THE ORDWAY JUNKET
BEACON ROCK
THE RHYME OF THE GREAT NAVIGATOR, PART 3

Plus
“An Oral History of the Mammoth in North America”
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A Message from the President

As my presidency draws to a close, I’d like to thank everyone—members, board of directors, chapters, committee members, and volunteers—for all the work done this past year. It wouldn’t happen without you. You are a special group and make the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation a great organization. We do an impressive job telling the story, and have fun doing it. Keep up the good work.

It seems an appropriate moment to take measure of our organization’s progress. My points of reference are: fifteen years ago when I served on our board of directors as treasurer just prior to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, five years ago following the bicennial years when a membership survey was conducted in 2011, and today, as my term heads into the home stretch.

Fifteen years ago the country was preparing for the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The excitement began just prior to those years with the publication of Stephen Ambrose’s Undaunted Courage. Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan had teamed up on a successful television production, and enthusiasm for the Corps of Discovery was building. However, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, with a staff of four, struggled to keep up with events as we planned for the impact of the bicentennial. The loss of three executive directors in a short time further added to the stresses our leadership faced in keeping the organization running. As treasurer, I was faced with creating proposed balanced budgets based on limited funding resources—mainly membership dues. I quickly learned the potential benefits of having regular revenue streams to support our operations and programs through endowment funds. Our success as an organization rested in large part on the continuing publication of We Proceeded On, keeping the headquarters staffed, and the doors open. The foundation had earlier formed a bicentennial committee generating wonderful enthusiasm, a wealth of ideas, and the promise of endorsements and potential donations. We were well-positioned for the celebration from 2003 to 2006.

The bicentennial did boost the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation in those years. The nation’s interest in the story helped swell our membership upward of 3,500. Staff expanded. Revenue from the bicentennial coin monies and donations from the Montana Bicentennial Commission grew the endowment funds and provided program dollars.

The post-bicentennial years, however, presented a challenge with a steadily declining membership, leadership resignations, and staff turnover. In 2011, as leadership dealt with these pressures, they conducted a membership survey that now gives a benchmark of what our membership desired and valued.

More than one quarter of the membership responded to the survey and provided several planning and budgeting priorities. Top response? Education. Typical comments: “involve youth, have a presence in the school curriculum, keep the Lewis and Clark story at the forefront of the nation’s consciousness, and generate interest.” Today I am pleased to report that the Burroughs/Holland Bicentennial Education Fund will be making grants later this year with the theme of “Kids on the Trail.” The fund has grown to $100,000 (from $3,300 when I was treasurer) and the current campaign is adding to the total to provide even more grants. Also, this year our foundation signed an agreement with the Lewis and Clark Fort Mandan
Foundation to provide content to the Discovering Lewis and Clark website, the “world’s most authoritative website devoted to the Lewis and Clark Expedition,” originally established in 1998 by longtime member Joe Musselman. We continue to publish a quality We Proceeded On, now in its 42nd year, and its articles are available online and are searchable. We are the keepers of the story!

In 2011 members emphasized the need for fundraising for foundation survival. Five years later, I’m pleased to report that we are finishing a fund-raising drive to boost the Burroughs/Holland Bicentennial Education fund. Other foundation funds help support programs including We Proceeded On (supported by the Bronze Fund), the Sherman Library and Archives (supported by the Shattuck Library Fund), the Lewis & Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment (providing grants), and the Montana Bicentennial Sign Fund (to support the repair of Montana signs). Operational funds include the Fellow Fund for partial support of an executive director, the Third Century Operations Fund that helps all operational costs, the Past Presidents’ Project fund, and the Annual Meeting Fund. These funds help keep membership dues at affordable levels. The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation also has established the Lifetime Membership program, and this year established the “tribute” program that recognizes the memory of a departed member or honors the accomplishments of a current member. We have also announced the Legacy Program that provides for the future through gifting to the foundation by members in their wills or as a beneficiary. While most of these funds are small, they provide a solid foundation upon which to build and help fund the next fifty years.

The third priority identified in 2011 was outreach. The Orderly Report was reinstated as a result. Another facet of our outreach is the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Facebook page that now has as many followers as we do members. The foundation website also keeps members informed with its calendar, chapter information, and member benefits. Since the survey, two or three very successful regional meetings have been conducted annually. They are a great way to showcase Lewis and Clark sites and involve more local members. Chapters continue to do a great job of recruiting members and hosting meetings and projects. The board of directors has taken the initiative to meet with members wherever possible, especially at board meetings. They have also committed to meet with other trail groups when possible.

The final priority identified in 2011 was trail stewardship. Half of the responding members felt this was the most important priority. I am pleased to report that thanks to the Lewis & Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment we have made significant grants for five consecutive years in this program. Over $270,000 has been dispersed to chapters and local groups all along the trail to make improvements or interpret the trail. These amazing projects range from trail work on the Lolo Trail in Idaho to new interpretive signs along the Ohio River. Our foundation is also an active member and advocate in the Partnership for the National Trails System. This organization advocates for all national scenic and historic trails. We are the stewards of the trail!

I feel confident the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation is strongly positioned as we approach 2018 and commemorate our fiftieth annual meeting, and our fiftieth anniversary in 2019. Again, I would like to thank each of you for helping make this happen with your time, dollars, and heart. This past year has been personally rewarding. I have asked much of you over the year, and together, we have accomplished great things. We are keeping the interest in Lewis and Clark alive. We are a passionate group of people, but we know how to have fun, too. I hope you will continue to be passionate about the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, the Lewis and Clark story, and enjoy the beautiful Lewis and Clark trail. Happy trails and many thanks.

—Steve Lee
Clarkston, Washington

Attention Lewis and Clark Trail Stewards!

October 1 is the deadline for submitting a Bicentennial Trail Stewardship Endowment Grant request for the 2017 grant year. See www.lewisandclark.org/grants for the application and guidelines.

Call Lindy Hatcher at 406-454-1234 if you have questions or need help with the application.
Dear Editor,

One of the more charming entries in the Lewis and Clark journals is Meriwether Lewis’s tribute to Toussaint Charbonneau’s boudin blanc (literally “white pudding,” although it’s actually a sausage). Lewis had a generally unfavorable view of Charbonneau except when it came to his campfire cooking. Boudin blanc is a pork sausage, but Charbonneau, as Lewis noted in his journal entry of May 9, 1805, made do with the choice cut of a freshly killed buffalo, chopped up and kneaded with suet, salt, pepper, and flour, and stuffed into a casing of buffalo intestine, then “baptised in the missouri ... and bobbed into the kettle; from whence after it be well boiled it is taken and fryed with bears oil until ... brown, when it is ready to asswage the pangs of a keen appetite.”

I think of Lewis’s paean to Charbonneau’s boudin blanc whenever I’m in New York City and having dinner at Bar Boulud, a charming Broadway bistro opposite Lincoln Center. Boudin blanc has been a staple on the menu there since it opened in 2008. Bar Boulud is one of my favorite restaurants, and two times out of three its savory, delicate boudin blanc is my default order. It has a light taste and texture unlike any sausage I’ve ever eaten and is served along with sections of caramelized apple on a bed of mashed potatoes with truffle shavings. When I was there a few months ago I couldn’t resist taking a photo.

For more on Bar Boulud in New York, see www.barboulud.com/nyc.

Dear Editor,

Now that the dust has settled a little, I would like to comment on the reception for my article “My Friend and Companion” (We Proceeded On, 41:1-2) With all of my historical writing over the years I have encountered both avid support and very negative criticism, but I must say the reaction to this particular article was unprecedented. I expected some readers of We Proceeded On would utterly reject my thesis, but I was unprepared for the level of invective it unleashed. It was a new experience to have people question my personal integrity, my motives, and even my patriotism. It’s sadly clear that somewhere in the brouhaha the entire point of the article got lost.

I first began to suspect that there was a homosexual element to the Lewis and Clark story after viewing the Ken Burns documentary on the Corps of Discovery. My hunch was strengthened after reading Stephen Ambrose’s Undaunted Courage—not because of anything that Burns or Ambrose revealed, but because the lives of Lewis and Clark so closely followed a pattern for homosexual lives in early America that I had been uncovering with my research.

I launched a multi-year research project that included reading all of the primary, and many of the secondary, sources. I traveled to St. Louis and to Philadelphia to do original archival investigations. In time I felt I had assembled enough pieces of the puzzle to make a strong case to anyone who had a basic knowledge of LGBT American history. But I was also aware of our foundation, paused until, as he says, “the dust has settled” and offers this summary of his intent and the reactions.]

An Author’s Response

[From the editor: Last year we published a two-part article by William Benemann that elicited a great deal of discussion and numerous letters to the editor. Mr. Benemann, a member
that I was far from convincing anyone who did not have a good grasp of that particular historical context. Unfortunately, I had run out of places to search. In 2006 I published my background research as a separate book, Male-Male Intimacy in Early America (New York: Harrington Park Press), and then filed away my unpublished and unpublishable article on Lewis and Clark. I turned to other projects.

Then I saw the CFP [call for proposal] for We Proceeded On, and I had hope. Surely the members of the LCTHF, who were so deeply steeped in Lewis and Clark history, would be able to suggest further leads for me to follow. In the very least they would be able to suggest alternative interpretations for my evidence that would help me to hone my argument. I was delighted when my article was accepted—and gob-smacked by the response. I thought I had made the tentative nature of my conclusions clear. At the beginning of the article I wrote, “[P]erhaps it is time to confront whatever controversy may arise, to explore this particular question in more depth, to lay out the evidence as it is now known, and to suggest some preliminary conclusions, with the caveat that much more needs to be uncovered before the issue can be fully understood.” Somehow this message was lost on many of the readers, resulting in a torrent of angry letters denouncing me and everything I had proposed. Most disturbing of all for me were the calls to fire Bob Clark as editor, for having allowed an historian to present an unpopular thesis.

There were a few letters of support, for which I am grateful. Of the negative letters that were published, I most appreciated the one from Mary Conrad, which appeared in the February 2016 issue. I sincerely thank her for her close reading of my article and for her cogent criticism…

From the letters published in WPO I am assuming that my article convinced no one, but I hope that it opened at least a small crack of possibility in the thinking of some readers, and that in the future when they are re-reading a journal or analyzing a newly-discovered letter, a word or a phrase will jump out at them that otherwise would not have, and we will move one step closer to understanding the relationship shared by these remarkable men. I should be extremely happy.

William Benemann
San Francisco, Calif.
The Ordway Junket

by Steve Evans and Allen Pinkham

On their return trip from the Pacific Coast in 1806, the men of the Corps of Discovery had time on their hands while waiting in Kamiah Valley along the Clearwater River for the Bitterroot snows to melt. One of the most ignored episodes of the expedition took place during this interim—a trip to the middle Snake River region and a gorge, 7,900 feet deep, that would eventually be named “Hells Canyon.” Thirty-year-old Sergeant John Ordway of New Hampshire led the junket and kept a spare record of it in his journal. Robert Frazer was with Ordway and probably wrote of it also but, unfortunately, his journal has not been found. Luckily, Patrick Gass and Captains Lewis and Clark all recorded in their journals some of what was described to them by the participants. It was a rich adventure and perhaps an impossible mission without help from different tribal members nearly every step of the way.

On Sunday, May 25, 1806, Private Silas Goodrich left Camp Chopunnish and traveled about half a dozen miles upstream to a village on the opposite side of the Clearwater River. After doing some trading, Goodrich returned and reported seeing salmon, “fat and fine,” which the Nez Perces informed him came from a place on Pik’u-nen (Lewis’s [Snake] River). Goodrich’s report was probably the inspiration for the captains to send a special three-man task force to “that place” where salmon might be “procured in abundance.”

Sergeant John Ordway and Privates Robert Frazer and Peter Weiser were chosen to go, to trade for salmon, and return the next day if possible. At eight in the morning, on a cool and cloudy Tuesday, May 27, they began with the serious undertaking of swimming their saddle horses and pack stock across the swollen Clearwater River. With their saddles and equipment stacked in the center of their canoe, they poled and paddled for the far bank. Someone held the lead ropes of the horses. In August, this location was an easy ford, but the end of May was a time of icy cold water and deep treacherous currents. There was ample opportunity for catastrophe, but they made their way across safely. Once on the south bank (modern Kamiah, Idaho), at the camp of Chief Red Grizzly Bear, they were joined by three young Nimíipuu men and, together, they rode back up the trail that initially had brought the Corps of Discovery to the Kamiah Valley. Based on Ordway’s journal, it is difficult to trace their route precisely, but they rode about five miles up Commeap Creek (Lawyer’s Creek), “left this creek ascended a high hill on a plain and proced. on.” So undoubtedly their route took them past or through Chief Tın-na-che-moo-toolt’s (the Broken Arm) village and their own camp of May 10-12, along Lawyer’s Creek. There were several routes out of the canyon, all of them steep for horse travel, but many that were possible. An old trail led up a ridge parallel to Suzie Creek and may have been the one used.
This was the trail descended by the expedition just before the Grand Council on May 10–12, 1806.

Once on top, horse travel was easy, and they continued along their old route for a short while. Then they left their old trail and headed generally west, following the open divide between Lawyer’s Creek to the south and Long Hollow Creek to the north. They probably passed a little to the south of the modern hamlet of Nez Perce, the county seat of Lewis County, Idaho.

Because Lawyer’s Creek flows in a long curve or bow, the Ordway troupe’s relatively straight line of travel finally began to bring them back, like a bow string to a bow, into the proximity of Lawyer’s Creek and Canyon. Because they were now far upstream, the trail down to the canyon floor had a vertical drop of only about 400 feet. Where they had made their morning ascent, it was about 1,300 feet.

Ordway wrote that they passed a lodge where they struck the creek again, and followed said creek about eight miles farther upstream, and came to one of Chief Twisted Hair’s villages. He was the chief who had taken care of their horses during the winter of 1805-06. Ordway never names Twisted Hair in his account, but his description as the one “which took care of the horses,” or the “old chief,” clearly identifies him. In an earlier journal entry where we know he was referring to Twisted Hair, he also called him the “old chief.”

Later, Lewis confirms that indeed Ordway, Weiser, and Frazer were with Twisted Hair when he wrote June 6: “This morning Frazier returned having been in quest of some roots and bread which had left at the lodge of the Twisted hair on his way to the fishery on Lewis’s river.” While Ordway and crew were listening to the thunder and trying to stay dry huddled by Twisted Hair’s fires, both Lewis and Clark were concerned over the whereabouts of Chief Twisted Hair, upon whom they were depending to guide or provide guides for the return over the Bitterroots. What did they expect him to do—hang around Camp Chopunnish and wait for the snow to melt?

They need not have worried. Twisted Hair, a *mijidoxat*, was responsible to many people scattered over a wide region. Besides, he was an experienced mountain traveler, and knew that it would be weeks before the white men would be able to traverse the Bitterroot Mountains. In the meantime, Twisted Hair relieved the three young men of Kamiah of their guide duties, and they turned back toward the Clearwater River. Twisted Hair would personally conduct the Ordway party to the fishing place.

Obviously there had been some miscommunication over the distance between Kamiah Valley and the Lewis (Snake) River fishery, for they had already ridden, not a half-day’s ride, but all day and perhaps 26 miles to Twisted Hair’s village, located where Willow Creek flows into Lawyer’s Creek. Next morning, Wednesday the 28th, they set out early with Twisted Hair and another Indian leading. Ordway wrote that they rode “on a plain” indicating they were up and out of the creek bottom.

They passed between Mason Butte (Talmaks Butte) and Cottonwood Butte, both heavily timbered, which rise out of the plain. These buttes, both sacred sites as *weéyekin* locations to the Nez Perces, are obvious landmarks gracing the western skyline from almost anywhere on the prairie; it is too bad neither was mentioned by Ordway, for they would provide reference points.

Ordway, Twisted Hair, and the others soon found themselves in the timber and heading west. After a couple of hours, they turned southwest. Still in a forest of ponderosa, lodgepole, and fir, they had entered a large bench country, where the ground sloped upward and finally into a long, rough, table-top ridge known to the Nimiipuu as Wayatinwaus, a place to receive the guardian spirit, later named Craig Mountain by the settlers. This high tableland was incised by a number of creeks dropping off to both the Salmon River on the south and the Snake River on the west.

Two hours on horseback probably brought the small group near the headwaters of Deer Creek, which falls 3,000 feet and enters the Salmon River about fourteen miles up from where the Salmon mingles with the Snake. They pushed on through a rugged area that remains remote to this day. The horses struggled against scattered snow patches and downed timber, then “towards evening,” Ordway wrote, “we descended a bad hill down on a creek,” and “followed it down Some distance and arrived at a village where we Camped.” From the saddle that day, Ordway counted 14 deer and several mountain sheep.
The village was located partway down the west side of Deer Creek on a bench, about where the timber begins to give way to open basalt-studded breaks. Located far from the river, the “village” was likely a seasonal root-gathering and hunting camp.

The travelers spent another rainy night (May 28), and the next morning it rained more. Ordway wrote that Robert Frazer “got 2 Spanish mill dollars from a squaw for an old razer.” And Ordway went on to speculate: “we expect they got them from the Snake Indians who live near the Spanish country to the south.” Neither Lewis nor Clark made any mention of the Spanish dollars in their journals, but Patrick Gass, who received the story secondhand, reported that “there are several dollars among these people which they get in some way.” And he specifically identifies the two dollars Frazer traded for as having come from around the neck of a Snake Indian whom the Nez Perces had killed some time earlier. Frazer’s trade for the dollars reveals the wide-ranging commercial network that linked the Nez Perces to many people in faraway places.1

After breakfast, Ordway’s party, still led by Twisted Hair and his companion, descended along a narrow trail. “Shortly” all arrived at the Salmon River, called by Ordway “a fork of the kimoo-enim or Lewises river,” known to the Nez Perces as Tamáánumma. The five riders were now in the bottom of the lower Salmon Gorge and, from where they first came to the water’s edge, the river runs generally west.

Twisted Hair’s guiding brought the party to the Salmon at or near the mouth of Deer Creek just a half mile above the mouth of Eagle Creek, another of those incising streams coming from the north. The river bank was easily traversed here on foot or horseback, one of the few areas of the lower Salmon where this was possible since the slopes running from basalt bluffs to the water’s edge were relatively gentle. They followed the bank, Ordway wrote, for “Some distance” and then “bore to the right up a creek.”

Although he does not say so in his journal, Ordway could not have ridden along the Salmon much farther. It was only about eight more miles down the Salmon to Lewis’s or Snake River, and one might wonder, reading his journals or looking at a flat map, why they did not simply follow the Salmon River to its juncture with Lewis’s River. But Twisted Hair knew what he was doing.

Just three miles beyond the mouth of Wapshilla Creek, the creek they “bore up,” would have brought the travelers to “Blue Canyon,” where the Salmon runs between high, stone bluffs, dangerous and impractical for any travel. Lewis, who must have quizzed the men on this topic, declared in his own journal that the river was “as one continued rapid about 150 Yds. wide its banks are in most places solid and perpendicular rocks, which rise to a great hight; its hills are mountains high.” Certainly Twisted Hair knew that continuing down the Salmon would be folly on horseback or afoot. He guided them away from danger and toward a more practical route.

Ordway simply recorded: “passd one lodge crossed a steep bad hill and descended down a long hill an a run pass a large lodge and descended the worst hills we ever saw a road made down.”2 The steep bad hill describes Wapshilla Ridge, which separates the Salmon River drainage from the Snake. Following the Wapshilla Creek trail allows the traveler to top out on Wapshilla Ridge at a lower elevation than following China Creek. Still, it is a steep, rugged climb.

To ascend from the Salmon to a saddle leading to the head of Cottonwood Creek, which drains west into the Snake, is to rise more than 3,500 feet in approximately four miles. Once on top, you can straddle the Wapshilla divide. The party could look to the east northeast about twenty miles and see Cottonwood Butte, passed the day before. Nine miles south, the Salmon River merged with the Snake, but they could not see the waters actually join, as the gnarled end of Wapshilla Ridge blocked that sight. But they could see plainly where the canyons joined and, beyond that (another twenty miles), they looked into the heart of what would come to be called Hells Canyon, 7,913 feet deep, with the Seven Devils Mountains on the east, nearly 10,000 feet in elevation, and the equally high Wallowa Mountains to the west.

No one on the Lewis and Clark Expedition had ever faced a canyon like this before. Where they began their descent, the Snake Canyon was not as deep as many places upstream, yet it was still formidable at more than 4,000 feet down sharp volcanic rock alternat-
ing with steep slopes slick with mud. They crossed through a saddle and into a branch of Cottonwood Creek.

In their descent, they probably worked their way in a northwesterly direction, passing an easy divide between Cottonwood Creek and Big Cougar Creek, then followed down the ridge between the north and south forks of Big Cougar Creek. It was toward evening when they arrived “at the Kimooenim or Lewises river at a fishery at a bad rapid,” wrote Ordway. With moccasined feet and unshod ponies, they had been three days making their “half-day’s ride.”

There is disagreement over the location at which the Ordway-Twisted Hair party crossed Wapshilla Ridge and, consequently controversy, too, over which route they descended to the Snake. According to Idaho historian John Peebles, the Ordway group ascended China Creek, not Wapshilla Creek, and crossed Wapshilla Ridge further to the north and descended to the Snake at Wild Goose Rapids.3 Merle Wells, long-time director of the Idaho Historical Society, has them ascending China Creek and crossing Wapshilla Ridge and descending to the Snake between China Garden Creek and Cave Gulch to McDuff Rapids, a route which parallels the Peebles route, but further south.4

We, the authors, are convinced they crossed the saddle at the head of Wapshilla Creek (paralleling the Merle Wells route, but even further south). Although there is no way of knowing exactly where they went, the evidence we saw when visiting the locale more than a half dozen times suggests they traveled through the top of Cottonwood Creek, which is like a hand with the fingers spread wide at the top, with the “wrist” representing the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. They followed a plain trail through a saddle, then descending by crossing several finger ridges and traversed through another saddle into the Cougar Creek drainage and down to Cougar Bar and Big Cougar Rapids, the Cochrane Rapids, and Cochrane Islands.5

That the Wapshilla Creek-Cottonwood Creek-Big Cougar Creek trail connecting the Salmon country to the Snake drainage was the best saddle horse route was confirmed by Dick Jain (1933-2008) of Lapwai, Idaho, who worked as a cowboy wintering cattle on Cougar Bar. Descending Cottonwood Creek all the way to the Snake was unlikely because that drainage terminates in a series of high, impassable bluffs and waterfalls. Another fact of the terrain that suggests passage into the Cougar Creek drainage is that traveling west in the bowl formed by the headwaters of Cottonwood Creek naturally brings the sojourner to a saddle in the ridge separating Cottonwood Creek from Cougar Creek, which runs southwest.

Ordway noted that they were near a fishery on a “bad rapid,” and there was one large lodge which Ordway estimated as “about 100 feet long and 20 wide.” Just outside this lodge, Twisted Hair told the men to sit down and not go into the lodge until they were invited. Too many times already the white men had poked their heads into, and then entered dwellings that did not belong to them, and Twisted Hair had already told Lewis that the people did not like that. Twisted Hair’s presence with Ordway helped ensure a friendly acceptance and, at the same time, he successfully got the three white men to recognize appropriate tribal protocol. Thus they waited outside and, at length, were invited in. Robes were spread for them to sit on, and they were fed roasted salmon and some “white bread which they call uppah.” Ordway wrote that they ate “hearty of this fat fish but did not eat 1/4 of it.”

Because scholars are unsure of the location of this village, the authors planned to take our camping outfit in a dory from the boat launch at Pittsburgh Landing on the Snake, float downstream and investigate the
possible village sites. Initially, we planned for a summer excursion, but scheduling conflicts forced the authors to hold off launching into the Snake current until the last week of October 2002. It turned out to be the coldest week in October on record. Convinced that Cougar Bar was the correct location, we camped three nights in the canyon, closely examining Cougar Bar and several other possible village locations.

We read volume seven of Gary Moulton’s authoritative edition of the *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* as we rowed downstream and found more clues that fit Cougar Bar than any of the other sites. For example, we located a deep rectangular depression where a long house might have been placed. It was twenty-six paces long and seven paces wide, close to Ordway’s description.

Cougar Bar also fits the general description offered by elder Kew-Kew’-lu-yah h (Jonathan “Billy” Williams) to anthropologist Alice Fletcher in her 1891 interview. One village was named See-wy-yah, which is descriptive of “a sudden turn or bend of the river around a promontory.” This, again, fits the Big Cougar Bar location. See-wy-yah was likely where Ordway and his men found their fishery and began their trade. Other recent investigators have come to the same conclusion.6

The next day, May 30, a few small groups of people left the fishery with nearly all the salmon caught, and the Ordway party waited in anticipation of getting some fish, too. In the meantime, they were offered more roasted salmon to sustain themselves. Ordway wrote that they observed “only three dip nets at 3
places a fishing,” and most of the fish were being caught on the far side of the river in the “whorls and eddys.” Ordway made no comment on any other fishing practices and techniques.\textsuperscript{7} If the fish were running upstream in abundance, it is likely the Nez Perces would have been spearing them and using fish traps, also.

The description of this fishing village upon a “bad rapid” does little by itself to identify its location, because there are many bad rapids on the Snake. Yet there are additional clues which point to the village location being near Big Cougar (Creek) Bar and Cochrane Rapids on the Snake River.

See-wy-yaa village represented not only a fishery, but also a crossroads between the lower Salmon and Clearwater country (modern-day Idaho) and the Wallowa Valley region (of modern-day eastern Oregon). It was a meeting place and a trading center, and folks were coming and going, as alluded to in Ordway’s remark on the 30th that “a number of [Indians?] left this earily with nearly all the Salmon which was caught so we had to wait here to day expecting to git some Salmon.”

People were coming to the site to trade for early salmon, and obviously there were not yet enough caught to satisfy the demand—thus the wait. The observation that only three dip nets were in action surely points to the fact that the salmon were not yet running in force. Twisted Hair and his companion did not leave with Ordway on the morning of Saturday, the 31st, “as they had got no fish yet.”\textsuperscript{8}

Another bit of evidence, suggesting the location of the fishery and the range of activities, is not in Ordway’s written account, but in what he must have reported to Lewis, who wrote in his journal on Monday, June 2nd, that “at the fishery on Lewis’s (Snake) river below the forks (of the Snake and Salmon) there is a very considerable rapid nearly as great from the information of Segt. Ordway as the great falls of the Columbia the river 200 Yds. wide.” This information, comparing Cougar Rapids with the Celilo Falls of the Columbia, sets it apart.

Ordway’s reference to “the great falls of the Columbia” could only be Celilo Falls, near present-day The Dalles, Oregon. Celilo Falls was inundated in 1957 by the rising waters behind The Dalles Dam, but prior to that was one of the great salmon fisheries of the world. There remain hundreds of historical descriptions and thousands of photographs of Celilo, and both authors retain vivid memories of it before its 1957 inundation. Only Cochrane Rapids and Big Cougar Rapids on this portion of the Snake compare with Celilo.

Although Celilo was more than twice the size, in both drop and volume, than any of the middle or lower Snake rapids, there are some aspects of the Cougar Bar–Cochrane Rapids site that are worthy of comparison, albeit on a smaller scale. For example, at Celilo the river appeared to drop sideways, falling from the northern (Washington) shore of the Columbia toward the southern (Oregon) shore generally; that is to say, the falls were not formed by a ledge of rock going in a straight line from shore to shore, but by a series of rag-
ged ledges forming a series of islands and drops that ran parallel to the northern and southern shore. This is the situation, too, at Cochrane Islands. Some are large fields of river rock thrown into islands in the river center. There also are large basalt formations thrusting upward, and the current flows past, between, and sometimes over these rock ledges.

No other rapid on the Snake looks remotely like Celilo. In Ordway’s time the rapids may have been even more abrupt, since in both the late nineteenth century and early twentieth the rapids were blasted with explosives to improve the channel for steamboat navigation.9

It is possible that Ordway being reminded of Celilo was based on something he saw other than the river conditions, which triggered a comparison. Ordway did not write it, but both Clark and Lewis described the lodge (where Ordway, Frazer, and Weiser were required to wait outside) as having a flat roof. Flat roofs were typical of many of the dwellings on the Columbia’s shores at Celilo.

Or perhaps it was the trade Ordway witnessed going on around him. Again, this would not be on a scale with Celilo, where massive exchanges of goods transpired between the products of both the Plains and the Pacific, but the Cochrane Rapids, Cougar Bar area, and even downstream to Cache Creek and McDuff Rapids, were areas where the Wallowa Nez Perces and those of the Clearwater and lower Salmon region connected. Traveling, socializing, and trading were high on the agenda, too, of their Umatilla, Cayuse, and Walla Walla relatives (Sahaptian speakers, although the Cayuse also had their own primary language) coming to this area of the Snake through the Wallowa country from the Blue Mountains and Grande Ronde River country, and beyond.

Access makes a trading center possible, and the See-wy-yaa village produced a prime commodity: early salmon. In that rugged canyon, nature allows trails in few places. And many a ridge that at first looks like a promising route ends in cliffs or steep rockslides. Other trails parallel streams, but likewise disappear in bluffs and waterfalls. While some trails allow people and horses to reach the canyon from the east and others from the west, there are few places where trails from both east and west converge simultaneously on the Snake’s banks. Cougar Bar and downstream environs for several miles constitute one such location. The relatively gentle riverside terrain and the convergence of east and west trails at a prime fishing spot make the Cougar Bar and See-wy-yaa village the likely Wallowa-Clearwater-Salmon hook up.

The presence of Ordway, Frazer, and Weiser may have posed a temporary imposition upon village hospitality. Late May was the early stage of the salmon season, and Ordway wrote that the Indians “have but few Salmon.” Ordway does not say how many salmon he was able to trade for, nor what items he used to strike his deal but, in his journal entry of May 31, the day he and his men left the Snake River, he made the comment that some of the young Indians “stole some of our fish.”

No one has ever questioned Ordway’s statement, the only documentary record of the incident, yet a critical examination of it seems merited on several grounds. Theft in Nez Perce society was rare. This is reflected in the journals of all expedition members. But throughout the expedition, incidents of theft were treated seriously. Why did Ordway not earnestly pursue this case as other episodes of theft were addressed at other times during the expedition? Why were the “thieves” not directly confronted nor redress sought through the offices of Twisted Hair making the expedition’s case to the Fishing Leader? And if fish were taken, why were only “some” of the fish stolen and not “all”? Answers to such questions may provide insight into the “stolen” fish.

Imagine Ordway and his men awakening on the morning of May 31. Did they look about and discover the fish were missing, or did they actually witness the “theft”? There are few trees on Cougar Bar and none of any height, only the Hackberry and Thornbrush Tree (Columbian Hawthorn). Where did they hang the salmon? Maybe they hung them on drying scaffolding constructed of driftwood. It is easy to imagine hanging heavy salmon too low for protection from coyotes, wolves, or camp dogs. And again, if there was a real theft committed by young Indians, why were only “some” stolen and not all? Maybe the seventeen salmon that the expedition packed out of Snake River Canyon were the salmon hanging highest in the brush, and every other fish, the salmon hanging within reach, was taken by camp dogs.
Every Nimipuu fishing village had a Fishing Leader, known as lewtekenweet.¹⁰ His responsibilities were manifold and included, foremost, the equitable distribution of available fish. At the end of May 1806, the large Chinook salmon were not in sufficient numbers in the Clearwater River for the villages located there to harvest adequate fish to feed their people. This is why many people migrated to downriver locations to make early interceptions of the upriver migrating salmon. The fish migrated into Snake River before the Clearwater, and that is one reason why Twisted Hair and others traveled to the Snake River: more salmon, sooner.

By custom or law, visitors to any of the fishing villages had to defer to the Fishing Headman, or Fishing Leader. This is why Ordway wrote on the 30th that “a number of [Indians?] left early with nearly all the Salmon which was caught so we had to wait here to day expecting to git some salmon” and why he observed the following day that “our old chief [Twisted Hair] and his man stayed as they had got no fish yet.”
Why did Ordway receive salmon ahead of Twisted Hair? Did the village lewtek’eneuw’et (Fishing Leader) follow a courtesy of dealing first with guests who had the farthest to travel? Perhaps, but maybe, too, there were simply no more trading goods to be bargained for, and the three white men, who were never invited, posed a temporary imposition upon meager village resources. Still, the whites received the usual hospitality, and then it was time for Ordway and company to move on.

Another possible explanation was that the white men had traded for salmon with persons not authorized by custom to strike a deal. In a time of abundant salmon, this violation might have passed unnoticed, but since there were as yet few salmon, maybe another trading group arrived at See-wy-yaa whose presence also demanded village hospitality—meaning they needed to be fed. If salmon acquired in an “unauthorized trade” were hanging nearby, they were likely subject to an “adjustment” by the Fishing Leader.

There are other scenarios of cultural misunderstanding. Trade amongst the Nimipu was never exclusively an economic activity. It involved diplomacy and ritual that represented several levels ranging from friendship to quasi-kinship. A relationship had to be established before trade could begin. What if Ordway, Weiser, or Frazer made eye contact with a Nez Perce woman, she looked back at him, and he continued to exhibit an obvious interested stare?

In the tribal view, that behavior showed desire for a romantic liaison, one of the best levels of a trade relationship. It is possible, even likely, that the young men did not realize even a temporary “marriage” implied a legitimate expectation that the woman’s relatives could claim property belonging to her “husband.” This was
not something bad, wrong, or immoral; on the contrary, it was practical and a positive and good behavior. Many of these temporary trading patterns became lifelong and even extended between families through generations.

The relatives of any of the women involved with Ordway or either of his men could walk into their camp and legitimately claim whatever they chose. For example, if a woman's brother took any item from her lover, it was said that the lover had been “brother-in-lawed.” Maybe Ordway got “brother-in-lawed,” and maybe he was lucky to get out of camp with his horse and saddle.

This custom has been practiced well into the twentieth century. While there is no documentary evidence that sexual relations occurred at the Snake River village, the possibility cannot be ignored. It cannot be argued that the good sergeant was above such behavior; he had already been involved in a scrape over a woman during the Mandan winter.11

Is it possible that the sergeant and his men traded some of their precious goods for sexual favors instead of the salmon requested by the captains, and then explained their lack of a larger catch on “thieving” young Indian males? The captains might be predisposed to believe them and would not be trotting off seventy miles to check out their story.

The morning after the salmon were supposedly stolen, Ordway wrote, “got up our horses earily and Set out on our return.” Twisted Hair remained behind waiting for his own salmon, so Ordway, his men, and horses traveled back over the “same road” to “the village we left the day before yesterday.” They recrossed Wapshilla Ridge to the Salmon River, then rode along the north bank a few miles to Deer Creek, and ascended to the village where they had traded for the two Spanish mill dollars the night of Wednesday, May 28. They made this leg of the journey without a Nez Perce guide, the only portion traveled so far without one. However, they had ridden this trail just a couple of days earlier with Twisted Hair showing the way, and it was an area of distinctive geographical features—a difficult route, but easy to follow.

Once at the village, they were likely ready to spend the night, but the local miyóaat “directed us another way whi[ch] he said was nearer & a better road and Sent 2 boys to show us the way to a village on the road. They took us over a verry bad hill down on the Thom-

monama river [Salmon river] again then left the river ascended a high long hill near the top of which is a large village we Camped near Sd. village as night came on.” This was a new trail but, again, they had guides, “2 [Nimiipuu] boys.”

The “very bad hill” crossed by Ordway was likely Hoover Point ridge, and it was in this area which Chief Whitebird, Chief Joseph, and others led the non-treaty Nez Perces away from General Oliver Otis Howard following the Battle of Whitebird Canyon, the first fight in the 1877 war. After crossing this “very bad hill,” the entourage was back on the Salmon River only a few miles upstream from where they had been a few hours earlier. They were near the mouth of Maloney Creek, and then began to once again ascend out of the Salmon River canyon on a series of high benches which separate Maloney Creek from Divide Creek.

Somewhere near the top, perhaps near modern-day Keuterville, Idaho (Idaho County), they spent the night in “a large village.” The next morning, Sunday, June 1, they were set on the road again by a young man who got them headed in the right direction down a creek “flowing east,” probably down the headwaters of Cottonwood Creek and likely through the modern hamlet of Cottonwood, Idaho (Idaho County).12 About noon, they came to a lodge “where the trail left the creek,” which places them at a traditional camping location known in the early settlement period as “Chapman’s Crossing,” located where the 1863 reservation line crosses Cottonwood Creek.13

That afternoon, they paralleled Cottonwood Creek on the south side “tho the high plain a good road” and, by evening, they were at another village, located on a portion of the flat bottom near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek and the South Fork of the Clearwater River. Ironically, this was the same village site that was attacked by General Howard on July 6, 1877, and which resulted in driving the non-treaty people on a run for Montana and, ultimately, for those who refused to surrender, to Canada. But the ancestors of some of those welcomed Ordway and his men to their village and, as Ordway wrote, “they appeared verry friendly to us and gave us a large cake of uppah.”

The last day of this adventure (Monday, June 2), they rode down the South Fork of the Clearwater to where it emptied into the Clearwater proper. Ordway mentions
passing two more villages and, then about noon, they arrived opposite Camp Chopunnish and crossed over in an “Indian canoe,” having been deprived of passage in the expedition’s craft because of its being wrecked. They swam the horses across safely, and they were back with some spoiled and some excellent salmon. All in all, it had been a remarkable adventure.

They had traveled with a lot of tribal guidance, from Camp Choppunnish on the Clearwater River, to the lower Salmon River, and on to what would become known as Hells Canyon. This 7,913-foot gorge forms a portion of the modern boundary between the states of Oregon and Idaho. Sergeant John Ordway, the trip leader, accepted help from more than a half dozen different Nimiipuu for various portions of the trip.

Lewis, Clark, and Sergeant Patrick Gass wrote down accounts of the one-week journey based upon what they were told by the participants but, in most modern accounts, the trip is given scant attention. Yet Ordway, Frazer, and Weiser were the first United States citizens to gaze into Hell’s Canyon and the first to actually descend into it, although at the “shallow” northern end. They were also the first to see where the surging Salmon River joined the powerful Snake, and the first to view Oregon’s Wallowa Mountains and Idaho’s Seven Devils Mountains.

But they were not on a sightseeing mission; instead, they were on a quest for salmon for the Corps of Discovery to consume immediately and perhaps to preserve for the march over the Bitterroot Mountains. In this, they were only partially successful, yet their travel alone was an accomplishment. Their ride of Saturday, May 31, where they climbed out of Hells Canyon, descended into the lower Salmon gorge, climbed out of it nearly to the top, crossed over Hoover Point Ridge, and descended to the Salmon once again, only to then ascend out of the canyon one last time, deserves to go in the annals of great horseback rides of the West, and Nez Perce guides had been instrumental in nearly every leg of the journey.

Notes
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5. Field proofing by Steve Evans, spouse Connie, Allen V. Pinkham, and Northwest historian and author Carole Simon Smolinski began in 1998, and continued with visits by these and others, including Nez Perces Rodney Carter, his Yakima wife Cindy, and others each year from 1998 to 2005.
11. James Ronda, Lewis and Clark Among the Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 106. Has to do with Ordway’s problems at the Mandan village over a married woman.
13. This Cottonwood Creek begins on Cottonwood Butte and flows generally east and empties into the South Fork of the Clearwater River. Explained due to proliferation of “Cottonwood Creeks” in the region.
Beacon Rock

INTRODUCTION

Beacon Rock, a basalt monolith about thirty-five miles east of Vancouver, Washington, on the north bank of the Columbia River, was named by William Clark as the Corps of Discovery voyaged downriver toward the Pacific Ocean on October 31, 1805. Clark’s diary entry called the landmark “Beaten Rock,” an error corrected by Lewis on April 6, 1806, as the men began their return trip. In his entry of that date Lewis comments that “beacon rock…may be esteemed the head of tide water.”

In 1811 Alexander Ross of the Astorians called the rock Inoshoeack Castle. The rock was known as Castle Rock until, in 1916, the United States Board of Geographic Names restored the name Beacon Rock.

As related in the story that follows, in 1915 the rock was purchased by Henry J. Biddle (1862-1928). In 1924 he described the history of the rock and his construction of the famous trail to its peak in an article in The Spectator, a weekly tabloid-sized newspaper published in Portland, Oregon. The piece was reprinted, courtesy of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation member George Tweney and with the permission of the Biddle family, as a supplementary publication of We Proceeded On in 1978. We are pleased to reprint it again for the pleasure of our readers.

Henry Biddle was a descendant of Nicholas Biddle, who in 1809 accepted the task of editing and publishing a narrative of the expedition of Lewis and Clark from William Clark. Clark made the original journals available to Biddle in 1810, and by 1814 he had a finished draft of the manuscript ready for the typesetter. Nicholas Biddle’s election to the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1814 interrupted his work, however, and Paul Allen, a Philadelphia newspaper editor, took over the task of completing and preparing Biddle’s work for the press. Allen’s, rather than Biddle’s, name appears on the title page of the two-volume set titled History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark (Philadelphia: Bradsford & Inskeep, 1814).

As Henry Biddle tells us, he purchased the rock to save it from destruction after it had been acquired by others for quarry purposes. He also had a strong ambition to build a trail to the top, an ambition fulfilled between 1915 and 1918. Following Biddle’s death in 1928, his heirs attempted to gift the rock and about 260 acres of surrounding property to Washington State for use as a park. Initially Washington declined the donation due to stipulations in the grant regarding maintenance of the trail and property, and because Washington Governor Roland H. Hartley considered its donation a tax evasion on the part of the owners. However, when news appeared in the Portland papers that Oregon State Parks had entered into discussions with the Biddle heirs, the Evergreen State and its new Governor Clarence D. Martin changed course. Additional development to the area was done by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Biddle graduated from Yale Sheffield Scientific School in 1882, followed by a degree at the Royal Academy in Freiberg, Germany, School of Mines. He then worked in anthropology with his uncle, Spencer Baird, in Florida, New Mexico, and Kentucky under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution. Subsequent work for the US Geological Survey brought him to Portland. Biddle’s interests included farming, botany, archeology, and conservation. He helped support scientific studies by experts such as Julian Steward, William Duncan Strong, and W. Egbert Strong, all of whom published their findings in American Anthropologist.

Today Beacon Rock State Park comprises some five thousand acres of woods, meadows, riverfront, creeks, waterfalls, as well as the namesake monolith. Located on the north bank of the Columbia River, it is a basalt volcanic plug. The hike up the rock is one mile in length, with an elevation gain of 848 feet. Hiking is only permitted on the northwest side, where Biddle’s trail was built. Climbers and hikers should check the park’s website for access, as the rock is closed seasonally, in part to protect nesting birds and cultural resources.

—Robert Clark
Legends and Traditions of Beacon Rock

By Henry J. Biddle

Beacon Rock, like a huge pillar, rises on the north bank of the Columbia River, a few miles below the Cascades, and nearly forty east of Portland. Its history begins in remote geologic times, before the Cascade Range was elevated, or the vast sheets of basalt were poured out, which now form the cliffs along the Columbia Gorge. It was the pipe, or chimney, through which the lava of a volcano reached the surface. This lava cooled as a frothy, slaggy mass of red color when it came in contact with the air; but in depth it formed a dense, hard gray rock, and, through contraction in cooling, split into pillars.

The surface of the earth must have been about at what is now the summit of the rock when this eruption took place, and this red rock still shows there. The pillars or columns, formed by the cooling of the rock, are of unusually large size, being from four to eight feet in diameter at the base of the rock, and higher up reaching a diameter of as many as twenty feet. They formed at right angles to the cooling surface, and in consequence those on the sides of the rock are horizontal, or nearly so, but where the surface of the rock has been removed by erosion, on the river side, the columns in its center are seen to be vertical.

It seems to have become the fashion for writers to speak of this rock as a “monolith,” a word which means “single stone”; but from the forgoing description it is evident that this term cannot be properly used.

After the great sheets of Columbia River Basalt had been poured out, the Cascade Range was uplifted; and during this uplift the river kept its channel cut practically to sea level. Thus the present gorge of the Columbia was formed. All the softer material surrounding our volcanic pipe having been washed away, the mass of hard rock was left standing alone in its present stately grandeur.

The Indians of this region were, no doubt, well acquainted with the rock, but there is not a particle of evidence that they ever climbed it, or used it for signaling purposes. Indeed, even had they been capable of the feat of ascending the rock, their superstitions would probably have kept them from doing so.

That they had such fears is evidenced by the warning an old Indian, living near the Cascades, gave us shortly after work had commenced on the trail to the summit of the rock. It will be remembered that the year 1916 started with a succession of violent sleet and snow storms. This old Indian told us the bad weather was a sign of the anger of the gods, anger caused by our having blasted on the rock. The Cascade Indians called the rock “Che-cheop-tin,” but they could not explain the meaning of this name, which was, no doubt, given to it by some more ancient inhabitants of the region who they displaced.
Perhaps another fact might be taken as evidence that the rock was considered a sacred spot by the Indians: In 1904 some carved wooden figures, resembling “totems,” were found at the base of the cliff on the east side of the rock, and at a place where the cliff overhangs. These figures, two of which are shown here, are about three feet high, and show traces of red and black coloring. In the narrative of the Lewis and Clark Expedition mention is made of the Indians near the Cascades having in their abodes similar figures, which they adorned with trophies of war and the chase.

This brings us to the first historical mention of the rock by the great explorers. Their toilsome journey across the continent nearing its end, the last obstruction at the Cascades safely passed, they here recognized the effect of the ocean tides, and the rock must have seemed to them a beacon guiding them to the haven of their destination.

In Captain Clark’s diary, under date of November 2, 1805, he mentions it as “a remarkable high rock on Star’d Side about 800 feet high & 400 yds, round, the Beaten Rock.” On their return journey in the spring of 1806, the explorers camped near the base of the rock, and in their mention of it they correct the original error in spelling. Captain Lewis, under date of April 6, 1806, speaks of it as “the beacon rock which may be esteemed the head of tide water.” The remarkable accuracy of observation shown by these explorers is witnessed by the fact that the Geological Survey gives the height of the rock as approximately 850 feet above sea level, or something more than 800 feet above the level of the river at that point.

The name “Beacon Rock” seems to have been forgotten. On a map accompanying the report of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition, and dated 1841, the name appears as “Castle Rock.” How early this designation was applied will perhaps never be known, but it is certain that the later name clung to it, and was generally used until 1916. In that year the United States Board of Geographic Names rendered a decision that the correct name should be “Beacon Rock.” As should be the case, that decision has been practically universally accepted.

The ground upon which the rock stands was patented by the United States government to Philip Ritz. He was an Oregon pioneer of 1850, and worked assiduously to promote the building of the Northern Pacific Railroad to the Pacific Coast. In this way he became acquainted with Jay Cooke, the Philadelphia banker and leading financier of the country during the period of the Civil War. Ritz deeded the rock to Cooke in 1870. What Mr. Cooke’s plans were in acquiring the rock will perhaps never be known; correspondence with his relatives in Philadelphia only elicited the information that he did not intend to build a castle upon it. Jay Cooke became bankrupt in the disastrous financial panic of 1873, but he afterwards settled with his creditors, and remained the owner of the rock for many years.

However, he let the taxes on it become delinquent, and a portion of the property was sold for taxes to a neighboring landowner. In 1904, Charles E. Ladd of the well-known family of bankers in Portland, learning that some persons were trying to acquire the rock for quarry purposes, bought the portion that had been sold for taxes. Other persons, acting through Mr. Ladd, bought the remainder of the property from Mr. Cooke, who was still living at a ripe old age in Philadelphia. Mr. Ladd’s idea was always to preserve the rock from defacement, and when he and his associates sold it to me in 1915, a clause was inserted in the deed to that effect.

My purpose in acquiring the property was simply and wholly that I might build a trail to its summit. This had been in my mind for many years, and the idea of building a model trail in perhaps the most difficult location in which a trail had ever been built appealed to me most strongly. But before describing the trail up the rock, it will be well to mention those who ascended the rock without the aid of a trail.

For nearly a hundred years after the first white man saw the rock, no one seems to have made any serious attempt to reach its summit. Then on August 24, 1901, Frank J. Smith and Charles Church of Portland, and George Purser of White Salmon, made the
ascent. These first climbers showed great skill and courage. After they had placed spikes and ropes at the most difficult places, the task was naturally made much easier. They were followed by many others, among whom was Mrs. Frank J. Smith, the first woman to make the climb.

Many subsequent climbers left their names, inscribed on bits of paper, in a tin tobacco box on the summit, but so many of these names were obliterated that it would be impossible to give any complete list. Mention will only be made of a climb by a party of Mazamas, under the leadership of E. C. Sammons, on Oct. 11, 1914, when 47 persons reached the top. This was undoubtedly the largest party to climb the rock before the building of the trail.

Work was commenced on the trail in October, 1915, and it was completed in April 1918. Omitting time lost in the winter, about two years were consumed in the work. While this length of time might seem unreasonable, it must be remembered that much of the construction of the trail was like driving a tunnel—only one man had room to work at the head. I was fortunate at the start in securing a very competent foreman in the person of Charles Johnson, who had held a similar position in the building of the Columbia Highway. He not only helped me in many of the minor details of engineering, but also exercised such care in the work that in spite of the extremely dangerous location, it was consummated without the loss of a single life, or even a minor accident.

Owing to the steepness of the rock, it was impossible to survey much of the trail in advance. All that could be done was to drive a narrow trail ahead, selecting the most suitable points as they were reached. After eight months of this work, not knowing at any time that an impassable point might not be encountered, gentler slopes were reached, and it was possible to climb to the summit, and stake out the location of the trail to that point. This I did on May 16, 1916, and hoisted the American flag on the summit, replacing the small fragment still left of the flag put there in 1901. After that, there was no uncertainty that the trail could be completed as planned.

The trail is about 4,500 feet long, 4 feet wide, and with a maximum grade of 15 percent. It extends from the North Bank Highway, on the north side of the rock, to within about 20 feet of the summit. The rock there becomes so narrow that the construction of a wide trail was impracticable, so a narrow flight of steps leads to the topmost point. There are 52 hairpin turns in the trail, 22 wooden bridges, and over a hundred concrete slabs, spanning the minor fissures in the cliff.

By building concrete slabs on the outer edges of the trail much excavation, and consequent defacement of the rock, was avoided. But this work was naturally expensive, as all the material, gravel, sand, cement, and even water, had to be packed up on the backs of donkeys. At all the steeper points the outside of the trail is guarded by a railing of wire cable supported on iron stanchions. At many of the turns there are ornamental railings of wrought iron.

The building of the trail opened to view portions of the rock which had, no doubt, never before been seen closely by human eye. It revealed unsuspected beauties. The color of the cliff, due to mosses and lichens, varies in every shade of gray, brown, and green. During the winter months, this coloring is the most beautiful; and from April to November there is a succession of wildflowers blooming in every crevice. Not counting the blooming shrubs, there are probably not fewer than sixty species of flowers blooming on the rock, a remarkable number for such a small area.

Space does not permit the mention of all these, but one of the most notable is Pentstemon rupicola, a bright crimson flower, growing from imperceptible crevices in the face of the cliff, and blooming about the middle of May. Later in the season, Pentstemon rich-
ardsonii, pink in color, blooms in profusion on the south side of the rock, and at the same time the bluebells, often mingled with it, give a wonderful contrast of color.

The view from the summit is beautiful, and unique, due to the fact that one looks down almost perpendicularly, as from an aeroplane. The range of vision embraces the gorge of the Columbia from Wind Mountain to Crown Point. Yet, in my opinion, the views seen ascending the trail are the most beautiful. The distant background is then framed by the rugged contour of the cliff in the foreground, and to see the rock one should stop at every turn in the trail, and take a good look.

Since the completion of the trail, it has been open to the public without charge, and with only the restrictions that would be enforced in any public park. Thousands climb to the summit every year, and the Mazamas, the Oregon Trails Club, and other organizations make annual visits to it.

But it is a sad commentary on our civilization that a few among those who visit Beacon Rock seem to delight in doing all they can to destroy its beauty. Mosses and ferns are torn up along the trail, the wildflowers picked, loose rocks rolled down, and names scratched at every available point. The perpetrators of these deeds, when called to order by the caretaker, often retaliate with the vilest abuse. When will the uncivilized element of our population be educated to the point that it will be content to enjoy beauty without trying to destroy it?

[Editorial note from Robert Lange who prepared the reprint of Biddle’s article for the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation: “Readers will note that in the final paragraph of his monograph, Biddle alludes to vandalism along the trail to the summit of Beacon Rock. Regrettably, this condition continues to exist today. Late in 1976, vandals caused such extensive damage that the trail was closed to the public for several months until repairs were effected.”]

Notes
4. Ella E. Clark, Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 105, presents an Indian account of the creation of today’s Beacon Rock based on a story by Horace S. Lyman. In that story Coyote turns his two sons into Beacon Rock and Rooster Tail Rock in his disgust over their jealous fighting over a beautiful girl.
In the first of this three-part series we investigated the explicit references to Captain James Cook found in the journals of Lewis and Clark, emphasizing the intermediating roles played by Alexander Mackenzie and John Meares. In the second we viewed the obvious influences of Cook-related literature on Lewis’s famous text describing the Great Falls of the Missouri. There remains one tantalizing prospect for literary inspiration grounded in Cook and the muses of that era, one of the best-known passages in the Meriwether Lewis oeuvre—his 31st birthday rumination of 18 August 1805.

Students of the expedition are familiar with the general context of this passage. He had just completed his supremely important vanguard maneuver reaching out to the Lemhi Shoshone, or more particularly, their prospective commitment of horses that would take the expedition westward into Columbia River country. Like his Great Falls composition, Lewis’s reflective journal for this venture is well written in its studied, colorful phrasing and dramatic import. In many ways, Lewis seems to have perceived reaching and surmounting the Continental Divide as the capstone of his voyage, notwithstanding the fact that he stood a thousand miles from his nominal destination, Cook’s Pacific. Abruptly appended at the end-of-a-busy-day entry we read in his journal:

...This day I completed my thirty first year, and conceived that I had in all human probability now existed about half the period which I am to remain in this Sublunary world. I reflected that I had as yet done but little, very little indeed, to further the happiness of the human race, or to advance the information of the succeeding generation. I viewed with regret the many hours I have spent in indolence, and now soearly feel the want of that information which those hours would have given me had they been judiciously expended. [B]ut since they are past and cannot be recalled, I dash from me the gloomy
thought and resolved in future, to redouble my exertions and at least indeavour to promote those two primary objects of human existence, by giving them the aid of that portion of talents which nature and fortune have bestoed on me; or in the future, to live for mankind, as I have heretofore lived for myself.¹

This passage has long intrigued historians of the expedition who earnestly scour the journals looking for self-disclosing or self-reflective thoughts by the captains. This instance is rare, perhaps unique, and therefore remarkable. The melancholy subtext, notwithstanding the rededication to a more productive outlook going forward, can be, and has been, read as a foreshadowing of Lewis’s end-of-life psychological travail. As a rejoinder, Stephen Ambrose noted that “It was not unusual for men of the Enlightenment to write such stuff,” nodding in Thomas Jefferson’s direction for an example but without further explication.²

Deconstructing the text, a few key words or phrases stand out that provide clues to both the identification of Lewis’s hidden muses and the emotive profile his attempt at self-analysis provided via coded language. To start, the Latinate word “Sublunary” is very unusual. In the large volume of Lewis’s journaling text it appears here solely, and must be read as a kind of literary marker and psychological emblem. To document Ambrose’s point, the naturalist George Forster in his account of James Cook’s second voyage, former marine corporal John Ledyard in his history of Cook’s third voyage, and John Meares’s account of his fur trading exploits in Cook’s wake, all used the word. These men all did so in a common context—indigenous people were being referenced—though with varying nuances. Forster, allowing for “the imperfect sublunary happiness” endemic to all of humanity, found Native life in Tahiti to be as desirable as any on earth. In a related fashion, Ledyard used the term to describe the rapture of a shipmate who had fallen for a Polynesian beauty. In contrast, Meares, describing the Mowahchat of Nootka Sound, referred to their belief in the “hereafter, beyond the reach of sublunary sorrow.”³

The emotional dichotomy we see in these references, roughly contemporaneous with Lewis’s, betoken the extreme range of moods at the heart of human existence. This reflects one of the principal themes of English poet Edward Young’s (1683–1765) influential “Night Thoughts” (1742), especially the fugitive nature of time that serves as the motivating theme for Lewis’s reflection, and the whipsawing humans endure between the poles of bliss and moonlight melancholy. These sentiments proved to be powerfully attractive to proto-Romantics such as Lewis. Like James Thomson, author of “Seasons” and cited in part 2 of this series, Young was also on every young gentleman’s reading list in the late Enlightenment.

A few short passages from Young will suffice for documentation, starting with “Night First: On Life, Death and Immortality”:

> Of Time’s enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
> Strikes empires from the root; each moment plays
> His little weapon in the narrower sphere
> Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
> The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.
> Bliss! Sublunary bliss! Proud words and vain!

“Ft. Mandan Winter” by Michael Haynes. Lewis’s melancholy birthday reflections in August 1806 are mirrored in this moment during the previous winter on the banks of the Missouri.
From “Night Second: On Time, Death, and Friendship”:

O time! than gold more sacred; more a load
Than lead to fools; and fools reputed wise.
What moment granted man without account?
What years are squandered, wisdom’s debt unpaid!
Our wealth in days, all due to that discharge.
Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he’s at the door,
Insidious Death, should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the prisoner free.  

The very title of Young’s poem perfectly reflects the nocturnal timing of Lewis’s reflection, and the indictment of self-gratification and the sensual life in verse seems to echo the explorer’s critique of himself in prose. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Lewis’s entry for the following day is dominated by his discussion of Shoshone gender relations, guidance to his men on what might be called sexual diplomacy in the wake of some of them having “made very polite to those tawny damsels,” and an inquiry into the occurrence of venereal disease among these people. In short, Lewis wrote his birthday reflection at a time of sexual temptation and was possibly fearful that he had lost his ascetic grip.

The other key word in Lewis’s birthday contemplation is “indolence.” This stands out because James Thomson, best known for “The Seasons,” was also held in regard for another famous allegorical poem, “The Castle of Indolence.” From the Great Falls sequence we can safely assume that if Lewis read the one, he was likely familiar with the other as well. Touching on some of the same themes as Young’s “Night Thoughts,” the first canto of “Indolence” can be read as an indictment of over-indulgence in liquor, partying, and living a life of comfort; it speaks of a room filled with “one full-swelling Bed” with its cushy pillows, “Wines high-flavor’d and rich Viands,” and the freedom to “melt the Time in Love.” A very telling line reads: “But not even Pleasure to Excess is good, What most elates then Sinks the soul as low.” Thomson’s “Indolence” is also the likely source and inspiration behind the Salvator Rosa trope found in so many exploratory accounts, including Lewis’s Great Falls of the Missouri text discussed in the second part of this series. Another first canto extract begins by describing how a “Pencil” can bring landscapes to life, complete with operatic atmospherics such as when “the black Tempest strikes the astonish’d Eyes.” This passage ends with these five lines, trumpeting the skills of the Picturesque school of art:

Now down the Steep the flashing Torrent flies,
The trembling Sun now plays o’er the Ocean blue;
And now rude Mountains frown amid the Skies;
Whate’er Lorrain light-touch’d with softening Hue,
Or savage Rosa dash’d, or learned Poussin drew.
The second canto of “The Castle of Indolence” provides the redemptive rejoinder to the boyish innocence and simplicity of the “Morn of Youth” that inevitably turns into “Manhood’s thorny Ways.” In this section diligence triumphs over idleness in the textual form of the false enchanter or wizard “Indolence” that is vanquished by the “Knight of Arts and Industry.” The following lines from the poem are almost biographic as pertains to Lewis.

*He knew no Beverage but the flowing Stream;*  
*His tasteful well-earn’d Food the sylvan Game,*  
*Or the brown Fruit with which the Wood-Lands teem!*  
*The same to him glad Summer or the Winter breme.*  

. . . he scan’d the Globe, those small Domains,  
*Where restless Mortals such a Turmoil keep,*  
*Its Seas, its Floods, its Mountains, and its Plains;*  
*But more he search’d the Mind, and rous’d from Sleep*  
*Those moral Seeds whence heroic Actions reap.*

The foregoing passage is perfectly summed up by one other line from Thomson’s poem: “Renown is not the Child of indolent Repose.” All this gets to the heart of Lewis’s emotions on that night in the middle of the Rocky Mountains and the run of his conscious or unconscious thought and idealization of self.

The Lewis and Clark story has been told in many ways: as western adventure, cross-cultural encounter, military and diplomatic history, or a study of the environment. My aim with this serialized article has been to show how the expedition can also be understood as a study in English literature, for every exploratory text resonates with the ambient culture that produced it.

This essay is also a response to the clarion call of James Ronda’s valedictory noted at the outset of part 1. For the Cook and Lewis and Clark stories to remain fresh and lively scholars need to break out of the tedious sequential and directional straitjackets that bind and hinder their interpretations and risk making them irrelevant. It is only fitting that the lives of men who sought new lands and new people be studied at greater depths in new dimensions.

David Nicandri is the director emeritus of the Washington State Historical Society. He is the author of River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia (2010) and co-editor of Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage (2015). He is currently working on a book-length monograph with the working title James Cook in the Icy Latitudes: The Origins of Polar Climatology and the Evolution of the Northwest Passage.

Notes
“An Oral History of the Mammoth in North America”

A Poem by Mark B. Hamilton

Introduction

In late September, 1803, Meriwether Lewis left Cincinnati on horseback to travel cross country to Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, and rendezvous with his crew as they brought the keelboat down river. At the sinks, his men built fires, boiled brine for salt, and helped Lewis search for skeletal remains of mammoth, mastodon, sloth, and giant bison—huge animals thought to exist still in the far northern regions, areas the Corps of Discovery would travel as it moved north and west up the Missouri River toward the Rocky Mountains. For President Jefferson, as well as for other thinkers of the age at the American Philosophical Society such as Charles Willson Peale, these Big Bones were evidential in the ongoing debate to understand a theory of alteration through time in a natural world once thought to be a precise and unchangeable Chain of Being.

Perhaps Meriwether Lewis’s curiosity was first aroused when he, as private secretary to President Jefferson, read _The Notes on the State of Virginia_, in which Jefferson recounts his discussion with warriors from the Delaware tribe concerning mammoths. The topic was much debated by Jefferson, Rush, Barton, Peale, and Wistar as preeminent scientists of the American Enlightenment, all significant sources for the new and growing field of paleontology and the histories told by Native Americans. Amid the intellectual intrigue, a mystery was unfolding from unknown lands, both literal and imagined—one that Lewis no doubt hoped to unravel as the expedition journeyed into territories of the Louisiana Purchase—and one that would be pursued by William Clark in 1807 when he visited Big Bone Lick to collect an extensive sampling for President Jefferson.

Notes

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE MAMMOTH IN NORTH AMERICA
— as told to Thomas Jefferson by a chief orator of the Delaware Nation, circa 1779

i.
He stood as if in celebration, a Delaware warrior in regalia: buckskin leggings and breechclout panels, colorful shirt and tapered scarf, deer skin moccasins and a bear skin turban all intricately beaded with strong designs of white and purple geometrics and floral patterns. Over his shoulder, across his chest a wide band was attached to a paneled pouch worn at the hip, ornamented with black turkey beard and two red dyed deer tail.

A fan of golden eagle tail was used to gesture toward the floor and then into the heights of the room as if striking the war post, as he began his oration, bold and melodious:

“Ten thousand moons ago, when naught but gloomy forests covered this land of the sleeping Sun, long before the pale man with thunder and fire at his command rushed on the wings of wind to ruin this garden of nature—when naught but the untamed wanderers of the woods, and men as unrestrained as they, were lords of the soil—a race of animals were in being, huge as the frowning Precipice, cruel as the bloody Panther, swift as the descending Eagle, and as terrible as the Angel of Night.

“The Pines crashed beneath their feet; and the Lake shrunk when they slacked their thirst; the forceful Javelin in vain was hurled and the barbed arrow fell harmless at their side. Forests were laid waste at a meal, the groans of expiring Animals were everywhere heard; and whole Villages, inhabited by men, were destroyed in a moment—the cry of universal distress extending even to the region of Place in the West.

“But the Good Spirit interposed to save the unhappy. Forked lightning gleamed and loudest Thunder rocked the Globe. Bolts of Heaven were hurled upon the cruel destroyers alone, and the mountains echoed with their bellowing death.

“All were killed except one male, the fiercest of the race, and him even the artillery of the skies assailed in vain, as he ascended the bluest summit which shades the source of the Monongahela, and roaring aloud, he bid defiance to every vengeance.”

ii.
We retired to our host’s library, brandy warming us in the candlelight flickering like feathers of the scissortail. All of us as happy as the gentle, unbroken ancients.

Governor Jefferson, our kind host, then brought out giant femurs and the large molars of an elephant thought to inhabit still the far regions of the north.

Time seemed lost in that moment, as I remember, gathered in the shadowy realm of imaginings.

Such was my evening with the Ordinary People, the Lenape, our struggling friends and allies, we the rebels in Virginia.

The new publication now under review adds significantly to the history of cartography during that time and the special skills brought to bear by the expedition members (primarily William Clark) in illuminating Euro-American understanding of the geography of the West. It belongs on the shelves of every library and collection related to western exploration in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The authors are well equipped to the task. Ralph E. Ehrenberg is chief of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress. He is deeply informed on American military exploration of the West, and has performed considerable field study on foot, horseback, and snowmobile on the trail of the Corps of Discovery. Herman J. Viola is a curator emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution. He served as director of the National Anthropological Archives at the National Museum of Natural History, and is a nationally recognized authority on the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the history of the American West. Both authors have published extensively.

What separates Mapping the West with Lewis & Clark from the Moulton Atlas is its interpretive elements. While Moulton focused on the maps created by Clark and Lewis, their provenance and characteristics, this new work offers a broader contextual view. For example, Chapter 2, “Jefferson’s Vision of the Western Country,” offers insights on his contacts, interests, and library as they relate to western cartography.

An excellent chapter regarding King’s 1803 map of the West explores early concepts of the region, including interpretations garnered from David Thompson and Ac Ko mok ki, a Blackfeet chief who was an informant of Hudson’s Bay Company surveyor Peter Fidler. A large color reproduction of King’s important work accompanies the book in a flap inside the front cover. Likewise, Clark's 1805 map prepared during the winter at Fort Mandan is placed in a flap at the back of the book. Both of these folding maps measure 36 x 28 inches, and offer great detail.

Other important maps that influenced the Corps of Discovery are reproduced and discussed. Some of these are found in Moulton’s Atlas, but others are unique to this publication.

More than one hundred images are included, all in color. Many of them are detail sections from the larger maps, and offer keys to understanding the subtleties not often explored by the reader due to reproduction constraints of size.

Contributions by Native American informants to the cartographical understanding of Lewis and Clark are emphasized, including reproductions of a number of Clark’s interpretive drawings based on knowledge imparted by his informants.

Sixteen map reproductions in full are offered in the appendix to the work. These maps include Jefferson’s Map of Virginia (1787), David Thompson’s map of the Great Bend of the Missouri (1798), Soulard’s English version of his 1795 map of the West, and Pike’s Chart of the Internal Part of Louisiana (1810).

For the Lewis and Clark collector, this work offers an important contextual supplement to the previously published materials concerning the expedition and its cartographic fruits.

Robert A. Clark is editor of We Proceeded On, and editor-in-chief of Washington State University Press.
Smoke Signals in Crow (Apsáalooke) Country: Beyond the Capture of Horses from the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

By C. Adrian Heidenreich, Ph.D. (Dúxxiileeitche, “Goes to War in a Good Way”). Billings: Published by the Author, 2006. 124 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, references. Soft cover, 8 1/2” x 11”. $24.00. (Available from the author, 1022 North 30th St., Billings, MT 59101.)

Reviewed by Robert Clark

Adrian Heidenreich’s study of the Crow is based on a long relationship with the people, the printed sources, and their culture. Beginning in 1968, upon his arrival in central Montana, his work with the Crow has included anthropological study, involvement in social events and ceremonies, history, and politics. He brings his broad experience to this fine work.

A caveat is necessary: When first published in 2006, the author submitted the work to We Proceeded On for review, but for unknown reasons a review was never published. In correspondence on another topic in 2015 the author mentioned this fact to me, and I recommended that we restart the process. I am happy we did so.

Dr. Heidenreich’s focus is on the Apsáalooke culture and their contact with Euro-Americans who entered their world during the nineteenth century. Much of the early chapters details the contact (or lack of same) between the Crow and the Corps of Discovery. As indicated in the book’s title, smoke signals were the only sign of the Crow seen by Clark. The Crow were suspect in the loss of horses by Clark and his men, though the suspicion is only that.

The story of Clark’s exploration of the Yellowstone opens the door to a fulsome discussion of the horse in the Crow culture, its introduction and value. Tangential to this discussion is the relationship between tribes in the region and the interplay of raiding and trading.

The book reviews Clark’s role in Indian affairs from St. Louis, his interest in the fur trade and military/commercial posts on the Upper Missouri, and particularly his role in the Crow fur trade.

Sections of the text recount Crow interaction with fur traders, the rendezvous, missionaries, and scientific and artistic enterprises. The text is supplemented by excellent color reproductions of works by Catlin, Bodmer, John Clymer, Alfred Jacob Miller, and others. Two detailed maps are included with extensive indices.

Smoke Signals in Crow (Apsáalooke) Country is a contribution to the ongoing understanding of images and relationships in intercultural exchange beyond the romance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Robert A. Clark is editor of We Proceeded On, and editor-in-chief of Washington State University Press.
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Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
Memorials and honors can be made at www.lewisandclark.org,
by mail to PO Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403, or call 1-888-701-3434.

Camas blossoms photograph courtesy of Steve Lee
Along the Trail

The Discovery Expedition of St. Charles

The Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, Mo., with its corps of more than 200 reenactors, brings to life the Lewis and Clark story for young and old through living history reenactment. The organization consists of volunteers who, like their predecessors with the Corps of Discovery, sail separated from swift waters and eternity only by thin-but-sturdy layers of wood. Whether buckskins or uniforms, their clothing accurately recreates the dress of 1804. Their weapons are firelocks. They cook over campfires. They sleep under canvas. They know their history, and they teach. The Discovery Expedition is the only living history group who have crafted replica boats for the longest reenactment journey ever attempted.

By bringing Lewis and Clark to life on the banks of rivers—and in classrooms and gyms—the Discovery Expedition reenactors have helped thousands of school children see their teachers as storytellers and know that history is high adventure.

What’s more, over one million visitors—some avid students of history, some newly curious—have come to the riverbanks to inspect the boats, experience the period campsites, enjoy demonstrations of technology and events described in journals from almost two hundred years ago, and share the discovery.

Each reenactment, each voyage of rediscovery, showcases the boats, recruits new reenactors to the modern Corps of Discovery, and adds to our understanding of what our predecessors achieved.

In their years of reenacting, thousands of rivermiles, and hundreds of campsites along the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers, from Pennsylvania to South Dakota, the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles has brought adventure to large cities like Pittsburgh, Louisville, and Kansas City, as well as small towns who count their souls in scores instead of thousands.

The Discovery Expedition developed the necessary contacts, unique preparation, and credibility required to assume the flagship role of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. From 2003 to 2006 their journeys on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers, and across the Great Rocky Mountains down the Columbia to the Pacific and back again, they were continually featured by their knowledge, craft, and skills in the “Tent of Many Voices” presented on tour across the country by the National Park Service. They have proven themselves with many others of their kind to be a living national treasure. Their current and future plans include filming the keelboat on the Missouri for the St. Louis Arch Museum, working with the BBC on a film project, and presentations on the Eastern Legacy Trail.

If you have that passion to recreate this adventure for yourself, the Discovery Expedition may be your trail to living history. Contact www.LewisandClark.net

Thanks to Jan Paul Donelson for providing photos and text.