

We Proceeded On

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

February 2016 Volume 42, No. 1

“ONE OF THE GRATEFUL VEGETABLES” COLUMBIA PLATEAU BISCUITROOTS AND THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY



Plus THE RHYME OF THE GREAT NAVIGATOR, PART I

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FUR TRADE JOURNAL

VOLUME 9

2015



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN
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by Vic Nathan Barkin

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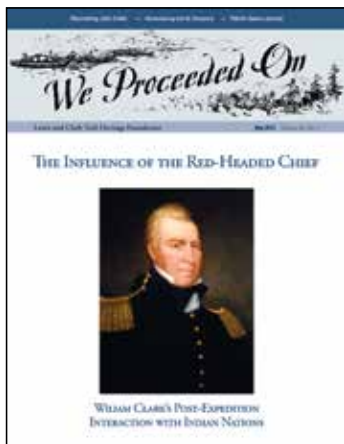
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A Message from the President

My working career has included interesting experiences that have given me some unique perspectives and insights that inform my work as president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Among them are my participation in a four-day cattle drive in southern Idaho, and my service as scheduler for a future governor's election campaign. Being a temporary cowboy reminded me it is never too late to experience the great out of doors as well as appreciate "the way it used to be." As Governor Cecil D. Andrus's scheduler, I learned the importance of paying attention to those little details that, in the end, make events go smoothly.

I recalled these experiences as I reviewed the plans for our foundation's 48th annual meeting in historic Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, this coming summer. The town of Harpers Ferry, like my cattle drive experience, offers an opportunity to experience life as it once was in a nineteenth century village. Attention to detail is much in evidence in the exciting schedule delivered by the volunteer group who have pulled together this year's meeting. A great time will begin on July 24 as we experience over two hundred years of history in Harpers Ferry. I urge all members to attend.

There are at least three great reasons to consider attending this year's event.

If you have not been to Harpers Ferry, it is a community at the confluence of Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers filled with history, including connections to Meriwether Lewis, in a wonderful outdoors setting. It is even bisected by the Appalachian Trail.

The annual meeting is an opportune time to meet new friends and



see old friends. As Bev Hinds likes to remind folks, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation annual meeting "is the family reunion you WANT to attend!"

Lastly, the organizers have created an outstanding schedule of events, like a keynote with Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis (evening program in the park), and speakers on topics ranging from the medicines purchased by Lewis to the C&O Canal. There will be a walking tour of the canal, Civil War features, and the Lewis and Clark walking trail (including a display of the iron-frame boat). Most events will be located in the national historic district next to the rivers.

I attended my first annual meeting in Bozeman, Montana, 1989, and have been to most of them since. They have allowed me to experience the Lewis and Clark trail from Charlottesville, Virginia, to Portland, Oregon. When I think back to all the fun times, the new sights, and the history I've experienced, I recall many favorite experiences that help explain why

attending our meetings is such a high priority for me.

Philadelphia featured a tour of the American Philosophical Society, founded in 1743 when Benjamin Franklin saw the need to "... improve the common stock of knowledge." A real thrill came when the attendees were able to view, and even hold, the original journals written by Captains Lewis and Clark.

At my first meeting in Bozeman a field trip took us to Lemhi Pass on the Continental Divide where we, like Hugh McNeal, straddled the spring and rivulet Lewis labeled the headwaters of the "mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri."

My favorite meeting experience was an event in Virginia. Attendees toured Thomas Jefferson's Monticello after public hours, where we were treated to a reception on the grounds. As the sun was setting we enjoyed a magical evening, sharing a glass of wine as the fireflies appeared. For a westerner, it was a rare experience and one I won't forget.

Another benefit of attending the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation annual meetings is visiting sites not directly related to Lewis and Clark, but still important.

In 1993 we visited Daniel Boone's last home in Defiance, Missouri. The floodwaters of the Missouri River played havoc with our schedule that year, leading to a surprise visit to his home. What kid growing up in the 1960s would not want to see Daniel Boone's home?

The 2014 meeting in Richland, Washington, offered a pre- or post-meeting boat trip on the Hanford Reach, one of the last free-flowing

stretches of the Columbia River that has only been open to the public since 2000. On the west side of the river we viewed the moth-balled reactors where plutonium for the first atomic bomb was produced, a secretive chapter in our nation's history. To the east were the spectacular towering "White Bluffs," reflected perfectly in the still waters of the Columbia.

This past year in Kansas City attendees visited the Steamboat *Arabia* Museum, where an incredible collection of outstanding recovered items showcased and helped explain the story of the steamboat's sinking, and its later reclamation from a Kansas cornfield.

The exhibits also illustrated the power of an untamed Missouri River.

These experiences have given me a chance to see people and places in this country I undoubtedly would have missed if not for our foundation's annual meetings.

Our summer meetings make memories. I hope each of us will make our own at the "Harpers Ferry trailhead" this year. New adventures and new friends await us as we create our own list of "favorites." I hope to see you there!

—Steve Lee
President, LCTHF

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Photograph of Lolo Trail landscape courtesy of Steve Lee

Awards

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation selected four individuals to be honored at its 2015 annual meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. Dan Sturdevant and Kris Townsend are Distinguished Service Award recipients and Maren Burgess and Gordon Wallace are Youth Achievement Award winners.

The Distinguished Service Award honors a foundation member who has made an outstanding contribution toward furthering the purpose and objectives of the foundation.

Dan Sturdevant of Kansas City, Missouri, began his service to the foundation fifteen years ago when he joined the Missouri-Kansas Riverbend Chapter. He served as president of his chapter from 2004 to 2011 and has been a valued member and chairman of several foundation committees. He established his legacy as a leader of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation during his tenure on the national board of directors and became president of the foundation in 2012. During his term as national president, Dan identified member services as a top priority and promoted increased outreach to members. He played a pivotal role in solidifying the organization's mission and vision through the work of its committees and staff. In a letter of support for his award nomination, a supporter wrote, "Dan has done it all unselfishly, with exceptional grace, and with good humor."

As the foundation moved into the 21st Century, it did not always keep up with modern technological advancements. **Kris Townsend** of Spokane, Washington, joined the foundation and in

less than two years' time made sure we had a modern, user-friendly website; helped brand the organization to differentiate it from countless other Lewis and Clark entities; brought impressive search capabilities to *We Proceeded On* online; and increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the foundation's internal operations through improved technology, privacy, and security.

Kris currently is working with staff to upload a William P. Sherman Library catalog to the foundation website. Additionally, he now serves on the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation board of directors.

All foundation members like to see youth on the trail, particularly those who are students of the expedition looking to grow and learn from the experiences of the explorers and those they met. This year two such individuals are being recognized. The Youth Achievement Award is given to a person or group of people under the age of 21 who have increased the knowledge of others in the Lewis and Clark Expedition through outstanding composition, art, drama, photography, site preservation, and enhancement, or other significant contributions.

Maren Burgess, a ninth grade student from Alpine, Utah, is a recent National History Day Competition winner at the state level, and competed at the national competition in Washington, D.C., where she presented her project, "The Legacy of the Corps: Lewis and Clark's Great Journey West." She has completed a research project on Sacagawea at the Three Forks of the Missouri and her paper, "Sacagawea Historian Project," was published in *The Orderly Report*.

Maren is a talented artist and has focused her abilities on the study of



Maren Burgess

Sacagawea on canvas. Her paintings include *Sacajawea at Three Forks* and many other images of the Shoshone woman. She is well on her way to becoming an expert in her field.

While some share their knowledge and talent through writing and art, others invite people to learn about Lewis and Clark through re-enactments and living history. **Gordon Wallace**, a high school student from Florence, Montana, is one such individual. He has participated in living history activities of the Brigade at Travelers' Rest since he was in fourth grade. Through living history, Gordon has displayed an extensive understanding of expedition members' journals, firearms, equipment, clothing, medicine, and packhorses.

He has shared his knowledge with the public not only at living history encampments, but also at youth groups, in his church, at the county fairgrounds, in his school and at community events. Gordon is able to fill in for any member of the Brigade and give their program at a moment's notice.

Wendy Raney

“Stone-faced Thomas Jefferson”



COURTESY STEVE LEE

In mid-October the South Dakota Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Encounters on the Prairie, hosted a regional meeting at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City, South Dakota. The

meeting was aptly titled “Road Trip to Mount Rushmore: Our Visit With A Stone Faced Thomas Jefferson.”

Thirty-six attendees enjoyed a Friday evening dinner reception (buffalo meatloaf or turkey!) with speakers. Dr.

Brad Tennant spoke about “Anxiety and Eagerness: Lewis and Clark Meet the Tetonwan Lakota” and Jay D. Vogt gave insights into “Mt. Rushmore: The Back Story.”

Saturday the group visited Mt. Rushmore, where Thomas Jefferson (aka Tom Pitz from Philadelphia) spoke about his life, times, and politics. The afternoon offered free time to explore Mount Rushmore, visit with Mr. Jefferson, and patronize the various shops/amenities located there. That evening welcomed a dinner, another program, and a silent auction, which raised \$394.50 for the William P. Sherman Library.

The weather was warm and the fall foliage spectacular. Many thanks to the South Dakota Chapter for a great job organizing a fun and informative meeting.

Laurie Brown
Oakesdale, Washington



COURTESY STEVE LEE

HOW TO RESUSCITATE A LIBRARY

SUSAN BUCHEL

Just over five years ago I walked into our foundation's William P. Sherman Library feeling more like an emergency medical technician than a potential volunteer. I found the "patient" in critical condition—pulse weak, breathing labored. The library had been without any staff support for some time (remember the recession?) and the loss of "life"—important records, books, objects, and donor documentation—seemed imminent if no one stepped in to start CPR.

Triage was the first order of business. With the help of two other volunteers, Ida Johnson and the late Dick Smith, both members of the Portage Route Chapter, we started a full inventory, comparing the computer records to materials on the shelves. Not long after starting this project, my life took a turn and I moved from Great Falls to Boise. My cohorts plugged on and sent long lists for me to compare remotely against our computer data. Dick wisely coerced a young woman, Shelly Kath, to help with the project.

Gary Moulton agreed to chair a re-constituted Library and Archives Committee, and soon we began updating policies and procedures to supplement the work in progress. Beverly Lewis, a retired librarian and member of the Encounters on the Prairie Chapter drafted most of the updated policies we now employ. The Board of Directors agreed to partially fund library operations as Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation revenues began to stabilize. By June 2012, we offered Shelly a part-time (10 hours/week) position as a Library Technician for the summer. The "patient" began to show signs of recovery.

Fast-forward to June 2015. We have completed a 100 percent inventory of our book, serial, audio-visual and object collections and have reconciled our findings with updated data in our library database. This library catalog can now be found on our website (www.lewisandclark.org) along with a listing of our archival collections, thanks to Kris Townsend's web support. Shelly now works part-time year-round to keep up with the new materials donated to the library, aided by our three volunteers, Patsy Sowers, Chris Maillet, and Paavo Hall.

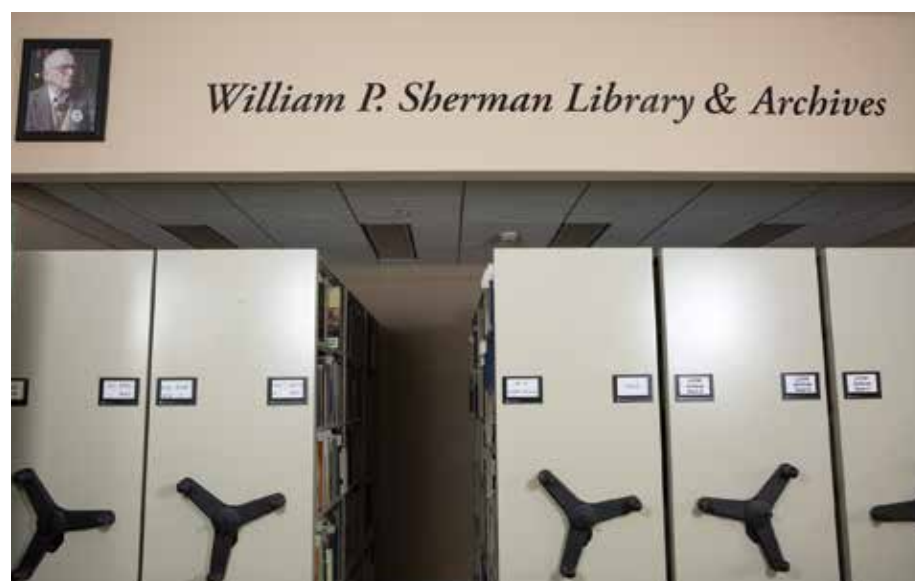
The Library Committee, now headed by Ella Mae Howard, includes Barb Kubik, Ron Laycock, Beverly Lewis, Lynette Scriver-Colburn, Jeremy Skinner and myself, with Shelly Kath as an ex-officio member. We provide policy direction and oversight, and serve as cheerleaders.

Last year, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Board of Directors recognized the need to provide stability by realigning the purpose of

the Robert Shattuck fund to support library operations.

Shattuck's personal library "contained some 500 books, and he apparently had read them all" according to Ludd Trozpek's May 2002 *WPO* tribute. "It was important to Bob that his Lewis and Clark books go for the benefit of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, and before he died he so donated them....In an act of quiet generosity, Bob [also] made the Foundation sole beneficiary to his life insurance and retirement savings. He also purchased an annuity that will benefit the Foundation tens of thousands of dollars over the next several years."

As the Shattuck fund grows, the annual release (keeping the principal intact) will supplement the library's currently small base budget. Other recent helping hands have come from several Chapters. The Encounters on the Prairie Chapter donated the proceeds from their October regional meeting's silent auction, as have the hosts of the last several annual



COURTESY KRIS TOWNSEND

meetings in Kansas City, Richland and Bismarck. The Portage Route Chapter purchased a rare book cabinet and has re-instituted the Scholar-in-Residence program to give visibility to the Sherman Library. The National Park Service is in discussion with our board about how it can also lend a hand.

This effort of staff, board, volunteers, partners, and chapters has helped the Sherman Library get back on its feet in recent years. My personal hope is that, with continued support, we can tackle some of the exciting and challenging projects that will make our “patient” a strong, vital resource for the Lewis and Clark community. Anyone who has spent time in rehab to gain strength after physical trauma will know it takes hard work, perseverance and much support. So, what is next?

At the Chapter Officers’ Meeting in Kansas City last summer I outlined ways chapters and individuals could help us reach our goal of a fully-functioning special collections library and archives, accessible to a distant public, staffed by a full-time professional, and preserving the important records of our organization. Here’s how:

Oral History Interview Collection

Former foundation and chapter leaders, and long-time members, all have stories to share about the work (and the fun!) involved in being “keepers of the story, stewards of the trail.” With our fiftieth anniversary approaching, we hope to expand the number of oral history interviews conducted across the nation—at annual and regional meetings, or as opportunities come up. Many important members are no longer able to travel to meetings, so we will have to find ways to visit them at home.

How can you help?

- Think about members living near you who should be interviewed, and

pass their name and contact information to the library (library@lewisandclark.org)

- Encourage an interested chapter member to learn how interviews are conducted by attending Oral History Workshops as they are offered. After training, urge your chapter to sponsor the interviewing of a local, long-term member. Watch for training announcements beginning the summer of 2016.
- Underwrite the transcription of one or more of our completed interviews. Transcribing, and then allowing the interviewee to review the transcript, is time-consuming and costs about \$175 per 2-hour interview. We currently have fifteen interviews that need to be transcribed and reviewed, with more to follow as we continue the project.



Shelly Kath (at right) shares materials with (from left) Philippa Newfield, Barb Kubik, Della Bauer (hidden), Phil Scriver, and Dan Wiley.

Archive Collections

The Sherman Library currently houses nearly fifty archival collections. These records document the history of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, its officers, and several chapters. Some collections detail the Bicentennial Signature Events, or the research papers of a Lewis and Clark author. Of the fifty collections, over half remain unprocessed. The arrangement, description, and housing of an archival collection needs the attention of professional staff. Our small crew has benefited from some basic archival training this past year, and additional training is being coordinated with the archivists at the Montana Historical Society, who can offer oversight as we make these important papers accessible to researchers.

How can you help?

- Underwrite the processing of one collection. Your name or chapter will be included in the permanent finding aid as that collection's sponsor.

Don Nell Visual Resource Collection

Former President Don Nell spent over a decade gathering Lewis and Clark Trail related slides as a resource for researchers. Technology has changed, and access to the internet has changed our goals for Don's collection. But we hope to convert those images for which we can document ownership into digital formats, add their information to our library catalog, and share them on-line. We also have hundreds of unprocessed photographs of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation activities to identify, digitize, and catalog.

How can you help?

- Sponsor the processing of images. It takes about \$1500 to process 250 images.

General Library Support and Development

We want to keep the William P. Sherman Library relevant to the scholarship surrounding the Corps of Discovery, the native peoples they met, the lands through which they traversed, and the context within which they operated. We need to be on the alert for, and have funds available, to purchase newly-published or newly-identified materials, as well as support the day-to-day operation of the collections.

How can you help?

- If you know of a new or obscure publication related to our themes, check our on-line catalog (<http://www.lewisandclark.org/library/index.php>), then click "Library Catalog" to see whether we have the title. If not, let us know about it. We maintain a wish list.
- Sponsor the purchase of new materials in the name of an individual or a chapter.

- Ask for a copy of our wish list, and donate a title if you can spare it from your personal collection.

We receive books from donors who agree they can be sold to support the library. These are titles already in our collection, but may be of interest to our members for their private collections. Ask for a copy of available books to see if you "need" one of the titles available for sale.

- Consider a contribution to the Robert Shattuck fund as a small endowment to the Sherman Library.

Together we can grow the William P. Sherman Library and Archives into a resource that will support the mission of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and fulfill our promise to remain "keepers of the story." Heartbeat strong! Patient cured!

Susan Buchel is a volunteer librarian at the William P. Sherman Library and Archives. library@lewisandclark.org

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An EPIC Story
Volume One
JEFFREY P. HAVENS

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To the Editor,

When I read both parts of William Benemann's "My Friend and My Companion," I had the same reaction. I knew Lewis and Clark had an intimate relationship, but I did not know and still do not know if they had a physically intimate liaison. Benemann raises this possibility. While Benemann's speculation could add another dimension to information about the Expedition, I was left with the feeling that the articles were poorly written.

As a former history major at Creighton in Omaha, I became accustomed to professors who certainly expected well-developed research papers in order for students to earn the grade of A. Those instructors demanded that pertinent facts and opinions should be presented in a plausible and convincing manner. The late Dr. Orville Zabel once assigned everyone in class to select possible nineteenth-century precursors to the modern environmental movement and to show how these could have coalesced into a twentieth-century phenomenon. On that paper, I earned a B, not an A, because Dr. Zabel said I had shown a logically plausible progression of ideas and of events for all but one of my selected elements. The professor was not necessarily denying the existence of one environmental forerunner. Instead the grade of B indicated that I had not convinced Dr. Zabel.

This illustrates the feeling I had after reading Benemann's thesis. I was not convinced because I immediately perceived many holes in his presentation of the evidence or lack thereof. Benemann's composition is too simplistic because he does not consider various plausible possibilities in many instances.

Yes, Benemann needs to place Lewis and Clark closely together if he wants to speculate on a physically intimate relationship. Benemann strongly suggests

the possibility of a sexual relationship because Lewis and Clark frequently were alone together in a pirogue and in a tent. Close proximity certainly is not enough reason to jump to conclusions regarding sexual relations. History professors preach historical context. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, complete strangers often slept together in the same bed in hotels, boarding houses, and homes. The sense of American individual privacy that we know today had not yet developed. Further, Lewis and Clark were the top two officers of a military expedition. Army protocol would have dictated a large degree of separateness to prevent fraternizing with those of lower rank.

Benemann also implies a previous physically intimate relationship may have been the reason Lewis selected Clark to be the other superior officer of the Corps. For Lewis to pick Clark, a particularly special previous relationship need not have existed. I have thought the reason could have been quite pragmatic. To be able to best select a capable, knowledgeable officer, Lewis likely would have had the most knowledge about officers' abilities from his previous military career.

Lewis and Clark's continued contact after their two tours of Army duty can be seen as a common activity of veterans. Sexual relations need not be a requirement for veterans to stay in contact. In Part Two when the author explains that Lewis was incredibly depressed due to the lack of a continued physical relationship with Clark, Benemann says Lewis felt "abandoned by both Clark and Jefferson" after the Expedition (p. 32). If this is yet further evidence to prove a past physical relationship between Clark and Lewis, should Benemann also imply a previous physical relationship between Lewis and Jefferson? After all, Lewis had lived in the White House as a personal secretary to Jefferson.

The author points to further proof of a titillating relationship because Lewis began writing "My Friend Captain Clark" more often as time passed instead of penning just "Captain Clark." Benemann says the phrase "My Friend Captain Clark" especially became more frequent during the long stopover at Ft. Clatsop. Before jumping to conclusions, Benemann once again needs to consider other possibilities and historical context. When the entourage stopped for longer periods, the captains would have had more time to write. Perhaps Lewis finally felt some degree of luxury of time at Ft. Clatsop, not only due to the long layover, but also because the journey was half over. With the availability of more time, use of the longer phrase could have become a habit. Benemann proposes Lewis was still explaining his relationship to Clark by writing "My Friend Captain Clark" many months into the journey. If we place the use of "My Friend" in the historical context of letter writing, such a phrase of that time was conventional and did not necessarily imply a close relationship. Thus the longer phrase could have indicated a more formal stance than the proposed intimacy.

Benemann's speculation of the destruction of a journal as the reason for the lack of a Lewis daily journal for an early period of the Expedition seems especially implausible. While historians most often gravitate toward attribution of depressive inaction by Lewis, Benemann throws out another possibility by suggesting that Lewis *did* write an early journal with many inappropriate ribald homosexual innuendos. Benemann proposes the captains destroyed Lewis's possible early journal. Why would the captains burn a journal when producing a record of the long journey was of extreme high priority?

Lewis and Clark historians generally agree all the journal writers regularly were comparing what all others were writing. If Lewis had been keeping an early journal, Clark would have been seeing what Lewis was writing. If Lewis really had been writing inappropriate text, why would Clark have waited weeks and weeks before saying something to Lewis?

Since the author says Lewis and Clark knew the original journals were not for public consumption, why would the captains have been concerned about some proposed personal innuendos? Who would have been the real readers of the unedited journals? Lewis and Clark did know that the other journal writers, as well as Jefferson and an editor, would read the unadulterated versions. Lewis had to have known of the societal taboo toward homosexuality of that era. Even if Lewis had homosexual feelings, why would he have written text that could have besmirched his reputation with other Corps journal writers, with Jefferson, and with an editor? Benemann says Lewis did write such text because he was depressed and not thinking clearly during the early part of the journey. I propose that anyone who led the incredible Corps of Discovery for over two years had to have had a healthy dose of pragmatic thinking. Despite moodiness and depressiveness, I cannot imagine this pragmatic explorer-diarist produced such inappropriate writings that he would have sabotaged his own reputation with the president of the United States.

While we know of some homosexual historical figures, surely other well-known persons did not come out of the closet. If Lewis did have homosexual feelings, Benemann totally ignores the possibility that Lewis could have chosen to remain closeted.

Benemann proposes the existence of a physically intimate relationship

between Lewis and Clark. If we are to be convinced of Benemann's theory, someone needs to write a plausibly compelling article that not only delineates evidences for a sexual relationship, but also shows why those are more likely than other possibilities. At this point, an A paper has not been written. Benemann did not even write a B paper.

Mary Conrad
Kansas City, Kansas

Dear Editor,

Alicia DeMaio's quote from Hartley, "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there," is extremely relevant to the whole discussion of Lewis and Clark's personal relationship, as she attempts to show in her article (*WPO*, August 2015).

Many Americans assume that the way we see things now is the way things really are. If they go to another country where it is normal for male friends to hold hands as they stroll through the streets together, Americans can hardly avoid assuming that these people must have a homosexual relationship. In fact, in some places where this is a natural thing for friends to do, most men are not even aware of homosexuality as an option.

Some years ago I was in India, staying in a hotel with an old friend from there, and we had to share a bed. He said, obviously pleased, "We have been friends for so long, but this is the first time that we have slept together." In spite of what it sounds like to many American ears, he was not even aware that his words might have a homosexual meaning. In his culture, friends often sleep together. He was simply pointing out that somehow we had never done it in all our years of friendship.

Hartley makes a very important point for foreign countries. Thanks to

DeMaio for helping us to apply it to our own past. As she and others point out, Lewis seems to have been psychologically very dependent on Clark. Perhaps in the United States of 2015 this kind of relationship would be likely to have sexual overtones (though I doubt that this is necessarily true, even now). But given the cultural views about friendship in early 19th century America, most people would not have suspected homosexuality to be involved in such a relationship.

That does not prove that it was not. More to the point, it should help us to wonder why the question should even be raised. As DeMaio says, there is probably no way we can ever know. So "why do we care? What does it matter?"

Norm Mundhenk
Poulsbo, Washington

To Editor Bob Clark:

I write to comment on two aspects of the November 2015 issue of *We Proceeded On*. First, Bill Swagerty's letter to you in response to the Benemann articles and related correspondence provides a model on how to respond to controversial subject matter in a civil and scholarly dispassionate manner.

Secondly, and more substantively, in John Jengo's stunningly comprehensive article on Columbia River geology ("After the Deluge" part 2) I find one element worthy of comment, though I trust it does not appear to be trivial faultfinding with what is a magnificent piece of research and writing. Discussing Memaloose Island, Jengo asserts Lewis and Clark "appear to have treated" this "Native American burial ground" "with due respect" because no remains were disturbed. In a literal sense that very well may have been the case, but the important point to note is that by merely visiting the island the captains committed what

the Native people viewed as a sacrilege. As Alexander Mackenzie pointed out in *Voyages from Montreal*, a book we know Lewis and Clark read closely, making an unceremonious stop at an Indian graveyard was something done only to an enemy. David Thompson, who passed through the same area a few years after Lewis and Clark, also wanted to view the same burial vaults but his Indian guide “begged of me not to do it, as the relations of the dead would be very angry.” Thus, Lewis and Clark may have thought they were making no offense in this instance but that’s not likely the way the Native residents of the Columbia River gorge viewed their deportment.

David L. Nicandri
Tumwater, Washington

Dear Editor Clark:

I am writing to publicly express my support for the decision to publish the recent articles examining whether Lewis or Clark had homosexual tendencies.

Contrary to some letters that have been published in *We Proceeded On*, this is exactly the type of publication where such ideas should be explored and communicated. Although after conducting my own research using the journals and other sources, I have not found any evidence that would support such a hypothesis as undisputable fact, exploring observations as a topic of discussion is what history and science are all about to find the truth.

As a matter of fact, a few journals are silent or understate some controversial decisions and important events, such as the one in which an order is contemplated on March 17, 1806, by both Lewis and Clark, to steal a Clatsop Indian canoe. The order is justified by claiming the canoe was payment for elk that were stolen by the Clatsop on

or about February 3, 1806. Because of these omissions and understatement, I think it quite appropriate to examine such controversial topics to provide perspective. I also write this as a former investigative news reporter who was often the target of vitriol because people did not like the message.

Thank you again for your decision, and I look forward to more intellectual exercises printed in these pages.

Jeff Havens
Helena, Montana

To the Editor:

Joanne Trogon is to be congratulated for her new book, *The Unknown Travels and Dubious Pursuits of William Clark*, in which she documents her discovery that William Clark was smuggling Spanish government silver dollar payments up river to Benjamin Sebastian and General James Wilkinson in June of 1798. It took a great deal of research and is an important piece of new information.

She focuses on Spanish conspiracies, but neglects the ongoing French conspiracies. In 1793, French secret agent and botanist Andre Michaux delivered a French army commission to William’s older brother, George Rogers Clark, appointing him Commander in chief of the revolutionary army of the Mississippi. Clark raised a volunteer army in Kentucky, rumored to be over 1,000 men, to seize control of the Spanish posts on the Mississippi from St. Louis to New Orleans.¹ The Neutrality Act of 1794, making it illegal for an American to wage war against any country at peace with the United States, ended Clark’s attempt at establishing a new country under French rule.

Five years later, George Rogers Clark still considered himself a general in the French army. In June he wrote he had

been asked to resign his French citizenship or “to retire from the United States.” He was in Philadelphia, then capital of the United States, lobbying against the Alien and Sedition Acts which were passed by Congress in July 1798. When he returned to Louisville in August, federal agents attempted to arrest him on the charge of treason. His friends helped him resist arrest and he fled to the sanctuary of St. Louis, then under Spanish rule. Spain and France were allies in the war against Britain. In St. Louis, Clark wrote to the French government: “If the executive Directory wishes to possess Louisiana, there is not time to lose. In nine months at the most, it will be too late. This country will be conquered by America or England.”²

Trogon is puzzled by William Clark’s list of Spanish posts in *ascending* order from New Orleans to St. Louis. The evidence is unmistakable that the Clark brothers were gathering intelligence for a French army invasion of the Mississippi Valley. In 1798, the United States was engaged in a quasi-war with France, fought mostly in the Caribbean.

Because both George Rogers Clark and his brother William have acquired mythic status in American history, it is hard to accept that they were involved in the numerous intrigues occurring at that time. My new book, *Meriwether Lewis: The Assassination of an American Hero and the Silver Mines of Mexico*, has a great deal more to say about the fight for control of the Mississippi Valley.

Kira Gale
Omaha, Nebraska

1 Alan D. Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2004) p.213.

2 James Alton James, *The Life of George Rogers Clark* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929/1972) pp. 445-49.

ONE OF THE GRATEFUL VEGETABLES

Columbia Plateau Biscuitroots and the Corps of Discovery

BY JACK NISBET

*T*he Columbia Plateau, which encompasses arid regions of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho within the lower Snake and mid-Columbia River drainages, is a great place for spring wildflowers. As early as February, colorful displays begin to creep across the heat-retaining basalt scablands and flood-gravel deposits of the shrub-steppe landscape. Along the well-known track of the Lewis and Clark party through this country, several of the most abundant of these spring blooms belong

to the diverse genus locals call biscuitroots or desert parsleys: biscuitroots after a bread-like staple that many western tribes prepare from the roots, and desert parsleys after their habitat and finely-cut leaves. The Latin name for the biscuitroot genus is *Lomatium*, which means “winged seed” and refers to the severely flattened edges of their ovoid seeds. Several species carry seductive aromas that evoke cultivated relatives such as carrot, parsley, and caraway.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN FISHER.

The yellow flower of the biscuitroot is scattered amongst bunch grasses and Arrowleaf Balsam root.



PAINTING BY JEANNE DEBONS

Cous (*Lomatium cous*) from central Oregon showing the irregularly shaped root.

Within the rugged lower Snake and Clearwater River country, traced and retraced by the Corps of Discovery during their journeys west of the Continental Divide, one particular biscuitroot emerges as a clump of dark-green lacy leaves, followed by a single reddish stem that rises no higher than a boot top. The flowers are arranged into compound umbels—small umbrellas of multiple tiny blooms gathered tightly into a larger yellow bumbershoot. The structure supplied the original family name Umbelliferae (also called Apiaceae) and remains the common calling card of the tribe. This yellow biscuitroot, which often forms dense carpets on the ground, is the one known as cous, pronounced both as “coos” and “cows.” Many people—especially members of several Plateau tribes who gather these biscuitroots for food—will quickly praise their flavor, whether boiled, roasted, or pounded and formed into cakes.

The Corps of Discovery had their first taste of cous in late fall of 1805 at the Cascades of the Columbia, near modern Bonneville Dam. Here William Clark

watched a broad array of native bands trading robes, skins, beargrass, camas roots, and some flat cakes that he and Lewis called “cha-pel-el” or “shapalell.” It’s not too hard to find corollaries for their spellings in the Chinookan word *a-sáblal* and the Chinook jargon, *sap-lil*, both of which translate as “bread.”¹

Although the captains described trading for “a kind of biscuit”² during their winter at the mouth of the Columbia, the shapalell did not assume its full importance in their diet until their return journey upstream in 1806. After arriving back at the Cascades of the Columbia in early April, Lewis again noted a lively traffic in goods, with the root bread as one stock item among many. On April 12 he purchased “2 pieces of Chapellel and Some roots”;³ two days later, approaching The Dalles, his grocery list included five dogs, along with hazelnuts, dried berries, and more root bread.⁴

As the Corps continued upriver, Meriwether Lewis made a connection between shapalell and the abundant yellow flowers he was seeing along the way. His naturalist’s eye recognized them as members of the same family as carrots and dill, familiar from eastern gardens. Near the mouth of the Walla Walla River, he pressed a sample and attached a brief label: “An umbelliferous plant of the root of which the Wallowallas make a kind of bread. The natives call it shappaell.”⁵ He tried to approximate the Sahaptin word for the root, *xáwus*, which he rendered as “cous” and sometimes “cows.”⁶ Lewis’s designation was later married to the Latin genus to arrive at the scientific name of *Lomatium cous*.

During the month of May, while making final preparations for crossing the Continental Divide, the Corps camped on the Clearwater River above its confluence with the Snake, near the village of a hospitable Nez Perce leader called Broken Arm. There they found spring food processing in full swing. “The noise of their women pounding roots reminds me of a nail factory,” Lewis remarked. “The Indians seem well pleased, and I am confident that they are not more so than our men who have their stomachs once more well filled with horsebeef and mush of the bread of cows.”⁷ In other words, the men were getting plenty of horse meat and cous bread to eat. Lewis’s use of the letter “w” instead of “u” in his spelling of cous can sometimes be confusing, but his description of the tuber that was providing



Cous in bloom. John B. Leiberg, who carried out plant surveys in the Columbia Basin during the 1890s and was well versed in Lewis and Clark's journals, wrote the following observation in one of his letters back to the Smithsonian: "Have you noticed how beautifully these early flowering low umbellifers form a chain from the highest to the lowest elevations in this region?" Leiberg to Rose, April 6, 1894.

"The noise of their women pounding roots reminds me of a nail factory."

so much of the Corps' sustenance is filled with keenly observed details, some of which must have been supplied by a tribal informant.

Lewis compared cous to the ginseng he had grown up with back in Virginia and the baked camas bulbs that hospitable tribes had fed to the visitors from the moment they arrived in the Columbia drainage. He not only paid close attention to cooking and preservation methods that might benefit the Corps, but also caught a hint of the seasonal rounds involved in collecting and processing the resource.

The cows is a knobbed root of an irregularly rounded form not unlike the Gensang in form and consistence. This root they collect, rub off a thin black rhind which covers it and pounding it expose it in cakes to the sun. these cakes are about an inch and $\frac{1}{4}$ thick and 6 by 18 in width, when dried they either eat this brad [bread] alone without any further preperation, or boil it and make a

thick muselage; the latter is most comin [common] and much the most agreeable. The flavor of this root is not very unlike the gensang. this root they collect as early as the snows disappear in the spring and continue to collect it until the quawmash [camas] suply's its place which happens about the latter end of June.⁸

As the Corps stockpiled food for its upcoming journey, the great quantities of roots processed with mortar and pestle by Nez Perce women became all the more evident. On May 19, Lewis noted that a group of his men returned from a trading session with "about 6 bushels of the cows roots and a considerable quantity of bread of the same materials."⁹

Recalling their difficult mountain journey of the previous fall, the Corps wanted still more. The captains debated sending the crew out to dig on their own but thought better of it. "We would make the men collect these roots themselves but there are several species of hemlock which are so much like the cows that it is difficult to discriminate them from the cows and we are afraid that they might poison themselves," wrote Lewis.¹⁰ He was wise to be cautious: parsely family members in that part of the Plateau include not only a host of other *Lomatiums* and several edible or aromatic relatives but also the extremely toxic western water



COURTESY OF JOHN FISHER

A hopper, circa 1800-1870, similar to hoppers used over the thousands of years. The mortar and pestle are of unknown age, probably prior to 1800. They were used by Nez Perce women to pound seeds, roots, etc. Rock is local basalt common to Nez Perce country. The hopper outer diameter is eleven inches. Photo and information courtesy of John Fisher.

hemlock, *Cicuta douglasii*. Plateau plant identification is not an easy learning curve for newcomers.

Choosing to rely on local knowledge, Lewis and Clark issued an allowance of trade goods to the men so they could each purchase “a parcel of roots and bread from the natives as his stores for the rocky mountains.”¹¹ The visitors continued to barter for more cous until early June, when they decided they had enough “bread” to see them through the mountain pass. By then, the Nez Perce women had switched their focus to digging camas bulbs. These the white visitors found less palatable, leading to disappointment with the tribe’s departing gift. “The Broken Arm gave Capt. C. a few dried Quawmas [camas] roots as a great present,” wrote Lewis on their last day. “In our estimation those of cows are much better, I am confident they are much more healthy.”¹²



“Cows” was not the only *Lomatium* the corps collected during their trip upriver that spring, and it was probably not the only biscuitroot that ended up in those shapallel cakes. Sergeant Patrick Gass may have been faintly aware of this diversity when he used the plural to describe “a kind of bread the natives make from roots, and bake in the sun; and which is strong and palatable.”¹³ Meriwether Lewis may have been on the same track when he referred to “those esculent roots which form a principal part of the subsistence of the natives,” and compared the shape of one tuber, most likely cous, to that of a sweet potato.¹⁴ The fact that these plentiful, vigorous, and esculent (which simply means edible) biscuitroots are so diverse, and often so difficult to distinguish from one another, is what defines their larger story.

Several dozen different *Lomatium* species of the Columbia Plateau have been dealing with the challenging environment of their homeland for a very long time. They have adapted to the short and early growing season, the stiff winds, the cold winters, and the long summer droughts that have long limited vegetation across the region. The compact size of many species enhances their ability to flower very soon after leafing out in the spring. Low growth habits and the lack of a central protruding stem protect the leaves from

buffeting winds, and keep them close to a relatively warm layer of air near the ground. Narrow leaf segments, often sliced to minute fineness, provide more surface area for photosynthesis in dry conditions. Their compound umbels, with male and female flowers present on the same plant, allow for both outcrossing and self-pollination by insects or wind.

Smaller *Lomatium* species quickly complete their reproductive cycles before the rocky soils lose their moisture during the inevitable summer drought. Fruits mature rapidly into winged seeds that dry up and are dispersed by the wind. Finely-cut leaves and stout stems desiccate in a matter of days until they too disappear. Underground, many of these *Lomatiums* harbor tuberous roots in a wonderful variety of shapes and sizes. These tubers store nutritious carbohydrates during tough winter conditions, then send that essential energy aboveground in the spring to support leaves, flowers, and seed production.¹⁵

Although a number of the Columbia River biscuitroots live in habitats created by the great floods that occurred at the end of the last Ice Age, their lifespan has to be measured on an entirely different scale of time. Plant systematists who study *Lomatium* pollination leap back at least as far as the late Pliocene and visualize changes in millions, not thousands, of years.¹⁶ Geneticists trace plant ranges that flow like amoebas across a landscape, developing new species at their extremities. Cataclysmic events can separate closely related clusters. Some of these colonies might survive in isolation, morph into a slightly different form, then be reunited with their ancestors by more gradual changes in geology or climate. The movements of the Cordilleran glaciers and the spurt of apocalyptic floods that ended the Pleistocene represent only two of the challenges these plants have successfully weathered.

For all their abundance, most of these biscuitroots live so inconspicuously that they have never acquired memorable common names, and the fact that the term “cous” is sometimes applied to several different biscuitroots as a general term only adds to their anonymity. During the time of Frederick Pursh and two other active naturalists who followed in the footsteps of the Corps of Discovery, David Douglas and Thomas Nuttall, species botanists now call *Lomatiums* were spread across a

*48th Annual Lewis and Clark Trail
Heritage Foundation Meeting*

22–27 July 2016,
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Meriwether Lewis at Harpers Ferry

Meeting location and lodging available at:

Quality Hotel Conference Center

4328 William L. Wilson Freeway
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425
304-535-6302

Note: Hotel room reservations must be made by **June 19, 2016** to receive the reduced rate of \$83 plus tax per night. There are a limited number of rooms available.

*Sir: You will be pleased to make such
arms and Iron work, as requested by
the bearer Captain Meriwether Lewis
and to have them completed with the
least possible delay.*

—Letter from Secretary of War Henry Dearborn
to armory superintendent Joseph Perkins,
14 March 1803

*Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
with Related Documents*, edited by Donald Jackson

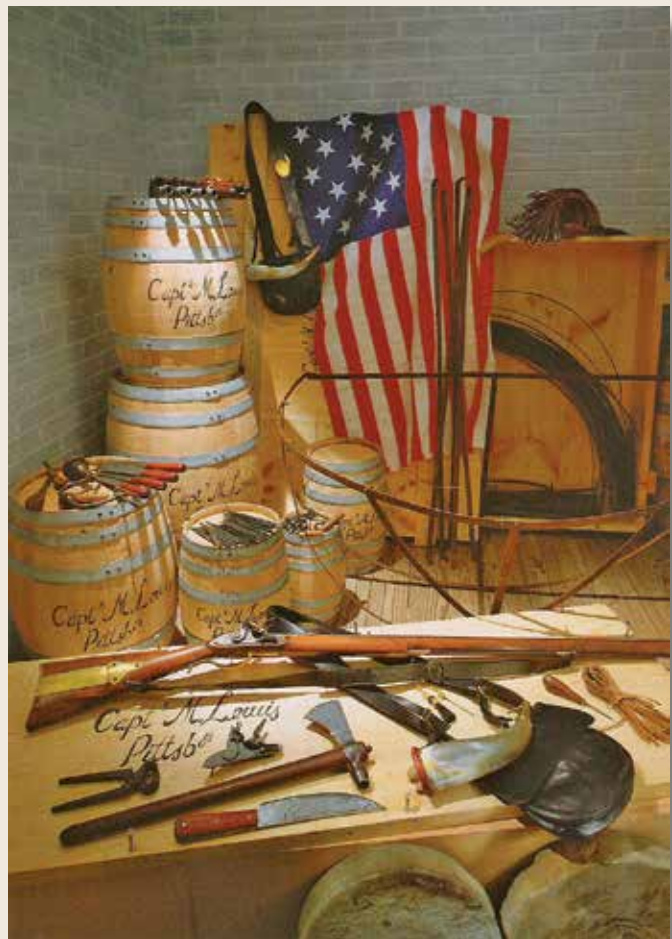


Photo by Eric Long, Courtesy NPS

Preliminary Program

22-23 July: Friday and Saturday – Board Meetings at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HFNHP)

24 July: Sunday

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Chapter Officers Meeting/Oral History Training Session, Berkeley Room

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. 50th Anniversary Business Meeting, Berkeley Room

Main Program:

Chapter and Committee Meetings – The Berkeley Room will be available during times when not scheduled for formal meeting events. A sign-up scheduling sheet will be posted on the meeting room door.

24 July: Sunday

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration & Harpers Ferry Historical Association book sales, Quality Hotel Conference Center (QHCC) Washington Room Foyer

12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m. Chapter display tables, QHCC Washington Room

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Opening Reception, QHCC Washington Room

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Evening Program, HFNHP, “*A President’s Vision, A Captain’s Challenge*” with Bill Barker as Thomas Jefferson and Dick Cheatham as Meriwether Lewis.

25 July: Monday

Day begins with Wellness Walk, followed by the Business Meeting, and an afternoon at HFNHP. Programs will include: “*The Evolution of the Armory*,” featuring Bill Barker as a Jefferson Scholar, “*Weaponry of Harpers Ferry*,” and “*Routes Traveled by Meriwether Lewis*.” Return to QHCC and dinner in the Washington Room.

26 July: Tuesday

Keynote presentation, “*What Lewis and Clark Accomplished*,” followed by “*Medicines Purchased by Lewis*,” and the afternoon keynote presentation, “*The C&O Canal: Dreams of Our Forefathers*.” Activities include a park walking tour, time for exploration, and a sign dedication. Return to QHCC and dinner on your own.

27 July: Wednesday

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Open Silent Auction bidding

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Cash Bar, QHCC Washington Room, approximately

Programs include: “*West Virginia and the Civil War*,” “*Preparing for a Traditional Journey: The Lewis to Linnard Letter*,” “*Expedition Member John Collins*,” “*Difficulties Made Easy: History of the National Road*,” and an update by the Superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Other events include a wellness walk, awards luncheon, and evening banquet. The evening program includes a presentation by the United Remnant Band Shawnee Storyteller, an invitation to the 49th Annual Meeting, a silent and live auction.

Although pre- and post-event trips are not planned as part of the meeting, many high quality trails and areas of historic interest are located in the area. Consult West Virginia Tourism for information at info@gotowv.com. Participants should make arrangements with concessionaires or travel on their own.

Vicinity Attractions: Walking tours of nearby **Shepherdstown** and **Charles Town**, The African–American Heritage Trail, The Appalachian Trail (accessible in the area), The George Washington Heritage Trail, and The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Trail cuts through the HFNHP and stretches for 184.5 miles from Washington, DC to Cumberland, MD. Bicycles can be rented from vendors located in the park for use on the trail. Antietam and Monocacy national battlefields and the Interstate Civil War Trail are all located in close proximity to the town of Harpers Ferry. Kayak and canoe rental/excursion trips on the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers are also locally available.

48th Annual Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Meeting

22–27 July 2016, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Meriwether Lewis at Harpers Ferry

“Yesterday I shot my guns and examined the several articles which have been manufactured for me at this place, they appear to be well executed.”

—Letter from Meriwether Lewis to President Thomas Jefferson, 8 July 1803
Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, edited by Donald Jackson



Meeting Registration Form

Please print neatly and clearly!

Name(s): _____

Name(s) on Name Tag: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

Phones: home: _____ cell: _____ work: _____

E-mail: _____

[Note: we will send your registration confirmation by e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, it will be mailed to you.]

Emergency contact name: _____ Relationship: _____

Emergency contact no.: _____

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Descendant of Corps of Discovery [member's name]: _____
- ☐ First time attendee
- ☐ New member
- ☐ Special requests/needs: _____
[Please specify, such as vegetarian, limited mobility, hearing impaired, etc.]
- ☐ Chapter memberships: _____

Registration fee: \$350 x _____ \$ _____

Registration fee for children, 16 and under: \$175 X _____ \$ _____

Registration fee after June 19, 2016: \$400 x _____ \$ _____

Total Due: \$ _____

Cancellation policy: Full refund until June 19, 2016, thereafter 50% refund

Payment information:

- ☐ Check enclosed (payable to Harpers Ferry Historical Association LCTHF 2016 Meeting)
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ MasterCard
- ☐ Discover
- ☐ American Express

Card Number: _____ CCV Number: _____

Expiration date: _____ Name on card: _____

Send my statement to address above: Yes ____ No ____

If no, please send my statement to the following address:

Street, P.O. Box, apt. no. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail your completed registration form and check to:

Harpers Ferry Historical Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 197

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425

Or Phone: 304-535-6881

Or e-mail completed registration form with credit card information, go to: hfha@earthlink.net

Or fax registration form with credit card information to: 304-535-6749

Thank you for your registration! We look forward to your arrival.

Note: If arriving by air, public transportation is NOT available from Dulles International Airport to Harpers Ferry. Car rental services are available at the airport. If traveling to Harpers Ferry by train, taxi service is available in nearby Charles Town for service to the Quality Hotel Conference Center in Harpers Ferry. The hotel operates its courtesy van only on Friday and Saturday.

I plan to donate an item/s for the Silent Auction to help raise money for the William P. Sherman Library and Archives: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please contact: Sue Buchel at library@lewisandclark.org to make arrangements

Notes: (1) Please bring a name tag holder and tote bag with you, if possible.

(2) Payment of registration fee by personal check helps to reduce meeting operating costs.

(3) Chapter tables for display purposes only (no sales). If you plan to set up a table, please contact Jerry Wilson at wilsonjkw@yahoo.com.

handful of different genera. In the two centuries that have passed, several closely-allied plants are still classified as outliers, and although taxonomists have devised keys to definitively separate the biscuitroots, words such as “variable” and “overlap” crop up frequently in the text of their technical descriptions. Field researchers not only continue to describe new species, but also consistently manage to find plants that do not fit any prescribed pattern. This is why botanists refer to the genus as “unsettled” and why, at least to a novice, the *Lomatium* complex seems like a wheeling flock of migrant shorebirds that never quite comes to earth.



But some people who live with these plants hold a different kind of vision. *Lomatiums* have provided a key resource for the Plateau tribes since the end of the last Ice Age, and in the late twentieth century families living around the Yakama Indian Reservation described uses for no less than fourteen different species of biscuitroots.¹⁷ Although the majority were valued for their roots, *Lomatium* stems, leaves, and seeds all received some mention.



PHOTO BY AUTHOR

Bare-stem biscuitroot (*Lomatium nudicaule*) in bloom. “The natives eat the tops & boil it Sometimes with their Soup...the same as we use celery.”

Botanists refer to the genus as “unsettled”

When the Corps of Discovery encountered people gathering food near the mouth of the Klickitat River in April 1806, they paused to collect an herbarium specimen that is clearly bare-stem biscuitroot (*Lomatium nudicaule*), for which they noted a tribal use: “The natives eat the tops & boil it Sometimes with their Soup . . . the same as we use celery.”¹⁸ That comparison of green spring tops with garden celery seems prescient. Today, in the back-and-forth way of cultures sharing place, tribes all over the Plateau call the food that anchors their first spring feasts “Indian celery.” There are several different species that answer to this description, and although barestem biscuitroot remains one of them, it is neither the leaves nor flower umbels that people eat. Women pick the earliest tender shoots before any flowers appear, and serve them with early roots, such as cous.

As noted in two seminal plant books on the expedition,¹⁹ of the several other *Lomatiums* that Lewis and Clark collected, degradation of their pressed specimens makes positive identification impossible today. One likely candidate for a plant Lewis collected on the Clearwater River, and that Frederick Pursh noted as “a great horse medicine among the natives”²⁰ of the southern Plateau, is fernleaf biscuitroot (*Lomatium dissectum*).²¹ The huge root of this very robust plant (called “chocolate tips” in areas where the flowers are brownish-purple rather than yellow) is certainly used for medicinal purposes. But in 1826, Scottish naturalist David Douglas described a different aspect of fernleaf biscuitroot in the northern Columbia Plateau, around the mouth of the Okanogan River. Just as the snow was receding, he collected an “*Umbelliferae*, perennial; flowers purple; one of the strongest of the tribe found in the upper country; the tender shoots are eaten by the natives.”²² Today, Salish-speaking Okanogan people from both sides of the international border still gather early shoots of chocolate tips and use them in their first spring feast, calling them “celery.”²³

Meanwhile, some Sahaptin-speaking people to the south get their initial dose of spring vitamins from Gray’s biscuitroot (*Lomatium grayi*), clipping the fresh young stems just as they emerge from the ground. The



PHOTO BY AUTHOR

Some varieties of fern-leaf biscuitroot (*Lomatium dissectum*) bloom yellow, while others tend toward brown or purple. The latter goes by the name of chocolate tips, and the plant itself was termed “a great horse medicine among the Natives” by Pursh.

strong taste of this Indian celery provides a tang clearly distinct from other shoots that share the “celery” name.

For First Feast, Plateau people gather fresh shoots of specific *Lomatiums* and other plants that form part of their cultural traditions. At the same time, they dig particular early roots and prepare them according to their family ways. Much more than a meal, First Feast is a ceremony renewing a sacred compact, and various Plateau creation stories teach the same lesson in different ways: back in the earliest times, the roots promised to take care of the people, so long as the people promised to take care of the roots.

Two of these *Lomatium* tubers are clearly the most utilized: Cous (*Lomatium cous*), the one that appears so often in Meriwether Lewis’s journals, and Canby’s biscuitroot (*Lomatium canbyi*), which he never mentions. These two biscuitroots are easy to tell apart. The flowers of *cous* are yellow; those of *canbyi* are white. *Lomatium cous* tubers vary wildly in shape, like a wild yam or a brown paper bag blown up and scrunched in every possible way. Those of *L. canbyi*, on the other hand, swell into perfectly globular spheres that, aside from depressions caused by rocks or other roots, could be mistaken for dark rubber balls.

Cous dominates shrub-steppe habitats in southeastern Washington, Idaho, and eastern Oregon, while the range of Canby’s biscuitroot extends from central Washington along a westward curve that follows the foothills of the Cascade Range south to the Columbia River. When Lewis and Clark entered that region on their return trip upstream in spring 1806, they quickly learned their visit coincided with the season for digging. At Celilo Falls on April 17, they tried to trade for some packhorses to cross the mountain ranges ahead, but had no luck, because, Clark reported, “The chief informed me that their horses were all in the plains with their women gathering roots.”²⁴ Plateau families, especially the women and children, were flowing across the countryside, branching and turning and joining again: season-dependent, flexible, persistent, hardy, resourceful, skilled, sharing, and knowledgeable to a degree the white visitors could sense, but in their short time on the scene could never quite grasp.

A little further upstream, at the confluence of the Palouse and Snake Rivers, the captains might have seen the ancestors of Mary Jim setting out with twined root bags and digging sticks. In a 1980 oral account, Jim described her family’s travel routes, which had persisted

since the early nineteenth century, and for untold generations before that.

“I am a Palouse Indian from the Snake River, where

my people have always lived. God put us there, and we prayed, thanking Him for the river and the salmon and all good things,” Mary Jim began. “My father was Alliyua, Thomas Jim, and his father was Fishhook Jim, Chowatyet. We lived at village Tasawiks. My grandmother was Amtaloot, who was from Priest Rapids. Grandmother taught me many things about how to live when I grew up.”

A large part of Mary Jim’s education consisted of learning the rounds for gathering roots—where and when her family sought the wide variety of different biscuitroots and other tubers they needed to sustain them for the coming year.

A large part of Mary Jim’s education consisted of learning the rounds for gathering roots.



A woman from the Confederated Colville Tribes digging *Lomatium canbyi* ca. 1955.

“We would start to move in March. We would move to Soap Lake, dig certain kinds of roots. They used to dig *skūkul* [*Lomatium canbyi*] and some other roots.”

Mary Jim’s family moved all around the central Columbia Plateau, north of the area traveled by the Corps of Discovery. They gained elevation as the season progressed, often arriving on sites at the most favorable moment for Canby’s biscuitroot, but opportunistically digging half a dozen others.

“When we were done there, we moved back to Snake River, last of May maybe, and then salmon came up the river. In the fall, we went over to Walla Walla

to dig *kouse* (*Lomatium cous*). That’s where we used to camp and dig.

“Then we went up into the mountains to dig other kind of roots. You baked some of them. We traveled a lot. You ought to have seen them horses: packin’, packin’, packin’.”²⁵

Mary Jim’s relatives, who were affiliated with Palouse, Wanapum, Yakama, and other tribal entities, spoke different Sahaptin tongues. Their names for the roots that fed them varied with place, time, growth stage, preparation technique, and taste. Mary Jim learned these names and places from her grandmother and uncle, who had been going to their special sites since they were small children, absorbing the knowledge of generations and passing it along.

For Salish-speaking tribes in the northern half of the Plateau—central and northeastern Washington, as well as parts the Idaho Panhandle and southeastern British Columbia—the white-flowered Canby’s biscuitroot is more available than its southern cousin, *cous*. Elders of the Spokane tribe tell a story that explains how these plants came to be distributed across their corner of the Columbia Basin. A character they called “Doodlebug” had just spent a

day fishing when he decided to conceal a nice salmon he had speared from his hardworking sister, who had spent her day busily digging roots of several kinds. Upon discovering Doodlebug’s deception, Little Sister was so filled with anger she clambered up a ridge above the Spokane River with all her roots and walked to the edge of the cliff. There, to spite her deceitful brother, she scattered the roots to the four cardinal directions. The roots flew away to new places—including some especially fine *p’úx^w pux^w* that landed on Ice Age flood-scoured grounds to the south and west, where people still dig them today.²⁶ The Spokane term for Can-



CHARLES GURCHE PHOTO

Camas lilies and nineleaf biscuitroot (*Lomatium triternatum*) blooming near Spangle, Washington.

by's biscuitroot is *p'ux'w pux'w*, and when native speakers pronounce this word, their mouths and cheeks round out to form perfect globes, just like the roots. Diggers also go after a biscuitroot they call "little *p'x'w pux'w*" which taxonomists call *Lomatium farinosum*—a widespread small biscuitroot with flowers of yellow or white depending on where they grow, and a nut-sized spherical root savored by both Sahaptin and Salish families.²⁷



On a windy day in early May a couple of years ago, I walked along a stony ridgetop just upstream from the confluence of the Columbia and Snake Rivers with a Sahaptin man who liked plants. He reveled in the bewildering variety of biscuitroots that sprouted within

the different rocky exposures, grassy swales, and wind-blown pockets of loess soil we traversed, calling out names in his language for several of the biscuitroots the corps experienced in 1806. He sampled them all, using a digging stick to turn up everything from round globes of several sizes to the long, skinny carrots of nineleaf biscuitroot, *Lomatium triternatum*.

Nineleaf biscuitroot is a species that was definitely collected by Lewis along the Clearwater River on May 6, 1806. In his journal the captain noted that the root was "5 or 6 inches long eaten raw or boiled by the natives." In Frederick Pursh's additional notes, he termed nineleaf biscuitroot "one of the grateful vegetables of the Indians."²⁸

Although not many tribal families dig this particular species today, Pursh's comment made sense when

I listened to the Sahaptin man describe how he used to watch his mother and aunts dry, bake, roast, grind, and boil different species of biscuitroots in different sequences in order to process them into food. The women would keep all their roots separated until each one was prepared, and then they would combine the array to make small cakes or cookies—a handful of this and a handful of that, shaped into edible form by slapping the palms together. The parents lured their children to join in with the promise they could keep any cookies they made with their own hands. Each handful had a distinctive taste, and each combination went together in a particular way. You learned how to make what you liked. After patting together their cookies, the kids laid them in the sun, then turned them carefully until they were dry enough to store.

One group of neighbors, who gathered cous, Canby's, and other biscuitroots in many of the same places as the family that made cookies, formed its pounded roots into something more like large pancakes. Each round would be about an inch thick and more than a foot across. The dad would bend together a willow frame, like a small sweat lodge, then build a low, slow-burning fire inside. The family laid its pancakes on top of the frame, so that the fire's smoke could slowly cure them. Different method. Different taste.

The Sahaptin man arched his fingers to imitate how that red willow frame allowed the smoke to curl around each giant flatbread and seal in all the flavor. He made it easy to picture the men of the Corps of Discovery breathing in that same delicious smell, then trying to barter for one more round of shapallel bread. 🌿

Spokane-based teacher and naturalist Jack Nisbet is the author of several books that explore the human and natural history of the Intermountain West, including award-winning biographies of fur agent David Thompson and naturalist David Douglas. The biscuitroot essay in this issue of We Proceeded On is adapted from his most recent work, Ancient Places. For more information, visit www.jacknisbet.com.

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THE RHYME OF THE GREAT NAVIGATOR

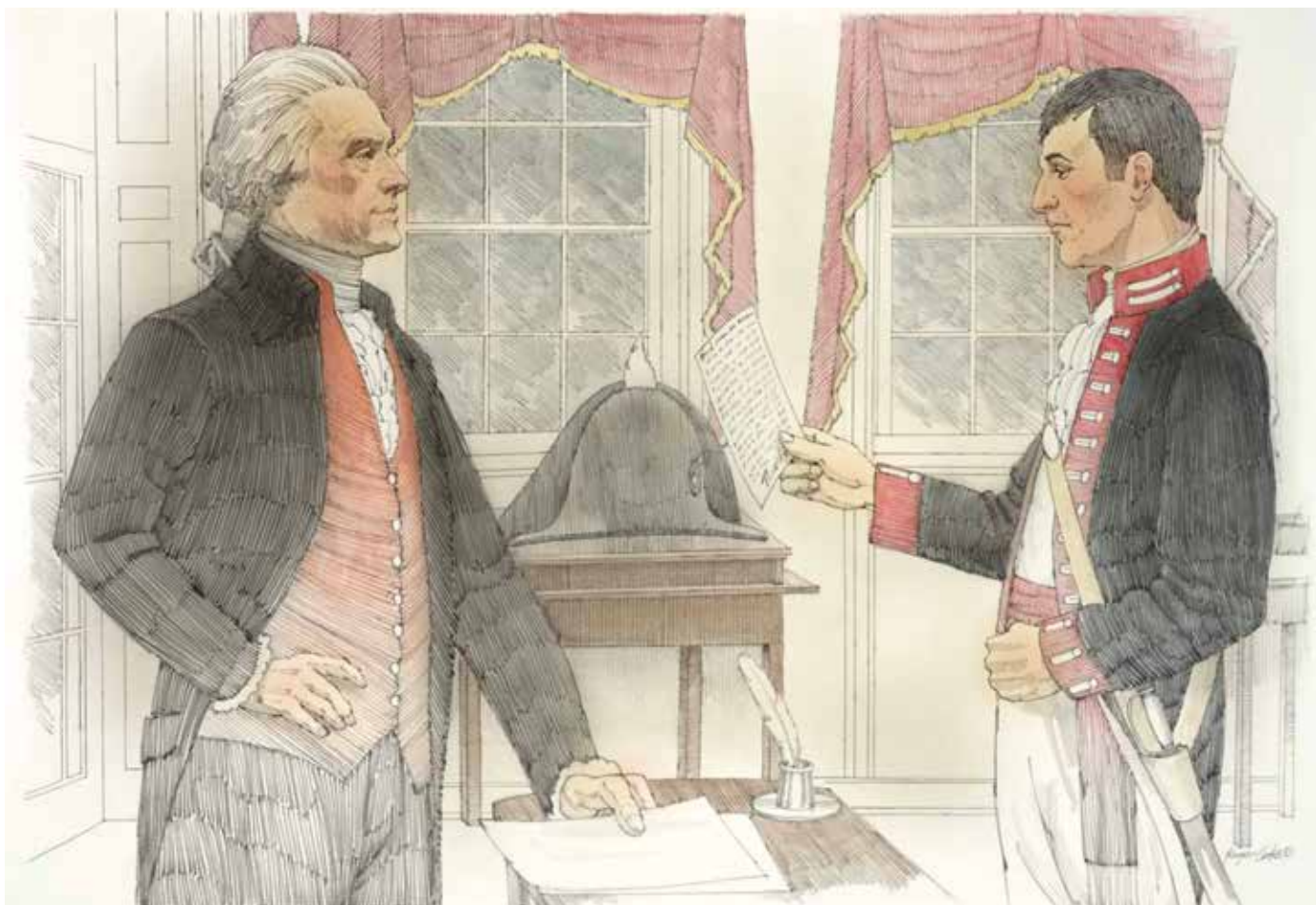
The Literature of Captain Cook and Its Influence on the Journals of Lewis and Clark

PART I: A CANOE'S TEETH

BY DAVID L. NICANDRI

In his audience remarks to audience at the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation meeting in Bismarck in July 2013, James Ronda reminded the assembly that the great American expedition was not the central event of exploration in its time. Rather, he asserted, Lewis and Clark should be more properly thought of as adjuncts within the age of Cook and Vancouver. Cook's influence and prominence within what has been called the Second Great Age of Discovery was paramount. Indeed he was the emblematic figure of Enlightenment-era exploration. Cook created a template for scientific discovery, in contrast to the overtly imperialist orientation of the preceding era—what might be called the Age of Columbus. For example, Thomas Jefferson borrowed from the British Admiralty's instructions to Cook, found in the published accounts of the great navigator's three great voyages of exploration to the Pacific (1768-1780) to construct his directions to Meriwether Lewis. For the second and third of these ventures, Cook largely drafted his own mission statement. Cook's influence on the ethos of his time and Euro-American culture was immense. To cite but one example, the principal astronomer on the second voyage, William Wales, was later an instructor of Samuel Coleridge Taylor, and it's now believed that through Wales, Cook's exploits heavily informed the narrative spine of the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Within the journals of Captains Lewis and Clark, Vancouver actually receives more mentions than Cook, largely as a function of Lt. William Broughton's exploration of the lower Columbia in the fall of 1792. Although Cook sighted the central Oregon Coast in 1778, and harbored briefly at Nootka Sound on what would later be discerned as Vancouver Island, the central focus of his third voyage was on the Pacific's higher northern latitudes thought to contain a navigable passage to Baffin Bay and thence, via Davis Strait, into the Atlantic Ocean. Routinely criticized by historians for supposedly missing the Columbia River and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Cook's attention was not drawn to the mid-latitude coastline of the Pacific slope containing these apertures. In fact he was specifically advised to avoid them except to make such landfall as was necessary to refresh his ships with wood and water preparatory to his run north. By the 1770s sensible geographers knew the mid-continental coastline in the latitudes of what is now Oregon and Washington and southern British Columbia could not possibly contain a directly navigable saline corridor to Atlantic waters. There was obvious evidence to the contrary in the form of the Saskatchewan and Missouri Rivers, which by necessity formed in high land and drained vast extents of a continental land mass. The only information from Native sources hint-



President Jefferson provides instructions to Meriwether Lewis. Illustration by Roger Cooke for the Washington State Historical Society.

ing at the possibility of an extension of salt water deep into North America from the Pacific came from latitudes even higher than Hudson Bay. Cook's third expedition began in earnest only when it reached 60° North, a zone that is home to Alaska's Prince William Sound and the large inlet to the west of it on which Cook's name was bestowed after his death. Alaska's Icy Cape at 70° North on the Arctic Ocean side of Bering Strait, Cook's northernmost reach before becoming stymied by ice, effectively marked the end of his and Europe's quest for the original, salt water version of the Northwest Passage.

Vancouver's follow up expedition, 1792-94, commonly misunderstood as a voyage to look for what Cook missed, was actually a more nuanced search for what might be called a second generation Northwest Passage, i.e., an inland extension of the Pacific that was an analogue to Hudson Bay; a sea that, with a bridge of land between them, shortened the distance between

the two oceans. Vancouver spent his first year of formal exploration—the late spring and summer of 1792—in the more southerly ranges of latitudes he was tasked to survey (basically the 40s), the general area visited a decade later by Lewis and Clark. He effectively concluded his work during the third year in the waters of Cook Inlet and the northernmost extent of the Alaska littoral. In this sense then, Lewis and Clark conducted their voyage of discovery in the Age of Cook, but within the zone of Vancouver.

Though Broughton's chart of the lower Columbia, and its key place names (viz. Mounts Hood and St. Helens) made Vancouver's expedition more immediate, Lewis and Clark were still mindful of Cook's voyages. This is most clearly true in the first of two explicit references to the great navigator in the journals of the American captains, as well as a third Cook-related textual passage secreted in Lewis's mid-continent grandiloquence at the Great Falls of the Missouri.



Captain James Cook. An engraving from "Atlas of Captain Cook's Third Voyage."

Cook's search for the Northwest Passage did not begin, strictly speaking, until he had been under sail for nearly two years, having made a passage to South Africa, New Zealand, Tahiti, Hawaii and Nootka; all that travel merely to set the stage for the actual attempt. In the same sense, Lewis and Clark did not commence the process of real discovery until they departed Fort Mandan for points west, a

year and three-quarters after Lewis left Jefferson's company in Washington, D.C. On the occasion of their jumping off onto the waters of the upper Missouri on 7

April 1805, Lewis penned a paragraph that is among the two or three most memorable, or, at least, most oft cited by historians. He wrote: "Our vessels consisted of six small canoes, and two large perogues. This little fleet, altho' not quite so respectable as those of Columbus or Capt. Cook were still viewed by us with as much pleasure as those deservedly famed *adventurers* ever beheld theirs; and I dare say with quite as much anxiety for their safety and preservation."¹

"Our vessels consisted of six small canoes, and two large perogues."
Lewis

And with that, Lewis with Clark started their western quest; a variation on the same theme that had prompted Cook to come out of retirement to conduct his final voyage. In a sense, Lewis and Clark sought the *third* version of a Northwest Passage to evolve as a cartographic projection within a quarter century: their mission was to find an interlocking river system that would cross the continent in lieu of the classic salt water corridor Cook was looking for or the intermediating mid-continental sea stretching toward Hudson Bay that Vancouver sought. This newest vision was one first propagated and popularized by Alexander Mackenzie in his *Voyages from Montreal*, published in 1802, the spring from which the Lewis and Clark expedition welled up.

In some respects Lewis's recollection of the "fleets" of these great navigators is merely narrative whimsy. The reference to Cook, in particular, seems to be an attempt to burnish his project's stature since the navigator's exploits were still in the working memory of geographers, of the armchair variety or the practical. Richard Van Orman has said that Lewis's wrote his departing text as a confidence-building exercise.² Lewis's rhetorical invocation of these two famous mariners, among the many he might have chosen, showed historical savvy. Each had inaugurated an entire age of discovery; in Columbus's case new continents, in Cook's new oceanic pathways to, through, or around these new lands.

Lewis's Dakota spring paean paragraph made for great copy in his journal, as evidenced by its appeal through the last two centuries, and almost certainly would have been included in Lewis's official account, had he written one. In any event, Columbus disappears from Lewis's text after this formulaic tribute, but Cook reappears in Clark's journal almost a year later in a mysterious way, one that perplexed journals editor Gary Moulton.

Lewis's lines about his predecessor's fleets soar as exploratory literature, which is why they are so well known. The later entry by Clark is characteristically prosaic and therefore easy to miss but it actually allows

us to probe more deeply into the literary dynamics resulting in the production of narratives that described exploratory activities. Near modern Knappa, Oregon, during the second day after leaving Fort Clatsop on the voyage home, the captains came upon a Cathlamet village. Lewis is keeping a journal himself at this point, and it is therefore novel to find Clark (seemingly) originating an observation on his own, rather than making a copy of Lewis's remarks as he often did when his counterpart was writing. Clark saw

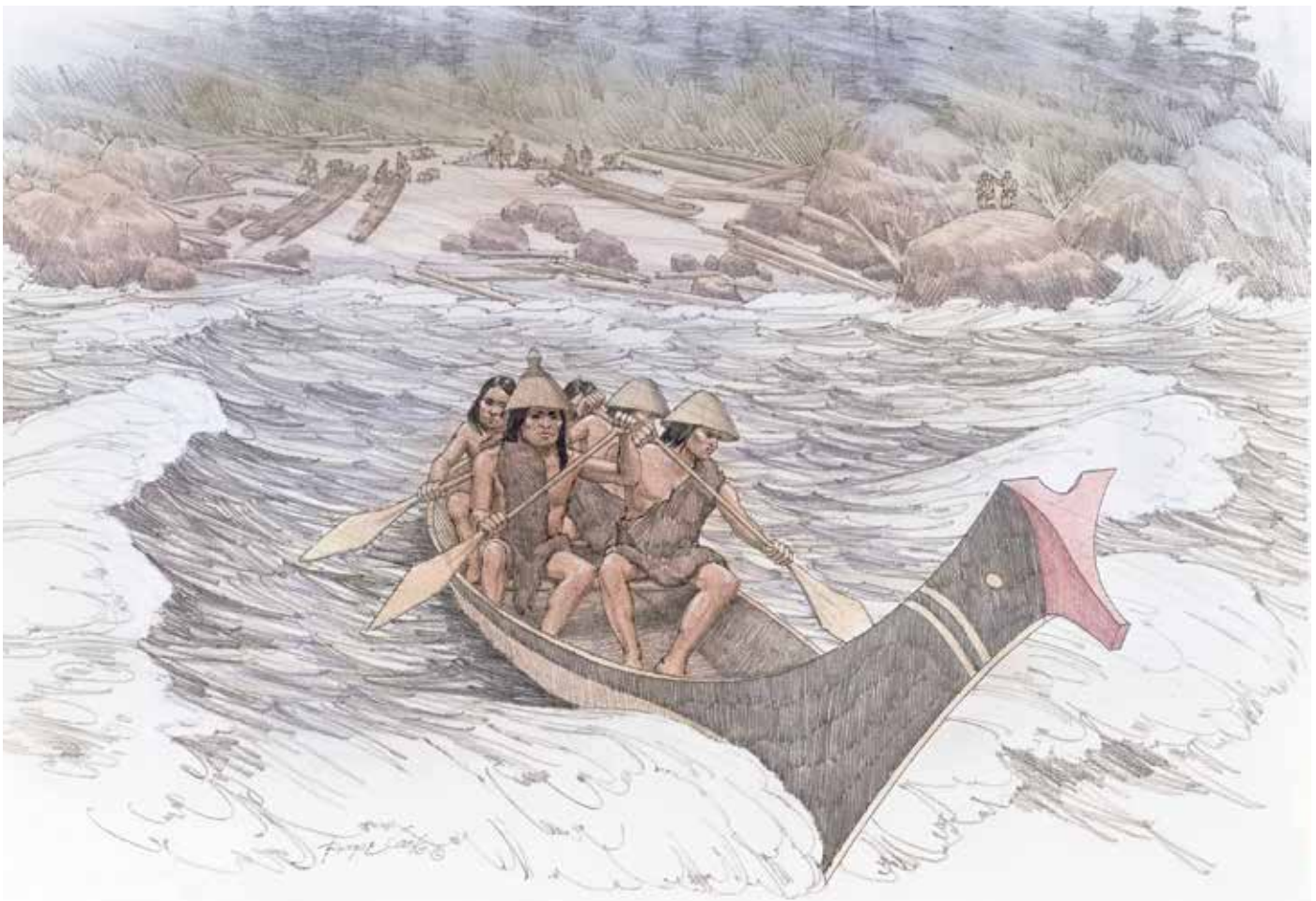
two very large elegant Canoes inlaid with Shills, those Shills I took to be teeth at first view, and the natives informed Several of the men that they [were] the teeth of their enemies which they had killed in War. [I]n examining of them Closely haveing taken out Several pieces, we found that [they] were Sea Shells . . . [and] they also deckerate their Smaller wooden vessles with those Shells

“large elegant Canoes inlaid with Shills, those Shills I took to be teeth” Clark

which have much the appearance of humane teeth[.] Capt Cook may have mistaken those Shills very well for humane teeth without a Close examination.³

The Cathlamets were probably trying to enhance their martial stature with the story about their enemies' teeth. Then too, it may have been a joke. The plural “we” that discerned the truth of the decorative shells indicates this was a group discussion, probably including Lewis. Given the larger volume of ethnographic content in Lewis's journals, strangely he never addressed the matter. All we have to work with is Clark's note.

Any reference to Cook, especially to a supposed mistake the great navigator may have made, was sure to elicit Gary Moulton's attention in his annotation of the modern edition of the Lewis and Clark's journals. Moulton looked at several facets of Clark's remark.



Best canoe navigators. Illustration by Roger Cooke.

First, Moulton observed that the published account of Cook's third voyage was in Jefferson's library. Since Jefferson had a copy of Cook's narrative, Moulton plausibly reasoned that "Lewis was undoubtedly familiar with at least the portions treating the Northwest Coast of North America."⁴ As outlined in this and the ensuing two parts of this serial essay, I believe Lewis was familiar with the entire three-voyage Cook oeuvre, and without question the last two. Here I refer not only to the official accounts issued under the Admiralty's auspices, but also ancillary publications such as those authored by second voyage naturalists Johan Reinhold Forster and his son George Forster, plus that of marine corporal John Ledyard, the American seaman who rushed an unauthorized account of Cook's third voyage into print in 1782. These books would have been in either Jefferson's possession, or in the library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia where Lewis conducted his preparatory studies in 1803.

Moulton made a point to note that it was Clark, not Lewis, who made the observation about the canoes' decoration. Since Clark here deviated from what is commonly referred to as his verbatim mode of journal-keeping when Lewis was journaling the question becomes: how to explain this deviation from the norm, even if it is in reference, as Moulton said, "to a minor point in Cook's journals"?⁵ The decoration of the Cathlamet canoes does indeed seem like something Lewis would pay attention to, not only because of his natural scholarly inclination and the division of labor between the captains but especially because it's extremely unlikely Clark would have seen Cook's account out on the Kentucky frontier. This is not a criticism of Clark, his education, nor his abilities. Lewis may have been the expedition's de facto ethnologist, but in terms of the practical management of human relations across the racial divide Clark was far better than Lewis.

In order to shed further light on this episode, Moulton scrutinized John C. Beaglehole's edition of Cook's journals. There, Moulton discerned that although the Natives encountered at Nootka Sound (the indigenous settlement visited by Cook that was closest to Lewis and Clark's position on the lower Columbia) traded in human skulls and hands, Cook never recorded any reference "to human teeth as ornaments of canoes." Moulton implies that Clark's mistaken "impression" was per-

haps derived from a misreading of Cook, a premise that also conveniently reinforces the orthodox understanding that Clark was quick to jump to conclusions; this as opposed to the supposedly more studied manner of the more scholarly Lewis. To explain Clark's sudden and unexpected interest and knowledge of Cook, Moulton states that "it may have been Lewis who mentioned it to him."⁶

Alternatively and in conclusion, Moulton posits the John Ledyard theory. After circumnavigating the world by sail on Cook's third voyage, Ledyard later set upon the spectacular notion of a personal global circumambulation. After crossing Siberia (which he nearly accomplished before being expelled by Empress Catherine) Ledyard planned to reach the Aleutian Islands by way of a Russian fur trading packet from Kamchatka and from there hitch a ride to Nootka or some more southerly latitude with one of the British or American traders who followed Cook's wake to the Northwest Coast. Thence Ledyard imagined walking across North America with a canine companion to the Atlantic shore. Ledyard met Jefferson in Paris in 1785 while laying the groundwork for this ill-fated venture. From that circumstance Moulton theorized that Ledyard passed the decorative insight about canoes to Jefferson, who, decades later, conveyed it to Lewis verbally.

These implausible scenarios were dictated by a documentary problem, for, as Moulton correctly observed, the comment Clark presumed to correct "did not find its way into the published accounts" of Cook's voyage, including Ledyard's.⁷ (After all, these publications, not Cook's log and journal as edited by Beaglehole in the mid-twentieth century, could have been the only conceivable source of relevant information.) And that's where editor Moulton left it, somewhat inconclusively. I made this perplex a sidebar project as part of my investigation of Cook, his high latitude voyaging, and the evolution of the image of the Northwest Passage. What follows is the ethnographic context and origin of the story of human teeth decorating Northwest native canoes, and the convoluted route it took for this story to get into the pages of Clark's journal; one that bypassed Ledyard, Jefferson, and Cook, but coursed instead through two other explorers unnamed by Clark.

As pointed out in my book *River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia*, North West Company

fur trader and explorer Alexander Mackenzie loomed over the western third of Lewis and Clark's trek to the Pacific.⁸ Though never formally acknowledged by Lewis or Clark for his contributions to their efforts, Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal* served as a veritable trail guide for the American captains. Many key tactics were initially modeled by Mackenzie and several noteworthy phrases, indeed whole paragraphs, were plagiarized by the captains from the Scotsman's account of travels to the Arctic and the Pacific. In the main body of text describing his run to Pacific tidewater in July 1793 Mackenzie notes, relative to a Native canoe: "The gunwale, fore and aft, was inlaid with the teeth of the sea-otter." In a footnote to this text Mackenzie added (gratuitously it turns out) an elaboration that gets to the heart of our concern: "As Captain Cooke [sic] has mentioned, that the people of the sea coast adorned their canoes with human teeth, I was the more particular in my inquiries; the result of which was, the most satisfactory proof, that he [Cook] was mistaken; but his mistake arose from the very great resemblance there is between human teeth and those of the sea-otter."⁹ Thus we see that Clark slyly appropriated Mackenzie's supposed insight about Cook's "mistake," but kept the origination of this information hidden. But proving Mackenzie was Clark's secret source begs the now transposed question: what record was Mackenzie drawing on which allowed him to presume to criticize Cook?

First, a discursive qualification on sources and the dynamics surrounding the creation of exploration texts: Since Cook died on the third voyage, technically he is not the author of any published information detailing his last expedition. Canon John Douglas was the editor of Cook's final report and though Douglas certainly drew heavily on Cook's journal for the basic chronology and narrative flow (nigh to the captain's death), it was supplemented from time to time by recourse to journal copy provided by others. Most notable in this regard

were the ethnological contributions of ship surgeon William Anderson and Lt. James King's cultural and geographical insights. On his own, King also authored the third and conclusive volume of the official account that picks up the story after Cook's demise in February 1779, taking it to the conclusion of the voyage in Great Britain in the fall of 1780.

Douglas, as Cook's editor, had access to King's journal, including ethnographic observations recorded at Nootka in the spring of 1778. Therein, King made note of the arrival in the sound of some "Strangers" (a neighboring tribe) who had in their canoe a set of boxes that were "part of their household furniture" which were "ornament'd with bones & teeth indent'd."¹⁰ Subsequently, in volume 2 of Cook's third voyage account, King's note is expanded by Douglas to include a description of these boxes, used to store armaments, masks, and other valuables. They were "often painted black, studied with the teeth of different *animals*, [emphasis added] or carved with a kind of freeze-work [sic], and figures of birds or animals, as decorations."¹¹ Several pages later, Cook (in

reality Douglas) adds a comment that some canoes in Nootka Sound "have a little carving, and are decorated by setting *seals* [emphasis added] teeth on the surface, like studs; as is the practice on their masks and weapons."¹² Since King's journal makes no such note, Douglas either gleaned this insight from Anderson's (still largely unpublished) journal or King mentioned it to him when reviewing the manuscript in advance of publication in 1784. Nevertheless, the problem remains: Cook's published account, and the original journals underlying that narrative, clearly identify the decorative material as animal in its origin, not human as Mackenzie/Clark have it.

So, having worked this problem as a reverse progression from Clark to Mackenzie to Cook et al, let's play it forward. Cook, who is really Douglas serving as editor for a syncretic Cook/King/Anderson persona, publishes information about canoes seen at Nootka



Alexander MacKenzie, from "Voyages from Montreal..."

“Some of these canoes are polished and painted, or curiously studded with human teeth” Meares

Sound decorated with seals’ teeth. Mackenzie, arriving at tidewater on the back side of Vancouver Island in 1793, correctly attributes this decorative motif to the teeth of sea-otters, but charges Cook with having mistakenly determined the ornamentation was of human origin. Clark, next in line, with Mackenzie’s book open before him, repeats the notion of Cook’s mistake about human teeth, but personally finds the decorative element to be constituted by sea shells. (The source of the divergence, of course, is that Clark is on the lower Columbia River, not the British Columbia coast). Since Cook (per Douglas) never said anything about human teeth decorating Native canoes, this is proof positive that Clark was snared in a plagiarist’s trap Mackenzie inadvertently set.

But if Clark was deviously gullible, Mackenzie was simply sloppy. Mackenzie did not (indeed could not possibly) find the line of text attributed to Cook describing Native canoes decorated with human teeth, because it doesn’t exist. It is actually found in John Meares’ 1790 narrative of fur trading on the Northwest Coast. Meares spent a season trading at Nootka Sound in September 1788 and his account, which did much to spur the Vancouver expedition, was widely publicized. In an ethnographic digression he writes of Native craft: “Some of these canoes are polished and painted, or curiously studded with human teeth, particularly on the stern and the prow.”¹³ Mackenzie, writing his memoir more than a decade after Meares’ narrative appeared, simply misattributed Meares’ observation, making it Cook’s. Clark was merely the not-so-innocent bystander.

Though this whole episode is, as Moulton stipulated, “a minor point” in content, it nevertheless reinforces several salient aspects surrounding the exploratory dynamic. First, we see the foundational aspect of Cook’s narrative, the first to describe the northwestern quadrant of North America; or, at least, its coastline. Second, we note that the Lewis and Clark experience

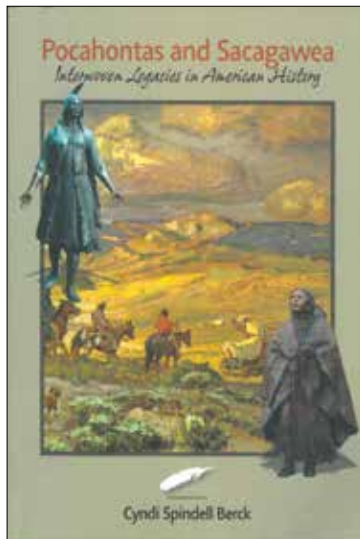
did not take place on a *tabula rasa*, given their reliance on Mackenzie for matters large and small. Here, Clark’s appropriation’s is a somewhat inconsequential “fact.” But at other intersections in their journey Mackenzie was so important to the captains they copied him directly and at length; never with attribution. Lastly, this episode is further proof of the need for historians to be vigilant in their appreciation of the evolution of exploratory narrative from field note to published account and the duty to read the documentary record in parallel form, much like biblical scholars study the synoptic gospels. 🌿

[Parts 2 and 3 of this article will appear in succeeding issues of *We Proceeded On*.]

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*Pocahontas and Sacagawea:
Interwoven Legacies in
American History*

By Cyndi Spindell Berck
Commonwealth Books of Virginia,
Alexandria, VA, 2015. 271 pages,
maps and images, notes, bibliography.
Paperback. \$19.95.
Reviewed by Wendy Raney

Taken literally, a reader might assume the author of this work attempts to weave the stories of legendary historical figures Pocahontas and Sacagawea together throughout American history, furthering the myths and deceptions that have been created to advance personal and political agendas for decades. On the contrary, in *Pocahontas and Sacagawea: Interwoven Legacies in American History*, Cyndi Spindell Berck has conducted extensive research in an attempt to separate truth from myth. She demonstrates that the legacies of Pocahontas and Sacagawea are intertwined with stories of some of the most famous people and events in American history including Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Marshall and Daniel Boone, along with stories of some little-known, but sig-

nificant, characters in our nation's history.

Berck focuses on the fact that descendants of Pocahontas were among the leading families of Virginia, and that Lewis and Clark were a part of that Virginia aristocracy; and she then begins to weave the legacies. Students and scholars of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and those of Pocahontas, will not find new material on their favorite historical subjects. Berck works through the arguments on both sides of the well-known aspects of each woman's stories and draws her own conclusions. For example, she believes Sacagawea died young, had a warm friendship with Clark, and that her presence, a symbol of peace, was likely her most significant contribution to the expedition.

In a recent interview, Berck said the common denominator throughout her book is the cross-cultural relationships Pocahontas and Sacagawea developed, which inspired human decency in the men they befriended.

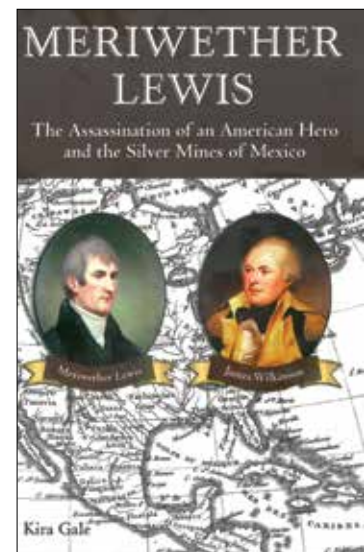
Berck's research is thorough and her writing is engaging. The book includes an extensive bibliography and 24 maps and images that enhance the narrative, though many of the maps are too small to provide details a reader might seek. Chapters in the middle of the book are mired in names, dates, and details of specific treaties. While those facts are important details in the history of our country, they are a distraction from the passionate personal stories of individuals whose actions had great impact on a variety of cultures and the creation of America.

The story of a third, lesser-known Indian woman who played a prominent and powerful role in American history is included in the concluding pages of the book. Thocmetony, better known as Sarah Winnemucca, was

born in 1844. She was a strong and respected leader of the Northern Paiutes, who testified before Congress and was a well-liked advocate for her people among the nation's highest circles. She fought tirelessly, though unsuccessfully, to make it possible for white settlers and Northern Paiutes to live together peaceably.

The author is successful in framing the legacies of Pocahontas and Sacagawea as belonging to multiple cultures while she highlights the enduring nature of, and our collective attraction to, those legacies. She successfully weaves their stories with those of Indians and settlers who played prominent roles in western expansion history.

Ms. Raney is chair of the We Proceeded On Editorial Advisory Board.



Meriwether Lewis, The Assassination of an American Hero and the Silver Mines of Mexico

By Kira Gale
River Junction Press, Omaha, 2015.
552 pages, photos, maps, bibliography, index. Softcover. \$27.95
Reviewed by John D. W. Guice

As its title indicates, Kira Gale's latest book is not "plain vanilla." Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe it in one word. Some adjectives would include curious, fascinating, creative, and bold. A few suicide proponents might call it ludicrous—even preposterous. But boring it is not.

Gale argues that General James Wilkinson conspired to have Meriwether Lewis assassinated, a claim she repeats throughout the book. To convince her readers she reconstructs the career of Wilkinson in considerable detail with frequent reference to his talent for conspiracy and assassination. One may wonder why she takes 463 pages of text, divided into fourteen chapters, to persuade us of her case. Evidently she felt some readers would not be familiar with the biography of Meriwether Lewis and with the account of the Expedition to the Pacific. Similarly, the author wanted to make sure readers were knowledgeable about the careers of William Clark and his brother, Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark.

Gale refreshes our memories about important aspects of American history in which her subjects were involved, such as the Whiskey Rebellion, the Legion of The United States, and Mississippi Valley separatist conspiracies. And of course, Gale reminds us of the escapades of Aaron Burr whose infamous career often intertwined with that of James Wilkinson. I, too, strongly suspect the majority of Americans have little understanding of the number and intensity of various separatist schemes—encouraged by the Spanish—that existed in the trans-Appalachian regions.

Most well-read Americans know Wilkinson was a paid Spanish agent while also serving as an American general. But few are aware of the extent

of his perfidy. In all of United States history there probably is not another career as convoluted as that of Wilkinson, who was literally ubiquitous in the trans-Appalachian West and South. One wonders when he slept. War Department files are packed with his correspondence written in his own peculiar scrawl. Evidently, his contemporaries learned to decipher it.

The author goes to great lengths to demonstrate the extent to which conspiracy—and assassination—permeated Wilkinson's behavior. This explains inclusion of the chapter on The Legion of the United States, 1792-1796, where she traces his rise through the ranks. With the assassination of General Anthony Wayne, Wilkinson became the Commanding General of the U.S. Army.

Likewise, it is difficult to realize just how much corruption existed in St. Louis and New Orleans. Entrepreneurs in both these frontier towns were unconscionable in the quest to acquire fortunes. The rich mineral lands in Missouri, along with the Indian trade, magnified the fraud there, as did the filibustering adventures into Spanish territories from New Orleans and Natchez. Gale does not exaggerate as she describes the rascality of Burr, Wilkinson, and their associates in these areas. While it does seem unlikely that Wilkinson was present in so many crucial junctures, opportunities abounded.

Unlike some authors, Gale definitely views Lewis's performance as territorial governor in a positive light, emphasizing his considerable accomplishments, particularly in the realm of Indian affairs. Writers unfamiliar with the challenges of governing the territories, both on location and with the distant, parsimonious federal bureaucrats, too often belittled Lew-

is's achievements—especially considering the interference of his implacable enemies, Secretary Frederick Bates and his cronies. Indeed, one wonders if Thomas Jefferson realized how unrealistic was his expectation that Lewis could edit his journals amidst such turmoil. I have often wondered whether or not Lewis secretly cursed his mentor Jefferson for placing him in an untenable predicament. Perhaps the idealistic Jefferson did not fully comprehend conditions in St. Louis. One wonders.

Of course, there is nothing new about the concept that Lewis died as the result of a conspiracy. There was undoubtedly conversation about a conspiracy both in St. Louis and on the Tennessee frontier as news of his demise circulated. In 1961 newspaperman/novelist Jonathan Daniels discussed the possibility in *The Devil's Backbone* (181-82). "But if Lewis was murdered, as good a guess as any is that Wilkinson ordered it, Bates arranged it, Pernia did it." We do not know precisely when Kira Gale decided that Wilkinson conspired to have Lewis murdered. But she is certain that he did—climaxing a long career of conspiracy and assassination.

The complexities of Wilkinson's assassination plot defy simple description. Suffice it to say, the general feared revelation of his misdeeds when he preceded Lewis as governor and of his plans to control the mineral wealth in the trans-Mississippi West. The main conspirators were Wilkinson, John Smith T from Tennessee, Major James Neely, Robert Grinder, and Capt. John Braham. Frederick Bates was also involved on the edge, so to speak. Chickasaw Indian Agent Neely delivered the victim, Grinder dispatched him, and Braham—with Neely's assistance—managed the cover-up. Both

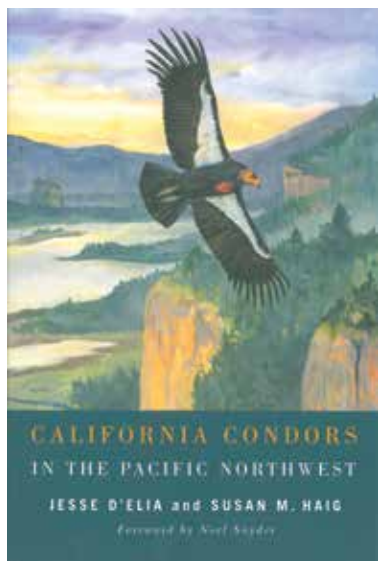
Neelly and Brahan conveniently were miles from the murder scene.

Remember Neelly supposedly wrote to Jefferson that he (Neelly) came upon the scene the morning of October 11, 1809, shortly after Lewis died. And Neelly informed Jefferson that Lewis's death was a suicide. But several years ago Tennessee attorney Tony Turnbow proved beyond a doubt that Neelly was seventy miles through the forest in court at Franklin, Tennessee. Brahan forged Neelly's letter from Nashville. These discoveries, plus evidence of other forgeries offered in the 1996 Hohenwald, Tennessee, Coroner's Inquest, fit neatly into Kira Gale's conspiracy puzzle.

If I were a priest, I would give Kira Gale "a tip of the birretta" for this formidable undertaking. Yes, parts of the book are based on speculation. But, isn't she just as entitled to her ideas as others who speculate about Lewis's suicide, his flawed character, or the meaning of journal entries? While her research is commendable, occasionally her prose is not easily followed. In addition, the volume suffers from inadequate copy editing that allowed careless errors particularly related to geographical locations. However, throughout the text are helpful maps, photographs, and illustrations. On balance, one must admit Gale has produced a book that cannot be ignored; a book that provides the reader with much upon which to reflect or discern. No doubt future scholars will uncover additional evidence of Wilkinson's schemes and activities in the Spanish archives that abound in documents created by and relating to Wilkinson. Though Kira Gale may have solved the mystery of Lewis's death, I still suggest he probably died at the hands of an unknown outlaw. One of my

friends likes to say: "The more a person knows, the less he/she knows *for sure*." I agree.

Dr. Guice is professor emeritus, University of Southern Mississippi. He is a long time contributor to We Proceeded On. A Yale graduate with a University of Colorado Ph.D., his most recent work is By His Own Hand? The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis.



California Condors in the Pacific Northwest

By Jesse D'Elia and Dr. Susan M. Haig
Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2013. 184 pages, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$19.95.

Reviewed by Barb Kubik

As the Corps of Discovery worked its way through the "Cascades of the Columbia" in present-day Skamania County, Washington, at the end of October 1805, the journal-keepers began to note the appearance of "the large Buzzard [with] white head and

part of the wings white," a bird they would come to call the "beatifull Buz-zard of the columbia." Over the next six months, the captains would continue to add to their knowledge of this magnificent, soaring, "butifull buz-zard" with a nine-foot wing-span—measuring it, sketching its head, noting its range on the lower Columbia River, and observing its habit of feeding on both sea and land mammals. They even preserved the head of one specimen for Charles Willson Peale's museum in Philadelphia.

In their book, *California Condors in the Pacific Northwest*, authors Jesse D'Elia and Dr. Susan Haig have gathered the oral histories and ceremonies of northwest tribes, the journals of early explorers and naturalists, and the observations of early twentieth century ornithologists to carefully examine the presence of the Corps' "beatifull Buz-zard of the columbia," the California condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*, in the Pacific Northwest.

Is it possible, they ask, to use the centuries of stories and observations to understand, scientifically, the condor's nesting habitat and breeding habits, its scavenger-style feeding, and the bird's ability to soar on Columbia River thermals, to plan for the effective reintroduction of the condor along the lower Columbia River?

D'Elia is a fish and wildlife biologist with a specialty in endangered species; Dr. Haig is a wildlife ecologist and a research associate for the Smithsonian. Together, they have thoroughly examined the paleontological record, five centuries of tribal traditions, artwork and oral histories, two centuries of journals, maps and sketches of explorer-naturalists like Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and the

Corps of Discovery, David Thompson and David Douglas, and of various Hudson's Bay personnel, and more recently, collections of scientific observations and data, and the study of condor physiology in an effort the answer just that question.


Their book, *California Condors in the Pacific Northwest*, is enhanced with maps, graphs and charts, and Ram Papish's sketches. The appendix con-

tains a list of eighty-one historic sightings of the California condor in the Pacific Northwest, from 1805 to 1925; the first eight are from the journals of the expedition!

Recently I stood at an overlook in the Columbia Gorge, the wind in my face. The clouds chased the sun, the waves sparkled on the Columbia River far below me, and I was struck by the thought of California condors soaring

on these winds once again. D'Elia and Haig's careful and thorough research for their book, *California Condors in the Pacific Northwest* will make the reader think it is possible.

Ms. Kubik is a past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, a regular contributor to We Proceeded On, and a member of the WPO Editorial Advisory Board.



O the Joy!

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Lewis and Clark Trail Stewardship Grants for 2016

By Margaret Gorski
and Philippa Newfield

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (LCTHF) funded eleven grant requests totaling \$56,512 for trail stewardship projects in fiscal year 2016 along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Eastern Legacy. Funding for the trail stewardship grants is provided by the *Lewis & Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment: A National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Legacy Project*.

This year's grantees include the **Badger State Chapter** of LCTHF (Wisconsin) for interpretive signs marking the sites of Lewis and Clark Expedition member Alexander Willard's homes in Wisconsin from 1827 to 1852; **Discovery Expedition of St Charles**, Missouri, for literature and supplies in support of the their Eastern Legacy Tour with the Bureau of Land Management's Traveling Exhibit; **Missouri-Kansas Riverbend Chapter** of LCTHF for completion of the Lewis and Clark Country promotional materials for Missouri, Kansas, and Illinois; and **National Smokejumpers Association** (Montana) for equipment for clearing and marking the route of the expedition's descent from Lost Trail Pass on the Montana side of the Continental Divide.

Also funded were two from the requests from the **Rochejhone Chapter** of LCTHF (Montana) and one from for the **Ohio River Chapter** for signage; **Salmon Valley (Idaho) Stewardship** for the restoration of Discovery Hill; **Our Montana** for the Yellowstone River Interpretive Map Project; and **Washington County (Nebraska) Historical Association** for a museum display.

The National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial ensured that the legacy of the Bicentennial would endure through the Trail Stewardship Endowment developed from proceeds of the

sale of the commemorative coins authorized by Congress and produced by the US Mint during the Bicentennial. The council helped shepherd legislation through Congress authorizing the US Mint to give the proceeds of the coin sales to non-profit organizations. Bob Archibald, then president of the council, was instrumental in bringing this to fruition.

In 2006 the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation was designated as the sole recipient of all proceeds "for the purpose of establishing a trust for the stewardship of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail." (H.R. 5401)

The fund agreement defined trail stewardship "as preserving, protecting and interpreting the natural, historic, educational and cultural resources of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Examples of trail stewardship include heritage site monitoring, protection of cultural resources, coordination and sponsorship of stewardship projects and programs, archiving and documenting Bicentennial stewardship projects, and interpretive programming along the trail."

The Lewis and Clark Trail Stewardship Advisory Committee, appointed by the LCTHF in 2011, fine-tuned the guidelines and recommended, with Board approval, that the grants also be made available to projects along the Eastern Legacy route, as Bicentennial events were held in the Eastern Legacy



In 2015 our foundation provided a grant to the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument to construct enclosure fences around two campsites on the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River at Gist Bottom and Little Sandy campsites. Two members of the Montana Conservation Corps team who assisted in project help construct the fence.

states and legislative efforts are ongoing to incorporate the Eastern Legacy into the officially designated Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The grant program emphasizes encouragement and support of projects oriented to physical trail access, development, and on-site interpretation.

Each year a portion of the Lewis & Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment is released to support projects that will have a demonstrable, positive impact along the pathways followed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Please visit lewisandclark.org for a grant application. Grant requests for FY 2017 are due on October 1, 2016. The LCTHF thanks the members of the Lewis and Clark Trail Stewardship Advisory Committee: Chair Margaret Gorski, Karen Goering, Rob Heacock, Jane Henley, Steve Lee, Dee Roche, Dan Wiley, Ex Officio NPS, and Lindy Hatcher, Executive Director.

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