



# *We Proceeded On*

AUGUST 2018 VOL 44 NO 3

LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

## **Lewis:**

- **David Nicandri on the Future of Lewis and Clark Studies**
- **Did Lewis Ever Live in Georgia?**
- **A New Lewis Biography by Patricia Stroud**
- **An Interview with Scott Mandrell**
- **A Great New Painting of Lewis and Jefferson**

*This issue* of *We Proceeded On* is mostly about the commander of the expedition, Meriwether Lewis. Two important new books are reviewed herein, Patricia Stroud's biography of Lewis, and Gary Moulton's capstone volume, *The Lewis and Clark Expedition Day by Day*. Two of this issue's articles explore aspects of Lewis's pre-expedition life.

The WPO Interview with Scott Mandrell is included not to re-open old wounds, but to help illuminate the character of Lewis "from the inside out." Nobody has dwelt more deeply in the heart of Lewis than Scott.

Plus, WPO prints the artist Peter Waddell's excellent painting of Lewis and Jefferson in the White House, surrounded by the accoutrements of the Enlightenment. One of my goals as WPO editor is to re-center the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the revolutionary traditions of the Enlightenment.

What fascinates me is not what we know about the remarkable Meriwether Lewis, but what we still don't know.

A number of mysteries continue to cast a shadow on his foreshortened life. Some of those mysteries can probably be solved by rigorous archival research and a closer reading of the expedition's journals and related documents. Some of the mysteries will probably never be solved.

### Here's my own list.

1: Why was Lewis silent for more than half of the days of the expedition? Were some of his journals lost or damaged or destroyed? Can we get closer to an understanding of when he wrote and why, and when he went silent and for what reason? (I have tried to address the question of Lewis and silence in my book, *The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer in the Wilderness*.)

2: Why didn't Lewis write his book? He published a prospectus for a three-volume report, and apparently made promises to his publishers, to Jefferson, and others. He engaged the services of illustrators, scientists, and mathematicians in Philadelphia to help the publication project along. Why didn't he do what his patron and mentor Thomas Jefferson expected and write a single or multi-volume account of what he called "my late tour"? In Jefferson's mind, the expedition wasn't really over until the final report was "submitted to a candid world."

3: Where was Lewis during the so-called "lost year," between February 28, 1807, and March 8, 1808, when he

finally turned up in St. Louis to take up his post as governor of Upper Louisiana? What was he doing during that period, when the expectation was that he would arrive in St. Louis sooner rather than later, or at least be able to explain his delay by showing significant progress on the book?

4: What was his state of mind in the critical dark period between August 18, 1809, when he received the sharp letter of rebuke from Secretary of War William Eustis, and his arrival at Grinder's Inn on the Natchez Trace in the late afternoon of October 10, 1809? What were the contents of the lost letter written to Clark from New Madrid—a letter that Clark considered an important clue to Lewis's last movements and state of mind in September and early October 1809?

5: What was the precise nature of the physical maladies Lewis was suffering under in the autumn of 1809 and what was their effect on his mental state and his behavior? How serious and how debilitating was his malaria?

6: How serious was Lewis's drinking problem at the end of his life, if indeed he had a drinking problem? Opinions vary. Was he dosing himself with laudanum during the last months of his life? If so, what was the effect of those self-medications on his health and mental state?

7: What precisely did Lewis mean when he said the government of the United States could bankrupt him but could never "make 'A Burr' of me"? "She may reduce me to Poverty; but she can never sever my Attachment from her." To what degree were his actions or reactions during this period related to the Aaron Burr conspiracy, if at all?

8: What was the relationship between Lewis and General James Wilkinson, the highest ranking US military officer in the American West? Did General Wilkinson play some role (however indirectly) in the death of Meriwether Lewis?

9: Why was Lewis unable to court a woman successfully? Was it a matter of circumstance, as Patricia Stroud insists, or a matter of personality, style, and character?

10: What happened after dark at Grinder's Inn on the night of October 10-11, 1809?

Unfortunately, these mysteries are not solved in these pages, but my hope is that the August issue of WPO advances our understanding of the leader of the story we all find so fascinating. I hope you are enjoying this journey as much as I am. Let me know.

Clay Jenkinson

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*We Proceeded On* welcomes submissions of articles, proposals, inquiries, and letters. Writer's guidelines are available by request and can be found on our website, [lewisandclark.org](http://lewisandclark.org). Submissions should be sent to Clay S. Jenkinson, 1324 Golden Eagle Lane, Bismarck, North Dakota 58503, or by email to [Clayjenkinson2010@gmail.com](mailto:Clayjenkinson2010@gmail.com). 701-202-6751.



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E. G. Chuinard, M.D.,  
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Clay S. Jenkinson  
Bismarck, North Dakota

### Assistant Editor

Catherine Jenkinson  
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### Transcription Services

Russ Eagle  
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### Volunteer Proofreaders

H. Carl Camp, Jerry Garrett, and  
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### Publisher

Washington State University Press  
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## The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403  
406-454-1234 / 1-888-701-3434  
Fax: 406-727-3158  
[www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org)

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# A Message from the President



Phillip Gordon and President Philippa Newfield

As Elizabeth Casselli, former director of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, famously said, “Getting hooked on Lewis and Clark is a little like falling in love.” Her elaborate analogy concluded with, “And then you meet the family.” And this is exactly what the inaugural Moulton Lecture in honor of Dr. Gary E. Moulton at the Omaha headquarters of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (LCNHT) turned out to be—a family reunion.

Mark Weekley, superintendent of the LCNHT, welcomed the 125 participants who had come to hear Dr. Jay Buckley, Dr. Moulton’s graduate student at the University of Nebraska, give his talk entitled, “On the Historian’s Trail: Gary E. Moulton’s Lewis and Clark Odyssey,” a veritable “This is Your Life” for Dr. Moulton according to Lewis and Clark. It was indeed a grand celebration of Dr. Moulton’s work as editor of the *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. We thank Superintendent Weekley and his staff and the Western National Parks Association for their hospitality, the many friends and family members who traveled to Omaha for this event, and Dr.

Buckley who, with humor matched only by his regard, helped us all celebrate one of our own.

## Developing a Strategic Plan

I had written previously of the five most important questions a non-profit organization must ask in order to further its mission. They were developed by management authority Peter Drucker. They are: 1) What is our mission? 2) Who is our customer? 3) What does our customer value? 4) What are our results? 5) What is our plan? Challenged by these questions to formulate a strategic plan for the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (LCTHF), your board met with Jane Weber, Cascade County (MT) commissioner and first director of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, who guided us in proceeding on.

We identified four overarching goals, the objectives we wanted to accomplish, and some of the action items necessary to achieve those goals.

**Goal 1:** The LCTHF will build its financial foundation to ensure adequate funding to accomplish the prioritized programs, projects, and operations of the organization. The objectives subsumed under this goal include increasing contributions to restricted and unrestricted funds, reviewing the budget process, and providing financial education to the LCTHF Board and members.

**Goal 2:** The LCTHF will strengthen the Trail Stewardship Program. The objectives for this goal include writing a plan to define and direct the LCTHF’s trail stewardship, developing an advocacy program, and establishing partnership agreements with other organizations that share our mission.

**Goal 3:** The LCTHF will increase awareness and relevance of the Lewis and Clark story and the LCNHT. The objectives under this goal include identifying our target audience, reaching out to organizations whose members have common interests, and creating a marketing plan for outreach to current and future members.

**Goal 4:** The LCTHF will identify, secure, and disseminate resources to strengthen our education programs. Objectives for achieving this goal include expanding *We Proceeded On*, the LCTHF website, [lewisandclark.org](http://lewisandclark.org),



Jay Buckley in Omaha. Photo by Clay Jenkinson.

## A Message from the President

and Discovering Lewis and Clark ([lew-is-clark.org](http://lew-is-clark.org)), making library/archives holdings widely available through the internet, and encouraging annual, regional, and chapter meetings.

How the Board prioritizes the goals and objectives of our strategic plan will be affected to a considerable extent by the feedback we receive from our members. A survey was sent to our members either electronically or in hard copy to solicit their opinions regarding what they value about our foundation and how they would like to contribute in terms of both their talents and resources. The results of the survey will be tabulated and published in an upcoming issue of *The Orderly Report*.

We encourage all our members to join your officers and board in working to achieve these goals and objectives. The LCTHF is a membership organization that thrives on member participation. Our committee structure enables committee members to develop projects and procedures to augment the actions of the officers and board. Please contact us at [info@lewisandclark.org](mailto:info@lewisandclark.org) or 406-454-1234 to let us know which committee's work would best suit your interests. LCTHF committees include Advocacy, Awards, Eastern Legacy, Education and Scholarship, Governance, Meetings, Membership, Outreach, and Trail Stewardship.

### Our Expanding Membership

The membership of the LCTHF has grown by 14% in the past year, an excellent record for an organization that saw a diminution in our numbers at the conclusion of the Bicentennial and thereafter. We welcomed 132 new members this fiscal year through May 27, versus 59 last year at the same time.

As a further indication of renewed interest and activity, two chapters have been revived: The Meriwether Lewis Chapter (Hohenwald, TN) under the leadership of Crystal Nash, and the Crest of the Rockies at the Plattes (CORPS) Chapter in Colorado under the leadership of Steve Deitemeyer. LCTHF Membership Committee Chair Chuck Crase has also been helping Garrett Jackson and Star Barto organize the totally new Cumberland Gap Chapter in southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee. The other bright star in this firmament of new and revived chapters is the Sakakawea Chapter of North Dakota under the leadership of Christine Hogan. That chapter is coming back to life through the encouragement of Clay Jenkinson, editor of *We Proceeded On* (WPO), and has been very supportive of his efforts to expand the number of pages in each issue of WPO.

This increase is also owing in part to the LCTHF's robust gift membership program whereby the givers of gift memberships receive a \$5 Amazon gift card for each membership given. The givers also have as many chances as memberships given in the drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card at the Annual Meeting. The winner need not be present to claim the prize, although we look forward to seeing everyone there anyway.

### In Celebration of Our 50th

Astoria, Oregon, will be the trailhead for the 50th of our foundation's adventures along the LCNHT and the kickoff to our three-year celebratory continuum. Please join us there on October 7–10, 2018, for the many and varied activities inspired by the theme of "Arrival at the Pacific: Object

Achieved." We will be going on guided hikes, meeting with local tribes for a traditional salmon feast, plying the waters of the lower Columbia, sharing meals, and interacting with experts on many aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Please register at [lew-isandclark.org](http://lew-isandclark.org) or [or-lcthf.org](http://or-lcthf.org). Also in this issue of WPO is a more detailed description by Larry McClure, chairman of the planning committee, of all they have in the works to celebrate 50 years of coming together for fun and friendship.

**So long. Be well. *L'bitraot*.<sup>\*</sup>  
Take care...**

This is my final column as president of the LCTHF. I would like to thank everyone who worked so assiduously to make these two years memorable for me and productive for our organization. That LCTHF stands for "Lasting Chance To Have Fun" is an understatement. Every one of our activities is an opportunity to connect, enjoy, explore, and form the kind of lasting friendships for which we are famous. Fortunately, service to the LCTHF is a gift that keeps on giving. As of October 1, 2018, I will become immediate past president, retaining a seat on the board and the Executive Committee. I look forward to continuing to work for our members and partners in that capacity. My appreciation to all of you for your help, support, and friendship and for sharing with me your love of the Lewis and Clark story and the trail. ■

<sup>\*</sup>See you again (Hebrew)

*Philippa Newfield*  
President

*Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation*

## The Study of Lewis and Clark: Where We Are Now and Where We Ought to Go Next

by David Nicandri

### *The Bicentennial*

of the Lewis and Clark Expedition precipitated a profusion of new publications. Facilitated by Gary Moulton's modern edition of the Journals (1983-2001), much of this literature was descriptive



David Nicandri

narration with an orientation to a localized portion of the trail. These efforts were often quite good at answering the "how" and "what" questions, but not as successful in addressing the "so what?" proposition. Even the most accomplished of these efforts were often derivative in nature, keying off the foundational geographical insights provided by John Logan Allen's *Passage*

*Through the Garden: Lewis*

*and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (1975), later reissued and retitled as *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (1991). Allen's book is the single most influential analysis of the expedition ever written. Among other impacts, he popularized the trope of Meriwether Lewis's "disappointment" at the Continental Divide. He can also take credit for inspiring James Ronda's interest in the Lewis and Clark story.

Prior to 1975, Ronda's professional scope was a more generalized interest in the history of the early national period, but his exposure to Allen's treatment (during the course of preparing a book review) resulted in the second most influential book in the modern historiography about the expedition, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (1984). Reduced to its essence, Ronda's book was the first one to look at the expedition as it appeared to the Native inhabitants on the shore, as opposed to standard interpretation which was the vantage from the keelboat or pirogues and the Euro-American men

inside them looking for the next bend in the river. During the Bicentennial era Ronda was the most durable and insightful scholar and his many talks formed the core of two compelling anthologies: *Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (1998), and *Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark* (2001). He was emphatic in stating the need for extensive analyses of other explorers to help put the Lewis and Clark experience in context and he provided the great insight that the exploration history is at root environmental history. Both of these perceptions have inspired my own work on Alexander Mackenzie and James Cook.

Of course, no book exceeded the popular reach of Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (1996), which gave the bicentennial its early momentum. Its success was turbocharged by Ambrose's starring role in the Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan PBS documentary "Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery" (1997). Burns' film cemented the Lemhi Disappointment and Bitterroot Mountain starvation myths in the popular and scholarly imaginations, and introduced the notion of Lewis as an accomplished but troubled individual, one perhaps suffering from manic depression. *Undaunted Courage* also transplanted the ethos of Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, his WW II epic, to the American West.

Burns and Duncan had been on a trajectory to focus on the latter's detailed knowledge of the trail landscape, recorded previously in his *Out West: A Journey Through Lewis & Clark's America* (1987), Allen's geographic insights, and Ronda's attempt to tell the story from the Native American perspective—all three are featured in the documentary. But the emergence of *Undaunted Courage* during the production of the film shifted the focus to an American pageant focusing on a heroic but perturbed Lewis. Commonly misunderstood as a history of the expedition, *Undaunted Courage* (as the subtitle of the book indicates) is actually a dual biography of Lewis and Jefferson. Accordingly, Clark's contributions to their joint effort got the short shrift but his relationship with Lewis was never-

theless constructed as the best friendship in history.

The first prominent crack in the modern idealization of the expedition came with Clay Jenkinson's *The Character of Meriwether Lewis: 'Completely Metamorphosed' in the American West* (2000). Jenkinson broke ranks from the orthodox interpretation of the expedition by pointing out such things as Lewis's psychological immaturity and his corresponding fondness for striking poses, both in deed and in text. For example, Jenkinson discerned that Lewis engineered the course of the expedition so that the moments of greatest triumph were his alone. His single greatest insight was detecting the polished artificiality of much of what Lewis wrote going westbound from Fort Mandan to the Nez Perce villages, including his self-absorption in the reveries of being an explorer in previously uncharted lands. In particular, Jenkinson pointed out the studied, one might say practiced, nature of Lewis's journal surrounding the Great Falls of the Missouri and Lemhi Pass sequences.

Jenkinson's breakthrough was prefigured by Albert Furtwangler's *Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis & Clark Journals* (1993), a book that deserves greater attention than it has received. It was disadvantaged by being published just a few years before *Undaunted Courage* and the Burns/Duncan documentary, productions which positioned the expedition as a great western saga. Furtwangler began the subtle but necessary interpretive shift away from considering the expedition as an adventure story toward the actual context within which Lewis and Clark's contemporaries understood it. The most popular accounts of the expedition implicitly encourage a visualization of their story as a backward glance toward an American Eden through which readers can envision themselves living in a simpler time upon pristine landscapes. In truth, the elite few of Lewis and Clark's generation who read the Biddle account of their voyage (1814) actually evaluated it within a comparative literary framework, the accounts of Cook,

Vancouver, and Mackenzie, for example, not as an outdoor escapade. Unfortunately, with few exceptions, we have been narrowing the focus ever since.

The first book after *Undaunted Courage* to transcend the micro-universe of Lewis and Clark studies was Thomas P. Slaughter's *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness* (2003). Slaughter did not have the popular sales success of Ambrose, but his treatment of the expedition

captured wide attention amongst the professoriate. This occurred because of Slaughter's fondness for debunking both the explorers (who were suddenly enjoying national attention as a function of the bicentennial), and those who bothered to study them. Nonetheless, *Exploring Lewis and Clark* is full of interpretive insights, such as documenting some of the divergences between Lewis's account of particular episodes versus Clark's, and more broadly showing how Lewis used his journals to create an identity for himself based upon what he read about the experiences of other explorers. In this regard, Slaughter built on the foundation created by Jenkinson's and Furtwangler's preceding efforts. He also infused his book with interpretive strategies adapted from postmodern literary studies that had become increasingly popular amongst academics

in their discussions about Euro-American exploration, Captain Cook in particular. *Exploring Lewis and Clark* thereby became the first postcolonial study of the expedition. This took such forms as his provocative notion that Lewis was already dead (spiritually) when he came home.

Drawing on Jenkinson's opening and Slaughter's incisiveness, I followed in 2009 with *River of Promise: Lewis and Clark on the Columbia*. The book has several main themes: Lewis and Clark scholars have long favored the expedition's time on the Missouri (at the expense of the Columbia), principally because of the erudite exposition in Lewis's journal westbound from Fort Mandan to Lemhi Pass, truly a classic in American literature, and his subsequent silence in the Columbia basin. I wanted to invert that focus to concentrate on the portion of



Lewis at his best, gathering camas in Packer Meadows.  
Painting courtesy of Michael Haynes.

their voyage that was central to the actual mission of the voyage. I next attempted to prove that Lewis's westering journal was not a field diary written each night around the campfire, but was instead a second-generation retrospective reflection probably intended as the first draft of the book he never got around to publishing. Rather than the greatest friendship of all time, Clark was often annoyed by, if not a little angry about, Lewis's grandstanding attempts to claim all the prized moments of discovery. This included Lewis's expropriation of Clark's insights about the complexity of Rocky Mountain geography, what is sometimes referred to in historiographic terms as Cameahwait's geography lesson.

*River of Promise* also showed that Lewis and Clark were heavily reliant on the field tactics and geographic understandings found in Alexander Mackenzie's published account, *Voyages from Montreal* (1801), but never attributed insights gleaned from the Scotsman because of his connection to the British Empire. The captains borrowed colorful phrasing from Mackenzie and sometimes plagiarized whole paragraphs of his text. Lastly, I believe Lewis's ultimate psychological dissolution was prefigured during the return from the Pacific, including his loss of emotional control on the Columbia and then his shoot-out with the Blackfeet in Montana. Whether my book fully succeeded in achieving these five main goals, others will have to judge. I can only cite, by way of example, the opinion of Canadian scholar Barbara Belyea who, in the pages of *Pacific Historical Review* asserted that *River of Promise* created "a post-bicentennial baseline for future studies of the great expedition."

In what directions did the "future studies" of Lewis and Clark head? Clay Jenkinson responded with an enlarged version of *The Character of Meriwether Lewis* (2011), now fixed with a new subtitle: *Explorer in the Wilderness*. Abandoning the interpretive strait jacket of a continuous chronological narrative, Jenkinson took his readers on a discursive ramble through Lewis's life and key episodes from the expedition. Combining an erudition drawn concurrently from the fields of history, literature, psychology and geography, *Character II* is an expansive extension of his original work, as seasoned by Slaughter and Nicandri. Without doubt, his deconstruction of Lewis's demise, in a chapter entitled "Why," will serve as the modern standard addressing the one topic that intrigues all scholars of the expedition: just what happened to Lewis "out there" and at his end? In response to this query Jenkinson cites Jefferson's failure to provide Lewis a suitable support structure (especially concerning the publishing project), Lewis's somewhat adolescent attitudes about wom-

en, his complicated family relationships, writers block, and physical and mental illnesses, including, if Jefferson can be believed, alcoholism.

Seemingly timed as a response to Slaughter, but appearing in print with approximate concurrence with Nicandri and Jenkinson (II), Thomas C. Danisi and John Jackson published their biography, *Meriwether Lewis*, in 2009. Adulatory toward its subject in the same fashion as Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage*, Danisi and Jackson's biography uncovered new sources documenting the Lewis story and introduced the novel interpretation that the physical aftereffects of exposure to malaria were the principal cause of his unraveling. In effect, they provided the perfect synthesis in response to the question that has faced students of the expedition since October 1809. Yes, Lewis killed himself, but he did so accidentally in a hazy reaction to the pain he was suffering from a malarial recurrence; thus the act does not deserve stigmatization. Or as Jenkinson summarizes the thesis, Lewis killed himself but did not commit suicide. In another positive innovation, Danisi and Jackson refused to emphasize Lewis' time with the expedition, providing thereby the most valuable and encompassing record of Lewis's life post-1807 that has been published to date.

A few years later, Danisi followed with a solo effort, *Uncovering the Truth About Meriwether Lewis* (2012). He again broke new ground in an exposition on Lewis's 1795 court-martial and displayed his trademark assiduousness in finding new documentary material. This is instructive because some have averred, in the wake of Moulton's authoritative edition of the journals and Donald Jackson's preceding compilation of ancillary documentation, that we now know all there is to know about the expedition and its participants. However, as we saw in the preceding issue of this journal, (*WPO*, May 2018) in the form of the recently rediscovered Arikara map, new and consequential discoveries continue to be made.

In the wake of Slaughter, Nicandri, and Jenkinson, students of the expedition should no longer have to suffer bro-mides about the perfect expedition and best friendship ever. Indeed, when adding in the scholarship of James Holmberg, Landon Jones, William Foley, and Jay Buckley, William Clark has been brought out from under Lewis's shadow, forever. At long last Clark has been fully liberated from being Lewis's "Tweedledum." But by giving him a more visible place in the expeditionary story scholars have necessarily shone light on his standing as a slaveholder, including his problematic post-expeditionary treatment of York, plus his role in the treaty process that dispossessed so many Missouri Basin tribes.

This has diminished an easy heroizing of him, so now we are left with two challenging figures at the center of the story.

### Where to go from here?

A few themes might be laid out for consideration. We need an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the expedition, much like Bernard Smith brought to the investigation of Captain Cook before that field was inundated by postcolonial intemperance. For example, follow-ups to Daniel Botkin's environmental studies (*Our Natural History: The Lessons of Lewis and Clark*, 2003, and *Beyond the Stony Mountains: Nature in the American West from Lewis and Clark to Today*, 2004) are long overdue. These could be localized analyses or discussions of particular species; or, on a grander scale, treatments of the three great biomes that undergird the expeditionary narrative: the Missouri and Columbia basins and the Rocky Mountains.

Similarly, there needs to be a series of ethnological studies like Allen Pinkham and Steven Evans' important *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce: Strangers in the Land of the Nimiipuu* (2013). Moving from east to west, the first nations' stories most in need along these lines are the Lakota, Mandan/Hidatsa, Blackfeet, Shoshone, and Chinook. Such works could be nicely complemented with state-based digests of Moulton's *Journals* on the model of Clay Jenkinson's *A Vast and Open Plain: The Writings of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in North Dakota, 1804-1806* (2003), or Robert Carriker and Roger Cooke's *Ocian in View! O! The Joy: Lewis & Clark in Washington State* (2005).

Examinations of trail segments will always draw local interest, though more are needed that reach the level of thoroughness and production values found in Rex Ziak's *In Full View* (2002), his study of the expedition on the lower Columbia River. What we now require, given the standardization of the narrative because of the authoritative nature of the Moulton edition of the journals, is a careful reading of texts to learn more about what they say, not in broad narrative terms, but in their particularity, and also what they do not say. All students of Lewis and Clark know the main storylines, and they do not need to be continually rehashed. (See my review of Patricia Stroud's biography of Lewis later in this issue). The murder/suicide debate would seem to be a good candidate for an interpretive cease-fire. At this point it should only be reopened if we discover new sources, such as what might turn up in Spanish archives. For the field to grow, if not survive, it needs especially to transcend micro-analyses of topics that were of purely quotidian interest

to Lewis and Clark themselves. For example, the only aspect of the armaments that mattered to the captains was whether they worked or not. How the expedition was outfitted (uniforms, utensils, etc.) is of obvious value to re-enactors, and much good research has been done on that topic, but a focus on such ordinary concerns risks trivializing the story and the loss of potential audiences.

I believe that what truly concerned Lewis and Clark was (1) achieving the mission of reaching the Pacific; (2) the party's safe return in order to tell their tale, and (3) how their story would come across on the printed page when people like Thomas Jefferson, Joseph Banks, or Alexander Mackenzie read it. In many respects, an 18th or 19th century expedition never happened unless it was described and explained in book form; thus discovery as literature is as important a consideration as is discovery as geography. For this reason, Lewis and Clark as travel literature must be studied in a comparative context.

An excellent example of this genre is Richard van Orman's *The Explorers: Nineteenth Century Expeditions in Africa and the American West* (1984), but much remains to be done. Captain Cook's three voyages between the years 1769-1780 completed the centuries-long work (inaugurated by Columbus and his peers) of delineating continental outlines below the Polar Circles. Post-Cook, the discovery impulse in Western Civilization shifted to mainland interiors, specifically the sources of rivers—concourses that were then the only means of access to remote hinterlands. This was the phase of global exploration of which Lewis and Clark were a part, and in one sense Jefferson's instructions to Lewis can be read as a function of the river source-hunting excitement that began late in the 18th century and lasted for much of the 19th.

Take as a close example the life of John Ledyard (1751-89), whose start in the exploration business came from sailing on Cook's third voyage. After his quixotic dream of walking around the world came to naught (a venture he discussed and financed with the help of both Joseph Banks and Thomas Jefferson), Ledyard's quest for meaning shifted to the finding the headwaters of the Niger River in Africa. His plan called for reaching the continental interior by way of the Nile (whose headwaters were a still greater mystery to Europeans). Once inland, Ledyard planned on taking a Nubian trade caravan across the width of Africa in the direction of Niger's upper reaches near the most exotic place in the world: Timbuktu. Ledyard's last letter was addressed to Jefferson, from Cairo on November 15, 1788, on the eve of his expected venture. Unfortunately, his departure from

Cairo for the interior was delayed because of illness, most likely dysentery, from which he died on January 10, 1789. Ledyard was thus probably the most famous explorer who never really discovered anything.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Lewis and Clark scholars can make is joining the defense of Enlightenment values, both cultural and scientific, now commonly written off by some postmodern intersectional commentators as a time-bound cultural construct of limited use toward the achievement of progressive goals. Jefferson is central to the American portion of the Enlightenment, and thus, to some extent, Lewis and Clark with him. To be sure, Jefferson was a seriously flawed figure because he owned slaves, one of whom was apparently his concubine, but the Hamilton-ization of popular culture is truly astonishing to behold. I refer not merely to the famous Broadway play about Alexander Hamilton, but the extension of his imagined democratizing ethos to such disparate figures as Winston Churchill and Katherine Graham in the films “Darkest Hour” and “The Post.” (Here I am thinking of the imaginary scenes where Churchill conducts a demographically idealized focus group about whether to resist Nazi Germany, or when Graham emerges from a Supreme Court hearing and wades through a crowd of acolytes.) The real Hamilton made many contributions to American history, but in the rush to contrast him with an increasingly demonized Jefferson, his monarchial if not Napoleonic tendencies are being overlooked. Speaking of monarchs, the one facet of modern American life that would astonish Jefferson the most is the near reverence with which some elements in our nation, especially the media, treat the British royal family.

The greater irony is that Enlightenment-era exploration, including Jefferson’s Lewis and Clark Expedition, guided Euro-American culture to an appreciation for the autonomous value of indigenous civilizations, and not coincidentally at the same time it began to exhibit a less exalted view of itself. The Enlightenment was the very origin of the valorization of pluralism and multi-culturalism that dominates the avowed sensibility of Western Civilization in modern times. At times this is as reductive as aggrandizing the people of Tahiti or Mandan earthlodges as inhabitants of a pre-conquest Eden, but there is no doubting that the hundreds of encounters of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment period held up a sometimes disconcerting mirror to European culture.

There are related incongruities. The academy and media illuminati are agog over the emergence of the “post truth” era in American politics, but this movement’s origin lies not

in some reflexive populism but rather the rejection of the very idea of objectivity by postmodern scholars. A lot has been lost in the transit from Bougainville (1729-1811) to Foucault (1926-84). The Enlightenment’s broad perspective in search of broad truths about the cosmos and humanity’s place in it has been fractured by the prism of subjectivities into miniaturized academic disciplines, identity politics, and what might be called the rise of “witness studies.” The logic of authoritative competence has shifted from rationalism and a hierarchy of knowledge to the whims of emotive ideologies and personal self-reflection viewed solely through the lens of race, class, and gender.

As for postcolonial scholarship, a variant of the postmodern outlook, much of it is not history but rather moral posturing pretending to be social science. Its worst excess is the positioning of Enlightenment era explorers under the metaphorical tyranny of Kurtz, Joseph Conrad’s central character in *Heart of Darkness*. Historians have a role to play in helping society to recover from this kind of distortion, but what we truly need today as an antidote to our current epidemic of moral absolutism is an entirely new Age of Enlightenment that aims to mitigate the problems of our times by freely crossing intellectual and other boundaries, discovering along the way the universality of the human experience. We continue to need explorers, and to study them, for as T. S. Eliot wrote:

*We shall not cease from our exploration,  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time. ■*

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*David Nicandri is the retired director of the Washington State Historical Society. He is currently conducting a two part study of Captain Cook. Volume 1, “Re-Discovering Captain Cook: The Origins of Polar Climatology and Reappraising His Final Voyage” is under peer review by an academic press. Volume 2, “Discovering Nothing: The Pacific Portal to the Northwest Passage and its Evolution as a Cartographic Image,” will take the story past Cook to include maritime fur traders such as John Meares, plus George Vancouver, Peter Pond, Alexander Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark. An anthology of previously published essays and new material titled “Lewis & Clark in Context: The Cook, Vancouver and Mackenzie Connections” is also under consideration by an academic press.*

# WPO Quiz

When artist Peter Waddell was commissioned by the White House Historical Association to create this painting of Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis in the White House, June 20, 1803, he was instructed to include only objects that Jefferson is known to have possessed or created. **How many of the objects in this painting can you identify?** A full description of the accoutrements will be published in the November issue of WPO.

The “dramatic moment” of the painting is June 20, 1803, the date of Jefferson’s famous instructions to his private secretary and aide-de-camp Meriwether Lewis, for what became known to history as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Jefferson and his first secretary Lewis lived together in the executive mansion for more than two years before Lewis left Washington, DC, on July 5, 1803 for Harper’s Ferry and the West.

The room that Jefferson chose for his White House study now serves as the State Dining Room. The room is 36 by 48 feet, and 18 feet high. It now seats up to 140 guests. The room received its present name during the presidency of James Monroe, one of Jefferson’s principal protégés.

As Jefferson took office after one of the most hotly-contested elections in American history, the editor of the District of Columbia’s newly-established *National Intelligencer* was a man named Samuel Harrison Smith. His young wife, the former Margaret Bayard, was the daughter of a stern Federalist. She encountered president-elect Jefferson for the first time in the late autumn of 1800. She had been led to expect that Jefferson, in the manner of Britain’s radical politician John Wilkes, would be the “violent democrat, the vulgar demagogue, the bold atheist and profligate man I have so often heard denounced by the federalists.” Instead, she met a “man so meek and mild, yet dignified in his manners, with a voice so soft and low, with a countenance so benignant and intelligent,” that she was rendered speechless. She developed what can only be characterized as a crush on Jefferson, a lasting platonic love that inspired her to leave a wonderful, even priceless written record of the human side of Jefferson’s presidency. Much of Waddell’s painting was made possible by Mrs. Smith’s descriptions of Jefferson’s character, clothing, amusements, accoutrements, tools, artifacts, hobbies, eccentricities, and furnishings.

Mrs. Smith described today’s State Dining Room, which Jefferson called his “cabinet,” beautifully:

The apartment in which he took most interest was his cabinet; this he had arranged according to his own taste and convenience. It was a spacious room. In the center was a long table, with drawers on each side, in which were deposited not only articles appropriate to the place, but a set of carpenter’s tools in one and small garden implements in another from the use of which he derived much amusement. Around the walls were maps, globes, charts, books &c. In the window recesses were stands for the flowers and plants which it was his delight to attend and among his roses and geraniums was suspended the cage of his favorite mocking-bird...

Good luck with the WPO Quiz. — Editor



# Peter Waddell's Painting of Jefferson's White House Study

Courtesy of the White House Historical Association. Originally created for publication in "President Thomas Jefferson's White House Museum," *White House History*, the quarterly publication of the White House Historical Association, number 35, Fall 2013.



# Did Meriwether Lewis Ever Live in Georgia?

By James P. Hendrix, Jr. and Guy M. Benson

*It is conventional* for biographers of Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) to place him in the Broad River Valley of northeast Georgia for several years of his childhood. John Bakeless (1947), Richard Dillon (1965), Rochonne Abrams (1978), Stephen Ambrose (1996), and Thomas Danisi and John Jackson (2009) all subscribe to such a belief.<sup>1</sup>

Bakeless has young Lewis in Georgia as early as age ten (1784), but back in Virginia by 1787. Dillon does not suggest a beginning date for a Georgia stay other than “shortly after the Revolution” and has Lewis returning to Virginia when thirteen or fourteen (1787 or 1788). Abrams does not suggest when Lewis’s supposed time in Georgia began but has him returning to Virginia at “about eleven or thirteen” (1785 or 1787). Ambrose has him in Georgia at age eight or nine (1782 or 1783), and living there “for three, perhaps four years,” until moving back to Virginia sometime between 1785 and 1787. Danisi and Jackson do not suggest a date when Lewis went to Georgia but have him leaving that state to return to Virginia at age thirteen, in the spring of 1787. All, save Danisi and Jackson, declare, to varying degrees, that Lewis’s days living in frontier Georgia helped hone his wilderness skills and shape his character in positive ways.<sup>2</sup>

James P. Hendrix, the co-author of this article, also suggested a substantial and meaningful Georgia boyhood for Lewis in a 2001 WPO article. There I expressed the opinion that he moved to Georgia with his family, probably in 1784, but no later than 1785, and that he remained in the Broad River Valley until returning to Virginia in the spring of 1787.<sup>3</sup>

There is no question that the Lewis family moved from Albemarle County, Virginia, to Georgia at some point in the 1780s. Meriwether’s father had died in 1779 and his mother married Captain John Marks in May 1780. His mother’s brother (Francis Meriwether) and nephew (Thomas Meriwether) moved to Georgia no later than

October 1785 as part of a Virginia contingent recruited by General George Mathews to fulfill the requirements of a 1783 Georgia legislative grant to him of 200,000 acres of land on the condition he recruit at least 200 settlers.<sup>4</sup>

No evidence exists in surviving Georgia land-grant records of grants to Captain Marks, but other evidence makes it clear that he, Meriwether’s mother, and other family members did, at some point in the mid-1780s, move to Georgia, living on land adjacent to Francis Meriwether.<sup>5</sup> When I (Hendrix) wrote my 2001 WPO piece, I contended that Meriwether accompanied the family on this move.

Subsequent to the publication of my 2001 article, I received a polite email from Guy M. Benson of Raleigh, North Carolina, suggesting that Meriwether Lewis did not accompany his mother and stepfather, et al., when they moved to Georgia, but instead remained in Virginia under the oversight of a legally-appointed guardian. It did

not take long for me to realize, given documentation Guy possessed regarding the appointment of such a guardian and other information, that my claim of several years’ residence by Meriwether in Georgia was probably in error. Realizing this, I suggested to Guy that we co-author a corrective piece and we agreed to do so at some future date.<sup>6</sup> So here we finally are, seventeen years later, with an update to that 2001 article.

Several months of research led us to the conclusion that, other than for visits in the summer months, it is unlikely Meriwether Lewis spent any significant childhood time in Georgia. Our inability to document in definitive fashion his domicile during

1787 makes it possible he was in Georgia that year, but, as said, we feel this is unlikely. Our construction of a chronology surrounding his family’s movement to Georgia indicates that he was still in Virginia in late 1786, and also clearly there in 1788. But even with a lack of precise evidence for 1787, we believe he remained in Virginia during that year.



Meriwether Lewis. Portrait by Michael Haynes.

Let the chronology speak for itself.

- 1774 – ML born.
- 1779 – ML's father William Lewis dies.
- 1780 – Mother remarries--Captain John Marks.
- 1783 – Georgia Legislative land grant to General George Mathews.
- 1784 – Francis Meriwether, Thomas Meriwether, and others begin move to Georgia.<sup>7</sup>
- 1785 (May 12) – John Marks appointed colonel in Albemarle County, Virginia, militia.<sup>8</sup>
- 1785 (May 18) – Jane Lewis, ML's older sister, marries Edmund Anderson of Hanover County, Virginia.<sup>9</sup>
- 1785 (Nov. 10) – John Marks appointed sheriff of Albemarle County, Virginia.<sup>10</sup>
- 1786 (Jan. 6) – John Hastings Marks, ML's step-brother, is born; he is baptized in Virginia on June 9, 1786.<sup>11</sup>
- 1786 (Aug. 14) – Elizabeth Thornton Anderson, first child of Jane and Edmund Anderson, is born in Virginia.<sup>12</sup>
- 1786 (Sept. 14) – William D. Meriwether (nephew of ML's mother) appointed guardian of Meriwether Lewis by the Albemarle County, Virginia, court. William and Nicholas Lewis posted a £3,000 guardian bond.<sup>13</sup>
- 1787 (Dec. 22, 1786 & Aug. 10, 1787) – Sheriff Marks signs documents in Albemarle County, suggesting he shuttled back and forth in 1786 and 1787 between Georgia and Virginia.<sup>14</sup>
- 1787 – John Marks listed in Wilkes County, Georgia, tax records as owning 290 acres and 12 slaves. Notably, he is not listed in 1785 or 1786 tax records.<sup>15</sup>
- 1788 (June 18) – Guardian report records payment of £7 to Reverend Maury “for schooling” of ML.<sup>16</sup>
- 1788 (Nov. 11) – Virginia Legislature authorizes Deputy Sheriff William Clark[e?] to make sale of lands for taxes in Albemarle County as “John Marks, sheriff of the county of Albemarle, in the years 1786 and 1787 did sometime within those years remove to the state Georgia.”<sup>17</sup>
- 1790 – Meriwether visits his mother and family in Georgia.<sup>18</sup>
- 1791 (Early summer) – Captain Marks dies.<sup>19</sup>
- 1792 (May) – Meriwether travels to Georgia to bring his mother, brother, and step-siblings back to Virginia.<sup>20</sup>

The chronology reveals 1785 and 1786 to be busy times in Virginia for Meriwether's mother, Captain Marks, and the family. Captain Marks was appointed a colonel in the Virginia militia in May 1785, and as sheriff of Albemarle County in November of that year. Babies abound in 1786 with the birth of ML's step-brother, John Hastings Marks, on January 6 (baptized June 9), and his niece on August 14. These 1786 births and baptism, again, are documented as occurring in Virginia.

The appointment on September 14, 1786, of William Meriwether as ML's guardian would seem to be a harbinger of a pending move out of Virginia by the Marks family, without Meriwether. And John Marks does indeed make his first appearance on Wilkes County, Georgia, tax records in 1787. We believe that Captain Marks was back and forth between Virginia and Georgia in 1786 and 1787, but did not move his family until the fall of 1786, at the earliest, and then without Meriwether.

We know that Meriwether was engaged in his tutorials with the Reverend Maury in 1788 and think it likely that he lived with his guardian, and was tutored by him, from the time his mother departed for Georgia until he entered Maury's Latin school.<sup>21</sup>

In sum, it is clear that the Marks family did not move to Georgia any earlier than the fall of 1786. We see no logical reason why a guardian would be appointed for Meriwether in September of that year unless the intention was for him to remain in Virginia. So, as is often the case with history, while we can not be absolutely certain, we strongly believe that the “Georgia Days” of Meriwether Lewis were restricted to summer visits, and that he did not spend any significant portion of his childhood, or early adolescence, there. ■

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*Guy Meriwether Benson joined the LCTHF in 1980. He holds a PhD in math from the University of California at Berkeley. He was the originator of the map exhibition at the University of Virginia in 1995, and author of Exploring the West from Monticello. He lives in Raleigh, NC, with his wife Joan.*

*Jim Hendrix is a long time member of the LCTHF and is currently Treasurer of the Carolina Chapter. He holds a PhD in history from LSU, has retraced much of the L&C route, and worked as an on-board historian for National Geographic/Lindblad Lewis and Clark cruises on the Columbia and Snake Rivers*

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## Notes

*The authors thank Douglas Valentine of Charlottesville, Virginia for his assistance with this article.*

1. John Bakeless, *Lewis and Clark: Partners in Discovery* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1947); Richard Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Coward MacCann, 1965); Rochonne Abrams, “The Colonial Childhood of Meriwether Lewis,” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, July 1978; Stephen Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Thomas Danisi & John C. Jackson, *Meriwether Lewis* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2009).

2. Bakeless, 14, 15, 19; Dillon, 13-14; Abrams, 224; Ambrose, 24-5; Danisi and Jackson, 31-2. Danisi and Jackson do not speculate, in the absence of any documentation, on the “shaping” influence of frontier Georgia on young Lewis, rather reaching the common sense conclusion that these years provided a nice environment for a growing boy.

## Did Meriwether Lewis Ever Live in Georgia?

3. James P. Hendrix, Jr., "Meriwether Lewis's Georgia Boyhood," *We Proceeded On*, August 2001, 25-28.
4. Hendrix, 26, and especially notes 5 & 6, the latter note documenting Thomas Meriwether's purchase of 300 acres of land in Georgia in October 1785.
5. George R. Gilmer, *Sketches of Some of the First Settlers of Upper Georgia, of the Cherokees, and the Author* (reprint of 1855 edition, Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965), 9; J. Russell Slaton, *Vanishing Sites of Old Wilkes* (Milledgeville, GA, Boyd Publishing Co., 1996), 24.
6. Guy and I were both quite occupied with other endeavors in 2001, and have been in subsequent years. Fortuitously, since our initial contact in 2001, I relocated to North Carolina where we are both members of the Carolina Chapter of the LCTHF, and see each other at various chapter events. Guy is an accomplished Lewis and Clark scholar and also has a personal interest in such research. His middle initial stands for Meriwether; he is a direct descendant of Francis Meriwether, Meriwether Lewis's Uncle.
7. Francis Meriwether and several Virginia neighbors make a scouting trip to Georgia in the spring of 1784 (Gilmer, *Sketches*, 7-8). Francis then sells his home plantation and an additional tract in Amherst County, VA, in May 1784 (*Amherst County Deed Book E*, 454, 501) and subsequently he and his son Thomas receive land grants in the Broad River area of Georgia. The two of them also make additional land purchases of land. The first document, a warrant, is dated Feb 2, 1785 (*Wilkes County Plat Book G-733*, 262). By sometime in 1785, tax records show that Francis Meriwether had accumulated 1,400 acres (Frank Parker Hudson, *Wilkes County, Ga. Tax Records 1785-1805*, (Atlanta: self-published, 1996), 42. It is to a portion of this land that Francis' sister Lucy, Captain Marks, et al. move in late 1786 or 1787. Another portion will also be used by John Gilmer, who was married to Mildred, another sister of Francis.
8. *Albemarle County Order Book 1783-1785*, 404.
9. William Lindsay Norford, *Marriages of Albemarle County and Charlottesville, Virginia, 1781-1929*, (Charlottesville, VA: Jarman Print Co., 1956), 1, shows Edmund Anderson and Jane Lewis being married on May 18, 1785. A note on this: Jane had chosen Edmund as her guardian six days before on May 12. *Albemarle Order Book 1783-1785*, 403.

10. *Albemarle County Deed Book 9*, 157 and *Albemarle County Order Book 1783-1785*, 564.
11. W. Mac Jones, *The Douglas Register* (Reprint of 1928 edition, Richmond, VA: W. Fergusson & Sons, 1928), 116, 243. We feel it unlikely that Meriwether's mother would have left Virginia prior to the birth and baptism of John Hastings, and birth of her first grandchild.
12. Sarah Travers Lewis Scott Anderson, *Lewis, Meriwethers and Their Kin* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995), 116.
13. Mary Catherine Murphy, compiler, *Guardian Bonds of Albemarle County, Virginia, 1783-1852* (self-published, 1968), viii, 2. It is our assumption that Capt. Marks, ML's mother, brother Reuben and step-sibling leave for Georgia shortly after this appointment.
14. *Albemarle County, VA Will Book 3*, 28; *Albemarle County VA Deed Book 9*, 157.
15. On the other hand, John Gilmer, starting with the same opportunity to receive land grants, did move to Georgia in 1786 and settle on the same land as Marks would subsequently do. Hudson, 120, 128.
16. *Albemarle County, VA Will Book No. 3, 1785-1798*, 40.
17. William Walter Hening, *Statutes at Large*, vol. 12, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 662.
18. Letter in the Missouri Historical Society from ML to his mother dated early 1791.
19. Will dated Mar March 29, 1791, and recorded Dec. 21, 1791. *Wilkes County GA, Will Book DD*, 249-250.
20. Hendrix, 27.
21. Thomas Jefferson, in his biography of ML, "At 13 he was put to the Latin school . . ." Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 2:587.

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# Did Meriwether Lewis's Cousin Introduce Him to William Clark?

By Arend Flick



Anthony Wayne's Legion at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on the banks of the Maumee River, Ohio, 20 August 1794. Steel engraving, 1859. Courtesy Sarin Images/Granger.

*On May 9, 1795,* nine months after he helped defeat the Indian Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Lieutenant William Clark wrote a chatty letter to his sister Fanny in Louisville from his station at Fort Greenville, eighty miles north of Cincinnati. He had been home in Kentucky in March, and two months later, he seems less preoccupied with his duties as an army officer than with his earlier romantic exploits, telling Fanny (in his usual orthographically challenged way).

I am very Soleceticous concerning the wellfar of the Ladees of your Nabouring hood perticularly Miss \_\_\_\_ . . . I have Some hopes of visiting your Purt of the world after the Indian Treaty, at which time I hope to know my fate, at a certain place, Captain T Lewis tells me in Confidence that If he could flatter himself with the Smallest hopes of Suckcess, he would once more attack Miss B.C., but as he can't—he must Content himself with admroing her amuable qualities. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Captain T. Lewis—undoubtedly Captain Thomas Lewis—appears sporadically in accounts of General Anthony Wayne's campaign of 1794–5. Like Clark a Virginian, he was half a generation older than his companion. Captain Lewis had fought in the Revolutionary War, entering service as a second lieu-

tenant in 1776, and becoming a first lieutenant in 1777. He left the army in 1781, but joined the newly created Legion of the United States on March 5, 1792 (a day before Clark received his own commission), as captain of a rifle company. He was initially assigned to the first sub-legion but transferred to the third sub-legion in the following year.<sup>2</sup> In July 1794, he was appointed “an extra Aid de Camp to the Commander in Chief,” and late that month, he was a witness to Wayne's will.<sup>3</sup> (With a major battle looming, many of the soldiers were writing their wills.) After the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Wayne commended him for valor.<sup>4</sup> He remained in the army until March 1801, when he resigned his commission—almost twenty years after he had left the army the first time.

In his 2002 edition of the letters Clark wrote to his brother Jonathan that also includes three written in 1795 to Fanny, James Holmberg speculates that Thomas Lewis may have been a relative of Meriwether Lewis and might have introduced Lewis to Clark at Fort Greenville when Lewis first arrived there in summer 1795. “When the younger Lewis, new to the army, reported to Wayne's Legion,” Holmberg hypothesizes, “his veteran cousin would have welcomed him and introduced him to his comrades, including his friend William Clark.” “This is speculation,” Holmberg concedes,

"but an interesting possibility."<sup>5</sup> Frazer Wilson's *Around the Council Fire*, a 1945 account of the treaty-signing process in 1795 at Fort Greenville where both Lewis and Clark were present, takes the relationship a step further, describing Thomas Lewis, a signatory to the Fort Greenville treaty, as the "brother of Meriwether [sic] Lewis, the explorer."<sup>6</sup>

Thomas was not, of course, Meriwether's brother. Indeed, the two Lewises, while both members of old Virginia families, were not even related. However, a second Lewis at Fort Greenville during this period was a cousin of Meriwether. If any Lewis introduced Meriwether Lewis to Clark, it was he.

Holmberg says Captain Thomas Lewis died in 1809, but I believe he is confusing him with another Thomas Lewis (1749–1809), a colonel in the Revolutionary War who never served in the Indian Wars.<sup>7</sup> This Thomas Lewis was also born in Virginia, but he moved to Kentucky around 1788 and became a rich landowner with a mansion in Lexington, Lewis Manor, that still stands.<sup>8</sup> In 1792, when Captain Thomas was joining the Legion of the United States, Colonel Thomas was taking the oath of office as one of the first state representatives and helping to write Kentucky's first constitution.<sup>9</sup>

If this Thomas Lewis is not Clark's Thomas Lewis, who was his Thomas Lewis?

Alan D. Gaff's *Bayonets in the Wilderness*, an authoritative account of the Indian Wars of the 1790s, identifies Captain Thomas Lewis as a native of Augusta County, Virginia, and a member of a strict Presbyterian family. Gaff cites two sources for these observations: *Sketches and Recollections of Lynchburg* by Margaret Couch Cabell and *History of Augusta County, Virginia* by J. Lewis Payton.<sup>10</sup> Cabell's book, published in 1858 and based on the recollections of the oldest living inhabitant of the city, describes Thomas Lewis as "a noble, brave, spirited officer" in the Indian wars, the son of Major William Lynn Lewis and grandson of John Lewis, Augusta County's "pioneer settler."<sup>11</sup> Payton's book, published in 1882, depicts Thomas Lewis's family history similarly, emphasizing William Lynn Lewis's status as a Presbyterian elder who reprimanded his son for hunting on the Sabbath when he was home on leave from Wayne's army.<sup>12</sup>

John Lewis, born in 1678 in County Donegal, Ireland, arrived in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia around 1732 as one of its first settlers and died in 1762.<sup>13</sup> Histories of this family agree that these Lewises were originally French Huguenots who immigrated to Ireland (and perhaps changed their name from "Louis") in the seventeenth century. Virtually all accounts of Meriwether Lewis's ancestry, by contrast, agree that his Lewis ancestors were Welsh, not Irish

(or French).<sup>14</sup> Despite efforts by some family historians to combine Thomas's ancestral line with Meriwether's, they seem to have been entirely distinct.<sup>15</sup>

We lack church or civil records confirming Captain Thomas Lewis's birth year, but multiple histories of his family agree that he was born in 1761, the second son in a family of four boys and three girls, probably at the Staunton, Virginia, home of his parents.<sup>16</sup> This date does pose a problem for the view that he is the same Thomas Lewis who was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Continental Army in 1776, since he would have been fifteen at the time. A couple of explanations are possible. First, family histories often give erroneous birth years. *The History of Augusta County* lists Thomas's older brother John as having been born in 1758, with no child born to William and his wife Anne until Thomas in 1761.<sup>17</sup> Thomas's correct birth year could have been 1759 or 1760. It is also possible that he really was fifteen at the age he joined the army. Officially, young men could join the Continental Army without parental approval at the age of sixteen, with their approval at fifteen. But instances of boy soldiers as young as nine were not uncommon.<sup>18</sup> Not all of them were drummers or fifers.

*The Historical Register* indicates that upon entering the Continental Army in 1776 as a second lieutenant, Thomas was assigned to the 15th Virginia Regiment, which was absorbed into the 11th Virginia Regiment in September 1778. This regiment saw action at the Siege of Charleston in 1780, where most of the unit was captured. Since Lewis left the army in February 1781, well before the end of war, it is possible he himself was captured and paroled. Or perhaps he was wounded and mustered out. In any event, South Carolina would again figure prominently in his life before the end of the century.

Nothing is known of that life for the next six years, but if family historians can be trusted, 1787 was an eventful year for Captain Lewis. In April he is said to have fought a duel with a Dr. Bell of South Carolina in which Bell was killed. A duel did apparently take place at that time between an army officer named Lewis and a doctor named Bell, in or near Belleville, South Carolina. A short report on this event ("in which the Doctor unfortunately fell") appears in a Charleston newspaper, the *Columbia Herald*, on April 23, 1787. According to this account, the duel was fought on the "11th instant," that is, April 11, 1787.<sup>19</sup> South Carolina was a place with a rich dueling history during this time, and this duel is associated with the Thomas Lewis family in ways that lend some historical credence to this family story. Like his

son, William Lynn Lewis also spent part of the Revolutionary War there. William joined the Continental Army, as a lieutenant, a year before Thomas did. He was promoted to captain in 1776 and major in 1779. He is also said to have participated in the Siege of Charleston (though with the 10th Virginia Regiment) and to have been captured there, remaining a prisoner until 1781.<sup>20</sup> In fact, military records indicate that Thomas and William both left active service on the same date, February 12, 1781. Six years later, Thomas may have been in Charleston on business arising from his father's captivity, or his own, when he fought a duel with Dr. Bell. Belleville was a plantation (and briefly a village) captured by the British during the war and turned into a fort, possibly the site of one or both of the Lewises' imprisonment. It was fifty miles northwest of Charleston, on the Congaree River.<sup>21</sup> What Dr. Bell said or did, or had said or done years earlier, that made Thomas challenge him to a duel (assuming the challenge was made by Lewis and not by Bell) remains unclear.<sup>22</sup>

The next five years in Thomas Lewis's life are similarly blank, but when the Legion of the United States was formed in 1792, he quickly returned to military life. This time he was fighting Indians, not the British. He seems to have established an especially strong friendship with his commander in chief. Cabell cites one occasion when Anthony Wayne and Captain Lewis "were hotly pursued by Indians, the horse of Gen. Wayne fell, and together with the rider being disabled, Colonel [sic] Thomas Lewis took his general in his arms, and put him on his own fleet horse, telling General Wayne to feel no uneasiness. . . ." "Colonel Thomas Lewis and his general," she continues, "were much attached to each other. . . ."<sup>23</sup> Payton sums up Lewis's military career by saying he "was greatly distinguished for gallantry and was called the modern Chevalier Bayard, 'sans peur et sans reproche' [without fear and without reproach]. He killed Dr. Bell, of S.C., in a duel, and never enjoyed peace of mind afterwards. He died, s p [without children], in 1804."<sup>24</sup>

After his resignation from the army in 1801, Lewis once again largely disappears from the historical record. Historical accounts of his family all agree that he died in 1804. It seems probable that the Thomas Lewis of Greenbrier County, Virginia (now West Virginia), whose death on September 15, 1804, was reported in the *Alexandria Herald* on September 29, 1804, is our Thomas Lewis. Thomas's father William had moved to this area some years earlier. The county seat of Greenbrier County, Lewisburg, had been named after William's brother Andrew, who surveyed it in

the 1750s.<sup>25</sup> Each of Thomas's siblings, however, left clearer evidence of his or her year and place of death than Thomas did, and that may have something to do with the loss of "peace of mind" after the duel to which Payton refers. One wonders how different his life might have turned out if his pursuit of Miss B.C. in Louisville had been successful.

Clark's companion in their joint assault upon the belles of Louisville (and earlier upon the Native Americans of the old Northwest) was therefore not a relative of Meriwether Lewis and would not have introduced Clark to him. Curiously, though, one of Meriwether's hitherto unremarked cousins, Howell Lewis, did serve at Fort Greenville during and shortly after the end of the Indian Wars. Howell Lewis was commissioned an infantry captain on March 5, 1792, and assigned to the third sub-legion on September 5 of that year.<sup>26</sup> He fought at Fallen Timbers and resigned his commission on July 25, 1797.

In part because of his uncommon first name, there can be little doubt that Howell was Meriwether Lewis's cousin—in fact, his first cousin. They were the grandsons of Robert and Jane Meriwether Lewis, Howell the son of their third son, Charles, Meriwether the son of their fourth son, William. Captain Howell Lewis was born on July 16, 1766, in Albemarle County, Virginia, probably at the North Garden plantation of his father. He married Mary Carr in 1787, had three children with her, and inherited half of his father's estate, which he named Anchorage. He died in Albemarle County on July 11, 1845, and was buried in Locust Hill Cemetery, where Meriwether Lewis's mother also lies.<sup>27</sup>

Could Howell Lewis have introduced Clark to Meriwether? It is possible. While Clark and Howell Lewis were in different sub-legions (Clark in the fourth, Lewis the third), both commanded rifle companies and were posted together for much of this period. At Fort Greenville, the third and fourth sub-legions were housed in adjoining quarters.<sup>28</sup> There is no record of any friendship between the two men, but they must have been acquainted. However, it is not clear how well, or even if, Meriwether knew his cousin. Howell was eight years older, and while he grew up approximately twelve miles southwest of Meriwether's Locust Hill home, those gaps in distance and age in a large extended eighteenth-century family may not have been bridged.

One additional note about Howell Lewis: in November 1795, he served on the court-martial of a young ensign of the fourth sub-legion who had been accused of drunkenness and of challenging a fellow officer to a duel.<sup>29</sup> Fortunately, that ensign—Meriwether Lewis—was exonerated. If the

court knew the two Lewises were cousins, it must not have considered that a conflict of interest.

An enduring mystery of the Lewis and Clark story is how the two captains, so dissimilar in so many ways, could have formed so deep and abiding a relationship in the few months they spent together on the Ohio frontier in 1795-6. Reuben Gold Thwaites is one of many chroniclers who think Lewis and Clark's friendship was too strong not to have begun in boyhood, though the evidence suggests they almost certainly never met before 1795.<sup>30</sup> There is, I think, still more to be discovered about the precise circumstances that led to the formation of this greatest of American friendships, which began almost certainly in Ohio, not Virginia. When that story is fully told, I believe Howell Lewis, and not Thomas Lewis, may have a small part to play. ■

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*Arend Flick was born and grew up in southwestern Ohio, not far from the site of Fort Greenville. A member of the Foundation for the past 20 years, he is emeritus professor of English at Norco College in Southern California. He lives in Pasadena.*

## Notes

1. James J. Holmberg, ed., *Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 269. I want to express my gratitude to James Holmberg for reading an earlier draft of this essay and making valuable suggestions for its improvement.
2. Francis B. Heitman, ed., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789 to March 2, 1903*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1:631.
3. "Orderly Book," 529; Alan D. Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness: Anthony Wayne's Legion in the Old Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 258.
4. "Orderly Book," 373.
5. Holmberg, ed., *Letters of William Clark*, 271-2.
6. Frazer B. Wilson, *Around the Council Fire* (Evansville, IN: Whipporwill Publications, 1975; reprint of 1945 edition), 72.
7. There is no Colonel Thomas Lewis listed in Francis B. Heitman's *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army* (Washington, D.C.: Rare Book Shop Publishing, 1914), suggesting that he was perhaps a colonel in the militia only. The title may well have been an honorific.
8. Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 143. The home is on the National Register of Historic Places.
9. Robert Peter, M.D., *History of Fayette County Kentucky* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin, 1882); *Kentucky Gazette*, September 9, 1809. The ancestors of this Thomas Lewis were Marylanders.
10. Gaff, *Bayonets*, 377.
11. Margaret Couch Cabell, *Sketches and Recollections of Lynchburg By the Old Inhabitant* (Richmond: C.H. Wynne, 1858), 319-20.
12. J. Lewis Payton, *History of Augusta County, Virginia* (Staunton, VA, 1882), 341.
13. For an account of John Lewis's colorful exit from Ireland to Portugal and eventually America, see his page at the splendid "Genealogy Junction" website, accessed August 23, 2017, [http://www.madeofcotton.com/family/major\\_john\\_lewis.html](http://www.madeofcotton.com/family/major_john_lewis.html).
14. Meriwether Lewis's 3x great grandfather was also named John Lewis, but his Virginia tombstone indicates he was born in Monmouthshire (Wales) in 1594 and died in 1657. He and his family came to America around 1650, settling in what later became King and Queen County. William Terrell Lewis's *Genealogy of the Lewis Family in America, From the Middle of the Seventeenth*

*Century Down to the Present Time* (Louisville: Courier-Journal Printing Co., 1893) provides what is largely an accurate account of the Huguenot Lewis ancestry but becomes hopelessly confused in its effort to connect the Welsh Lewis ancestry to it, claiming incorrectly (among other errors) that Meriwether's great-grandfather John Lewis was born in England.

15. Except perhaps by marriage. Thomas Lewis's niece Elizabeth Towles married a man named John Blair Dabney. Meriwether Lewis's brother Reuben married a Mildred Dabney. I have traced Mildred's Dabney ancestry back four generations and John's Dabney ancestry back four generations without finding a common ancestor, but presumably they were very distant cousins. Eighteenth-century marriages in Virginia united a great many planter families together many times over—though not, so far as we know, Lewis and Clark.

16. "WikiTree page for Thomas Lewis (1761-1804)," accessed August 17, 2017, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Lewis-15080>. The page is accurate (and consistent with Cabell and Payton) except in calling Lewis a major. Lewis's family were members of the Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church near Staunton during this period, but extant church records do not contain birth dates of parishioners' children.

17. Payton, *Augusta County*, 287.

18. Caroline Cox, *Boy Soldiers of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

19. *Columbia Herald*, April 23, 1787. I'm grateful to Christina Rae Butler of the College of Charleston for her help in locating South Carolina records related to Thomas Lewis. The *Herald* account of the duel (which was later reprinted in other American newspapers as far away as Massachusetts and which is incorporated into the Augusta County Thomas Lewis family histories) refers to him as a major and is probably the source of the confusion about his rank.

20. For biographical details, see the well researched "Wiki Tree for William Lynn Lewis," accessed August 21, 2017, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Lewis-2333>. William Lewis is said here and in some other accounts to have earned a medical degree, which, if true, may have had something to do with his son's dispute with Dr. Bell. William Lewis's prisoner of war status is referred to in his findagrave site as well as at "Southern Campaign Revolutionary War Pension Statements & Rosters," accessed August 21, 2017, <http://www.revwarapps.org/b178.pdf>. William Clark's elder brothers Jonathan and Edmund were also taken prisoner by the British at Charleston.

21. For a good overview of Belleville during the Revolutionary War, see Steven D. Smith, "Military Sites Program Follows in the Footsteps of Lieutenant Anthony Allaire," University of South Carolina Scholar Commons, accessed June 7, 2018, [https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1121&context=anth\\_facpub](https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1121&context=anth_facpub).

22. Gaff (*Bayonets*, 200) also mentions a duel Thomas Lewis supposedly fought with Major Cushing in the winter of 1793-4, but he confuses this with a duel actually fought between Cushing and Thomas Lewis's nephew, a Virginia congressman named William Lewis, in 1817. As an adjutant and inspector in the army in 1803, Cushing wrote several letters, one directly to Meriwether Lewis, facilitating the deployment of the soldiers who would accompany Lewis down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh. Earlier, in 1793, General Wayne called Cushing, a supporter of James Wilkinson, "a very artful, & seditious man," in a letter he wrote to Secretary of War Henry Knox.

23. Cabell, *Sketches and Recollections*, 319-20.

24. Payton, *Augusta County*, 291. Pierre Teurail (1473-1524), a French knight noted for his valor and for being without fear (*peur*) and above reproach (*reproche*).

25. The *Alexandria Herald* article of September 29, 1804, reads, "Died on Saturday the 15th instant, Major Thomas Lewis, of Greenbrier County." William Lynn Lewis and his family moved to Sweet Springs, Virginia, around 1784 and developed a resort there. Sweet Springs, in Monroe County, is approximately 20 miles from Lewisburg. Thomas Lewis, who seems never to have married, might have chosen to move to an area with family and work opportunities after his army career ended.

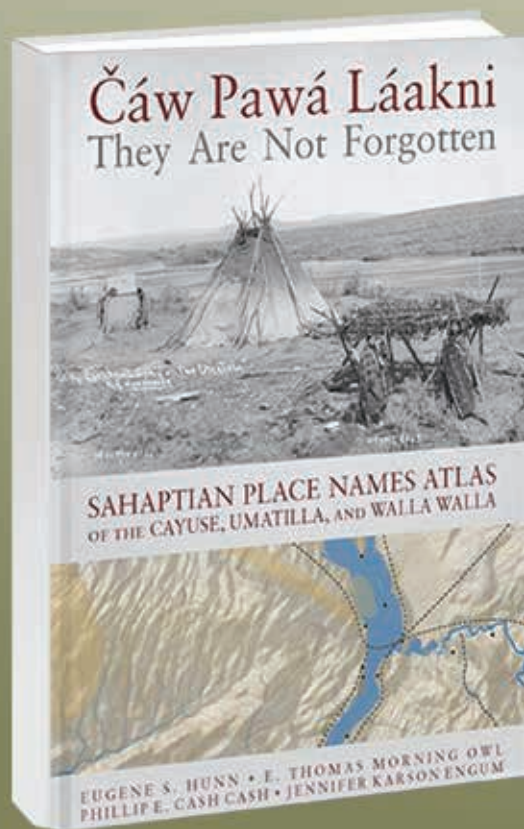
26. Heitman, *Historical Register*, 631.

27. Merrow Egerton Sorley, *Lewis of Warner Hall: The History of a Family* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1935), 665. Captain Howell Lewis is not to be confused with his and Meriwether's eponymous second cousin Howell Lewis (1771-1822), whose mother was George Washington's younger sister, Betty. This Howell, who never served in the military, briefly acted as manager of his uncle's Mt. Vernon estate in 1793.

28. Wilson, *Council Fire*, 14.

29. "Capt. H. Lewis" is listed as one of the court-martial members on the first page of the trial transcript. See Thomas C. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth about Meriwether Lewis* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012), 251.

30. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804-1806*, 7 vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1969; reprint of 1904 edition), 1:xxvii.



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Photograph of Trapper Peak, Bitterroot Mountains, Montana, courtesy of Steve Lee.

# The WPO Interview



The many faces of Scott Mandrell

## Scott Mandrell

by Clay S. Jenkinson

**Editor's Note:** Whatever else is true, Scott Mandrell is a brilliant, intense, reflective, and amazing man. It seemed to me that enough time has passed since the sad and crazy developments of the Bicentennial, when Scott was asked to leave his post as commander of the Discovery Expedition after the first year of travel, that we can now hear his insights about Meriwether Lewis without getting tripped up by the leadership and personnel conflicts that led to his dismissal.

The precipitating incident was Scott's treatment of a weekly newspaper editor and photographer who stepped onto the keelboat at an inopportune time at Fort Mandan, but—as Scott is the first to admit—his style as commander had rubbed a good number of people the wrong way, on and off of the boats. Scott was asked by the headquarters folks at St. Charles to apologize to the reporter from the *Washburn Leader*. When he refused, he was cashiered. Scott organized his own alternative flotilla, and completed the journey, more or less in tandem with the original Discovery Expedition. All of this was a serious blow to the harmony of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Feelings in some quarters are still potent.

With a bit of trepidation, I asked him to sit for an interview with WPO. Scott could not have been more generous with his time, nor more cooperative in every way: frank, forthright, humble, and endlessly interesting. He's a talker! What follows is merely a sliver of an interview conducted over a month-long period, lasting more than twelve hours.

There are lots of individuals who have retraced the Lewis and Clark Expedition in some fashion: in canoes, SUVs, RVs, speedboats, on horses, in helicopters and small airplanes. Some have hiked whole segments of the journey, particularly along the Nez Perce Trail through the Bitterroot Mountains.

Still, one person, and one only, has followed nearly every mile of the trail, sea to shining sea. And he retraced the whole journey in real time. Scott rode a black stallion from Washington, DC, to Elizabethtown (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania (July 5-15, 2003). He descended the Ohio River in a 55-foot replica of the keelboat, beginning August 31, 2003. With the original Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, he ascended the Missouri River to Fort Mandan. Then, beginning in April 2005, he commanded his own flotilla, "Three Men and a Dog," aka "First Squad," to the headwaters of the Missouri near Dillon, Montana. Up over the Bitterroot Mountains on horseback. Then he and his small crew built a dugout canoe at Orofino, Idaho, with which to float down the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia rivers. He descended to the Pacific Ocean, with the obligatory stall at Dismal Nitch on the Washington side of the Columbia. And he came most of the way back again, again in real time. He made the fateful Marias River excursion in north central Montana, while others of his group floated the Yellowstone. Finally, when all that was over, after the bicentennial, he acquired

a flatboat, floated down to Memphis (Fort Pickering), and then rode a horse to Grinder's Inn on the Natchez Trace. And all of it in real time, tracking the dates of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Whatever else is true, Scott Mandrell has earned his mastery of the Lewis and Clark story. WPO is well aware that other expedition re-enactors may have different perspectives on all that transpired during the Bicentennial, and even different memories. We want their stories, too.

**WPO:** How did you become Meriwether Lewis?

**SM:** I had no designs on Meriwether Lewis whatsoever. In fact, since I speak French and since I was a canoe guy, I was much more intrigued by the voyageurs. I spent my whole life canoeing around here. I was all about the French thing. My friend Glen Bishop asked me to be Lewis. Not to portray Lewis, it wasn't so much that I would be Meriwether Lewis. It was more like I had the fancy hat and shiny stuff, so I'd be Lewis. But it was more than that. He asked me to captain the boat.

**WPO:** Why do you resist the idea that you "portrayed" Meriwether Lewis in the full sense?

**SM:** Never in the course of this expedition did I ever introduce myself as Meriwether Lewis. Not one time. I was introduced as Meriwether Lewis many times, but I never did it myself.

**WPO:** Why?

**SM:** Because I'm not Meriwether Lewis, and because I wasn't doing first person presentation. I would find it kind of absurd to talk about myself after my death if I'm doing first person.

**WPO:** But if I asked a thousand Lewis and Clark types, almost everyone would say that you were portraying Meriwether Lewis. You *were* Meriwether Lewis.

**SM:** Absolutely. But I made a very clear choice. When somebody talked to me as if I was Lewis, I would respond, but I never said, "My name is Meriwether Lewis."

**WPO:** Why? There's got to be a philosophical reason for this.

**SM:** I wanted to be able to talk about the expedition from a contemporary prospective. I wanted to be able to talk about what it was like to ride the National Road and have the spray of an eighteen-wheeler in my face. I wanted to be

able to talk about it as my experience, as Scott Mandrell, walking in Lewis's shoes. There was no question that I was in some sense portraying Meriwether Lewis, and day after day people saw me in the role, but I just made a point of never saying those words.

I really did want to be able to speak to both the historical journey and the contemporary journey that I'd involved myself in, and to be able to compare and contrast. Our educational project was called "Lewis and Clark: Then and Now." For me the ability to do that historical overlay was crucial because sometimes we were highlighting the gross differences in the trail then and now, and sometimes we were able to talk about the amazing lack of change, the similarities, how things had remained the same.

I had worked for years and years on this thing to make it a success, to be able to complete the journey. That was my mission, to complete the journey. There were a lot of other people who joined very late in the game but felt as though they were absolutely capable of dictating how things would go. I had put a lot of work and effort into the group over the years. But through all of the events that transpired, there's only one person who was at all of them. Me.



The captain in full pride and full regalia.

**WPO:** So it wasn't that you fancied yourself a reincarnation of Captain Lewis. What precisely was the attraction for you? This wasn't some sort of summer vacation.

**SM:** I think there was a bigger question for me, which was why the Lewis and Clark Expedition. I had done mostly French and Indian and Revolutionary War stuff for most of my life. But it dawned on me early on that unlike the Revolution War, unlike the French and Indian War, you could do this entire thing. My undergraduate degree is actually playwriting and directing, and if you know what the three unities are--time, action and place--this has a finite number of people, a finite location, and a finite time frame. This could be done in its entirety. That was it for me. And quite frankly, nobody else was thinking that way at the beginning. To stay on the clock day by day, and to re-create the journey in something like real time.

**WPO:** You had to stay on the clock.

**SM:** We were on the clock every single day. I didn't have the luxury of laying to for a couple of days and letting the weather pass, or being tired and deciding to stay somewhere an extra day. If I didn't make it to the next town, it meant that we weren't there for the school kids. If I didn't make it to the next town, it meant that we weren't there for the people that counted on us being there because that was the day that Lewis and Clark were there. And if I fell behind one day, and then I fell behind two days, and then I fell behind three days, there was no making it up.

**WPO:** What I hear you saying is that you did this for lots of reasons, but it wasn't just simple re-enactment. By following the trail from Washington, DC, to Pittsburgh, tracking in the actual days of the year in which this happened, and kind of intuiting your way through these moments when you're not quite sure, whether to go left or go right, whether to go through the town or around the town, you were learning something that can only be learned in this way, how the land interacts with the mind of Meriwether Lewis.

**SM:** That's true. But the works of those and other historians helped to inform me, and I would not have been successful in my exercise had I not had the benefit of the insights that I had gained from their work.

To that point, one of the moments that was most enlightening occurred when we were out at Lolo. We spent a night there with Gary Moulton. We were at Traveler's Rest,

and we actually had a little bit of down time. There was a photographer named Peter who traveled the trail regularly, and he offered us showers at his house. Gary Moulton spent the night there too, so we ended up sitting around with Gary there, and it was kind of funny because we were all hiding from public view, Gary included.

But there was the issue of Old Toby.

We're reading in the journals where Clark derides Toby for getting them lost and circling around.

The next day we got in Pete's car (I find no heresy in our getting into a vehicle during our down time) still dressed in our period clothing, in tatters. Gary wasn't going to be with us on horseback so we wanted to go look at a few things that day. We went up to the meadows where Old Toby led the expedition.

I can tell you unequivocally that Old Toby knew exactly what he was doing. They were not lost. I've taken horses through the Bitterroot Mountains. They had a string of 72 horses with them at that point. Had they not gone down by the way that is now known as suicide gulch, had they not gone down to that low prairie where Clark thought they were lost before ascending to the trail, there would have been no fodder for the horses. That's why Toby took them down there.

I have no question in my mind about this. Maybe if you had two or three horses, or a string of half a dozen horses, you could go straight up the Lolo Trail, but not with 72 horses. There was no food. Had Old Toby not taken them down into that pasture and fed those horses before they went up, they would have lost horses getting over those mountains. He fed those horses.

That's one of the things that's frustrating to me. For 200 years this guy has been derided as some sort of confidence man, trying to figure out a route he really didn't know, bluffing and stumbling. Old Toby knew the way, and he knew to feed those horses before he took them over.

**WPO:** How did you figure this out?

**SM:** It's something you wouldn't think about if you weren't feeding horses. I had been feeding horses since Salmon, Idaho. I had been on horseback every day since Salmon, Idaho, trying to make sure that they ate. A horse doesn't scream out like a child that it's hungry. It just gets weak and stops moving. We had ridden horses from Dillon, Montana, and we had taken a string of horses over Lemhi to Salmon and then all the way up. By the time we got to Lolo,

we were fully aware of the nuanced aspects of this.

This is an area where the south sides of the hills are barren and the north sides are pine trees, so there's very little green grass for these horses to eat. There are little spots--we had some good grass in Darby—but you come to realize it's not rocket science. Probably every horseman in that valley could have told us that, what you have to do to find grass. Such people aren't obsessed with the journals of Lewis and Clark. There are things about the physical journey that you can't know until you experience them. I don't want to paint this in a negative way, but you don't know you don't know something until you know.

**WPO:** Many years have passed since the incidents that led to your being released from the “official” Discovery Expedition re-enactment of the expedition after the 2004 travel season. You handled those moments in a certain way. You could say that you were so deep into it, that others had no idea how much discipline and pressure that journey required. You could say that you might have been a bit of a hothead, but you were trying to preserve the authenticity of the thing, and it was a dangerous situation. You could say that today, because you are older and perhaps more mature, you would hope to be a little more congenial. But I don't hear you saying that. I hear you saying that you know you did the right thing and you would do it the same way.

**SM:** I might in hindsight wish for a little more patience. But we were not in the middle of a “re-enactment” at that point. And at no time when I was on the river was I really in some kind of simple “re-enactment.” I grew up in Alton, Illinois, and literally, on an annual basis, there were deaths on the river. Yes, I wish it had gone down differently. I wish that there had been a protocol in place that would have guaranteed that we would not have had civilians walking onto the boat at dangerous times. And maybe I should have anticipated that, maybe I should have done something to insure that there was a better perimeter established. I have no way of knowing that if I'd handled it differently, that somebody wouldn't have gotten hurt. I would rather have everybody safe than everybody happy.

Never in my military career or in this exercise did I ever compromise safety. I've never had anyone whose life was in any way potentially compromised by my failure to make safety the preeminent concern. No one has ever been injured.

**WPO:** The rap on you is that you were brilliant, you did your homework, you knew things that nobody else knew, you were incredibly intense, you had a pretty large ego, and you were at times a martinet. And that's nicer than it's usually put.

**SM:** I wish it had happened differently. I do.

**WPO:** So were you that person—the high-strung leader with the mercurial temper? Does it take that person to get the boats to North Dakota? Talk about that.

**SM:** People came in and out of this adventure intermittently. There was nothing intermittent about it for me, not for any aspect of this trip, not for me or for the small group of men who were at my side, and not for the boats themselves or the horses. When people would show up, there was never an appreciation of what it took for the smaller core to get it there. This goes back to my saying that no day was more important than the other. It was easy for people to show up some place and see what happened that day without any understanding of what happened the day before or the day before that or the day before that.

**WPO:** There are people that like you and have affection and respect for you who would say to this day, “Scott is a terrific guy. But you know, he could have been nicer and still accomplished what he did. If he had been a little more patient, and a little less hotheaded, he could still have achieved everything he achieved because we like and respect him. We don't know why he was wired so tightly.” What do you say to that?

**SM:** That's probably all true.

**WPO:** Does it bother you that that's still a perception?

**SM:** Yes and no. I guess for a minute there I didn't know if you were describing Lewis or me.

**WPO:** That's the point, that's what I am trying to explore with you, Scott. But answer this question first.

**SM:** It does bother me because that was never my intention. I wanted to make this trip happen. All of the judgments were being made by people who were in the comfort of their homes during the three-and-a-half years that I was doing this. For three-and-a-half years nothing ever stopped for me. No excuses. Yes, what happened bothers me. I wish it hadn't happened.

**WPO:** You come at Meriwether Lewis from a unique angle, that of having lived every single mile of it. You saw things that no person except you and Lewis have ever seen. In some sense did you wind up, whether you liked it or not, becoming Lewis?

**SM:** I think I wound up seeing a lot of things from the same perspective. I think I shared a lot of his perspectives. There was a very similar experience and I would imagine that probably we were cut from similar cloth, that we even had some similar life experiences prior to both of our trips. I think that some of those shared experiences, some of those similar perspectives, probably tempered our responses and maybe even shaped our behaviors.

I think from the military perspective there was an expectation, and it was probably wrong of me, but I did expect there to be a respect for a chain of command and authority, that that authority had been very judiciously allocated, by the actual US Army of the Bicentennial period, and that there was a reason for it. It was not always for everybody to rehash and reevaluate whether that authority was rightfully placed. There were many things that happened on this trip day in and day out that had to happen in a top down way. When the command was to drop the mast, it meant drop the mast now. Not have a conversation about whether we should drop the mast, but drop the mast now. If someone said to get a line out on the port side, that meant get a line out on the port side. Not to ask why there was a need to get a line out on the port side, but get a line out. There can only be one captain on a boat. I didn't like any of the negative stuff that took place, none of it. And after a while it really got to me.

**WPO:** You have a certain character set. You've talked about the demands of leadership, and how this is not a game, this is not some sort of weekend excursion for a bunch of history buffs. At some point during the journey, did you wind up on shore one night alone thinking, "Oh my God, I've become Meriwether Lewis. I'm being swept down a path here that is almost mystical, and it's frightening me a little?"

**SM:** In terms of the parallels, yes. I believe firmly that Wilkinson had Lewis assassinated. Lewis made enemies. He inherited enemies because of Jefferson, and there were times when I felt that. But they were circumstantial enemies. It wasn't about me. I was the hood ornament on this thing, and people walked by and wanted to tear off the hood ornament.

People say I really thought I was Lewis. Let me tell you what I actually was. I was a captain in the United States

Army. I was a real captain in the United States Army, a real veteran of the United States Army. There were individuals involved with this Bicentennial re-enactment who were really fantasizing about the fact that they had been bestowed with some magical commission in the United States Army. They were beside themselves with frustration and anger and vitriol when certain things happened that underscored the fact that they were not.

**WPO:** When you describe the criticism and the pressures coming in, the abuse and the willful misunderstandings and the politics of it, that sounds like Lewis in 1806 and 1807 and 1808. Re-entry was a disaster for Lewis. Certainly there were deep pressures. What was it like for you?

**SM:** It was certainly nice to be back with my wife and my children. I think for a lot of people who were involved in the Bicentennial, this may well have been the pinnacle of their experiences beyond their actual daily lives. This may have been the thing in their life that they did that was really unique and extraordinary. It was certainly a particularly significant thing for me, but it was not the pinnacle. I had other things in my life that I returned to.

I came back and immediately was asked to direct Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for a theatre here in St. Louis. I started doing my engineering work for the school district, and very shortly after bought an 1861 homestead that was originally built by John Wesley Redfield, a well-known abolitionist who was referenced by Lincoln in his debate with Douglas.

I began the process of the restoration of this home, but even then I didn't totally abandon this story. I secured a flat-boat and took it from St. Louis to Memphis and then rode



Governor Lewis arrives at Grinder's Inn.

horses over to Grinder's Stand to put the epilogue to rest.

After it all ended, there was a great deal of relief and sadness. Lewis for me is sort of my Yorick--I knew him well. It was a hard thing but a relief to ride up to Grinder's Stand. I feel strongly that Meriwether Lewis was assassinated. Even my last ride, his last ride, offered insights into why I believe he was assassinated and how it went down and why it went down the way it did. I believe I have a special kinship with him, and I believe that we shared a lot of things in our proverbial DNA and our life experiences that brought us to where we were in all of this.

But I'm under no assumption that I am him or possess



Painting courtesy of Michael Haynes.

all of his traits. I have tremendous respect for him. I think that he would like me. It's sometimes said that people don't get along because they are too much alike, but I feel like he and I, if we were sitting around with a group of guys and there was a need for a fire team to take a walk, I think he and I would look at each other and know that we were the two who were going to take that walk. I have that relationship with a handful of other men in my life, men I know

that I can trust implicitly, men I know I can rely on in the direst of circumstances.

I can't go back and change anything. Every day on that trip I did what I thought was necessary to accomplish the mission. When I came home I tried to take his mantle off and put it down. Lewis is dead. Whether he was assassinated or took his own life, he's dead. I'm still alive. I have a wife and four children I love very much, and I have a life that I love very much.

**WPO:** At Grinder's Stand, did you do the last horseback ride in real time? Did you get there on October 10?

**SM:** I did.

**WPO:** Talk about that.

**SM:** We took an 8-ton, non-motorized flat boat to Memphis from St. Louis. When we got to Memphis we waited the appropriate amount of time. It was maybe ten days that they were there at Fort Pickering. On the flat boat ride down we had plenty of time to make arrangements, and I found a thoroughbred racehorse rescue center in Tennessee that agreed to bring me three horses to Fort Pickering. They dropped them off unbroken. We had 24 hours to break them and we did. We broke them under the I-55 bridge in a public park with the cops shaking their heads at us, saying we were out of our minds. We rode out of Memphis on those horses and we made it to Grinder's Stand on October 10.

**WPO:** What was it like that evening? The last mile, arriving at Grinder's Stand, getting off your horse? Talk about that moment for you.

**SM:** It was weird. I do believe Lewis was assassinated. As a historian I was trying to keep my mind open. I was studying the map and thinking about our movements and how fast our horses were moving and what had happened the night before, how the horses got separated, how Lewis had ridden ahead and all that sort of stuff. I felt a sort of apprehension, like I was afraid for him. It was weird. There were very spiritual things that happened throughout this whole journey for me for years, things like where a vortex opened and all of a sudden something was there that shouldn't have been.

I wanted to look over into the woods and see Lewis's free black servant John Pernier and stop him. I do believe he was the trigger. I believe that Lieutenant James Biddle Wilkinson paid him at his father's behest (we all know the true character of General James Wilkinson), and I believe Pernier is the one who shot him. I wanted to see him and stop him. Maybe something would happen where I could intervene, sort of a Star Trek moment where I could stop him.

Of course my rational mind was just happy it was over. My rational mind was glad that this was the last piece of that thing that years and years before I had conceived and dreamed of being able to do in its entirety. I had to finish this last piece. I don't know that I would consider it fulfilling or rewarding or satisfying. It was just closure. I had said many years before that I was going to do this thing, and I am a person who, when I say I am going to do a thing, I see it through to completion.

**WPO:** Is there any part of this journey, from Washington, DC, to the end and back again, that you haven't done?

**SM:** No.

**WPO:** Would you do it again?

**SM:** I don't believe a journey like mine will ever happen again. Doing living history growing up, I was blessed to have imparted to me, whether it was from others or just my own epiphany, a realization about the issue of judging people out of the context of their own time. I do believe that unless things change drastically, the revisionist trajectory we are on will preclude this story from ever being revered again. I'm afraid that we are on a trajectory that has decided to vilify those who went before if it is convenient and politically expedient to do so. It's easy to put a target on anyone you want to put it on. I don't think there will be a 300-year commemoration of Lewis and Clark, at least in the current climate.

**WPO:** Because Lewis and Clark and the people they traveled with, and including probably Jefferson, are going to be regarded as racist conquerors?

**SM:** It's an absolute absurdity. It's short-sighted. It's a reflection of the woefully ignorant. I still hold out hope.

Despite my fear, I hope there will be a 300th anniversary commemoration, and I hope it will be a time that we tell OUR story, our collective story, the story in which every group gets the right amount of airtime. There were those of us during the Bicentennial who began to understand the need to tell the story as a whole. We were singing the melody but we needed the harmony. That was what we really were striving for. We saw and began to feel the loss of our story if we did not make sure that everybody's story was told.

**WPO:** You mean that we could lose even the Eurocentric white hero story if we're not generous enough to include the other stories that are central to this whole thing?

**SM:** Right. I have a buddy who has a turn-of-phrase that he uses and maybe over-uses, but I've heard it a lot. We will be in a group and he'll be trying to say something and somebody else will be trying to say something and he will say, "I can sing with you but I can't talk with you." That's what was happening a lot. People were trying to talk over one another rather than trying to sing together during the Bicentennial. It's our collective story. It belongs to all of us, not just this tribe or that nation.

We're trying to forge relationships that are meaningful

and real in the 21st century as we go forward as a nation. This isn't play-acting, and it's not about what happened 200 years ago. Here we are now. When we were at Chamberlain, Lynn "Smokey" Hart, who traveled with me for a while, was largely responsible for there being Native American Days rather than Columbus Day in South Dakota. He was a sixteen-year champion bull rider with the PRC, and he was half Indian and half black. When we were at Chamberlain we had a get-together there. They didn't want to talk with the Discovery Expedition. The guys with Discovery Expedition wanted to sit down, but there was one member of our organization who literally used the term "Great White Father" to these guys. He was "in character." This was at a get-together with AIM [the American Indian Movement] in 2004, and one white crew member wanted to talk and use terms like that. Carter Camp stood up and told him he was going to kick his ass up and down the Missouri, and then walked away to have a cigarette.

I joined Carter, and Smokey went with me. We sat down and had another conversation, a better one. Russell Means was there too, and he said to me, "You want to come to my house? You come out to Pine Ridge and put on some jeans and a sweatshirt and take those stupid f...g clothes off and then come to my house." And ultimately I did. Russell had made a comment about living in the poorest place in America, and Smokey looked over at him and said, "Well Russell, talking about living in the poorest place in America, I see you're wearing \$250 tennis shoes." Smokey goes on this long, brilliant, eloquent diatribe about being black in America, about being half-black and half-Indian, about all of his woes and troubles. He was right on, and they were listening to what he had to say. Then someone said to Smokey, "You think it's bad to be discriminated against. Try being ignored." Now that was a real encounter, one that maybe was based in Lewis and Clark but transcended it in really important ways.

And that's where we are. For you and me, we are acutely aware of the beauty and wonder and all of the incredible diversity in the Native American world, and we're aware of the suffering and the injustice, and we're aware of these brilliant men and women who are articulate and passionate and try to keep their culture alive, but the reality of it is that most Americans have never met a Native American. Most Americans believe they are some sort of mythical creatures, like leprechauns or an extinct species. They're ignored and marginalized out of ignorance, not even out of malice. It's heartbreaking.

I don't know what my kids will ultimately think about

communities other than their own, but at least I'm trying to insure that they are having unfiltered and raw exposure to those communities and cultures so they can make up their own mind down the road about the ins and outs and whys and wherefores. But across our nation as a whole, there is nothing being really done to provide any exposure, positive or negative, to the Native American culture. The perceptions of Native Americans that exist are paternalistic at best, usually derogatory, and almost always monolithic.

**WPO:** Everyone who remembers the Discovery Expedition fixates on the famous "confrontation" in Chamberlin, South Dakota. That for another interview another time. But there were really positive encounters, too.

**SM:** In 2002 we took a boat trip down the Columbia to its mouth. I had spent months in conversation with Gary Johnson and others from the Chinook tribe, and it was the same sort of reaction that I had experienced with the other tribes. I would make a call and I'd maybe hear back or I'd hear back through somebody else. I got the whole workaround. I finally

began getting little dribs and drabs of, "Yeah, we'll be willing to meet with you and we look forward to your coming," that sort of stuff. But no hard commitments. Still, I kept hoping.

We got to the mouth, and we went to Fort Columbia on the northern side of the estuary there, and it was our last day. At the mouth it's always gray and rainy, and there was of course a sense of euphoria and accomplishment. This was just our 2002 trial run, but there was a really weird feeling that it was incomplete because we had not had this culminating experience of meeting the Chinook tribe. We were in Fort Columbia State Park, and the trailers were there and we were loading the dugouts, planning to go and eat somewhere. We were done, and we were going home the next day. It seemed clear that this hoped-for culminating piece was not going to happen. As I say, what we were doing was not a "re-enactment." It was an actual journey. It looked like it was going to end in anti-climax without a meeting with the Chinook.

We were cleaning gear and packing, and suddenly one of the guys yelled out, "There's a canoe out there." We stopped and looked out and sure enough we could make out this little



Lewis was happiest alone on shore with his gun, his notebooks, and his dog. Painting courtesy of Michael Haynes.

silhouette as far out as we could see. The closer it got, the more it became clear that it was a Chinook canoe with a high prow and a totem carving.

We all came down to the beach. There was a parking lot full of pedestrian-looking, park-going people, maybe 50 or 60 people. We had about 25 paddlers and a support group of around 10, so there were maybe 35 of us. Those other folks saw what was going on and sort of migrated behind us.

When the canoe was about 100 yards out, all of these people who had been standing around the park started singing, and we realized it was the tribe! They were singing in Chinook, singing a welcoming song, a salmon song. We realized that these weren't pedestrians at all, these weren't just people hanging out at a park. It was the Chinook tribe. They had come to meet us. Gary Johnson and his son Tony, five guys came in a big canoe. They got out of the canoe and brought out big Chinook salmon. This old man walked out of the crowd past us and down to the canoe, and they spoke to each other in Chinook. There was an exchange and the old man put his hand on Gary in a sort of blessing kind of way and pointed to me, and Gary brought the salmon over and gave it to us.

The reason I tell this story is related to this monolithic perception we have of the Native Americans. As we were leaving, they had a potlatch for us. They had given us so much, beads and woven baskets and other gifts. When we were leaving I asked George in a very public way if there was anything that I can send him from back east. He smiled and said, "Yeah can you send me some of that buffalo meat. I've always heard about it, and I've always wanted to try it."

There has been an institutional dismissal of Native American knowledge and a lack of interest in understanding those nuances. I feel very fortunate to have been forced to grasp it and forced to travel from tribe to tribe and to be made aware of some of the distinctions.

**WPO:** Can you think of the moment or moments when you understood Lewis with some sort of an "Aha!" moment? Were there moments on this journey where suddenly a veil was lifted, and you could understand or see Lewis in a way that maybe before you hadn't?

**SM:** Many. There are many Lewises. There was the Lewis of Monticello, the Lewis of DC, the Lewis of Harper's Ferry, the Lewis of Pittsburgh, the Lewis of Louisville. In each one of those places I think I had the opportunity to get a glimpse of him.

I remember one morning up by Lower Brule [in South Dakota]. It was just me and my second Newfoundland dog Bison. We had slept miles away from everybody. We had walked. It was summer, and I remember waking up and it was a beautiful morning. Just me and the dog and my haversack. I was always self-contained, always had the right gear. Any time I got off the boat I was good for three days. Completely self-contained with what was on my person.

We had been away from the boat since the day before. The dog and I always cuddled. I remember waking up and going down to the river, stripping down and taking a bath, with Bison walking around. There was nothing anywhere that I could see that had anything to do with the contemporary world. It was me and my dog and the river. All the rest of the world went away.

My cell phone was dead, which was a great blessing. People have no idea of what a burden the cell phone was. I got calls daily from the Army, from the National Park Service, from the Discovery Expedition, from the school district. That was in addition to calls saying something like the engine had trouble, the bilge pump wasn't working on the keelboat. It never stopped. I'm not complaining about it, but it is so easy for people to make judgments about me without having one moment's understanding of what was going on. The parties that went on during this Bicentennial that I did not attend were legion. I was accused of being arrogant in not wanting to attend the parties. I went to more hardware stores than I did parties, looking for some odd part so we could engineer a solution to some problem and get up the river the next 25 miles. There was just so much stuff going on.

I think it was moments like that I just described, taking a bath, where I feel I understood that the burden on Lewis must have been tremendous. I think when there were moments of isolation and solace on his journey, they must have been the most restorative moments. More than people can imagine. I remember moments like that.

I was fully gussied up. I had knee high boots. I had riding boots for when I was on horseback, but I also had high boots that were dismounted cavalry boots. I had half boots that were regular officer attire. All the things Lewis would have had for different applications. I was in high boots that were heavy-soled, very heavy, but they were for trudging through stuff. I wore long underwear at all times. Pants on top of that, legs gartered up. I had my wool vest, my overcoat, multiple knives, haversack, and canteen. When I was walking away from the boat I had my backpack with bedroll.

I usually had two haversacks. I was really heavily laden in everything I was doing. Sometimes I wouldn't unbuckle and get out of those clothes for three or four days at a time. I would take a bath, and then when I would put it all back on I would know I was in it for days. Days of it at a time. Kind of regular army stuff really.

As far as moments of great wonder, Lemhi was awesome. There were a lot of times on the trip where we got to the place on the right day and nobody was there.

This was awesome, because Discovery Expedition was often on a somewhat different schedule. For them, with their official responsibilities, it was all about being there for the hooptedoodle. I get it. I understand that doing public events on Saturdays and Sundays are going to bring out more people, and you have festivals and all, I get it. That's why I really don't begrudge anything that the Discovery Expedition continued to do. I was party to it for a long time. We modified dates. Once I was freed from that and I was able to really follow the journals meticulously, to the hour, to arrive at Lemhi and there be nobody there because we'd gotten there on the right day and the hooptedoodle wasn't until tomorrow, it was awesome. To get to Lemhi and there be no one there, and we were alone to look out over that view.

There were countless times that I had reflective moments. The really awesome moments were my moments, not his. I could flip the switch and try to make the connection, but if the moments are truly awesome, they've got to be first-person. They were my moments and accomplishments. I knew that despite everything that happened at Fort Mandan, despite the storms that were brewing, when we got the boats to Fort Mandan I had done what Glen Bishop asked me to do. That was such a huge sense of relief, because I knew I had not failed the one man who was more singularly responsible for there being a Bicentennial re-enactment than any other. Had there been no Glen Bishop, nothing that we're talking about would have happened.

**WPO:** What were some of your greatest moments on the trail?

**SM:** There were times like that when it seemed like nature had staged stuff for us. I remember the Ghost Dog. After Lewis and Clark left Fort Mandan they didn't see anybody until they got to the Shoshone, but they did see evidence of Native Americans. They saw tipi poles. They talked about abandoned villages, but those villages were not really abandoned. Those poles were intentionally left, to be recovered at a later time. There was a day where Lewis wrote about the

fact that out of nowhere a dog appeared and followed them all day long. At one point the guys were throwing rocks at this dog because it was coming up and harassing them. This seems weird, given the fact that they hadn't seen anybody. It seems that seeing a dog would have inspired them to take it along, to have two dogs. That always seemed odd to me.

But anyway, they talk of being kind of harassed by this dog. They had jerked meat and stuff, and the dog was harassing them. But by the end of the day the dog had disappeared. They also talked about seeing Indian prayer ties that day. This is Poplar, Montana, now. That day we read the entry about the dog. That morning going into Poplar, we had the dugout in the water. But our numbers had grown, so like the original expedition, we had a ground party. The dugout was on the water and a couple of us were walking. I always liked to walk when there was a walking exercise. Not that I didn't like paddling upriver against the Missouri, but I had gotten my fill of that. Walking was a different experience, and all part of the story. Lewis walked a lot.

We were going up the road, and gospel truth, this dog appeared out of nowhere. Yellow lab mix mutt type of dog. This isn't particularly noteworthy in itself, but we were on a BIA road, close to the river, and there was a fence line along the road. All of a sudden there were prayer ties on this fence. This was the Assiniboine Sioux Reservation. We got to Poplar, and R.J. Young, the Cultural Affairs officer for the tribe, drives up in a pickup to tell us that they had a hooptedoodle going on for us in town. We started to tell him about the dog. We turned around to show him and the dog was gone. Ghost Dog, prayer ties. Those things happened more than you might imagine.

One day we took off to get away from everybody that wore a patch on their shoulder, and we went back into Packer's Meadow. We had a string of horses by this time. We had our horses and our packhorses, and we had Gene's horses and his packhorses, and then Gene and Molly had this little colt with them. We turned the colt loose because the mare that Molly was riding was its mom. We had this colt and we had Bison, my second Newfoundland. Bison was probably a year-and-a-half old at that time, still pretty young. Bison and this colt were like two kids traveling with a bunch of adults. This colt and this Newfoundland playing together, out in the middle of Packer's Meadow, having a blast. It was beautiful. There were no words for it. And then it was weird, because our next stop was Kilt Colt Creek. It was one of those times when you wonder what was going through their

head that day. I'm sure somebody that day was bummed. As hungry as they were, it was a bummer. Because this sure was a pretty colt.

**WPO:** As you remember and tell these stories, they are in a certain sense paranormal. What's your way of seeing this?

**SM:** I just see it the way I saw it. I have no idea what Lewis and Clark saw, but I know what I saw, and I saw it at the same place on the same day, same time of day. It had to be similar.

When I read the journals now, I know what everything looks like out there. When they talk about the distant hill, I know the distant hill. When they talk about looking down into the ravine or the valley, I know it. I can see it. You can never get that from books alone.

As I tried to understand Lewis, I was very careful to avoid imposing my own conflating life experience or my personality on his. But this thing about a sense of betrayal of the ideals of the journey, particularly as I started to spend time with the Indian community, the issue of the treaties, became very strong. I felt very strongly that when Lewis extended his hand to Native Americans and made promises, he made them in good faith. There were the three mission statements: the exploration of the river and its major tributaries, the documentation of flora and fauna, and the anthropological study and communication with the tribes.

The original intention was for the Louisiana side of the Missouri to be one huge Native American reserve, with the idea that there would be commercial interface but not European settlement. Lewis wrote a letter once he was out here saying that tens of thousands of Americans had already crossed over the river and that he didn't think we could ever get them back. Lewis saw very quickly that he had been put in a position of making promises that others had no intention of keeping.

**WPO:** Who are these others?

**SM:** General James Wilkinson for one. But quite frankly, I think that Lewis might have had some sense of that ruthlessness in Clark and others involved with the American Fur Company. There was also an institutional disregard. I believe that Lewis in his heart was acting in good faith. I think in St. Louis he started to feel this sense of betrayal. In the old Guard we used to say "on behalf of a grateful nation." I think Lewis also felt betrayed by the pettiness of the financial charges against him.

**WPO:** Why, in his 1813 biographical sketch of Lewis, did Jefferson paint that picture of an alcoholic, troubled man?

**SM:** I think it was because of his concern for his own legacy and abdicating any responsibility for being involved in that particular drama or scandal. Media exploded during this time. What had been the fairly parochial and localized media of the late 18th century was now national. People knew. There were national scandals. I believe that Jefferson was always looking out for Jefferson. I love Jefferson, but I do think he was doing damage control. I fault Jefferson for that. I think it was unfortunate that he was so quick to throw Lewis under the bus.

I think that Jefferson thought he had a son to some degree in Lewis. At least a protégé of sorts. He might have even projected a little of himself on Lewis, and he probably lived a bit of adventure vicariously through Lewis.

What did Carlos Dehault Delassus say about Lewis after he met him? Delassus was the Spanish Intendant in St. Louis, and he referred to Lewis in his writings. Lewis met him on December 10, 1803. A lot of people don't grasp this, but Lewis had come over the night before with a handful of guys, and they stayed the night. They did this on purpose so there wouldn't be a logistics issue in the morning when they came to meet Delassus. They knew that the river has a personality that can preclude you from making it across.

Theoretically, he was coming over without permission, and he came in an almost covert way. Delassus said the next day that he had met with Lewis, who had made himself known the night before. When Lewis had come over the river the night before, word spread. Clearly, "Mack was back." But Delassus referred to Lewis in his report to Santa Fe as Major Lewis, Jefferson's nephew.

The Spanish were the last monarchical power in this story. Britain had undergone a change. England was not a true totalitarian monarchy any more. France was certainly not. We were espousing a democratically-tending constitutional republic, though we were definitely not. Only Spain was still a true monarchy, and their entire view of the world was still seen through that prism. So Delassus, who was himself a third son minor noble who had been sent to St. Louis, a crappy assignment but still something, because he was a minor noble and needed an asterisk next to his name in the history books. So of course this emissary from Jefferson must be of noble birth to even have had the audacity to come speak as a peer to him.

I'm curious as to how that conversation went. Did

Delassus suggest that high status, a kind of dynastic status, and Lewis went along with it? Or did Lewis puff himself up to facilitate the conversation? As far as Delassus was concerned, and what he reported back to Santa Fe, he met with Jefferson's nephew, Major Lewis. Somehow he got the impression that the relationship between this man and the President of the United States was familial.

The later governorship awarded to Lewis was perceived, at least in Jefferson's mind and probably in everybody else's mind, including Lewis's, as a warranted and deserved accolade. I think it was the single greatest mistake.

**WPO:** Why?

**SM:** Being a great officer in the field does not necessarily translate to being an equally great staff officer. Bureaucracy is the bane of the existence of field operations.

Probably the most liberating aspect of the expedition was the departure from Mandan. From that point on there was surely no communication. I think Lewis was an awesome infantry officer. Even in today's world, men would follow him without hesitation to the ends of the earth, and clearly those men did. I don't believe he had the organizational inclination to be a chief executive officer.

I have never believed that the Lewis and Clark Expedition was a co-captaincy. It was in many ways, and I understand what they said to one another, but during the expedition Lewis was the Company Commander. Clark was the Executive Officer, which is the number two in command in a military structure. It fell to Clark to make the daily logs. Lewis was journaling, but if he didn't journal, he was thinking in a much bigger picture.

After the expedition, Lewis was given a job that he was not prepared to do. I think that if he had had a real bureaucratic support team and administrative staff, he might have muddled through it for a while. His inclination had always been to accept the challenge he was given and to do it. He was given this charge and he accepted it. I don't think he relished it, and I think it very quickly became a burden to him. It was not at all what he wanted to be doing.

Sometimes you get into a downward spiral. I think it became overwhelming and he began to drown in paperwork and in the bureaucratic backlog with billing and other administrative duties. I think it weighed on him heavily. I'm my own greatest critic, and if I'm in a situation where I have to fake it until I make it, I'm not good at it. To me that is not the same as adapt, overcome, improvise, or rise to the occa-

sion. I don't like being perceived as a counterfeit or phony. I'm the first to call myself out on it, and I suspect Lewis was similar. He knew. In his heart he knew he wasn't the governor.

There was plenty of evidence to that. Clark and everybody else who was in St. Louis at that time were all running circles around him, undercutting him, back-dooring him. He was not in charge. Unlike Clark, who had the support of a family, who had the social network and all, Lewis was living in isolation. He had lived his entire life in isolation. He was a loner. I don't think he was a lonely loner, but he was not plugged into the social network and the extended family. There was some communication with home, with his siblings, but it was not like Clark had. Clark knew that at the drop of a hat he could go to Louisville, which was really close. He had family nearby. Lewis was a long way from home, and even when he got there people might be happy to see him, but it wasn't the same. He hadn't even really lived there.

I really think that if Jefferson had told Lewis he needed him to go back out there to start shaping the future of those sovereign nations within our greater borders and the role the people there were going to play, Lewis would have thrived and flourished and it probably would be something we could look back on today as the shining example of what could have happened when cultures collided. But we'll never know.

That's not the end of the story. Because this happened to him, and because the ball was dropped, terrible things happened. Missteps occurred. We can envision what might have happened had Lewis been able to return and to foster those relationships and had gotten it right. Just because that didn't happen then and he went down the wrong path, I don't believe that means we accept that as the status quo and as the end of this thing. ■

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**Editor's note:** What you have just read is approximately 3% of a set of interviews I have been conducting with Scott Mandrell. In choosing to interview the once—and perhaps still—controversial Mandrell, my primary goal was to try to understand something about Meriwether Lewis “from the inside out,” from the perspective of someone who embodied him in the most exacting and visceral way possible. I find the parallels both fascinating and troubling in ways that help me understand the life and achievement of Meriwether Lewis. At least a dozen times in our interviews, Scott insisted that he represents *only one* of many important voices from the Bicentennial's re-enactment arena.

# Reviews

## *The Lewis and Clark Expedition Day by Day*

By Gary E. Moulton

Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska

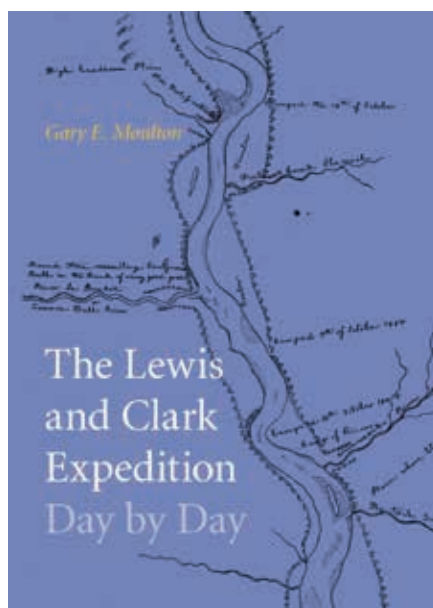
Press, 2018, 768 pp., illustrations, maps, index, hardcover \$75,

paperback \$29.95

Reviewed by James J. Holmberg

One of the most famous phrases associated with the epic Lewis and Clark Expedition is “we proceeded on.” It appears often in the journals kept by the explorers during their journey. The last words William Clark wrote in his journal in September 1806 are “we commenced wrighting.” He rightly could have written those words on May 14, 1804, when the Corps of Discovery left Camp Dubois and set off up the Missouri River. Those two phrases accurately describe the Lewis and Clark journey that Gary Moulton has experienced in editing his definitive edition of the expedition journals and now in writing his masterful *The Lewis and Clark Expedition Day by Day*.

For almost forty years, Dr. Moulton has “proceeded on” in his Lewis and Clark labor. His research, editing, writing, and speaking talents have been devoted to the epic Lewis and Clark adventure. All that he has done before to bring the edition of the journals to publication and become one of the preeminent authorities on the journey of the Corps of Discovery is now crowned by his day by day narrative account of the expedition. Beginning with the Corps’ ascent of the Missouri River and ending with its September 1806 arrival in St. Louis almost twenty-eight months later, Dr. Moulton has combined the entries of all the journal-



ists into a daily summary of their experiences, adventures, and accomplishments. Merging the surviving writings of journal-keepers Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, John Ordway, Patrick Gass, Joseph Whitehouse, and Charles Floyd is no easy task. Combining them and their information into a cohesive, consistent, readable entry for each day is very challenging and Dr. Moulton succeeds admirably. He also very appropriately incorporates the information Nicholas Biddle recorded in post-expedition interviews with Clark and George Shannon that shed further light on the journey.

In order to do this, Dr. Moulton employs a methodical and organized approach. Chapters divided into important segments of the expedition, accompanied by a map showing the Corps’ route, allow the reader to clearly follow the progress of the expedition. His techniques are explained in a preface. Of great assistance are Dr. Moulton’s excellent introduction and afterword. The introduction provides the reader with a concise yet very informative overview of the expedi-

tion. Those journalists contributing to the daily summaries are noted. One also understands the methods the journalists used; how they borrowed and copied from one another and what was important to them to record. Lewis and Clark are, of course, the major focus of the summaries given the type of information they often recorded. Reading the day by day narrative summaries of the journey one is struck and impressed by the amount of the captains’ ethnographic, geographic, botanical, zoological, and other observations and how fortunate we are that this information has been preserved. But one also is struck by how unfortunate it is that both writings and specimens were lost during the expedition and that the wealth of information the journals contained was essentially lost for so many years due to the failure to publish them as Lewis had planned. This especially becomes evident by Dr. Moulton’s very helpful use of the present-day names of places and species that Lewis and Clark identified and named but that remained mostly unknown due to the lengthy delay in publishing the Biddle edition of the journals, its limited circulation, and the failure to publish scientific information from the journals until almost a century later.

The inclusion of the present locations for the party’s campsites and landmarks it passed is very helpful in identifying them on a modern map. Providing mileage traveled makes clear how arduous a journey it was. Progress often was marked by a few miles in navigating the Missouri, Columbia, and other waterways. Such difficulties and hardships become abundantly evident, as do the dangers the Corps faced. The fact that only one member died,

and that from natural causes, is almost miraculous when one reads about the close calls from grizzly bears, injuries sustained, suffering from the elements, illnesses experienced, and the almost daily scouts and hunts undertaken. The highs and lows of the experience and the members' feeling are captured by carefully selected quotes from the journals.

What must not be forgotten is the interaction with the Native peoples. The Corps very easily could have become corpses if not for the goodwill and assistance of Indian nations such as the Arikara, Mandan, Hidatsa, Shoshone, Nez Perce, Clatsop, and others. There were close calls and tensions almost resulted in hostilities a number of times, but only the encounter of Lewis and three companions with a party of Blackfeet on the Two Medicine River resulted in violence and the death of two warriors. How easily any one of these nations could have attacked and killed some if not all the explorers. Instead, the vast majority of Native peoples welcomed and assisted the Corps. If not for the Mandan, Shoshone, Nez Perce, and others the Corps never would have accomplished its mission. Dr. Moulton's careful attention to the explorers' interactions with the Native peoples makes this abundantly clear and an essential part of the Lewis and Clark story.

The expedition was a team effort. Its members all did their duty in advancing it and making it a success. In reading the daily summaries, though, one clearly understands who the major members were. The names of George Drouillard, Joseph and Reuben Field, John Shields, the sergeants, and a few others appear regularly. The reader also understands the partnership of

Lewis and Clark--how the expedition's co-captains divided duties and leadership responsibilities and how they interacted with one another and lent their talents to achieving this monumental undertaking. Much has been written on the partnership of Lewis and Clark, but in reading the daily summaries of the trek the reader is impressed by their interaction and cooperation in knowing each other's strengths and acknowledging and using them to "proceed on" and successfully accomplish their mission. It was a partnership and friendship that extended beyond the expedition until ended by the premature and tragic death of Lewis in October 1809 at that backwoods Tennessee inn.

*Day by Day* solely focuses on the May 1804 to September 1806 portion of the expedition. Lewis's Ohio River journal and Clark's field notes from their winter at Camp Dubois are not included. To focus on the primary western portion of the journey makes narrative and editorial sense. A few factual errors sneak into the text. Clark joined the regular army in 1792 (not 1791) and resigned as a first lieutenant (not captain); the iron frame boat was four and a half feet wide (not long--clearly an editorial slip); York was not freed until at least 1816 (not in 1811); and a few others. But they are minor and do not detract from the major contribution Dr. Moulton makes to Lewis and Clark historiography with *The Lewis and Clark Expedition Day by Day*. This book is a must for anyone interested in Lewis and Clark, exploration, the American West, or an epic adventure.

This reviewer sometimes is asked what he thinks was the most important accomplishment of the Lewis and

Clark Expedition. There were, of course, many important accomplishments, but what I ultimately answer is the fact that the explorers put one foot in front of another, one oar/paddle/pole in the water after another day after day, working together toward that ultimate goal of the Pacific Ocean and then home again. What they achieved is phenomenal. Their abilities and dedication were important reasons they successfully completed their mission. And like the Corps of Discovery, Gary Moulton has dedicated his research and writing abilities to work on the journals day after day, and has given us this masterful day by day account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. ■

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*James J. Holmberg joined the staff of The Filson Historical Society in 1982 and is now the curator of collections. His major publication is Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark (2002), as well as numerous articles and encyclopedia entries.*

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## **Meriwether: An American Epic**

Video Game

Script and story by Carlos Hernandez

Historical consultant: Barb Kubik

Steam Early Access, \$14.99

Reviewed by Erik Kubik



Wagons ho! Or should it be westward onward? These days, historical video

games are few and far between. *Meriwether: An American Epic* happily fills this void. This may be one of the closest ways to experience what the Corps of Discovery saw on their journey across the Louisiana Territory, over the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia River.

When I first heard about a Lewis and Clark game coming to Kickstarter in 2012, I assumed it would be like Oregon Trail. There was a lot of eager response to the Kickstarter campaign from other game developers, historians, and the general public. I noticed many of the first backers were Europeans who have a fascination with the American West.

I played a brief demo of the game in 2014 where I met Josh DeBonis, one of the founders of Sortasoft LLC, the company behind the game. I was intrigued by what the game offered

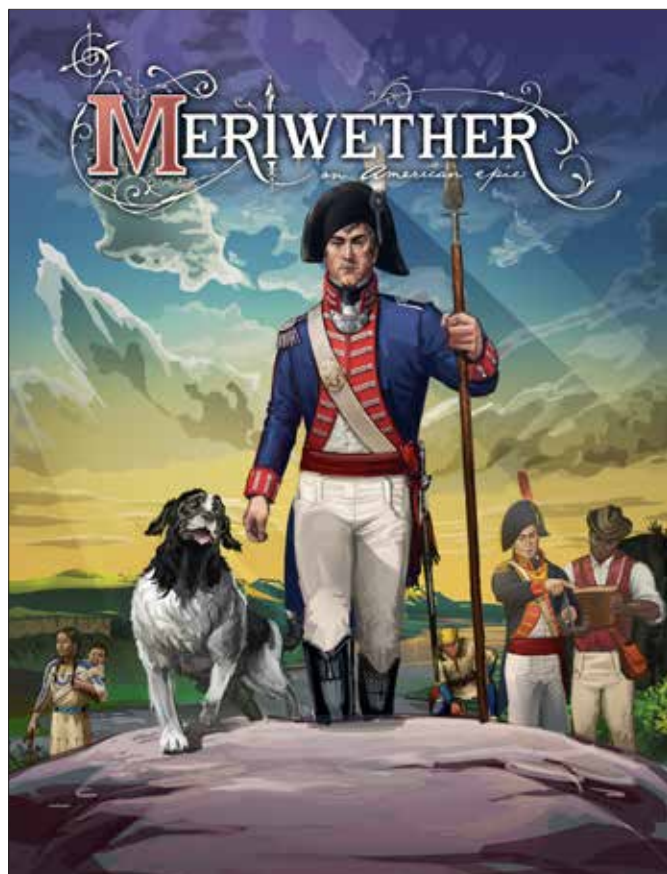
and what his vision was for the adventure. As an avid gamer, I asked several questions at the time about the gameplay and the skill set system, and I was curious about the Wunderkammer. Think of the Wunderkammer as a giant guidebook (or a curiosity cabinet) which grows as players progress in the game, keeping track of lore, historical content, a dictionary of plants and people gamers were going to meet along the way. Even in 2012 I felt the gameplay reminded me a little of the Mass Effect series.

As I played the game I was asking the most important question about *Meriwether: An American Epic*. What kind of audience is the game for? I can safely say the game can be played by anyone if you have patience and enjoy lots of historical content.

The game play centers around players guiding Captain Meriwether Lewis

and the Corps of Discovery, from the concept from President Thomas Jefferson to the return journey home. Gamers are tasked with keeping the Corps of Discovery in good spirits, managing resources and surviving, meeting Native Americans, and gathering information about the uncharted lands. All of this is reflected during the gameplay

*Meriwether* has a first person perspective, which means players are playing through the eyes of Meriwether Lewis. Players guide him through the wilderness, establishing camps, navigating rivers, addressing the Corps of Discovery, and overseeing what work or tasks they have for the day. A little progress meter on the left of the screen keeps track of the current objectives. Some of the objectives include hunting or exploring; others are for particular members such as sending Private



## Play the Lewis and Clark Videogame!

Thomas Jefferson has chosen you to lead the most important mission of exploration in U.S. history. Can you cross North America, endure harsh climates, keep starvation at bay, befriend Native Americans, map these uncharted lands, and make it back alive? You must: or perish in the attempt!

*Meriwether* is a historically rigorous, meticulously researched video game created by noted game designer Josh DeBonis and historian Barb Kubik to bring to life the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to a new generation.

Order your copy of *Meriwether* today online at [www.meriwethergame.com](http://www.meriwethergame.com)



humanities MONTANA



Nathaniel Pryor to scout a local village, or asking Private John Shields to repair firearms. As gamers finish these tasks, they can move further down the timeline of the expedition. There is also a fatigue setting; Lewis can only do so much before he must make a fire or sleep in a tent. So, players better make sure they have wood for a fire and rations to eat as these will affect company morale. No matter where you are in the camp or wilderness, Seaman is always close by.

Speaking of consequences for actions in the game, players have access to a skill tree. This focuses on four options—Diplomacy, Leadership, Soldier, and Scientist. The points for increasing skills in certain areas are obtained when the player interacts with the party or Native peoples. A few examples include punishing members for falling asleep at their post—will you be just and fair or lead by example? Each of the four options will have something to choose. Gamers can only pick each of the four options four times in a row before they are no longer selectable but by filling these they can accumulate points in their skill tree, much like a traditional RPG (role-playing game). Some of these skills included quick draw which lets gamers automatically reload, haggling for dealing with traders, spy for unlocking the spyglass, crafting skills—there are a lot of beneficial options.

One of the other elements I was drawn to was the use of medicine. By reading books, Lewis can increase his knowledge of how to treat ailments and injuries. This plays out like a mini game. Players have a few chances to select the right medication with helpful hints guiding them. Failure to figure out the solution often results in an

ineffective treatment!

Graphically, *Meriwether* isn't a bad looking game. The game makes the people, objects in, the environment, and the landscapes as authentic as possible. Players will not see big cities, but they will notice plains, forests, grasslands, campsites, and several mighty rivers. Bushes and trees sway in the wind and animals roam the grasslands. Native Americans are dressed as their tribes would dress and are not just lumped together in the traditional Plains-style garb. Someone took the time to research these parts of the historical content. Each of the Corps of Discovery members has been painstakingly recreated with enough detail to make each of them unique. Players can easily tell Pryor from Gass from Floyd and the Field brothers.

The audio in *Meriwether* is also authentic for the time period. This helps to emphasize the mood in the game between the flashbacks of preparing for the expedition to floating down the river in the keel boat. The game text and voice narration are pleasant as well. York and George Drouillard sound like I thought they would sound. The designers and consultants took the time to make sure the books in the game and spoken text sound like someone is living in the early 1800s. I found the music to be the perfect compliment to the gameplay, light and soothing and not too intense.

After spending several hours with the game, I enjoyed what I played. Think of it as a slow, methodical, historical adventure where players have a lot of potential options. So join the Corps, and grab that sense of adventure as Captain Lewis. This game is probably best suited for those interested in the Corps of Discovery or

gamers wanting something a little different. My only knocks against the game were that I ran into a few bugs and I really wish there was game controller support along with mouse and keyboard. The game is out on Steam Early Access for \$14.99. Early Access means the game is out there for those to purchase, but it's not quite finished. The development team is still working on the final touches. If you would like to see some of the gameplay, I recommend this Youtube series which features a Let's Play on part of the game. The video reviewer plays through the game and narrates what they are doing.

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*Erik Kubik lives in Kennewick, Washington. He is a graduate of Washington State University with degrees in history and English/Creative Writing. He has been writing about video games for over 10 years. If you enjoyed this review, you can find more of his reviews, opinions and his biweekly podcast at The Gamers Lounge. He can be reached via email at erik.kubik@the-gamers-lounge.com. He is also a member of the Charbonneau Society.*

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## ***Bitterroot: The Life and Death of Meriwether Lewis***

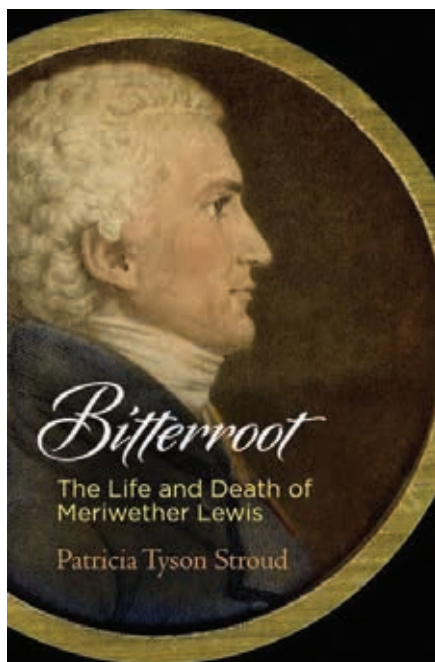
By Patricia Tyson Stroud  
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2018,  
416 pp., illustrations, maps, index,  
hardcover \$39.95

Reviewed by David Nicandri

Patricia Stroud's goal with *Bitterroot: The Life and Death of Meriwether Lewis* is to counteract "the narrative of a weak and troubled alcoholic depressive [that] has dominated historiographic accounts, biographies and films" (pp. 1-2). She directs fire at a veritable all-star cast of scholars--Paul Cutright,

Gary Moulton, Carolyn Gilman, Ken Burns, Stephen Ambrose, Clay Jenkinson, Thomas Danisi—but her real target is Thomas Jefferson. Stroud’s hypothesis is that the third president seeded “this denigrating historiography” with his short biography of Lewis which appeared as a prologue to the 1814 edition of the journals edited by Nicholas Biddle. In her view, Jefferson was simply too credulous of sources from the Tennessee frontier who convinced him “without any corroborating evidence, that Lewis was a drunkard” (p. 2). Stroud asserts that there are no “reliable contemporary accounts” to indicate he was “pathologically depressive, alcoholic, or suicidal.” Instead, Jefferson, “the man who Lewis had looked up to with near reverence failed him” by his uncritical acceptance of rumors about “Lewis’s dissipation,” a point of view that has “colored virtually every account since” (p.7).

To lay the groundwork for this argument, the first two-thirds of Stroud’s book is a recapitulation of the expedition that in essence attempts to prove that the competent (if occasionally temperamental) explorer of 1803-1806 was same man in 1809; only the venue of his professional operations changed, not his underlying character or personal deportment. In many ways her interpretation of the expedition has a time machine-like quality in its pre-bicentennial veneration of Lewis. His decisions are glorified and missteps glossed over if not ignored. Stroud resurrects Ambrose’s favored trope that Lewis and Clark formed “one of the most perfect collaborations in American history” (p. 76). She excuses Lewis’s decision not to keep a journal during the winter of 1803-1804 arguing “he may have thought it



unnecessary for both of them to keep a journal” (p. 82). Later Stroud implausibly argues that “part of the reason” Lewis did not keep a journal west of the Nez Perce villages was because he was too busy compiling Native American vocabularies (p. 148). There is no evidence to support this view.

Authors are free to develop their own interpretive framework, but the front part of this book is simply replete with errors. It is stunning that so many mistakes were able to pass through substantive editing at a major press. A sampler follows. Alexander Mackenzie did not, as Stroud states, think the river he struck “was a tributary of the Columbia” (p. 48); he thought it was the main stem. Philadelphia was not the capital of the young republic from the end of the Revolutionary War to 1800 (when it moved to the District of Columbia) (p. 55); New York was federal hub from 1785-1790. Within the context of Jefferson’s negotiation for the purchase of Louisiana, Stroud mistakenly contends that France was then “leading the field in scientific explo-

ration” (p. 59). Napoleon Bonaparte had dispatched a voyage of exploration to Australia in 1801, but Vancouver’s account of Northwest Coast exploration had been published in 1798, and Matthew Flinders, in two separate voyages before and after the turn of the nineteenth century, superseded the work of the French team by establishing the insularity of Tasmania (something that had eluded even the great James Cook) and mapped the continent’s entire coastline. The Northwest Coast fur trade was based on the pelts of the sea otter, not fur seals (p. 70). Charles Floyd was not the “youngest man on the expedition” (p. 100). And she trots out the old myth that Sacagawea “demonstrated the expedition’s peaceful intent” (p. 126). This is merely a sample.

Stroud’s rehashing of the expedition’s course contains an occasional insight, such as her emphasis on the fact that the day the expedition left Fort Mandan, in April 1805, Lewis walked ahead of his “little fleet” for six miles to that night’s encampment. Though unremarked upon by the author, this circumstance proves the contrived nature of Lewis’s famous (and suspiciously polished) literary commentary ascribed to his journal for that day. Her suggestion that Lewis’s naming of the “Wisdom” and “Philanthropy” branches of the Jefferson River “have a Masonic ring” (p. 138) is plausible. The author also detected the fine point that Jefferson finally acknowledged Clark’s rank as a captain in response to Lewis’s letter sent to the president after he returned to St. Louis (p. 191). But there aren’t a sufficient number of such findings to countervail the litany of inaccuracies, such as the howler that the portage around

the Great Falls took place “from the latter part of August through most of a grueling September” (p. 136). One paragraph later she has them leaving the upper portage camp on July 15th. (How can a copy-editor miss that?)

Stroud also misunderstands the logic of Lewis’s place-naming as applied to the western landscape. The Jefferson River was not thusly named because it was the largest of the three forks, but rather because it flowed from the mission-centric direction. Lewis himself said “it’s direction is much more promising than any other,” by which he meant that it headed “with the waters of . . . the Columbia.” Comparing this western fork of the Missouri with the middle one, he was unable to “satisfy myself which was the largest of the two, in fact they appeared as if they had been cast in the same mould there being no difference in character of size” (Moulton, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 4:435, 437).

Stroud perpetuates the myth of Cameahwait’s geography lesson, writing that “From his conference with the chief, Lewis understood that the route he had determined to follow was more complicated” (p. 140). In fact, Clark later objected to Lewis’s expropriation of this knowledge, posthumously interlineating in his colleague’s text that the discernment of geographic complexity in the mountains was “related to Capt C” (Moulton, *Journals*, 5:94).

With the possible exceptions of Dayton Duncan and Gary Moulton, no one knows every intricate aspect of trail geography, but it is still remarkable to read about the “rock-walled river” (p. 150) eliminating the prospects for laying out camp below the mouth of the Cowlitz River. The party moved some stones about but the

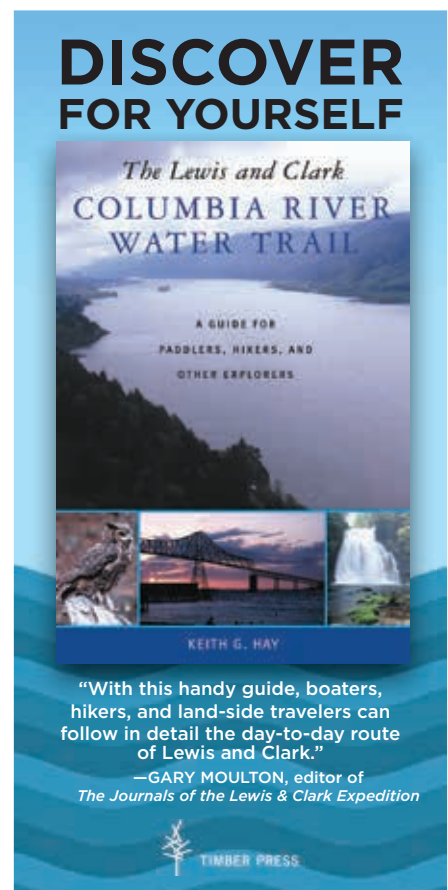
author paints an entirely different picture with her terminology; rock-lined river would have been more suitable. Stroud was not well served by those who read her manuscript for the press, thus allowing this *partial* list of factual and bibliographic errors and geographic gaffes to survive into print.

The book’s faults are often compounded by a naïve reading of journal text. At Fort Clatsop, Lewis mused about the prospects of maritime fur traders visiting the mouth of the Columbia River. He wondered whether these merchants first stuck the Pacific coast south of the Columbia or transited directly from some island “between the continents of Asia and America to the South West” (p. 156). (The insular allusion was almost certainly a reference to the Hawaiian Archipelago which Lewis would have picked up on from his reading of Cook’s and Vancouver’s accounts.) In any event, Stroud seizes on this passage as a political forecast suggesting Lewis used the term “America” “in the belief that one day this part of the continent would be part of the United States.” Actually, explorers of the Northwest Coast going back to Cook routinely referred to the North American mainland as simply “America,” and its native inhabitants as “Americans.”

Similarly, Stroud reiterates the notion (long since discredited by Stephen Dow Beckham, Clay Jenkinson, and myself) that the captains’ journals “were hastily written, mostly under trying circumstances” (p. 183). This pattern may be true for the “captain’s log” that Clark and John Ordway maintained, but it rarely applies to what has come to us from Lewis. The great preponderance of his text has all the look of a polished second-draft

(probably written at Fort Clatsop and waiting for the Rocky Mountain snows to melt) that he hoped to translate to the printed page, but never did.

The quality of Stroud’s book takes a dramatic turn for the better starting with a chapter titled “Philadelphia Interlude,” which, among other things, discusses Lewis’s handling of unauthorized accounts of the expedition, including the Gass-McKeehan Affair. Stroud is much more adept describing Lewis’s engagement with the physical and social dynamics of that urban environment than the remote landscapes of the Far West. She tries to discount Ambrose’s theory that Lewis dissipated his time in alcohol and carousing with Mahlon Dickerson, but she argues away Dickerson’s intriguing declaration in the summer of 1807 that his friend was “in trouble.” Stroud asserts that Lewis,



after his return from the Pacific, “was wholly focused on writing, arranging for, and producing the journals” (p. 195), but where is the proof of that? She excuses his lack of progress by noting that Jefferson sent his former aide-de-camp to witness the Aaron Burr trial in Richmond, Virginia, for a couple weeks that September; and detailing the logistical demands of organizing his effects for the trip to St. Louis (in November), and other undefined “matters to attend to,” all of which kept him from having “enough time to organize his thoughts and begin” writing his narrative (p. 229). This line of thought is unconvincing.

Here we might digress to consider a question that I don’t think has ever been posed. Just how much time was reasonable for Lewis to finish writing and publishing his three-volume account? As is so often the case, a recourse to the experiences of other explorers is helpful. At one extreme we have Alexander Mackenzie, who finished his voyage to Pacific tidewater in 1793 but did not publish his account until 1801. Clearly, Mackenzie had a worse case of writer’s block than Lewis had, and perhaps sourced in the same predicament.

Mackenzie confided to his cousin and fellow fur trader Roderick Mackenzie that “the greatest part of my time was taken up in vain Speculations.” He confessed he could not “write to purpose” and that he “passed so much of my time insignificantly.” He also confessed to being psychologically “uneasy,” writing of dreams in which “I could not close my eyes without finding myself in company with the Dead” (Gough, *First Across the Continent* (1997) p. 168).

At the other pole we find James Cook. He did not write or edit the

account of his first voyage, which was mostly based on the journal of the nobleman/naturalist Joseph Banks in any event. Ultimately unsatisfied with that product (the published account of the first voyage) when he read it while returning from his second voyage, Cook determined to write his own account of the second expedition, which concluded on July 30, 1775. This manuscript was delivered to the Admiralty no later than June 25, 1776, when Cook boarded the *Resolution* for his third and final voyage. With the assistance of the Admiralty’s formidable array of editors, cartographers, engravers, and house publishers, Cook’s second-voyage narrative appeared in 1777, a mere two years after the second expedition concluded. With none of the infrastructure the Admiralty made available to Cook, a timeline this tight was an entirely unfair expectation of Lewis.

Stroud recounts Lewis’s distractions as governor in another strong chapter, “Land of Opportunity.” Herein she cites new or rarely used documentation to provide much interesting detail, including aspects of his frustrating bachelorhood. Nevertheless, in these pages Lewis comes across as someone far more interested in boosting his territory’s prospects for economic development than finishing his report. As governor he made no connection between the boom he was boosting, causing the price of land surrounding St. Louis to double in sixteen months, and the fact that, as Clark’s brother-in-law William Preston phrased it, the Indians “have been exceedingly troublesome during the last winter and spring” (p. 237). If Lewis had failed to complete his manuscript on a Cook-like timeline (when he reached St.

Louis from Philadelphia and Virginia near the end of 1807, 15 months had passed since the expedition ended), it was certainly not going to be advanced once he got caught up in the vortex of territorial events (Indian relations, commercial and political intrigue, etc.) Stroud is very strong on this point.

The central event in this denouement was the formation of the Missouri Fur Company (MFC), which Clark and Lewis’s brother Reuben invested in. Lewis commissioned this firm to return Sheheke to his Mandan homeland at Jefferson’s insistence, yet another intrusion upon the governor’s time as a writer. Stroud maintains that in commissioning this public-private partnership for the return of the Mandan leader, Lewis did not have an explicit conflict of interest, which may be true, but in modern parlance it cer-



### Attention Lewis and Clark Trail Stewards!

The LCTHF has three Grant Programs:

- The Lewis and Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment
- The Burroughs-Holland/Bicentennial Education Fund
- The Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Sign Maintenance Fund

For criteria, deadlines and applications, visit [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org) and click on “What We Do”

Additional info: call (888)701-3434, e-mail Lindy Hatcher at [grants@lewisandclark.org](mailto:grants@lewisandclark.org), or ask any LCTHF board member

tainly raised concerns over the appearance of fairness, as John Jacob Astor pointed out for the president's benefit.

The MFC story, of course, is the foundational element in the War Department's questioning of Lewis's financial and administrative practices. When Astor talked, people listened, and Lewis seems to have paid a price professionally for doing (the now retired) Jefferson's bidding. Accounting problems prompted Lewis's ill-fated attempt at returning to the nation's capital in the fall of 1809 to defend himself.

Here the story gets very dense, which only the hardest of Lewis & Clark scholars dare tread upon. Stroud is to be commended for the attempt, but in the end she simply channels some of the hoary themes dating to Vardis Fisher's *Suicide or Murder: The Strange Death of Governor Meriwether Lewis* (1993).

Lewis and those with whom he communicated were inconsistent on why he chose the route to DC that he attempted. Lewis is supposed to have thought a voyage down the Mississippi risked the loss of his journals to British depredation but, even assuming foreign intervention in that port, the longstanding interest of the British Empire in scientific discovery would have made this outcome unlikely. Thomas Danisi and John Jackson are almost certainly right in asserting that Lewis's health and diminished durability dictated the overland shortcut.

Lewis told Clark that he was going to the capital, in part, to finish their book, but at the same time he communicated an intent to Amos Stoddard that he would be back in St. Louis before the end of 1809. Given the rate of progress on his narrative and time it took to travel to the DC and back, nei-

ther of these avowals was realistic. After Lewis dies Stroud gets to the heart of her book by asking why Jefferson went along with what she characterizes as the Neely/Russell defamation campaign that seized on the idea that Lewis was drunk and deranged.

Remarkably, for a book published in 2018, Stroud seems unaware of Clay Jenkinson's comprehensive analysis of Lewis's last few months as found in *The Character of Meriwether Lewis* (2011). However disreputable James Neely might have been, the first person to point out his low character, Jenkinson avers, was Gilbert Russell. In fact, Russell largely took the blame for Lewis's death by assigning the governor to the stewardship of a person that today one would refer to as an enabler. Stroud also gives short shrift to the exchange of letters between Stoddard and James House (whose trunk Lewis was to convey to New Orleans) in late September 1809. Friends of Lewis both, they were concerned about his reported derangement; this a fortnight before the turn of events at Grinder's Stand. In other words, Stoddard and House verify an insight about Lewis' deteriorated state of mind before the Neely/Russell correspondence was composed. (In Stroud's view, these men were positing suicide, but impliedly covering up a murder.) On the other hand, Stroud's disclosure that Clark's important first letter after learning of Lewis's death "exists only in typescript at the Filson Historical Club" (p. 282) just begs for more discussion than she provided. Perhaps other Lewis & Clark scholars can address this matter.

Stroud never really comes to a conclusion about why Jefferson would have colluded with Neely and Russell by popularizing the notion of a semi-

crazed Lewis, only that he did. Jefferson's mini-biography of Lewis in the Biddle account probably deserves more attention than it has been given, and near the end of her book she raises a very intriguing point about that narrative. In it Jefferson implied that another American explorer, the famous John Ledyard, had taken his life as well. Stroud correctly points out that Ledyard, "suffering from dysentery, died from an overdose of an emetic he took to induce vomiting, which broke a blood vessel" (p. 287).

What Stroud calls Lewis's final "paroxysm" (p. 289) might have reminded Jefferson of Ledyard's undoing, or vice-versa. Alternatively, Jefferson could have innocently misremembered how Ledyard died. Or, as Stroud has it, perhaps "Jefferson projected his own proclivity for depression onto Lewis" (p. 290) and let the Lewis slander remain hoping to deflect attention from the problematic complexities of his relationship with James Wilkinson. But the simplest explanation is that Jefferson, rather than spoiling Lewis's reputation, recast the Ledyard-story in an attempt to give Lewis some company in death, to destigmatize it, and make his surprising demise less exceptional, more human.

The hope for any new book is that it will advance scholarship on the subject by resolving historiographical controversies, or providing innovative ways of looking at an old story. Though Stroud's writing is clear and competent from beginning to end, in the end it only serves to highlight her book's limitations. ■

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*David Nicandri is the former director of the Washington State Historical Society and a frequent contributor to WPO.*

# Lewis and Clark Roundup

## Arrival at the Pacific: Object Achieved

It is fitting that the 50th Annual Meeting of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation will be held in Oregon from October 7 to 10, 2018, where several of our foundation's early founders dreamed of a national organization to help preserve and interpret the Corps of Discovery's legacies.

Finding shelter from Pacific storms was the captains' primary objective as the expedition entered the Columbia estuary that November. We have no daily journal entries from Meriwether Lewis during those final weeks of 1805, but after Fort Clatsop was built, he finally picked up his pen on New Year's Day and poured out amazing descriptions and drawings of Native people and dozens of plants, mammals, birds, and fish. Your Oregon hosts recommend careful reading of the journals covering November 1805 through March 1806. Also, access the online version of *Empires of the Turning Tide* by Douglas Deur, a Portland State University professor of anthropology. Doug lives near Cannon Beach where Captain Clark led a small party, including Sacagawea, to see the "great fish."

The Chinook and Clatsop Indians provided welcome hospitality to the Corps of Discovery. For us in 2018, an authentic salmon/oyster "welcome" feast in October will feature tribal-caught fish prepared in the traditional way. Descendants of Comcomly and Cobo-way, often mentioned in the journals and by later foreign visitors to the area, will share stories of how indigenous cultures are being maintained despite lack of federal recognition. Cedar canoes like those admired by the Corps of Discovery are still used today, including one that was repatriated by the Clark family several years ago in recompense for the one to which the captains helped themselves for the trip back up the Columbia (March 18, 1806).

Capt. Lewis never got around to putting together a final report for President Jefferson, but maybe he counted on a Gary Moulton in the future who would pull all the journals together for easy reference. Our Annual Meeting will celebrate how important the Corps of Discovery's printed word remains in preserving the stories and inspiring arts and letters in succeeding centuries. Dr. Moulton will be with us in

Astoria with his newest book that tracks the expedition day by day. A narrated cruise on the Columbia River on Tuesday, October 9, will point out the same spots described in your advance reading of the journals and later explorations.

Activities at Fort Clatsop on Sunday, October 7, will mirror the routines of the expedition itself. Lewis stayed close to his quarters while others made forays into the wet and rich coastal environment. There will be presentations throughout the day in and around the fort itself, now rebuilt more accurately (and in compliance with today's fire codes), after the disastrous fire in 2006. Experts will demonstrate period skills and lead short nature hikes to see what the captains

described. The salt makers, working on October 6 and 7 in Seaside, will present Lewis with that preservative and flavoring he so desired. This is all exactly what the founders of LCTHF did during those early days when the body of literature on Lewis and Clark was comparatively small. Frenchie Chuinard, Irving Anderson, Robert Lange, and William Sherman were Oregonians who wrote books and *We Proceeded On* (WPO) articles still

cited today, based on their own field work in the area.

The final banquet on Wednesday, October 10, will again include a live auction to support our foundation's operations. At that time, we will join with other national scenic and historic trails in commemorating the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson's signing of the National Trails System Act. In those first years of our foundation, a mimeograph machine was the most affordable newsletter technology for a new organization. This early effort would later be replaced by WPO. New WPO editor Clay Jenkinson will be in Astoria to solicit your feedback on what our quarterly journal should attempt to achieve in the next 50 years.

The Corps of Discovery finally had enough Pacific coast rain and left Fort Clatsop on March 23, 1806, a week earlier than planned, not knowing they would be delayed later by deep snow in the Bitterroot Mountains. With so much to see and do at the Pacific Coast, we expect that in 2018 LCTHF members will wish they could stay even longer. ■

Larry McClure



Lighthouse at Cape Disappointment. Image courtesy of Steve Ludeman.



## ARRIVAL AT THE PACIFIC: OBJECT ACHIEVED

*We are at the end of our voyage to the Pacific Ocean.*  
— Private Joseph Whitehouse, Nov. 16, 1805

50th Annual Meeting, October 7–10, 2018, Astoria, Oregon

Also remembering the beginnings of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (LCTHF), the signing of the National Historic Trails Act, and the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail (LCNHT)

Headquarters hotel: Holiday Inn Express, (503) 325-6222, mention “*Lewis and Clark group.*”  
Optional accommodations nearby. See [www.lcthf-astoria.com](http://www.lcthf-astoria.com) to register and for details on housing, program, driving routes, agenda, area attractions. Registration may be limited.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

- ◆ **Friday, October 5**—LCTHF board meeting, hiking and exploring on own, early registration
- ◆ **Saturday, October 6**—Teacher workshop at Fort Clatsop, Pacific Northwest Living Historians re-enact saltmaking at Seaside, Oregon (continues Sunday), registration at Holiday Inn Express, explore on your own, chapter meetings
- ◆ **Sunday, October 7**—Fort Clatsop activities followed by Chinook Tribe salmon/oyster feast
- ◆ **Monday, October 8**—Business meeting, first general session, awards lunch, afternoon field trips to Dismal Nitch, Middle Village (Station Camp) and Cape Disappointment area, dinner on own
- ◆ **Tuesday, October 9**—8:30-2 p.m. On board Portland Spirit sightseeing vessel for presentations and 3-hour cruise of lower Columbia, followed by optional program activities at Columbia River Maritime Museum, other field trips, dinner on own
- ◆ **Wednesday, October 10**—Second general session, box lunches and afternoon field trips to points of interest south of the Columbia River; reception, dinner and banquet, short presentations and live auction
- ◆ **Thursday, October 11**—Optional explorations in the area

**Featured authors:** Stephen Dow Beckham, Jay Buckley, Roberta and Richard Basch, Doug Deur, Doug Erickson, Rob Heacock, Clay Jenkinson, Tony Johnson, Gary Moulton, David Nicandri, Roger Wendlick,

**Some of the topics you can expect:** life at Fort Clatsop, canoes of the Lower Columbia, firearms used by the Expedition, trade beads and medals, decision on winter camp, role of York, rebuilding Fort Clatsop, tribal life then and now, botanical discoveries, finding the whale, errors of perception, artifacts visible today, what happened after the Expedition.



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