of scholarship, of thoughtful opinions, and of memories of good trails and good adventures, taken with good friends.

The essays ramble along, like a good trail story should. They are diverse, covering topics like our fascination with Sacagawea, the death of our beloved captain, Meriwether Lewis, the need to listen well to the stories we are told, and the importance of taking a dog, jerky and children with you as you explore the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

The essays are also personal. They are based on the author's years of exploration and adventure on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, as well as her years as a speaker, scholar and consultant. The research is sound, and the bibliography strong. Readers will find the bibliography includes much of the respected scholarship we are accustomed to, from Gary E. Moulton to James P. Ronda to Donald Jackson, as well as work that encourages us to think outside our traditional views of the story and the trail—Rudolph Giuliani, Richard Louv and Allen Pinkham.

Readers might not always agree with Tubbs's conclusions. Her musing about Lewis's death, "Selected and Implanted by Nature," will surprise you ... and give you pause to think, which is what a good essay should do. Bring

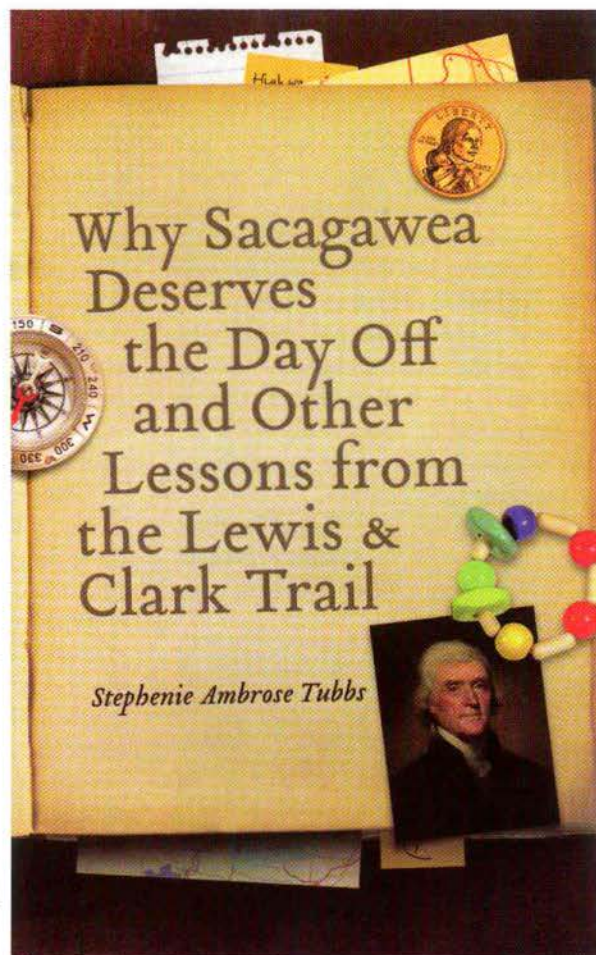
the essay with you when you come to Tennessee this fall for the Foundation's 41st annual meeting.

Many of the essays explore the story of the Corps of Discovery in Montana, but they could easily apply to any state along the trail. The second essay, "Missouri River," could apply equally well to the Columbia, the Snake, the Knife or the Yellowstone River. Her reminder to "open our ears" (and our hearts) to this story when it is told differently is as timely for those of us in Washington State, as it is in Montana, or Iowa or Virginia.

This is a book for people who have explored the trail and the story by canoe, by horse or by foot, as well as for those who, like Thomas Jefferson, do so from the comfort of their own home. It is the "ah ha!" moment in our own musings, when we nod our heads agreeably, or shake our heads in disagreement, but we still agree on one thing—this story, this trail, is a part of our lives, and as the author reminds us, a part of our children's lives, and our children's children's lives.

So, pour yourself a cup of your favorite drink, whether it is the dram the men enjoyed each evening (until the supply ran out in July of 1805), a pint of hot chocolate as Clark did in September 1806, or a glass of beer, such as Collins made from soured camas roots in the fall of 1805, stretch out in front of your own campfire and ramble through these 11 essays, with the sound of Daniel Slosberg's fiddle in the background!

—Barb Kubik



Geology information available online

The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology has posted the results of some of Bob Bergantino's work on Lewis and Clark geology on its Web site at: http://www.mbgm.mtech.edu/gmr/lewis_clark/lewis_clark.asp.

Little information has reached the public detailing the geography, geology, minerals or fossils that Lewis and Clark described in their journals. The site explains some of the more important geological observations and navigational aspects the expedition recorded while in the present state of Montana. The site has 10 subjects: navigation, equipment, Culbertson, White Cliffs, Great Falls, Gates of the Mountains, Three Forks, Beaverhead Rock, Pompeys' Pillar and Terry.

Colter novel invites reader on wild ride

Colter's Run

Stephen T. Gough

Stoneydale Press
392 pages / \$24.95

Two centuries ago, in the autumn of 1808, John Colter ran his legendary race for life against fearless Blackfeet. Fittingly, author Stephen Gough in his novel *Colter's Run* uniquely describes this run and other historical adventures of John Colter. After Colter's days with Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery had ended, this story begins.

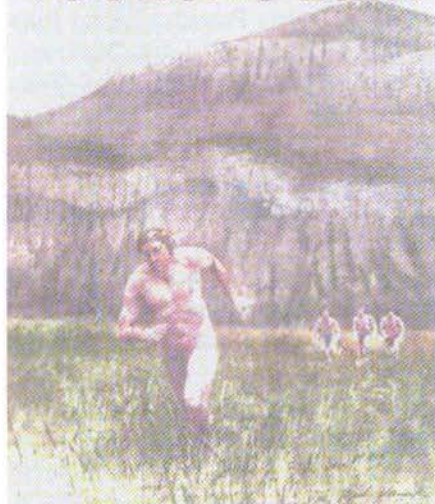
Gough artfully writes, largely from a first-person point of view, about Colter's involvement in the Blackfeet's battle against the Crow and Flathead Indians, his run for life at the Three Forks of the Missouri, and trapping expeditions with Manuel Lisa and, later, Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry. Gough brings to life not only the main character, but also many of his fellow trappers, including John Potts, Peter Weiser, Old Toby, George Drouillard, Thomas James and Edward Rose.

The author paints vivid pictures for the reader of the flora and fauna against the backdrop of the Absaroka and Beartooth mountains, the awe-inspiring Yellowstone and the legendary Three Forks country. The sights and sounds of nature's mountains, rivers, prairies, beaver, bear, bison, snow and searing heat transport the reader.

Additionally, Gough has a remarkable ability to captivate the reader through the dialogue between Colter and his companions, as well as Colter's own thoughts. He does this very effectively, which allows the reader to "get inside" this renowned mountain man's head and, at the same time, gives opportunity to reflect

Stephen T. Gough

Colter's Run



upon Colter's fear, doubt, anxiety, and longing for home and family.

Colter's Run, in general, is positioned in a factual framework of events with the exception of Old Toby and Colter teaming up against the Blackfeet. Gough stated that he purposely took literary liberty to better develop Old Toby's character.

The reader may find interesting the prologue and epilogue of Gough's book, which include references to Colter's lineage. I disagree with a reference in the prologue to his mother being Ellen Shields Colter. James and Alice (Ellen's sister) Colter more likely were his parents.

Gough's references to works by Ruth Colter-Frick and Shirley Winkelhoch (both direct descendents of Colter) add validity to the development of a better, though incomplete, understanding of John Colter.

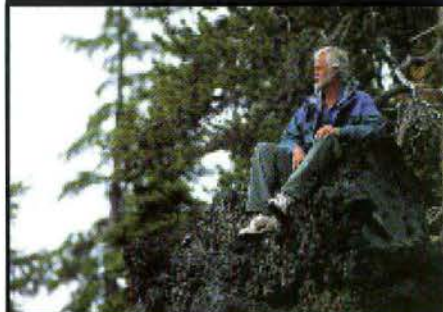
After reading *Colter's Run*, I feel like I now know John Colter, not just know about him. This book should be in the history buff's library, but mostly it simply should be read and enjoyed.

—Timothy Forrest Coulter

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John Newman court martial revisited

BY H. CARL CAMP

Richard Stenberg is undoubtedly correct when he states in his WPO article (November 2008) that "John Newman ... primarily is remembered for his court martial and subsequent expulsion from the Corps of Discovery."¹ As the author makes clear in his use of the scant documentary materials, the Newman story is much more complex than that. A sub-theme not pursued by Stenberg, but which I believe worthy of closer scrutiny, is the dramatic reversal of fortune suffered by Newman barely six months after the expedition began its historic journey.

Private Newman apparently enjoyed the co-captains' confidence early on in the expedition. For example, on March 24, 1804, at Camp River Dubois, William Clark wrote in his journal: "I sent Newman with Letters to Koho [Cahokia] & to Cap Lewis at St. Louis. ..."² While some members of the detachment at that stage of their training were prone to disobedience and troublemaking, Newman seemingly was not among them. He therefore was entrusted with the responsibilities attending courier duty. In fact, in a letter of recommendation to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn after the Corps of Discovery returned to St. Louis in 1806, Captain Lewis observed that "The conduct of this man previous to this period [his court martial and expulsion] had been generally correct ..."³

On June 29, 1804, as the Corps of Discovery prepared to depart from its encampment at the junction of the Kansas and Missouri rivers, a court martial was convened to try John Collins for "... getting drunk on his post this morning out of whiskey put under his Charge as a Sentinel and for Suffering Hugh Hall to draw whiskey out of the Said Barrel intended for the party." [i.e., members of the detachment] The captains appointed

John Newman to the five-man panel that passed judgment in the case. Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor presided over the trial. Three panel members were from Sergeant Charles Floyd's mess; namely, Patrick Gass, John B. Thompson and John Newman. The other two panel members (John Colter and John Potts) were from Sergeant John Ordway's mess. Collins and Hall were duly convicted of the alleged offenses and the court set their punishment: Collins received 100 lashes on his bare back and Hall 50 lashes, likewise on his bare back. The sentences were carried out that very evening.⁴

Shortly after Lewis and Clark held their first council with representatives of the Otoe and Missouri tribes just north of present-day Omaha, Nebraska, on August 3, 1804, Private Moses B. Reed went AWOL from the Corps of Discovery. A special detail was dispatched to find and bring him back—dead or alive. Reed was found, captured and brought in for trial. His court martial was convened on August 18th after "he Confessed that he 'Deserted and Stold a public Rifle Shot-pouch Powder & Bals' ...". He petitioned the court to show him as much mercy as it could under the circumstances. Reed was convicted and "Sentenced ... to run the Gantlet four times through the Party & that each man with 9 Swichies Should punish him and for him not to be considered in future as one of the Party—". Little else was said about the incident in any of the journals and the names of the men making up the court martial panel were not recorded (which is somewhat surprising). Rather than being turned out alone on the prairies to shift for himself, Reed was allowed to remain with the expedition through the winter at Fort Mandan and was sent back to St. Louis with Corporal Warfington and the keelboat in April of 1805.⁵

It is a sad irony that barely more than two months later, John Newman himself was the defendant in yet another court martial. His ignominious fall from grace for "having uttered repeated expressions of a highly criminal and mutinous nature" (not explicitly spelled out) was sealed by the unanimous decision of a court martial proceeding convened by Lewis and Clark. His sentence consisted of 75 lashes on his bare back; dismissal from the corps; loss of his rifle and accoutrements; and hard labor until he was sent back to St. Louis in disgrace the following spring.⁶

There are several aspects of Newman's court martial and its aftermath that warrant further attention. The nine-member panel included two sergeants (John Ordway and Patrick Gass) and seven privates (George Shannon, John Shields and John Collins from Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor's mess and William Bratton, Silas Goodrich, Hugh Hall and William Werner from Sergeant John Ordway's mess).⁷ With the exception of Patrick Gass, the captains pointedly avoided appointing any of Newman's messmates to serve on the court martial panel.

That said, it is somewhat surprising to find that the nine-member court martial convened in the Newman case included John Collins and Hugh Hall. After all, these two men had been judged guilty as charged and sentenced to lashes on their bare backs on June 29, 1804, by the court martial on which John Newman sat in judgment. That raises a fundamental question of fairness. Both men probably were still smarting, psychologically and physically, from their punishment. Even conceding theirs was a military court martial under the Articles of War of that period and not a civil court proceeding, it seems unlikely that this arrangement would go unchallenged in today's legal environment. There were

other men available to serve in place of Collins and Hall from Ordway and Pryor's messes—unless, of course, some of them had become entangled in Newman's allegedly "mutinous" utterances.⁸

In any event, Collins and Hall were only two of a unanimous nine-man panel that found Newman guilty on all the charges leveled against him. In the sentencing phase, however, some disagreement surfaced among the members of the court. While the captains reported their concurrence in the judgment and sentence rendered by the court martial, they also noted the sentence was supported by two-thirds of its members.⁹ The court's sentence was carried out around noon the next day.

Almost immediately Newman set about trying to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the captains. While the expedition was in winter quarters at Fort Mandan, he apparently worked hard, held his tongue and even subjected himself to physical harm when he was frost-bitten on one of the expedition's winter hunts. Yet, when it came time for the permanent party to resume its westward trek in the spring of 1805, Captain Lewis decided he could not risk the good discipline and well-being of the expedition by rescinding Newman's sentence. No doubt Newman was deeply disappointed; nevertheless, he made himself useful as he joined Corporal Richard Warfington and the keelboat crew on their journey back to St. Louis, as reflected in Lewis's recommendation to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn in the earlier cited letter.

Lewis clearly felt himself justified in taking the course of action he had chosen in the Newman matter. On the day of the permanent party's departure from Fort Mandan, Lewis penned this euphoric entry in his journal: "The party are in excellent health and spirits, zealously attached to the enterprise, and anxious to proceed; not a whisper of murmur or discontent to be heard

among them, but all act in unison, and with the most perfect harmony." The moody captain was manifestly glad to be underway once more and free of Newman and Reed—the expedition's principal troublemakers. As if to underscore Lewis's burst of optimism, the expedition was henceforth free of dissension of any note—no more desertions, no more mutinous outbursts, no more court martial proceedings.¹⁰

Over the ensuing months, particularly during the long, soggy winter days and nights at Fort Clatsop, Lewis would have had ample opportunity to mull over the events that led to Newman's court martial and punishment. In time, he may have come to feel some remorse over the consequences of the court's judgment. Once back in St. Louis, Captain Lewis wrote Secretary of War Henry Dearborn recommending most members of the Corps of Discovery for appropriate remuneration, bonuses and land grants for their service while on the expedition. Those recommendations included John Newman even though he had been summarily dismissed from the permanent party early in the journey. This compassionate act, I believe, was prompted by some feelings of guilt or remorse or, at the very least, a concern for fundamental fairness on Lewis's part. He, after all, did not extend the same gesture to the expelled deserter, Moses B. Reed.

One cannot help wondering what John Newman's post-expedition life would have been like had he been less impulsive and outspoken; had his critical outbursts not occurred so soon after Reed's desertion, capture, court martial and dismissal; and had Lewis not been so strait-laced and such a stickler for military protocol and discipline.

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NOTES

¹ Richard Stenberg, "John Newman," *We Proceeded On*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (November 2008), p. 24.

² Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983–2001), Vol. 2, p. 180.

³ Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783–1854*, 2 volumes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 372.

⁴ Moulton, Vol. 2, pp. 329–330. Clark's entry for June 29, 1804.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 488–489. Clark's entry for August 18, 1804.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 168–171. Clark's entry for October 13, 1804 and Orders by Lewis and Clark on the same day.

⁷ On May 26, 1804, the captains' Detachment Orders divided the permanent party into three messes led by Sergeants Charles Floyd, John Ordway and Nathaniel Pryor. Patrick Gass was elected sergeant to fill the vacancy created by the death of Charles Floyd. John Newman was a member of the Floyd/Gass mess. For purposes of this discussion, it is assumed that the membership of the three messes remained the same as designated under the Detachment Orders of May 26th at the time of Newman's court martial. Private Peter Weiser from Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor's mess is listed among the panelists in the Newman trial, but the name is bracketed, which may indicate he did not serve or perhaps served as an alternate jurist. Moulton, Vol. 2, pp. 254–255; *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 170–171.

⁸ Moulton, Vol. 2, pp. 254–255. Moulton points out, for example, that Ordway notes in his journal entry for October 12, 1804, that "Moses B. Reed, the erstwhile deserter, was confined at the same time [as Newman]. No other record or journal mentions Reed's connection with the affair, and there is no indication of what his offence was." Perhaps he was a provocateur, or a co-conspirator, or perhaps his confinement was simply a precautionary move by the captains to nip in the bud any contagion of dissension or discontent. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 171, n. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 170.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 10. Lewis's entry for April 7, 1805.

What conspiracy? Another look at the evidence involving Lewis's death

BY THOMAS C. DANISI

In the last edition of WPO (Letters, November 2008), author Kira Gale offered information culled from her forthcoming book on the death of Meriwether Lewis. This is the latest in a long history of attempts to find a motive for a possible conspiracy to assassinate Governor Meriwether Lewis. These attempts are fine and good, in their way, but have to be held to the same standards of accuracy and accountability as any good history writing. Unfortunately, in this respect Ms. Gale's efforts at positing a conspiracy scenario are a failure.

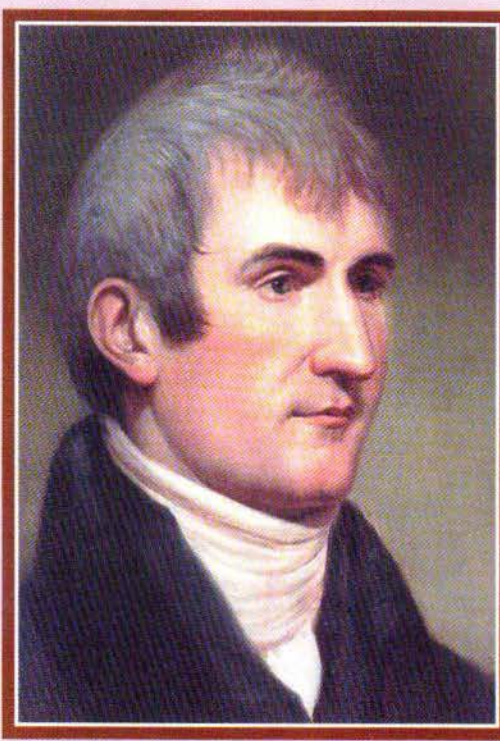
Gale states that General James Wilkinson, John Smith T. and others conspired to assassinate Meriwether Lewis because "their primary motive was the fortune to be made in the lead mine district." While Gale's premise is correct—that the Ste. Genevieve mining district "became the scene of raging mineral wars," her reasoning regarding how the wars began and their significance is incorrect.

In April 2008, I delivered a paper at the Missouri Conference on History entitled "Land Fraud in Upper Louisiana: A Misconception." From that paper, Gale's thesis emerges relating to the disposition of the Spanish land grants in Ste. Genevieve, but with a much different conclusion than my own.

A few paragraphs of explanation are necessary to bring this period into focus. In November 1803, Captains Amos Stoddard and Meriwether Lewis met in Kaskaskia (across the Mississippi River from Ste. Genevieve) with John Rice Jones, the attorney general of the Indiana Territory (which at that time also encompassed today's State of Illinois). Jones reported that Zenon Trudeau, the former Spanish lieutenant governor, in concert with Antoine Soulard, the surveyor general of Upper Louisiana, were selling blank

concession papers (unauthorized land deeds) of large mineral lands for various sums of money.

Jones showed Stoddard and Lewis several of these concession papers and they agreed that the Spanish officers had performed a criminal act upon the



Meriwether Lewis

United States, which would assume control of the Upper Louisiana Territory in just a few months. Jones wrote to an Indiana Territorial official that he had "discovered that a scheme of iniquity had for sometime been practicing on the Spanish side of the Mississippi to defraud the United States of a considerable quantity of land. The method ... was to make large grants of land to individuals dated above three years ago. ... I have therefor little doubt but that proper precaution will be taken to invalidate these iniquitous and fraudulent grants."

In January 1804, Stoddard sent a disturbing report to President Jefferson connecting Zenon Trudeau,

the former lieutenant governor, with these land frauds. Attorney General Jones displayed proof that Zenon Trudeau was "induced by the speculators to sign a number of blank sheets of paper which were used as the basis of large land claims." Stoddard's report became the foundation of published information on Upper Louisiana land frauds.

To this day, no one has discovered how Jones acquired this damaging information and for what purpose. Not only did it condemn Trudeau, but it also ruined the reputations and livelihoods of several Spanish officers with the incoming American administration. There is no doubt that Jones had a vested interest in revealing the information, for he and Moses Austin were partners and joint claimants in the largest and most profitable lead mine in Upper Louisiana between 1797 and 1812. The mine covered three square miles of land equaling 6,085 acres.

That was a huge conflict of interest for Jones, the attorney general of the Indiana Territory, to have concealed from Lewis and Stoddard. Furthermore, the concession papers originated with Austin, Jones's partner. Soulard, who lived in St. Louis, loaned Austin the blank concession papers as an accommodation, to reduce the number of trips that he would have to make to St. Louis. The papers originally were intended principally for potential landowners who followed Austin to Ste. Genevieve from Virginia. Austin was to fill out the papers with the names of these followers so that the land could be granted to them. However, Austin put his own name on the papers and gave them to Jones, who then showed them to Lewis and Stoddard. Austin and Jones's sole purpose was to gain favor with the new American regime, so that the U.S. government might be disposed to buy Austin's lead.

Their plan worked, and they were rewarded with political positions and salaries. President Jefferson asked Austin to write a dissertation on the lead mines, which was read before Congress a year later. Austin was appointed as a judge in Ste. Genevieve while Jones became a prominent member of the Indiana legislature.

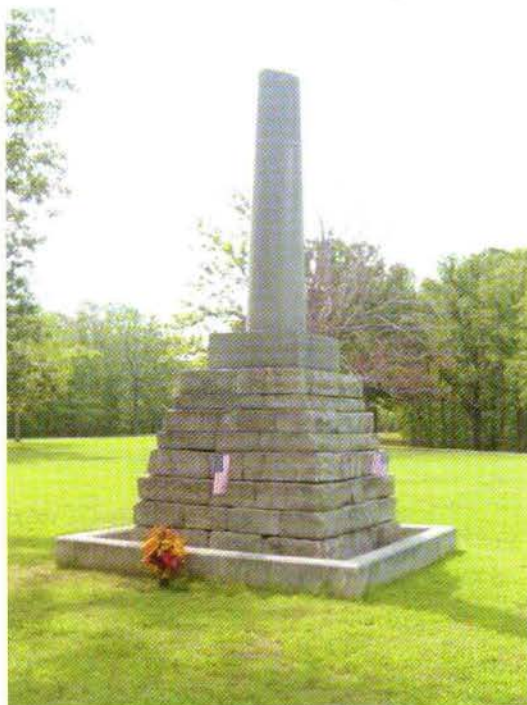
The "mineral wars" were a direct result of Austin and Jones's misrepresentation to Lewis and Stoddard. John Smith T.'s role of "gangster politician" and Wilkinson's strong defense of the inhabitants prevented Austin and his cronies from stealing even more land. Corrupt as Smith T. might have been, he paled in comparison to Austin and Jones.

After Lewis's arrival in St. Louis in 1808 as territorial governor, he could see, much to his dismay, that Jones and Austin had duped him four years earlier. Territorial Secretary Frederick Bates (his position more likely would be called lieutenant governor today) sided with Austin prior to Lewis's arrival in the territory. When Lewis immediately unseated all of Austin's men from official positions, it irritated Bates, since he had appointed Austin's people. This led to the bitter disagreements between Lewis and Bates so early in Lewis's governorship. If anyone wanted to assassinate Lewis, Bates was a far more likely candidate than Smith T. or Wilkinson, whose side in the mineral wars was being favored by the governor's actions.

Keeping this brief account of the situation in mind, Gale's claims in the November issue of this magazine are unrealistic—that Lewis's demise was due to the Ste. Genevieve lead claims, John Smith T. or General James Wilkinson, who was the commanding general of the Army at that time. The United States Supreme Court did not confirm the Ste. Genevieve lead claims until the 1830s, long after Lewis's death and the mineral wars. As for John Smith T., whether he named a

rifle after his deeds or made Austin quiver in his boots, a strong dose of the rifleman in the crime-infested valleys of Ste. Genevieve was necessary so that what little land the Spanish inhabitants possessed, they could retain.

James Wilkinson, condemned by many historians as a shady character, was stationed in New Orleans from March 1809 until February 1810.



Monument to Lewis at his gravesite in Meriwether Lewis Park on the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Gale tries to show that Wilkinson and Lewis were enemies; however they had known each other for 15 years and had been members of two elite private American organizations. The two had spent very little time together and their paths seldom crossed—once for certain in Richmond, Virginia, for the treason trial of Aaron Burr. So, where is the motive for murder? Can we believe that Wilkinson was capable of ordering a murder by "remote control?" Gale says Wilkinson could have influenced others to commit the murder, but a letter sent one way took months to receive. It is impossible to believe that Wilkinson had gunmen located in various parts of the United States who would have been predisposed to

follow his orders without question and be able to receive orders in time to pull off a covert assassination, much less find Lewis on his 1809 journey to Washington by bush-whacking through the wilds of Tennessee.

Other minor mistakes that Gale made in her letter include the fact that Lewis did not appoint Clark as brigadier general of the territorial militia; Thomas Jefferson did. She states that J.B.C. Lucas was an honest land commissioner, but Lucas rarely appeared to hear the claims, and according to his fellow commissioner, Clement Penrose, the board made every effort not to meet with him.

Finally, for Gale to launch into the idea that certain individuals would readily murder or assassinate Lewis negates pages of historical fact. A far more thorough grounding in the historic documents surrounding the arguments and rivalries of the early Louisiana Territory is a necessary step prior to making accusations about murder plots and motivations.

Present-day scholars, and their readers, need to be well schooled in this rather obscure period of American history before trying to sort out the truth of the complex set of circumstances that led to Meriwether Lewis's descent into an early grave.

Foundation member Thomas C. Danisi is a researcher and published author with a broad background in western development.

SOURCES

American State Papers, *Public Lands*, Vol. 1, pp. 177-178 and 188-191; Thomas C. Danisi, "Honor Without Title: A History of the French and Spanish Land Grants of Upper Louisiana" (unpublished manuscript, St. Louis, Missouri, 1996).

IMAGES

Courtesy of the National Park Service.

L&C educator honored

Foundation member and longtime educator Claudia Crump received Indiana University Southeast's highest honor, the Chancellor's Medallion, for her indefatigable dedication to education and the community.

Over an inspiring seven-decade career, Crump has "influence[d] the way generations of teachers and students across Kentuckiana approach teaching and learning by earning the label of Indiana's Social Studies Icon," according to university officials.

Crump taught for 25 years at Indiana University Southeast in the School of Education before retiring in 1993. She also served as the university's elementary coordinator. Crump created and supervised method classes and field experiences for language arts and social studies classes at graduate and undergraduate levels. She authored programs, textbooks and numerous books and articles on the methodology of teaching social studies and multiculturalism.

She served as a commissioner in the Indiana Governor's Lewis and Clark Commission during the bicentennial and continues as chairwoman of the Indiana L&C Foundation. Crump is actively involved with the Foundation Education Committee and currently is spearheading a cooperative education project between the Foundation, Lewis and Clark Legacy Forward (Indiana) and the Boy Scouts of America. They are planning a major education event in Indiana next fall.



Claudia Crump, left, received Indiana University Southeast's Chancellor's Medallion.

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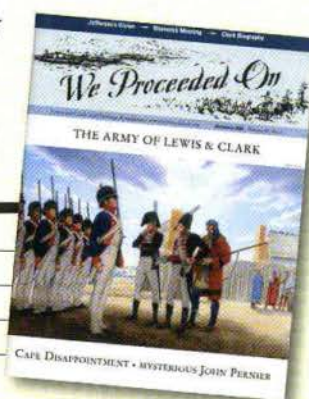
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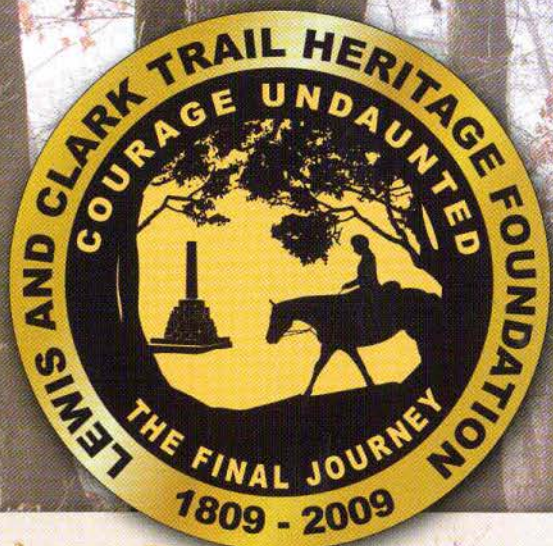
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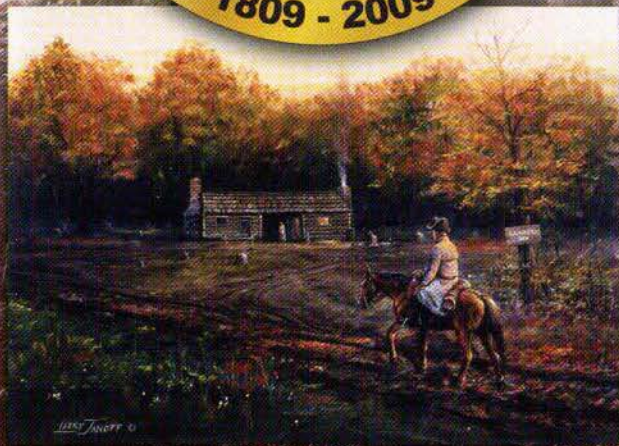


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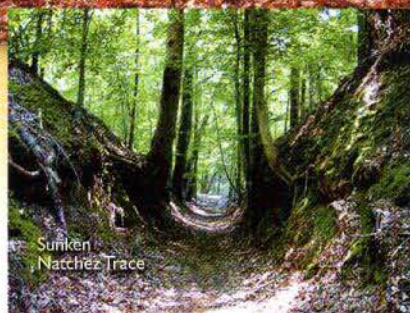
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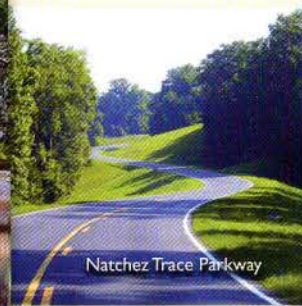
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