Travelers' Rest State Park Expands

• A Sacagawea Bibliography

Eva Emery Dye's Sacagawea

Birdwoman, Wife, Mother, Interpreter: Who Was Sacagawea?

Lewis and Clark Encounter a World of Women

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On the cover
Sacajawea
by E.S. Paxson, 1904.
Montana Museum of Art and Culture
President’s Message

In Peace and Good Friendship

America went through significant changes in 1812. John Jacob Astor’s Pacific Fur Company constructed Fort Astoria near the former site of Fort Clatsop. Mountain man Wilson Price Hunt discovered an overland route to the Pacific via the Snake and Columbia rivers. The New Madrid earthquake shook residents in the heartland and even caused the Mississippi to flow backward for a time. The New Orleans was the first steamboat to successfully navigate from Pittsburgh to the Gulf of Mexico. Its arrival coincided with Louisiana’s becoming the eighteenth state of the Union. War broke out between the United States and Great Britain in a second American Revolution. William Clark (who turned 42 on August 1, 1812) was appointed the new Missouri territorial governor and served as ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs for all western tribes. Several years later, after the election of James Monroe, the Era of Good Feelings was ushered in.

Since October 1, 2011, the leadership of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation has been busily engaged in fostering its own Era of Good Feelings. During my term as president of the LCTHF, I have been gratified to see so many individuals and chapters step forward to address the concerns of our time. We elected a new president, replaced the executive committee, and added new board members. We held board meetings in Clarksville, Great Falls, and had a fabulous annual meeting at the Falls of the Ohio. We hired Caroline Patterson as the new editor for our scholarly journal, We Proceeded On. She has done an outstanding job of getting the publication of WPO back on schedule. We hired Lindy Hatcher as the new executive director. Lindy has done a masterful job of learning the major and minor components of the operation and we are so pleased to have her at the Great Falls headquarters. We thank Don Peterson and Cathie Erickson for their assistance and bookkeeping. I also extend special thanks to Ken Jutzi, who performed extraordinary service with our information management system.
annual meeting in Clarksville. Steve Lee was instrumental in initiating an annual report. Doug and Lynn Davis helped restore order to Great Falls office files. Sue Buchel and others have volunteered at the Sherman Library. An anonymous donor gave a thousand dollars to the Foundation to assist in the executive director search. The membership of the Badger Chapter raised funds to make a donation to the Foundation. The California Chapter paid for lobby directional signs and the Portage Route Chapter funded the William P. Sherman Library and Archives sign at the Great Falls Interpretive Center. Other chapters hosted fantastic regional meetings on the Columbia, Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio rivers, at the Columbia Gorge in Ore. and in Wash., and in the East in Frederick, Md., Big Bone Lick, Ky., and Tippecanoe, Ind. We anticipate other meetings including the one commemorating Sacagawea’s death in South Dakota in September and another in New Orleans, La., in February 2013. You may want to start making plans to attend the LCTHF’s 45th annual meeting next summer at Fort Mandan in Washburn, N. Dak.

Exciting things are happening from sea to shining sea. After losing nearly 300 members since 2010, we have added 60 new members this year for a total of approximately 1,200 members. We need your ongoing support to recruit and reclaim more members.

Enthusiasm in the schools is also catching fire. Teacher David Ellingson taught a Lewis and Clark class focused on the scientific contributions of the expedition to high school students in Woodburn, Ore. Following the journals, students did field work in the Columbia Gorge and near Fort Clatsop documenting the same botanical specimens the captains collected more than 200 years ago. After collecting used cell phones and selling them for parts, the third grade class of the Princeton Day School in New Jersey donated the proceeds to the Foundation. We are grateful to one and all for their contributions.

I am grateful to the three dozen LCTHF chapters throughout the country. Their leaders and members are instrumental in helping us fulfill our mission as the nation’s premier non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the Lewis and
President’s Message (continued)

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the sharing of its stories. We are so pleased that we were able to distribute $50,000 of Trail Stewardship grants to our chapters. Chapters and other entities may now apply online for the next grant cycle, which was unveiled at the annual meeting and in the Annual Report. We hope chapters take advantage of these grants to conduct trail stewardship, advance education about Lewis and Clark, create interest in the local communities, develop chapter leadership, and capture or generate additional local and national membership. Involved citizens, in concert with our federal, state, and tribal partners, can do a tremendous amount of good.

When we work together, we accomplish more than by working alone. This past year, our volunteers provided 128,000 hours of service and partnership support valued at $4,808,766 in helping us fulfill our mission to “preserve, promote, and teach the diverse heritage of Lewis and Clark for the benefit of all people.” Please know how deeply we appreciate the members who step forward to make the Foundation a success. You are the best ambassadors for spreading the Lewis and Clark story and fulfilling our charge to be wise stewards of the trail. Thank you for your ongoing contributions to create a lasting Lewis and Clark legacy. It has been an honor to serve you and associate with you.

We have pared down our expenses to live within our means. Nevertheless, our operating budget for WPO and the executive director still depends upon dues and contributions from members and friends. Please consider ways in which you can help build the future: step up to serve, recruit members, attend national and regional meetings, and contribute to LCTHF or to one of the restricted funds that provides income and opportunities for the organization and comes back full circle to the chapters and members.

Finally, join with me in extending a heartfelt, Lewis and Clark welcome to incoming President Dan Sturdevant, Vice President Margaret Gorski, Treasurer Jerry Garrett, and Secretary Larry McClure. We thank them for their devotion, passion, and sacrifice. Huzzah!

Proceeding on in peace and friendship...

— Jay H. Buckley
President, LCTHF

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.

Editor’s Note

On December 22, 1812, Sacagawea, the Shoshone woman who travelled with the Corps of Discovery, translating, interpreting, and guiding, reportedly died at age 25 at Fort Manuel, a Missouri Fur Trading Company trading post in present-day S. Dak. Medical researchers think she died from complications from an illness she had suffered from all of her life—a an illness worsened by the birth earlier that year of her daughter Lisette. At the time of her death, she was with her husband Toussaint Charbonneau, her son Baptiste and daughter Lisette. Clark legally adopted Sacagawea’s two children, educating Baptiste in St. Louis and then in Europe. It is not known if Lisette survived infancy.

When Bill Stevens mentioned to me that he was devoting the Encounters on the Prairie Chapter regional meeting, September 28–30, 2012, to Sacagawea, I was inspired to use this issue of We Proceeded On to highlight scholarship about this remarkable and mysterious woman. We know so little about her—yet she has fired our imaginations for so long, inspiring biographies, novels, poetry, and children’s books. I hope this issue piques your curiosity. I know it did mine.

—Caroline Patterson
Iron-Framed Boats to Coracles

Those interested in the origins of Meriwether Lewis’s iron-framed, skin-covered boat may find additional documentation on the subject in The Florida Anthropologist. Wilfred T. Neill wrote a 1954 article “Coracles or Skin Boats of the Southeastern Indians” in which he scoured the historical literature for mentions of skin or leather watercraft in the southeastern regions of America. Since the source might be somewhat obscure (but easily available through Interlibrary loan), Neill documents other occurrences in the literature:

John Tobler mentioned in 1737 that the Indians in the area of Savannah Town (or Savaneton), South Carolina, brought “buffalo, bear, and dear hides ... and even a leather boat” to the local merchants. He noted that the boat could be folded up and easily carried, with a capacity of four or five people when used to cross rivers.

James Adair, a trader and early Indian historian, described a canoe made of tanned leather, with “the sides overlapped about three fingers breadth, and well sewed with three seams. Around the gunnels, which are made of saplings, are strong loop-holes, for large deer-skin strings to hang down both the sides: with two of these, is securely tied to the stem and stern, a well-shaped sapling, for a keel, and in like manner the ribs. Thus, they usually rig out a canoe, fit to carry over ten horse loads at once, in the space of half an hour: the apparatus is afterwards common hidden with great care, on the opposite shore.”

His observations were made sometime between 1735 and 1750, although they were not published until 1775.

William Bartram, a famous naturalist, described his 1778 crossing of the Ocmulgee River in Georgia in which, “[W]e sat about rigging our portable leather boat, about eight feet long, which was made of thick soal leather ... We ... cut down a White-Oak sapling, and by notching this at each end, bent it up, which formed the keel, stem, and stern post of one piece; this was placed in the bottom of the boat, and pretty strong hoop-poles being fixed in the bottom across the keel, turned up their ends, expanded the hull of the boat, which being fastened by thongs to two other poles bent round, the outside of the rim formed the gunwhales [sic]: thus in an hour’s time our bark was riged. ...”

Neill gives other instances of temporary and expedient leather watercraft that were not much more than hides shaped into a bowl or a tub used by individuals involved in trade in Georgia in the 1730s. Meriwether Lewis may have learned of such watercraft during his boyhood sojourn in Georgia and tried (unsuccessfully) to make use of the idea at the Great Falls.

Kerry Lippincott
Casper, Wyo.

Burning Bluffs Redux

This letter is in response to Jim Peterson’s May 2012 letter about John Jengo’s article in the February WPO, “‘Blue Earth,’ ‘Cliffs of White,’ and ‘Burning Bluffs’: Lewis and Clark’s Extraordinary Encounters in Northeastern Nebraska.”

I wanted to respond to Mr. Peterson’s statement that I relied upon erroneous maps to draw my conclusion that the actual “burning bluffs” noted by William Clark were located near Wynot, Nebraska (northwest of the Route 15 bridge at Mulberry Bend SWMA) as opposed to the Ionia Volcano location. I would agree that the late Martin Plamondon II’s herculean cartographic reconstruction efforts are not flawless. In fact, I pointed out an apparent error in his plotting of one of Clark’s critical bearing readings on August 22, 1804, and there are differences between his depiction of the Missouri River’s position along this day’s travel versus the Clark-Maximilian Sheet 6 in Dr. Gary Moulton’s The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, Volume 1. However, using the best source material available, Clark’s own course and distance notations and his journal entries, the tenuous link between Clark’s observation of the “burning bluffs” and the Ionia Volcano literally doesn’t add up.

Using the area where Aowa Creek (Clark’s “Roloje” Creek) emerges from a narrow valley east of Ponca, Neb. as a reference point—and this is a very reliable benchmark because the creek is constrained at or very near its 1804 position between two closely-spaced ridges—Clark’s distance calculations from Aowa Creek to his observation of the “burning bluffs” totaled 29.25 river miles. The distance from Aowa Creek to the present-day Ionia Volcano is only 13 miles. Even the differing interpretations of the river’s position and meander of the river encountered August 22, 1804, (which could add perhaps a mile or two to the distance between Aowa Creek and Ionia) can’t alter the fact that the expedition passed the Ionia Volcano location on August 22, that none of the journal keepers (Clark, Ordway, Whitehouse, and Gass) noted any volcanic occurrences on that day. It would be two days later (August 24, 1804) before Clark noted the extensive “burning bluffs” in his journal. Distance calculations from the expedition’s position on August 24 to definitive landmark stops such as Spirit Mound (which the captains hiked to on August 25, 1804) prove that the expedition had to be in the vicinity of Wynot, not Ionia, when they noted and mapped the “burning bluffs.”

John Jengo
Downington, Penn.

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Buttons, Beads & Bilious Pills: Montana’s First Campsite

By Martha Lindsey

Nicknamed “Montana’s First Campsite” for its association with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Travelers’ Rest in 1960 was designated a National Historic Landmark at the confluence of Lolo Creek and the Bitterroot River in Lolo, Montana. In 1976, the area was given a 700-acre boundary “to include enough of the low meadowland and tree-lined creek to provide an adequate setting for the site of the two historic camps and to allow for possible changes in the creek bed.”

Then the archeologists arrived. In the course of their digging from 2001 to 2002, they discovered a button from an early nineteenth-century military jacket, a trading bead, campsite fire rings, as well as evidence of mercury from Dr. Rush’s bilious pills. The discovery was exciting, but problematic: it showed that the National Historic Landmark was located on a site that did not include the area where Lewis and Clark camped.

The evidence was convincing enough to prompt the National Park Service to do something that was itself historic: to redraw the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark in 2006, negating all of the original 700 acres and designating 24 acres encompassing the archaeological site. Today, the Travelers’ Rest Preservation & Heritage Association is just $100,000 short of $700,000 in funding needed to acquire additional acreage for the park. This will enable the park to own outright the land surrounding the National Historic Landmark and its visitor center/museum.

The Corps at Travelers’ Rest

Travelers’ Rest was a pivotal site for the expedition as it headed to and from the Pacific Coast. On September 9, 1805, the corps approached the snowy and treacherous Bitterroot Mountains and rested along a “fine bould clear running stream” that Captain Meriwether Lewis named Travelers’ Rest Creek. Here they prepared for what would be the most treacherous part of their journey—the Bitterroot Mountains. When they returned from the Pacific Coast on June 30, 1806, Captain William Clark described their difficult journey:
Entrance to the Bitterroot Mountains by the Lou Lou Fork, by Gustav Sohon, June 1854. Travelers’ Rest is located along the base of the hills to the right.

Descended the mountain to Travellers rest leaveing those tremendous mountanes behind us—in passing of which we have experienced Cold and hunger of which I shall ever remember.

The expedition spent four days at Travelers’ Rest, resting, hunting, and planning one of their most important navigation decisions: to split up. Lewis proceeded east and north to the Marias River while Clark went south and down the Rochejhone or Yellowstone River.

But where, precisely, did the corps camp at Travelers’ Rest?

BUTTON, BUTTON, WHOSE BUTTON?
Locating archeological evidence of the expedition was daunting, but in 1996 the members of the Travelers’ Rest Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation took up the challenge. Travelers’ Rest scholars were aided by significant new research and newly available historic documents that were being published, including Gary Moulton’s 13-volume The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, as well as the journals of Private Joseph Whitehouse and Sergeants Patrick Gass and John Ordway. Robert Bergantino, a Montana Tech geologist, used modern-day survey equipment to follow and replicate Clark’s original survey calculations.

The chapter then acquired a set of infrared photographs of the National Historic Landmark and the surrounding Lolo community, which helped identify subsurface anomalies in the soil, where historic and prehistoric people might have left their marks on the land. The Travelers’ Rest campsite was located further up the Lolo Creek, approximately one to two miles west of the Bitterroot River. When the chapter members received permission from the landowners to scan the site with metal detectors, they dug up many items from early settlers, such as large screws and wagon wheels; however, one small, yet significant discovery was made in August 2001: the Tombac button. “The button,” as it has become known, was often sewn on military uniforms after the Revolutionary War and dated from 1760 through 1812. While a button alone was not enough to confirm the site, it became a catalyst for a full-blown archeological excavation.

FROM MAGNETOMETERS TO DR. RUSH’S PILLS
When the Travelers’ Rest Chapter hired professional archeologist Dan Hall to take over the project in spring 2001, he brought in a magnetometer to search for other relics that would have survived the 200 years since the Corps of Discovery traveled through western Montana. The first
magnetometer detected soil anomalies. While these images did not detect what caused the disturbances, they helped pinpoint 18 areas to be excavated.

Campfire hearths were the first find. Situated directly next to the old creek bed, they were larger in diameter than fires traditionally used by the Salish Indians. The fire pits also boasted more than charcoal. Carbon dating revealed that the fires had burned within 30 years of the expedition. And there was more: a small blue glass trade bead and a piece of lead.

While a button and bead reinforced the importance of trading, it was not proof that non-natives had used the site, let alone the Corps of Discovery. The fire pits also showed more than charcoal. Carbon dating revealed that the fires had burned within 30 years of the expedition. And there was more: a small blue glass trade bead and a piece of lead.

While the two captains relied on von Steuben’s manual for structure and discipline, they also used it to set up camp. The blue book stipulated precisely where the tents should be pitched “the captains and subalterns tents are to be in one line, 20 feet from the rear of the men’s tents, that captains in the right wing opposite the right of their respective companies.” The manual also specified where campfires, butchering areas, and latrine pits should be built. In accordance with its specifications, the two campfire hearths excavated at Travelers’ Rest were aligned in a fairly straight line, perpendicular to the old creek bed. As specified by von Steuben’s manual, the latrine was distanced almost exactly—nearly 300 feet—from where the butchering area would have been.

It was the mercury vapor in the decomposing organic matter at the latrine site that connected the area to the Corps of Discovery. Mercury vapor from Dr. Rush’s bilious pills were taken by men for anything from constipation to syphilis. Dr. Rush’s bilious pills were the expedition’s go-to first-aid remedy. Dr. Rush’s orders for “preserving health” relied heavily upon the pills, and he instructed the men to take as many as two or more pills at a time for illness. While taking poisonous pills for good health seems counterintuitive, mercury was a common medicine in the metropolitan areas of the late eighteenth
century. Based on common practices of purging or bleeding out illness, mercury was a strong laxative. When taken as a remedy, very little was absorbed before the body began to expel it, theoretically taking the illness with it. In the early 1800s, in the West, no one other than the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition used Dr. Rush’s pills.

Although each piece of evidence did not decisively prove that Lewis and Clark stood at the Travelers’ Rest creek side, the preponderance of evidence—the button, the campfire hearths, the traces of mercury from the bilious pills—suggests this Montana State Park is where the Corps of Discovery camped on their way to and from the Pacific Ocean. Today more than 20,000 people visit the park each year. Visitors can get a sense of the expedition at this spot, well-known to the Salish Indians, that is surrounded by streaming waters, cottonwood and pitch pine trees, and dotted by the delicate and tough pink blossoms of bitterroot flowers (*Lewisia rediviva*).

*Martha Lindsey, of Missoula, Mont., is program director for Travelers’ Rest Preservation & Heritage Association and a member of the LCTHF’s Travelers’ Rest Chapter.*

**NOTES**


Sacagawea, Sacajawea or Sakakawea
How Do You Spell Birdwoman?

by Irving W. Anderson and Blanche Shroer

History has accorded the Shoshone Indian woman member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition a most novel place in the hearts and minds of generations of Americans. That her fame is deserving is evident from historical records. Sacagawea was by birth a Shoshone. As can be best determined, she would have been approximately 12 years old in 1800, understood by the explorers to have been the year she was taken prisoner by the Hidatsa Indians and removed from her Rocky Mountain homeland east to their village near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. Lewis and Clark encountered her there in November 1804. By that time, she had been given the Hidatsa name Sacagawea, which means Birdwoman.

Sacagawea’s name was spelled by the explorers a total of 17 times. Thirteen of these were recorded by Lewis and Clark, and one was by Sergeant John Ordway, each in their original longhand journals. In addition, Clark inscribed her name on three of his maps. Although their flair for inspired spelling created some interesting variations, in every instance all three of the journalists who attempted to write it were consistent in the use of a “g” in the third syllable.

The captains’ longhand manuscript journals reveal a standardized phonetic spelling of her name, together with its meaning. Lewis’s journal entry for May 20, 1805, reads: “a handsome river of about fifty yards in width discharged itself into the shell [Musselshell] river...this stream we call Sah-ca-gah-we-ah (sah KAH gah WEE ah) or bird woman’s River, after our interpreter the Snake [Shoshoni] woman.”

Clark’s three maps that show the river named in her honor reinforce Lewis’s spelling and meaning of her name.

Lewis and Clark history scholars, together with the U.S. Geographic Name Board, the U.S. National Park Service, the National Geographic Society, *Encyclopedia Americana* and *World Book Encyclopedia*, among others, have adopted the Sacagawea form. The Bureau of American Ethnology, as early as 1910, had standardized the Sacagawea spelling in its publication. Her name traces its etymology to the Hidatsa Indian tribe, among whom she lived most of her adult life. The name derives from two Hidatsa Indian words: *sacaga*, meaning bird and *wea* meaning woman. It is pronounced Sa ca’ ga wea, with a hard “g.” Clark explained later that in recording Indian vocabularies, the “great object was to make every letter sound.”

Over the years, numerous linguistic attempts to decipher the mystery of her name have been published. Shoshone advocates claim her as “Sacajawea”...
(SAK-ah-jab-wee-ab), a form of her name that was popularized in spelling and pronunciation. This led to complications, however, because her name was never spelled “Sacajawea” during her lifetime. Moreover, “Sacajawea” allegedly means the equivalent of “canoe launcher” in Shoshone, which contradicts Lewis and Clark’s primary documentation, “bird woman.”

The “Sacajawea” spelling derives from the 18154 narrative of the journey, a secondary source published two years after Sacagawea’s death. The narrative was edited by Nicholas Biddle, a classical scholar who never met Sacagawea and never heard her pronounce her name. Biddle worked from the captains’ original longhand journal entries, correcting spelling and grammar, and substantially abridging many daily entries. Although his editing methodology is credited with standardizing the “Sah ca gah we a” form in the journals, no one knows why he decided upon the “Sacajawea” spelling in his 1814 narrative, especially when all of the primary documents spelled the name with a “g.” Perhaps Biddle was influenced by the poorly formed “g’s” contained in many of Clark’s longhand journal entries.

Indeed, two decades after the expedition, Clark persisted in this quirk of his penmanship when he spelled her name one final time. Clark perpetuated his life-long, exasperating idiosyncrasy of scribbling poorly formed “g’s” that appear to be “j’s” when he penned: “Se car ja we au Dead.”

North Dakota Hidatsa advocates vigorously promote a “Sakakawea” (sah-KAH-KAH-wee-ab) spelling and pronunciation of her name. Analogous with the “Sacajawea” form, the “Sakakawea” spelling is not found in the Lewis and Clark journals. This spelling has been independently constructed from two Hidatsa Indian words found in a dictionary titled Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians, published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. in 1877.

Compiled by U.S. Army Surgeon Washington Matthews 65 years following Sacagawea’s death, the words appear verbatim as “tsa-ka-ka, noun; a bird,” and “mia [wia bia] noun: a woman.” In a 1950 publication titled Sakakawea the Bird Woman, Matthews originally used another form of spelling “Tsakakawia” which was “anglicized for easy pronunciation” but it later became “Sakakawea … the spelling adopted by North Dakota.” This form, however, contracts Matthews’ explanation: “In my dictionary, I give the Hidatsa word for bird as Tsahaka.” Ts is often changed to S, and K to G, in this and other Indian languages, so “Sacaga” would not be a bad spelling … but never “Sacaja” [for bird] and “wea means woman.” Matthews’ explains in his dictionary that there is no “j” included in the Hidatsa alphabet and that “g” is pronounced as a “hard g.”

The authors of this paper agreed with the sources cited above that the Shoshone Indian woman’s name is Sacagawea. Over time, the American “editorial ethic” will uniformly adopt the Sacagawea form. We owe it to America’s most famous Native American heroine to correctly spell and pronounce her name.

The name derives from two Hidatsa Indian words: sacaga, meaning bird and wea meaning woman.

This article was adapted from “Sacagawea: Her Name and Her Destiny,” first published in WPO, November 1999.

Irving W. Anderson, who lived from 1920 to 1999, was renowned for his scholarship on Sacagawea and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Blanche Schroer, who lived from 1907 to 1998, was a Sacagawea scholar and freelance writer in Wyoming.

Notes

1 The original manuscript journals are held in the archives of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. They can be accessed online at http://www.amphilsoc.org/mole/view?docId=ead/Mss.917.3.L58-ead.xml
Lewis and Clark Encounter
A World of Women
By Carolyn Gilman

“We Hidatsa women were early risers in the planting season. It was my habit to be up before sunrise, while the air was cool, for we thought this the best time for garden work. …We thought that the corn plants had souls, as children have souls. …We cared for our corn in those days, as we would care for a child.”
—Buffalo Bird Woman, Hidatsa

“We … being viewed as property & in course Slaves to the men have not much leisure time to Spear—”
—William Clark

Left: Wife of Two Crows, painted by George Catlin in a Hidatsa Village in 1832
Right: Mi-néek-ee-sunk-te-ka, Mink, a Beautiful Girl, a Mandan girl painted by George Catlin in 1832.
Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traveled through a world full of women, but for the most part, their observations concerned only other men. When they did see women, they decried what seemed like oppression. “The Mandans, Minitee’s &c. treat their women as servile,” Clark noted. The women “do the drudgery as common amongst Savages.” Among the Sioux, the women seemed to him like “perfect slaves to the men, as all Squares of nations much at war, or where the women are more numerous than the men.” This was the expedition’s main “discovery” about Plains Indian gender relations.

This perception was not new. As early as 1785, Thomas Jefferson stated: “The [Indian] women are submitted to unjust drudgery. This I believe is the case with every barbarous people. ... The stronger sex imposes on the weaker. It is civilization alone which replaces women in the enjoyment of their natural equality.” However, during the course of the expedition, Lewis and Clark encountered a variety of gender roles that would force them to modify their simple assumptions. The two captains observed that, in many respects, the status of women was higher in the tribes they encountered farther west. The Plateau tribes, Clark noted, exhibited a more egalitarian attitude. On the Pacific Coast, it came as an almost unpleasant shock that the women were “permitted to speak freely before them, and sometimes appear’d to command with a tone of authority.” To explain the difference, Lewis developed the astute theory—later echoed by anthropologists—that the status of women was linked to their economic role. “Those nations treat their old people and women with most deference and respect where they subsist principally on such articles that these can participate with the men in obtaining them.”

The captains, however, could not let go of their first conclusions. Even the commanding Chinookan women were “compelled”—they never chose—to gather roots, and assist them in taking fish, and perform every species of domestic drudgery.” Observing them, Lewis confidently echoed Jefferson’s assertion that “our women are indebted to civilization for their ease and comfort.” Generations of readers would accept the implication that Indian women could only benefit from Euro-American civilization.

But was it that simple? Because Lewis and Clark rarely spoke directly to anyone but men, they could not know that for Native American women, as for their non-Indian sisters, power and powerlessness were intertwined. In Native American societies, as in the United States, there was conflict and disrespect between the sexes, including the domestic violence and ribald talk even Lewis and Clark recorded. On the Plains, men and women lived strictly separate lives and spent much of their time apart. They had separate social duties and separate religious organizations, and they even spoke different versions of their own languages. Men wielded public power, and the power of violence. But for Indian women, separation did not necessarily mean subservience. Their roles complemented men’s, requiring mutual reliance and cooperation. Their responsibilities even gave them secret sources of influence. In many ways, Mandan women would have been shocked at the status of women in Virginia.

The two captains observed that, in many respects, the status of women was higher in the tribes they encountered farther west.

The Women Lewis and Clark Left Behind

Lewis and Clark contrasted the “downtrodden” Native American women with the women of their own culture. Lewis idealized women of his race, writing once of “the pure celestial virtues and amiable qualifications of that
lovely fair one.”9 Women of the upper classes in Virginia had an easier life than did Indian women, and undoubtedly few plantation mistresses would have chosen to exchange places.

And yet, Virginians of the early nineteenth century did not think it proper for women of any class to have much power. A Virginian woman could not vote, hold public office or serve on a jury. She could make a contract or sue in court only under special circumstances. Marriage was a mixed blessing: to be without a husband often meant poverty, but when a woman married, her property became her husband’s. Her children belonged to their father’s family, and a divorced or widowed woman risked losing custody. Women’s and men’s work was segregated, as in Indian society. But through children, work, religious authority, and love, Virginian women had some of the same informal powers as Indian women. Such powers were often invisible to men.9

Meriwether Lewis’s most enduring relationship with a woman was with his mother, Lucy Marks. Though she came from the landowning class of Virginia, Marks had “spartan ideas” and “a good deal of the autocrat” about her, according to her acquaintances. And yet she was “kind without limit” and full of “activity beyond her sex.” At 17, she married her cousin William Lewis, a man troubled by “hypochondriac affections,” or depression. After ten years, four children and a revolution, William Lewis died, and she married John Marks, a relative of Jefferson’s by marriage. She outlived her second husband as well, retiring to her herbal medicines and her prized library of books.10

Because of the laws of primogeniture, Lucy lost guardianship of her oldest son, Meriwether, when her first husband died, because the eight-year-old boy was heir to the Lewis estate, and his father’s family assumed charge of his upbringing and property—including the property that Lucy was living on. And so Lucy’s husband’s brother, Nicholas Lewis, became the boy’s guardian. She did not lose actual custody of her son for another five years. By then, she had remarried and thus had lost all claim to the Lewis estate.11

When her second husband, John Marks, died in 1791, Lucy became the executrix of his estate, which she managed till their sons were old enough to inherit it. However, in

If a matriarch of Lucy’s standing had little control over her children and property, a younger and less experienced woman, such as Julia Hancock, was that much more dependent on men. According to Clark family legend, when William saw the young Julia Hancock at her family’s Virginia plantation in 1801, he decided to marry her. If so, he was prescient—she was only ten years old. After returning from the expedition in 1806, Clark’s first trip—even before he went to Washington, D.C.—was to return to her family’s plantation to fix the date of their wedding. “I have made an attacked most vigorously,” he wrote Lewis with soldierly jocularity. “We have come to terms, and a delivery is to be made first of January…when I shall be in possession highly pleasing to my self.” Julia had just turned 16 when they married.13

Julia had privileges that most woman of her day could not expect. She grew up in a wealthy household, surrounded by slaves. She was well educated, owning volumes of Shakespeare and writing more legibly than her husband. And yet her marriage followed some customs that a Mandan woman might have found demeaning. Both Virginian and Mandan women married young, around 15 to 17 years of age. Their husbands were often older; the 22-year difference between William and Julia was not unusual in either culture, and made for a relationship more like one of father and daughter than one of husband and wife. If they belonged to prominent families, girls could not decide on their marriage partners; the decision was a matter of negotiation between parents.

The similarities ended there. In Mandan society, a suitor offered rich gifts of horses and goods, and girls boasted about how much had been given for them, because the material gifts were public affirmation of their value to the family. In Virginia, the girl’s family paid to get daughters off their hands; Julia brought a groaning boatload of slaves and furnishings to set up house with her new husband. A Mandan girl stayed in her parents’ home, surrounded by a supportive family; a Virginian girl had to move to
her husband’s home. In Julia’s case, that meant an eight-hundred-mile trek westward to St. Louis, where she was isolated from family and friends and was utterly dependent on her husband’s kindness.

As far as we know, Julia was never discontented with her marriage. As the wife of a prominent man, she managed two large houses, entertained official visitors, and set the social and material standards of St. Louis society—she had the most stylish and expensive possessions, the best house, and set the best table. It was essential work, but it did not meet Lewis’s criterion of adding to the family’s subsistence, so it gave her little economic power. Family letters recorded little of her life other than pregnancy and ill health. In ten years, she had five children. She died at 28 years of age. Clark then married her cousin.

**YELLOW CORN: MANDAN EXPLORER**

*All those near relatives of mine …are bound to me like the threads of the spider-web.*

—Bear’s Arm, Hidatsa, quoting Charred Body

One woman who got a chance to observe the differences between Euro-American and Native American cultures was Yellow Corn. She was the wife of Shehek-Shote, the chief of the Mandan village closest to the spot where the expedition wintered at Fort Mandan from 1804 to 1805, and Lewis and Clark often crossed the Missouri River to speak to Shehek-Shote in his earth lodge.

What the captains did not know was that the earthen house Shehek-Shote lived in and the food he ate belonged to Yellow Corn and her family. The chief’s children belonged to her clan and traced their descent through their mother’s line. With others of her age group, Yellow Corn was a member of women’s societies that exercised sacred power over growing things. She had the right to purchase knowledge of female mysteries, such as pottery and house building. Officially, she had no say in public policy, but she influenced men through persuasion and criticism. When Lewis and Clark invited Shehek-Shote to go with them to meet the president, Yellow Corn insisted on going. The captains were not pleased, but she got her way. Along with her young child, she toured the east coast and met Jefferson. But for Lewis and Clark, she remained a cipher: they never even recorded her name.

A Mandan household often consisted of a group of sisters married to the same man. Women never had to leave their homes: when a couple married, the man came to live in his wife’s earth lodge, moving in with her parents and sisters. Children brought up in such a lodge called all their mother’s sisters “mother” as well, and if their mother died, the sisters became responsible for the children. As a result, it was inconceivable for a woman to lose custody of her children.

Even among the patrilineal Sioux, where women’s status was lower, their rights over their children up to the age of puberty were uncontested. If a couple separated or the husband sold his wife, gave her away, or abandoned her, she kept the children. It did not stop a Lakota man from asserting: “His woman (tawicu) was his property…. He might dispose of her at his will.” But if he acted on that belief, he might pay the price of losing his children.

The tenderness of Indian women’s relationship to their children and grandchildren was embodied in the things they made, from toys to clothes to cradles. Unlike men, women could also call on special powers to protect their children, for their songs and dreams reached beings with an interest in their welfare. On children’s clothes, symbols of those powers warned away less friendly forces.

**WORK AND ECONOMIC POWER: MANDAN AND HIDATSA WOMEN**

The women’s work Clark condemned as “drudgery” was the source of Native American women’s power. They did
work hard, but it gave them economic control. Unlike Euro-Americans, Plains Indians believed that the products of a woman’s labor belonged to her, not to her husband. Even though a man might shoot a buffalo, the hide belonged to the woman who tanned it. All the things she made from the hide—clothes, bags, even the tipi—belonged to her as well, unless she gave them away.19

Mandan and Hidatsa women guarded the secrets of skilled craftwork as jealously as medieval guilds in Europe. Secrecy kept prices high and reinforced women’s control over the commodities they produced, but that was not why they guarded the knowledge; they did so out of respect. “Basket makers would not let others see how they worked,” said Buffalo Bird Woman of the Hidatsa Tribe “because if another wanted to learn how to make baskets she should pay a good price for being taught.” A mother trained her daughter to value knowledge by encouraging her to give a present for each skill. The price for learning sacred skills like pottery was especially high, because that included songs and rituals given to humans by supernatural beings. “If one did it [a craft] who had no right he or some of his friends would get hurt,” said Buffalo Bird Woman.20

The basis of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes’ great wealth was the surplus of corn they sold to traders and other tribes. The scale of their agriculture was captured by the fur trader Alexander Henry, who rode between the villages in 1806: “Upon each side were pleasant cultivated spots, some of which stretched up the rising ground on our left, whilst on our right they ran nearly to the Missouri. In those fields were many women and children at work, who all appeared industrious. … The whole view … had … the appearance of a country inhabited by a civilized nation.”21 It was women who owned and worked the fields, with their sisters and daughters, and who guarded the ripening corn from birds and boys. Women kept the seed and danced to lure the corn spirits back each spring. Women processed and preserved the food so that it would last through the winter, and they prepared it into meals. Yet, no aspect of women’s work caused more confusion for visitors from the East.

Euro-Americans divided labor by gender, but differently: to them, farming was the work of men and slaves. Seeing women in the fields, white men often concluded that they were slaves as well. Their preconceptions about gender roles made it difficult for them even to perceive what the Indians were doing as agriculture. Their disapproval and misunderstanding of Indian work roles did not stop the Corps of Discovery from relying on women’s labor. Over the winter of 1804 to 1805, they bought countless bushels of corn to eat and to take upriver. Their gender-role blindness led to a comic blunder on the part of Lewis and Clark. Hoping to introduce the Indians to mechanized agriculture, they presented a corn mill to the Mandan men, failing to take into account that grinding corn was a woman’s job. The Mandan men later reduced the corn mill to arrow barbs, weapons that were more appropriate gifts for men than food processors; had the mill been given to women, the result might have been different.22

Sisterhood as a Source of Power

Sisterhood was another source of power for Indian women unnoticed by Lewis and Clark. On the Plains, men and women had separate social and religious organizations. Among the Lakota Indians, membership in societies was often limited to those who had dreamed or received visions from a particular source. In the Mandan and Hidatsa villages, however, membership was more general. People did not join as individuals; societies were organized by age. All girls of a similar age gathered together to purchase songs, regalia, and ceremonials of the society from the
generation above them. With their age-mates, women moved up the scale from the little girls’ Skunk Society to the River Society or Enemy Society to the prestigious Goose and White Buffalo Cow societies. Members of a women’s society called each other “sister” and called the women of the next-older society “mother.” Members provided mutual support throughout their lives.23

Each society had powers and obligations related to different aspects of life. Younger women’s societies encouraged their village’s war efforts by performing celebrations for the returning war parties. The Goose Society looked over the crops by holding springtime rites for good harvests and summertime dances to ward off drought and grasshoppers. The White Buffalo Cow Society danced in winter to draw close the buffalo that would sustain the tribe. Although the societies were not sacred, they had great powers, and women derived prestige and social standing from them.24 A Hidatsa elder explained the reverence in which they were held: “This society of old women was…inspired by the spirits of the mysterious women who live everywhere on the earth. …They appear in many forms, sometimes as animals, sometimes even as little children. Wherever they wish to go they can travel to in no time, just like thought. Wa-hu-pa Wi-a, Mysterious woman, they are called.”25

Another potent source of female power lay in sexual attraction. For Plains Indian women, love was ruled by tradition and mystery. The Lakota believed that when a girl reached sexual maturity, changes occurred: “A tonwan [spiritual essence] possesses her which gives her the possibility of motherhood and makes her wakan [holy] and this tonwan….[is] very powerful for either good or evil as it may be used.” Forces of disorder and irrationality lurked near women between puberty and marriage and could make approaching them dangerous.26

Men were not without powers of their own. A young man who distinguished himself in war or hunting was eligible to look for a marriage partner, and he often called on the supernatural for help. Because the bull elk was considered the master of power over females, a man who dreamed of the elk received its mystical ability to attract women. He might exercise that power through music, dancing, love potions or charms, and he had the right to wear elk-horn symbols on his possessions.27

But men were not the only aggressors in love. The Lakota supernatural being Double Woman, or Anog Ite, could give women the power of seduction over men. According to Lakota elders, she “was like a woman with two faces. One face was very beautiful, and the other very ugly. …She would lure hunters away with her beautiful face, and when she had them in her embrace she would turn her horrid face to them and frighten them out of their senses.” The woman who dreamed of Double Woman could cause all men near her “to become possessed. …So the people are very afraid of her. …Whoever dreams in this way seems to be crazy. …but then everything she makes is very beautiful.” According to a modern Lakota scholar, Double Woman “represents a dualism in which a moral choice must be made. …the dreamer must choose between the life of reckless fun and sexuality or the life of modesty.”28

According to Clark, the men of the corps needed no aid from dreams about bull elk, since they “found no difficulty in getting women.” 29 The journal-keeping men knew that their readers would miss the tales of Native licentiousness if they omitted them—the stories were a staple of nineteenth-century travel narratives—so hints of sexual escapades abounded. Mercury was the only love medicine employed by the Corps of Discovery. Lewis used it to dose the men who contracted venereal disease.

Every exchange between the expedition and the Native American tribes required translation, and sex was no exception. Sexual mores were a perpetual source of misunderstanding. The men of the Corps were constantly looking for sexual partners, but they were judgmental about the women who were willing. To Missouri Valley tribes, sex could be a way of fulfilling sacred obligations of hospitality, a way of transferring supernatural power, and a way of incorporating strangers into kinship and trade networks. Men who offered their wives to the visitors for one of those reasons were scrupulously rejected by the captains, despite the ill will it caused. When the women themselves made overtures, the journals called them “lechous” and “lude.” But the captains did not demand from their men the chastity that they criticized Indian women for lacking. Lewis wrote: “To prevent this mutual exchange of good offices altogether I know it impossible to effect, particularly on the part of our young men whom some months abstinence have made very polite to those tawney damsels.”30

In the world of women that Lewis and Clark traveled from and into—Euro-American as well as Native American—children, work, sisterhood, love, and sexuality were powerful forces. They worked as well for Julia and Lucy as for Sacagawea and Yellow Corn. They were indirect
powers, succeeding only through their influence on men. But in different cultures, those powers had very different meanings. If Lewis and Clark thought Indian women would gladly assume the rights and roles of Virginian women, they might have been surprised.

In the long run, Lewis and Clark were prophetic in linking women’s status to their economic role. As the American market economy reached west, Native American women’s control over their own labor was eroded. Traders dealt directly with men for commodities that were, in fact, produced by women. First, Indian men “took charge” of the small furs prized by traders and of the proceeds from their sale. Later, other aspects of women’s work came under new rules. When Lewis and Clark compensated Sacagawea for her services, they did not pay her: they paid her husband. It was a harbinger of things to come.

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NOTES
6 Ibid.
8 Moulton, Vol. 4, p. 266.
12 Lucy Marks, Power of Attorney to Meriwether Lewis, July 4, 1797, Lewis-Marks Collection, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.
17 Here and below, see Gilman and Schneider, The Way to Independence, p. 20.
19 Walker, Lakota Society, pp. 40, 43.
29 Jackson, Letters, pp. 537–38.
31 Walker, Lakota Society, p. 43.
When I was a child, I knew exactly what Sacagawea looked like. My naïve certainty arose from summer treks, along with my brother and our buddies, to the North Dakota State Capitol grounds in Bismarck, less than two miles from our neighborhood. In the mornings, we lingered in the museum. Then we ate our sack lunches outside, beneath Leonard Crunelle’s statue *Bird Woman*. We grew up hearing stories about Sacagawea’s contributions to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and seeing *Bird Woman*, the perfect image of the strong, patient, and persevering Sacagawea we so admired, brought those tales to life.

But what other meanings and messages do Crunelle’s statue, as well as other visual images of Sacagawea, actually relay? Although Captains Lewis and Clark and other members of the Corps of Discovery included mentions about Sacagawea in their logs, no one offered even a scrap of physical description of the woman who would eventually be thrust into legend. Like the expedition itself, the Sacagawea legend has reinforced some of America’s most sacred beliefs about itself. According to these accounts, America dawned when European settlers secured areas of the continent with the help of a beneficent God, and successive generations of pioneers rightfully extended the area of freedom to its “natural” borders. Often featured as the lone Native American joining the Corps of Discovery, Sacagawea signified native compliance in that mission. Depicted in numerous portraits,
sculptures, and films, she was quite literally “shaped” into an American cultural heroine.

The presentation of Sacagawea as an Indian princess in many of these narrative and visual texts helped spawn this legend. The ubiquitous Indian princess, claims Native American scholar Rayna Green, has occupied an ambiguous position between savagery and civilization. Her skin, for example, was typically whiter than most natives, but she was always darker than whites. More importantly, when the legendary princess acted, she inevitably helped a white man or men carve out a consecrated space from the American wilderness.2 Appearing as the guide and sometime savior of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Sacagawea was depicted as that most astute native who, like Pocahontas, realized that white settlement offered blessings of an advanced civilization. For more than a century, visual representations of Sacagawea have delivered to the American people the image of a heroic woman who advanced the national cause. These include Crunelle’s 1910 Bird Woman; the 1955 Hollywood film The Far Horizons; Harry Jackson’s 1980 monument Sacajawea; a 1989 decorative plate from The Hamilton Collection; and the golden dollar coin, first struck in 1999.

According to the Corps of Discovery journals, Sacagawea was useful in large ways and small, but the journal-keepers did not define her as an Indian Princess and certainly not as an American heroine.3 The absence of descriptions in those primary texts allowed subsequent writers and visual artists to fill in the gaps with their own perceptions of Sacagawea. Novelist Eva Emery Dye in her 1902 book, The Conquest: The True Story of Lewis and Clark, did exactly that.4 As the nation prepared to celebrate the Lewis and Clark Expedition centennial at the turn of the twentieth century, Dye transformed Sacagawea into an Indian Princess who helped the Captains in the wilderness. Inspired by Dye, the Women’s Club of Portland raised funds to erect a statue in Washington Park honoring Sacagawea in 1905.5 Designed and crafted by Alice Cooper, this bronze work depicts a guide who assertively thrusts her right arm forward to show Lewis and Clark the way to the Pacific. Other Progressive-era writers, painters, and sculptors soon followed suit, marking Sacagawea as essential to the mission’s success. Wholeheartedly embraced as a heroine, Sacagawea was thus ushered into legend.

The Sacagawea legend did not fade once pioneers had secured the continent. On the contrary, it has thrived in the American consciousness, with artists and writers offering seemingly limitless variations.

Donna Reed as Sacagawea in Paramount Picture’s 1955 movie, The Far Horizons. The movie is still available on DVD from Paramount Home Media Distribution.

Literally wrapped in the flag in this case and figuratively wrapped in the flag in other works, Sacagawea became one of the most recognizable emblems of American heroism.

Although written materials to raise funds and the dedication ceremony were transitory, Crunelle’s statue continues to reinforce Sacagawea’s eminent place in American culture. The 12-foot bronze seems to emerge from the block of rough granite upon which it stands. Crunelle’s Sacagawea appears to be an imposing woman, who stands erect, her head and chin tilted slightly...
Her strong, bronze features reveal neither sorrow nor pleasure, but a sense of calm concentration or determination. Dressed in fringed buckskin and blankets, this attentive Native American mother raises her right hand to her shoulder, assuring the security of the sleeping baby. Her right foot is placed slightly in front of the left, as if to indicate that she is walking at an unhurried pace.

Although the statue might appear, at first glance, to be a representative indigenous woman, the inscription on the base of the statue corrects that impression: “Sakakawea—the Shoshone Indian ‘Bird Woman,’ who in 1805, guided the Lewis and Clark Expedition from the Missouri River to the Yellowstone.” This monument honors a specific historical woman for a time in her life when she “guided” white men in the wilderness. To reinforce that message, the statue faces directly west, highlighting Sacagawea’s unique heroism. Sacagawea scans the western horizon to see America’s future. Her slow, but inexorable, stride represents the long journey she has endured on foot, an accomplishment that is more impressive because she bore her baby on her back. In these ways, Sacagawea and her child signify the perseverance of American settlers who courageously moved westward across the frontier.

**FROM SILVER SCREEN TO POLYCHROMED BRONZE**

The Sacagawea legend did not fade once pioneers had secured the continent. On the contrary, it thrived in the American consciousness, with artists and writers offering seemingly limitless variations. During the 1940s and ’50s, for example, novelists often concocted a romantic attachment between Sacagawea and one of the men of the expedition. Although previous scripts scrupulously avoided references to Sacagawea’s sexuality, writers in this period typically framed the story around the potential for interracial romance. The Indian princess of the trans-Mississippi West, as a result, became a nearly perfect duplicate of her “sister,” Pocahontas, as she bore a hopeless love for a gallant captain.

The Hollywood production, *The Far Horizons* supplied the most famous, or more accurately infamous, imagery of Sacagawea during this era. Arising from a romantic novel by Della Gould Emmons’ *Sacajawea of the Shoshones* published in 1943, the film starred Charlton Heston as Lewis and Fred MacMurray as Clark and featured an embarrassingly miscast Donna Reed as Sacagawea.

As the publicity photos reveal, Reed wore typical fringed buckskin, but this get-up was form-fitted with the hem raised remarkably high—so much the better to attract Captain Clark. Very obviously Caucasian, Reed sported an oily mess of brown makeup to emphasize Sacagawea’s ethnicity. As movie critic Frances Romero recently argued, *The Far Horizons* was one of the top ten misleading Hollywood productions because no historical sources hinted at the titillating and “implausible” romance.

Even by the 1980s, when issues about diversity and ethnicity became central to American cultural discussion, artists continued to create images of Sacagawea that featured her connection to the frontier narrative. Harry Jackson, a celebrated artist who specialized in sculptures about the American West, produced and successfully marketed works featuring Sacagawea. Commissioned by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center of Cody, Wyoming, Jackson completed *Sacajawea* in 1980.

This 10-foot, polychromed bronze monument, which bears no inscription, stands in the center’s courtyard. The monument reinforced common understandings of the Native American woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark into unknown wildernesses. As Donald Goddard asserted, “the monument places Sacagawea firmly at the “crossroads of the American frontier.” He added that “Sacajawea was created by the wind, which sweeps her hair and the enshrouding blanket into diagonal ridges and contours that suggest geological formation… [she is] herself a landscape, a promontory of primordial
human consciousness shaped by the elements. Not simply identified with the frontier period, Jackson’s sculpture depicted a Native American woman who is essentially the frontier itself, subject to exploration and settlement. The monument was unveiled July 4, 1980.

Journalist Carl Bechtold suggested a particular motivation for Jackson’s efforts to embody Sacagawea: the Sacagawea industry could be profitable. As Bechtold reported, Jackson sold 12 bronze castings of the two-foot studio model in less than 30 minutes after the unveiling. Within 24 hours, Jackson had taken orders for more than double that number. At $15,000 a piece, this limited-edition work recorded sales of just under $500,000 in less than a day. Twenty other small versions of the monument, painted like the larger work, also sold out rapidly. For more than two decades, Jackson produced a great many limited-edition sculptures depicting Sacagawea, including Sacajawea II (1980), Sacajawea with Packhorse (1992), In the Wind II (1993), and Sacajawea Modified II (2004). Sacagawea, in fact, became one of the mainstays of Jackson’s gallery. After Jackson died at 87 in 2011, the price of his work soared, and his estate put 13 sculptures up for auction at the Coeur d’Alene Art Auction. Two of those “rare” pieces featured Sacagawea. A three-foot study for the original monument fetched nearly $43,000, and In the Wind, a Sacagawea bust auctioned for the first time, brought in $17,550.

Princess on a Plate

Because Jackson’s limited edition sculptures were costly, his pieces were unquestionably outside the reach of most Sacagawea enthusiasts. A commemorative porcelain plate sold by The Hamilton Collection offered a less expensive option, and its 1989 advertisement testified to the force and attraction of traditional representations of Indian princesses. Anyone who peruses Sunday’s Parade Magazine knows that The Hamilton Collection has marketed innumerable images of Native American people. Among those offerings, the “Sacajawea” plate was a commodity that combined nostalgia for “Indian” objects with positive messages about America’s past. Attempting to appeal to broad audiences, the advertisement for the “Sacajawea” plate connected the Native American woman and her “American” heroism. “Gentle, serene and knowledgeable,” the script read, “Sacajawea helped lead her party over plains and rivers and through Montana mountain passes.” Although none of the western states existed at that time, copy writers recorded no apparent dissonance in naming the territory “Montana.” Additionally, the text explained that the plate is a “tribute to this American heroine” of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Familiar with America’s uncharted wilderness, she guided civilized men through the perils of the frontier. Reinforcing that message, the advertising banner read, “Sacajawea: A Brave and Noble American Heroine.” Just as other works have done, this advertisement declared Sacagawea an American heroine because of services she performed during the expedition.

The advertisement also provided a color photograph of the collector plate. The plate, which was taken from a graphic print designed and executed by David Wright, displayed a woman possessing all the physical attributes of the Indian princess. She is young and beautiful, and her skin is light brown. Her clothing of fringed buckskin may not indicate that she is “royalty,” but the fur trim, extensive beading and quill work, jewelry, and other ornaments point to Sacagawea’s extraordinary station. The plate also illustrated the context of Sacagawea’s “American” heroism by directly associating this Indian princess with the frontier West. Wright placed her in the wilderness, with snow-peaked mountains in the distance, a river in the mid-ground and a primitive campsite in the foreground. This portrait also denotes Sacagawea’s connection to the men of the corps. Two frontiersmen, no doubt Lewis and Clark, look at a map or chart in the background, and a few other men talk by the boat. There is no doubt, however, that Sacagawea is the subject of this
vignette. Sitting gracefully and serenely in the foreground, the beautiful Indian princess dominates the print.

No dissonance interrupted the visual harmony of the scene or Sacagawea’s association with the American mission on the continent. Nowhere does the plate register conflict between Sacagawea’s nobility as an “American Indian woman” and her role as an “American heroine.” Colors of red, white, and blue are prevalent. The baby’s cradleboard is decorated with red beads or quills in a design remarkably similar to the stripes of an American flag. A picturesque heroine, Sacagawea holds her baby’s cradleboard in her lap, her arms surrounding him protectively. As the portrait confirms and the advertising copy echoes, she simultaneously fulfills her obligations as a protective mother and as an American heroine of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

**Lady Liberty**

The most pervasive contemporary representation of Sacagawea appears on the golden dollar coin. According to CoinFacts.com, the internet encyclopedia of U.S. coins, the impetus for the Sacagawea dollar arose from the United States Dollar Coin Act of 1997, requiring U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin to replace the unsatisfactory Susan B. Anthony dollar coin. 19 That previous dollar was unsatisfactory because it was easily mistaken for a quarter due to its similar size and reeded or textured edge. 20 Although the statute mandated that the reverse of the coin display an eagle, the Secretary was allowed to select the subject for the obverse. Rubin stipulated that the design must “maintain a dignity befitting the Nation’s coinage” and that it must depict one or more women. By June 1998, the Dollar Coin Design Advisory Committee, appointed by the secretary, recommended Sacagawea as the subject and began reviewing designs. According to the U.S. Mint, the public played a significant role in picking the winner as they offered comments via letters and the official website. 21 By December, designs for both obverse and reverse had been selected, and they were unveiled in May 1999. 22

**The Sacagawea Dollar Coin**

This rendering of Sacagawea with her baby, Jean Baptiste, is reminiscent of Crunelle’s *Bird Woman*. Both Crunelle and Glenna Goodacre, the artist who designed the Sacagawea side of the coin, used Native American models to provide authentic physiognomies. 23 Goodacre’s Sacagawea looks more youthful, an apt change since Sacagawea was only in her teens during the Corps of Discovery journey. Both depictions feature Native American women and attentive and caring mothers.

What does raise significant questions is this: why is Sacagawea the sole Native American woman who is constantly and consistently celebrated in America? As Coin Facts notes, “The decision to create a design inspired by Sacagawea reflects a long numismatic tradition of placing symbolic and allegorical images of women and Native Americans on U.S. coinage as a means of communicating our nation’s history and values.” 24 Of course, those “symbolic and allegorical” images of Native Americans have long reflected sacred frontier narratives, and the Sacagawea dollar coin has continued that tradition. Coupled with the reverse side of the coin, Sacagawea becomes virtually inseparable from the eagle, one of the most important national symbols. To erase any doubt about the origins of the coin, “The United States of America” is emblazoned above the eagle’s wings. As is required of all U.S. coinage, the motto “E Pluribus Unum” signifies strength that results from uniting diverse peoples into a singular nation. On the surface, all of these images might be interpreted as declarations of Sacagawea’s importance as a Native American within the multi-cultural nation. But her image was clearly not chosen for that reason. Instead, as the U.S. Mint declares, Sacagawea was selected because she was part of the “journey of discovery.” 25 The Golden Eagle Coins Company additionally notes that the committee announced that it chose a figure of “Liberty depicted as a Native American woman inspired by Sacagawea.” 26 Perhaps it is not a surprise to see the word “Liberty” above Sacagawea’s head since the word always appears on American coins, but this declaration signifies that Sacagawea is three-fold removed from selfhood. She becomes a representation of an American symbol. Not an individual, not even a generic Native American, she becomes the iconic Lady Liberty.
As journalist Katie Mueting writes in the Daily Nebraskan, faculty and students at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, had various responses to the Sacagawea dollar. History professor Gary Moulton was part of the image selection process and was pleased with the warmth emanating from the design.27 English professor Frances Kaye and Lakota education specialist Helen Long Soldier saw the coin in a different light, however. Kaye noted that the coin was “kind of a backhanded compliment” since the expedition was not pursued for Native American peoples, and Long Soldier remarked that people needed to consider the consequences of Sacagawea’s assistance to the Corps of Discovery. 28

Although Disney has not offered a full-length production of the Sacagawea story, at least not yet, it is highly unlikely that she will fade from American consciousness. As University of Victoria historian Brian Dippie argues, Sacagawea is the most honored woman in American history because her legend “has an emotional appeal mere fact can never equal.”29 Novels sweep through the country, but most lose their audiences fairly quickly. That is not true of visual artifacts, however, particularly monuments and coins. They imply permanence and offer implicit and explicit meanings that are handed down to generations of Americans. For more than a hundred years, Sacagawea has not represented a unique person in her own right, nor has she embodied the history and stamina of Native American women in general. Instead, she has been emblematic of the very frontier narratives that ushered her into legend in the first place. 29

A native North Dakotan, Donna Barbie earned a doctorate in American Studies from Emory University and currently chairs the Humanities and Social Sciences Department at Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida.

NOTES

1Leonard Crunelle, Bird Woman, sculpture in bronze, 1910, Bismarck State Capitol Grounds, Bismarck, N. Dak.
5Alice Cooper, Unnamed Statue of Sacagawea, sculpture in bronze, 1905, Washington Park, Portland, Ore.

12Harry Jackson, Sacajawea, sculpture in bronze, polychrome, 1980, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyo.
14Goddard, p. 15.
22Coin Facts, Ibid.
23U.S. Mint, Golden Dollar Coin.
24Coin Facts, Ibid.
25U.S. Mint, Golden Dollar Coin.
28Ibid.
There is no single definitive biography of this popular member of the Corps of Discovery. There are, however, a number of books and biographies that offer solid biographical information. This bibliography is not an endorsement of any one particular work or philosophy, nor is it all-inclusive. Instead, this is offered as a helpful guide to readers who want to read about this Shoshone woman. They may want to start first to examine the bibliographies in these particular books and journal articles.

In addition to those listed here, biographical information can be found in the original journals and letters of the Corps of Discovery, in Charbonneau family histories and in essays. Blanche Schroer’s article, “The Legend and the Truth” and Dr. E. G. Chuinard’s article, “The Actual Role of the Bird Woman” are both good examples of well-developed essays with biographical material.

The best biographical works about Sacagawea should meet the following criteria.
• They should have primary source documentation, such as letters, journals and maps.
• Solid biographies should reflect an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of young Agaidika Shoshone, and Hidatsa women in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
• Without an understanding of marriage between fur traders and fur trappers and Native American women, many biographies misconstrue the relationship between Sacagawea and her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau.

### Primary Sources


This volume, which features letters, includes Captain William Clark’s letter of August 20, 1806, to Toussaint Charbonneau, with his offers of employment for Charbonneau and an education for Sacagawea’s son, young Jean Baptiste Charbonneau.


Luttig served as the Missouri Fur Company’s clerk at Fort Manuel, in what is now South Dakota. His diary, in which he recorded the death of “the Wife of Charbonneau” at the fort on December 20, 1812, includes a copy of the court-ordered guardianship of Charbonneau’s children, maps, bibliography, biographical sketches of Sacagawea, Charbonneau, and children.


The strengths of Moulton’s work lie in his annotated endnotes and depth of his resource materials. Each volume includes an introduction, bibliography and index. Volume 1, *Atlas of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* includes Clark’s map of May 19-24, 1805, showing “Sar-kah-gah-we-a or Bird Woman’s Fork or R” [Map #39].

### Biographies in Books & Journals


Although this is the single most accurate biography of the Charbonneau family, it lacks annotations and footnotes, as well as endnotes. There is, however, a good bibliography.


**Crawford, Helen. “Sakakawea.” North Dakota Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. 1, no. 3 [April 1927], p. 4-15.**

This biography, produced in the 1930s, is very dated, but accurate.
We Proceeded On August 2012


A must-read to understand 1930s biographies, essays and discussions about Sacagawea’s post-expeditionary life and death, and that of her son, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau.


A sound, two-part biography that analyzes Sacagawea’s life and death at Fort Manuel in 1812. The book also offers brief biographies of husband and son.


Told as a first-person “account” of Sacagawea, this author offers an interpretation of the role of Sacagawea as a Native American woman, wife, mother, and member of the Corps of Discovery.


Saindon’s article examines the route Sacagawea’s captors may have used from the Three Forks area to the Knife River.


Thomasma described the role of Sacagawea using heavily edited entries from Captain Meriwether Lewis’s and William Clark’s journals.

“SAH-KAH-GAR-WE A”: THE SPELLING AND THE MEANING OF HER NAME [MAYBE]

1This is the spelling as it first appears in the journal of Captain William Clark on April 7, 1805. Between the five journal keepers, there are at least 17 different spellings of her name.

There is much scholarly, regional, and popular debate about the spelling of her name, and its meaning. Some of the following essays offer information about her name, its spelling, origin, and its various meanings.


Thorough and scholarly, Saindon is as well-respected as Irving Anderson.


This piece was originally published in 1923.


ESSAYS

There is as much debate about Sacagawea’s role as a member of the corps as there is about her name. These thought-provoking essays contain detailed biographical materials, additional resource materials and copies of primary sources including letters, journals, and government documents.


Chuinard, Dr. E. G. “The Actual Role of the Bird Woman: Purposeful Member of the Corps or Casual ‘Tag Along’?” Montana: The Magazine of Western History, Vol. 26, no. 3 [Summer 1976], pp. 18-29.


Thoughtful view through eyes of Mandan-Hidatsa elders.


One of most interesting and well-written analyses of our fascination with the story of Sacagawea. Examines the various ways authors tell her story and explore her roles as a member of the Corps of Discovery, “interpreter,” wife, and a mother.


One of earliest comparisons of Sacagawea’s role as a “guide,” as described in the journals and in books such as Dye’s *The Conquest*.


A humorous look at the purported romance between Captain William Clark and Sacagawea, as it appears in fictional accounts.


Includes rarely-seen copy of Dr. Charles Eastman’s report [1925] about Sacagawea’s death.


Both are impeccable, well-researched, and thoughtful articles from a Sacagawea scholar who lived on the Wind River Reservation.


This article analyzes the relationship between two authors and suffragettes, Dye and Hebard, who believed the Shoshone Indian woman was the perfect role model for the suffrage movement.

**NATIVE AMERICAN RESOURCES**


There are very little well-written materials about the Agaidika [Lemhi] Shoshone. Madsen’s book tells their story in the years after the Corps of Discovery.


This includes a chapter about relationship between the Shoshone and the corps and the role of Sacagawea.


This is a first-hand account of traditional farming and preserving methods among Hidatsa women in nineteenth century. The Agaidika Shoshone were nomadic fishers, gatherers, and hunters; the Hidatsa were farmers and hunters. It is important to understand the two worlds Sacagawea grew up in.

**Other Materials**


Van Kirk explores the social, economic, diplomatic ties involved in marriage between Native American women in Canada and British, French and Métis traders and trappers. The marriage of Charbonneau and Sacagawea was similar to this—and this book the key to understanding their relationship.

Endnotes, bibliography, index, illustrations.

**Fiction**


This unique story uses Native American legends, journal entries, and first-person accounts to help Sacagawea and “Uncle” William Clark tell their stories to Jean Baptiste Charbonneau in 1811.


Romantic fiction at its best. Popular best seller for years.
Renowned Lewis and Clark scholar Clay Jenkinson expands upon his previous work, also titled *The Character of Meriwether Lewis*, but subtitled “Completely Metamorphosed in the American West.” While the subject and author remain the same, *Explorer in the Wilderness* is much more than a revised or expanded edition, it is—well—“completely metamorphosed.” Rather than scattered vignettes, Jenkinson’s latest work provides an in-depth psychological assessment of both Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the relationship between the two men. In this thoroughly engaging book, Lewis and Clark emerge as flesh and blood people—rather than mythological heroes—who annoy each other, suffer from mosquitoes and indigestion, and vacillate between petty selfishness and magnanimity. As such, *The Character of Meriwether Lewis* serves as an important antidote to the more celebratory version of their journey given us in Stephen Ambrose’s *Undaunted Courage*. Jenkinson makes a strong case that without Clark tending to the day-to-day affairs, while Lewis’s head was in the clouds, the expedition would have failed miserably. When Lewis did, indeed, suffer a meltdown in the aftermath of the expedition when he was separated from Clark, Jenkinson concludes, “Clark is Sancho Panza to Lewis’s Don Quixote.”

Clark was absent at three of the most fateful junctures of Lewis’s life, Jenkinson argues, and had he been present those events would have turned out differently. He devotes considerable time to describing the calamities and near-tragedies that befell Lewis on the 1806 return trip east, when the co-captains separated for five weeks during which Lewis traveled north to the Marias and Clark proceeded southeast along the Yellowstone. Unlike the outward journey when he and Clark travelled together, Lewis

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**The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer in the Wilderness**

By Clay S. Jenkinson

Foreword by David Nicandri

The Dakota Institute, 2011

$19.95

Clay Jenkinson’s provocative character study of Meriwether Lewis opens a new chapter in Lewis and Clark scholarship. Let the debates begin.”


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made a series of extremely poor decisions—particularly during his encounter with the Blackfeet when he left a peace medal on one of the dead warriors and his hunt with the near-sighted Pierre Cruzatte that nearly cost him his life. Jenkinson further argues that had Clark been with Lewis on his final journey from St. Louis to Washington D.C. in 1809, the melancholy Lewis would never have committed suicide.

On the other hand, when the two captains were in too close a proximity, such as during the winter camps at Fort Mandan and Fort Clatsop, Lewis, the fuel rod, shut down. Jenkinson maintains that this accounts for the perplexing mystery of Lewis's lengthy absences from journal-keeping. With Clark faithfully maintaining the daily journal, Lewis might have felt his contributions were redundant, or perhaps he felt freed from the drudgery. In contrast, Lewis was at his lyrical best when separated from his co-captain.

Clark also comes under scrutiny in this work. One of the most perplexing decisions Clark made was to forgo waiting for Lewis at their predetermined meeting spot at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri. Here, as in many other “mysteries,” Jenkinson's humanistic approach of seeking psychological explanations sheds light on what appears irrational behavior. Beset by mosquitoes at the rendezvous site, Clark left a note for Lewis and pushed on seeking a better waiting area. Jenkinson writes, “In the face of this rendezvous crisis, Lewis lost his capacity to think rationally” resulting in a sort of “betrayal fantasy.”

Jenkinson wraps up his profile by examining the ongoing debate about whether Meriwether Lewis committed suicide or was murdered. Based on the preponderance of evidence, he concludes that Lewis took his own life. By the time the reader reaches this point in the book, this seems a foregone conclusion. For the general reader, this debate (and several others) seems largely academic and esoteric. Indeed, if the book has a fault, it lies in the almost overwhelming detail that Jenkinson provides in fully illustrating each point.

Overall, however, The Character of Meriwether Lewis strikes a balance between delivering sufficient detail and insight for historians and Lewis and Clark enthusiasts while providing engaging prose for general readers. Jenkinson has made a significant scholarly contribution with this work. He demonstrates that historical documents such as the Lewis and Clark Journals need to be examined, not only literally, but also interpreted in a way that helps us understand the character of the authors and the meaning behind those words—a tricky proposition, but one in which Jenkinson is successful. This work will no doubt find its place alongside Stephen Ambrose's Undaunted Courage, David Nicandri's River of Promise, Thomas Slaughters' Exploring Lewis and Clark, and James Ronda's Among the Indians.

Greg Gordon, who received his doctorate in history from the University of Montana, teaches in the Environmental Studies program at Gonzaga University. His latest book, Money Does Grow on Trees: A. B. Hammond and the Age of the Lumber Baron, is forthcoming from University of Oklahoma Press.

The Lost Journals of Sacajewea

By Debra Magpie Earling

Photo-interventions by

Peter Rutledge

Koch Editions

65 numbered and 5 h hors commerce copies

A suite of exhibition prints is available

82 pp., $3,500. 2011.

In spring 2005, during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the Missoula (Montana) Art Museum launched an exhibition, Native Perspectives on the Trail: A Contemporary American Indian Portfolio. Alongside the prints by leading Native American visual artists such as Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Neil Parsons, Dwight Billedeaux, Molly Murphy, and Corwin “Corky” Clairmont, there appeared the text of a powerfully haunting poem entitled “The Lost Journals of Sacajewea” by Bitterroot Salish novelist Debra Magpie Earling.

Master letterpress printer and book artist Peter Koch, a native Montanan who makes his home in Northern California, was also exhibiting a Lewis and Clark–themed body of work at MAM. Koch’s suite of Iris prints, entitled Nature Morte, offered—like Earling’s poem and most of the work in Native Perspectives on the Trail—a highly critical interpretation of the impact of the Corps of Discovery on the landscapes and cultures of the American West.

Earling and Koch recognized each other as kindred spirits, and began immediately to plan the project that has become this extraordinary book. Earling extended her original text into a full-throated voicing of sorrow and rage over the legacy of abuse of Native American women and of destruction of the Native American world that revolved around
We Proceeded On August 2012

the vast herds of bison, a place and time when even “the bones of the earth [could not] stand the weight of buffalo running.”

In Earling’s telling, Sacagawea’s “is the story Lewis and Clark won’t be writing down.” It is a harrowing story; as Earling has noted elsewhere, “The stories I feel called to write often reveal the darkest side of the human heart.” Her novel, the award-winning Perma Red, unflinchingly depicts beauties and often brutal realities of life on Montana’s Salish-Kootenai Reservation in the 1940s. Here, again, she is unflinching:

The white men
don’t see the
wives who are
hidden
in the lodges at
the edges of lost
the women who
carried the
small-pox dead
to scaffolds
losing their fingers
in purging fires
of children
or women who
gather bundles of
sticks
in the frost-bitten
winters of fever.
They are witches
who crawl
hump-backed
their hands
only palms/the
webbed feet of
ducks/work dogs
to carry meat.
This is the life left to
unfortunate women.

Earling’s work, as novelist James Welch (author of Winter in the Blood and Fools Crow) has written, can be “startlingly spiritual,” and within the voice of her imagined Sacagawea, we sense a spiritual strength in the face of extremity that, quite simply, moves beyond rage or bitterness to a quiet acknowledgment of the importance of telling our stories, but especially those that might otherwise be lost.

A page from the Lost Journals of Sacajewea, which combines poetry by Debra Earling with photo-interventions by Peter Koch.

With all these stories of loss
rivers as wide
as a smile remembered
when rain changes
the brief night
with your face.

When rain
the pattern of a hundred faces, a thousand faces,
all the lost, all the
dead keep
showing up
on the highway
beneath the lip of
shivering leaves
in the wind tossed
rivers
In the flooding
waters
In the myriad
tales of rain
no one is lost from us.

To surround and embrace this astonishing text, Koch has constructed an equally extraordinary container. His self-styled “photo-interventions” make great use of the early photographic record of Euro-American incursion into the Northern Plains/Rockies and of the Native peoples and great bison herds that those Euro-Americans encountered. Images by L. A. Huffman, F. Jay Haynes, S. J. Morrow, and anonymous photographers, printed on Twinrocker Da Vinci hand-made paper, perfectly attend Earling’s text, forging tensions, offering evidence, tendering us a glance at an austere, troubling, and gorgeous world. The cover is printed on a smoked buffalo rawhide cover paper designed and hand-made especially for this edition, and the spine of The Lost Journals of Sacajewea is beaded with trade beads and small caliber cartridge cases.

Peter Koch, founder of the Codex Foundation which every other
year sponsors the internationally renowned Codex Book Fair and Conference at the University of California Berkeley, has created a great many books as works of fine art in his 44-year career, but none of them match the alchemy of text and type, paper and binding. At $3,500, The Lost Journals of Sacajawea is not for everyone, but copies can be found in libraries and museums across the land, from the Montana Historical Society to the University of Chicago to Yale University. Perhaps one day soon, a publisher will bring out a trade edition.

Let Sacagawea have the last words:

They are stacking the bones of buffalo
Mountains of dead buffalo rotting
Bones, more bones ... a great white fire rising over the vast land they once roamed.

Cathedral of bones.
In the murky dust of buffalo the cities rise.

—Rick Newby

Poet, editor, and cultural journalist Rick Newby is a past member of the Montana Arts Council, and the boards of the Montana Center for the Book, and the Holter Museum of Art. In 2009, he received the Montana Governor’s Award for the Humanities.
The Sacagawea of Eva Emery Dye

BY RONALD LAYCOCK

Eva Emery Dye’s historical novel, The Conquest: The True Story of Lewis and Clark, is credited with creating a mythological version of Sacagawea far different from than the Shoshone woman of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Published in 1902, just as the American public about to celebrate the centennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the book was widely received because it presented the public with a dramatic version of the expedition. By the turn-of-the-twentieth century, not many books had been written about the expedition, and only condensed, edited versions of the original journals were available.

The book also gave American readers a heroine in Sacagawea. This larger-than-life Sacagawea was far different from the Shoshone woman in the Lewis and Clark journals. Although Dye’s reputation as a factual historical novelist lent credibility to The Conquest, most of her information was inaccurate. Dye’s heightened language describing Sacagawea reflects her larger-than-life stance toward the Shoshone woman.

Out of Ross’ Hole, Sacajawea pointed the way by Clark’s Pass, over the Continental Divide, to the Big Hole River, where the trail disappeared or scattered. But Sacajawea knew the spot…”Yonder, see a door in the mountains.”

Ever patient, Sacagawea serves as the guide, the “Indian princess” who, as Dye states later, leads the American explorers across the continent, urges them on when they are discouraged and weary, who can read the mysterious landscape and the others cannot.

Dye paints a highly romantic vision of Sacagawea, as a Native American woman who is strong, beautiful, motherly, heroic, and steadfast in her ability to point out landmark after landmark on their mysterious journey.

Before them arose, bewildering, peak on peak, but again the Bird Woman, Sacajawea, pointed out the Yellowstone Gap, the Bozeman Pass of today on the great Shoshone Highway.

Sacajawea, modest princess of the Shoshones, heroine of the great Expedition, stood with her babe in her arms and smiled upon them from shore. So had she stood in the Rocky Mountains, pointing out the gates. She had followed the great rivers, navigating the continent. Sacajawea’s hair was neatly braided, her nose was fine and straight, and her skin was pure copper like the statues in some old Florentine gallery. Madonna of her race, she had led the way to a new time. To the hands of this girl, not yet eighteen, had been entrusted the key that unlocked the road to Asia.

Some day upon the Bozeman Pass, Sacajawea’s statue will stand beside that of Clark. Someday, where the rivers part, her laurels will vie with those of Lewis. Across North America a Shoshone Indian Princess touched hands with Jefferson, opening a country.

DYE THE SUFFRAGE WORKER

In order to understand Dye’s Sacagawea, it is important to understand that Eva Emery Dye was the Clackamus County Chairman and a longtime member of the Oregon Equal Suffrage Association. After the Equal Rights Amendment was turned down by the 2nd Annual Convention in 1898, she searched for a heroine that exemplified the ideals of womanhood.

I struggled along as best I could with the information I could get, trying to find a heroine. ...Finally I came upon the name of Sacajawea and I screamed, “I have found my heroine.”

I then hunted up every fact I could find about Sacajawea. Out of a few dry bones, I found in the old tales of the trip, I created Sacajawea and made her a real living entity. For months I dug and scraped for accurate information about the Indian maid....

The world snatched at my heroine, Sacajawea ... The beauty of that faithful Indian woman stood with her baby on her back, leading those stalwart mountaineers and explorers through the strange land appealed to the world.

The Sacagawea in Bronze

Following the publication of The Conquest in 1902, the Woman’s Club of Portland formed a Sacagawea Statue Association with Dye as chair. Women from Oregon and across the country sold Sacajawea spoons, mugs, and other souvenirs to raise money for the statue. Sacagawea also became continued on page 31
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“Sacagawea Returned to Her People—August 24, 1805.” by Charles Fritz.
In this painting, Sacagawea is depicted during her departure from Camp Fortunate, going west up today’s Horse Prairie Creek in southwestern Montana. The next day, with help of the Shoshone women and their horses, the expedition crossed over Lemhi Pass and the Continental Divide.

Birdwoman, Wife, Mother, Interpreter:  WHO WAS SACAGAWEA?

Lewis and Clark Encounter a World of Women
From Sakakawea to Sacagawea: The Evolution of a Name