



The Official Publication of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. **May 2001** Volume 27, No. 2

CORPS OF DISCOVERY HATS

What did Lewis & Clark and their men really wear on their heads?

ROW
4/C AD



The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.

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The mission of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. is to stimulate public appreciation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's contributions to America's heritage and to support education, research, development, and preservation of the Lewis and Clark experience.

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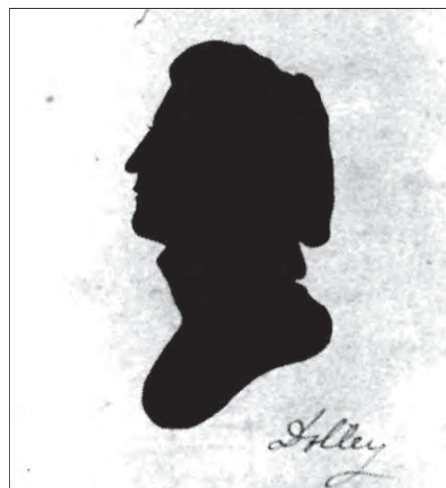
This painting by Missouri artist Michael Haynes depicts Joseph and Reubin Field, George Drouillard, and Meriwether Lewis and William Clark at the mouth of the Moreau River on June 3, 1804. The Field brothers are wearing round hats, while Drouillard sports a bandanna and Lewis a chapeau de bras. For more on the Corps of Discovery's headgear, see pages 20-27.



Columbia Gorge, p. 6



Hats, p. 20



Meriwether Lewis, p. 34



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E. G. Chuinard, M.D., *Founder*

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Letters

Another Gass portrait



I enjoyed reading "A 'New' Portrait of Patrick Gass" in the November 2000 WPO. Like Eugene Gass Painter, I too am a direct descendant of Gass—a great-great-granddaughter. His fifth child, Annie Jane, was my great-great-grandmother. And like Eugene, I have a portrait of Gass [pictured]. It appeared in "Amazing Americans," an advertising insert about Lewis and Clark published in a 1992 edition of *Time* magazine. The portrait bears an uncanny resemblance to my grandfather Clifford Taylor Gass.

DARLENE FASSLER
Great Falls, Mont.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The portrait is a variation of the one owned by Jeannette Taranik (discussed on page 29 of the article). Gass is posed somewhat differently (his left hand and cane are lower and more toward the middle, and his right hand is showing), indicating that the photographer took at least two pictures, and perhaps a series. Are there more out there?

In 1999, when the late Ole Olsen founded the annual Elk Point reenactment of Patrick Gass's election as sergeant, he and the other organizers knew little of Gass or his descendants. Then Kelly Kruithoff, the editor of our local newspaper, found Eugene Gass Painter living in Avella, Pennsylvania. Eugene's participation in

our first festival inspired an enormous amount of interest along this stretch of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Elk Point invites other Corps of Discovery descendants to reenact the roles of their ancestors during this year's Heritage Days Festival, to be held August 18-19. Those interested should contact Alice Murphy or Linda McKay at 605-356-2164/2310 or send e-mail to elkpoint@sd.value.net.

STEVE MARTIN
City Administrator
Elk Point, S.D.

Ordway's signature

In Jeffrey Olson's Trail Notes column in the November WPO he states, "Burned acres of the trail will recover in a few decades, but there looms a more serious, long-term threat to the only physical evidence of the expedition, William Clark's signature at Pompey's Pillar, on the Yellowstone River not far from Billings, Montana." I disagree that Clark's signature is the "only" physical evidence left by the Corps of Discovery. Journal entries for May 23, 1804, mention the explorers' stopping at Tavern Cave at the base of a cliff near St. Albans, Missouri. Sergeant John Ordway etched "ORD 1804" on the inside wall of the cave. I have seen the inscription, and it is still visible today.

LUCIE HUGER
St. Louis, Mo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more on Tavern Cave and the inscription, see Gerald S. Snyder, *In the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1970), pp. 37-39. Led by Mrs. Huger, the author visited the cave, where he found "on one wall three crudely carved letters, ORD, followed by much less distinct scratchings, possibly the date 1804. No one knows for sure, of course, but perhaps the journal-keeping Sergeant Ordway took time to leave his mark before the expedition once again pressed upstream." The signature was discovered in 1951 by Ralph P. Bieber, a professor of history at Washington University (Herb Waeckerle, "Mystery Cave," *St. Louis*

Globe-Democrat Tempo Magazine, June 10, 1951). The cave is on private property and is not easily accessible, but Mrs. Huger said one of her children visited it in 1997 and reported that the signature is still visible.

Mark Twain on bars

Thanks for "Pomp's Bier Was a Bar," by Joseph Mussulman, in the November issue. In Chapter 15 of Mark Twain's *Roughing It* (1871) there is the following passage, which may further illustrate the author's point:

"The climate of San Francisco is mild and singularly equitable. The thermometer stands at about seventy degrees the year round, It hardly changes at all. You sleep under one or two light blankets summer and winter, and never use a mosquito bar."

DAVID PALMER
Reno, Nev.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We picked up two small typographical errors on page 39 of the article in question: midway in the first column, the Merriam-Webster dictionary's reference to bier should read "archaic," and in the last line of the column, the italicized *dare* should be DARE, a reference to the previously mentioned *Dictionary of American Regional English*.

Reconstructing Floyd

I was pleased to see Strode Hinds's article "Reconstructing Charles Floyd" in the November WPO and would like to correct a small error. The urns used in Floyd's 1895 re-interment were made by the Holman brick yards (there was no Holman funeral home). I recently spoke with Grant Holman, the 86-year-old grandson of the company's founder, C. J. Holman, who as a boy in 1857 was let down on a rope to retrieve some of Floyd's bones after they had fallen from his eroding grave. He confirmed that his grandfather owned the brick yards, and that the urns were made there.

BEVERLY HINDS
Sioux City, Iowa

WPO welcomes letters. We may edit them for length, accuracy, and clarity. Send them to us c/o Editor, WPO, 51 N. Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534 (e-mail: wpo@lewisandclark.org).

From the Directors

"Keepers of the story and stewards of the trail"

I am writing this as I listen to one of my Corps of Discovery CDs. The music fills my office. If I sit quietly with my eyes closed, I can smell the campfire smoke, hear the slap of the water against a canoe, and listen to the voices of the Corps of Discovery as its members work into the evening. Sacagawea tends to her infant son, some of the men write in their journals, and Cruzatte tunes his fiddle.

Once again, I am struck by the importance of the story that we keep and the trail that we care for. The many facets of the story, and the many ways we find to tell it, fascinate me. Daily, I see people gather the story to themselves, dig deep into that part of it that interests them most, and then, as they learn, share what they have learned with others. Scholars, traveling trunks and exhibits, first person interpreters and story tellers, musicians and artists, writers and film makers all use their skills to tell the story through words, poetry, music, drama, and visual images.

Do we ever get enough of the story? I think not! Are there other facets to explore? Certainly! Have we learned all that we can learn? Definitely not! The Foundation has helped support the reprinting of Robert Betts's monumental biography *In Search Of York: The Slave Who Went to the Pacific with Lewis And Clark*. Jim Holmberg has taken the story into the new millennium with his epilogue. Could a publisher not do the same with *The Men of The Lewis and Clark Expedition*?

Bird Woman's enduring story

Interest in the story of Sacagawea and her role as a member of the Corps of Discovery continues to grow. I believe there are more books about her than any other member of the expedition, or of any other facet of the story. There are so many ways of looking at this young woman—as an Agaiduka Shoshone, as a Mandan-Hidatsa, as a wife and a mother, as an "interpreters." It has been suggested we bring the

scholars and storytellers together in a forum to share their knowledge of this extraordinary young woman.

We look at our bookshelves and see many well written, carefully researched biographies of Meriwether Lewis. Where is the story of William Clark as well researched and accurately told? And where are the biographies of other members of the Corps of Discovery?

This is an exciting time for all of us who have been "keepers of the story and stewards of the trail" for so many years. William Clark is now a captain, as he should be. York and Sacagawea have been recognized for their roles in the Corps of Discovery by their promotions to honorary sergeants. President William Jefferson Clinton, author Stephen Ambrose, and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt honored the story with their eloquent remarks during that ceremony in the White House on January 17. [See page 40.]

NPS grants

In our nation's capital we see the bipartisan, bicameral, bicentennial Congressional L&C caucus meeting to help us commemorate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. The National Park Service was authorized \$1 million for challenge cost-share grants for Corps of Discovery-related projects and has received over \$2 million in grant applications. The grants are for exciting and creative projects that will help tell the story and steward the trail. Park Service administrators were generous and thoughtful in the money they gave out, and we thank them.

In August, we will have the opportunity to listen and learn while some of those I mentioned share their knowledge of the prairie, the Yankton and Teton Sioux, and the Missouri River. Join us in Pierre, South Dakota, for the 33rd annual meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, "Encounters on the Prairie."

—Barb Kubik
President, LCTHF

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From the Bicentennial Council

"Sentral to the Nation, Convenient to the Countrey"

Momentous stuff is happening! On January 17, on the eve of a major transition in our elected leadership, President Clinton conferred the rank of captain on William Clark and made both York and Sacagawea honorary sergeants of the expedition—thus finally honoring all of their remarkable contributions. As the assembled 100-or-so White House guests burst into applause time and time again, eyes twinkled as tears brimmed. The honor bestowed upon Sacagawea was accepted on behalf of her birth and adopted tribes, the Lemhi Shoshone and Mandan Hidatsa Arikara, bringing these nations formally together in peace and friendship for the first time in nearly 200 years. There is so much the bicentennial can teach us about healing and reconciliation. [See page 40.]

Fort Clatsop tour

On March 3, the Council, along with Sen. Gordon Smith of Oregon and the Fort Clatsop National Memorial, had the honor of hosting Interior Secretary Gale Norton during her first official trip—and to a major Lewis and Clark site at that. Secretary Norton spent over two hours at the fort, beginning with a behind-the-scenes tour with John Reynolds, regional director of the National Park Service, Don Striker, superintendent of Fort Clatsop, Gerard Baker, superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Trail, Michelle Bussard, executive director of the National Council, Senator Smith, and Representative Greg Walden. Remarks emphasized historical authenticity, respect for and inclusion of the tribes, conservation and stewardship, leadership, and respect for grassroots momentum.

On April 4, the Council presented to the Congressional Lewis and Clark Caucus the State and National Master Project Inventory and Priorities and with the Missouri Historical Society and Library of Congress hosted a reception for the new signatories to the

Federal Memorandum of Understanding. The U.S. Mint, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Environmental Protection Agency have all joined our ranks.

Omaha workshop

"Sentral to the Nation. Convenient to the Countrey"—so wrote William Clark in August 1804 as the expedition, moving through the homelands of the Oto, Iowa, and Omaha nations, traveled up the Missouri to the land of the Arikara, Mandan and Hidatsa nations. The Council's annual planning conference, held in Omaha the week of April 23, honored that trek and brought over 300 attendees together to plan for the L&C Bicentennial. Featured speakers Gary Moulton, James Thom, Gerard Baker, Antone Minthorn, Tex Hall, and Chief Cliff Snider joined many others to explore how we guide, interpret, market, and manage the bicentennial. For the first time, a "Partners Summit" brought together the 40 national, tribal, and state groups with whom we collaborate. Next year the workshop will be in Lewiston, Idaho, where bicentennial partners will engage in hands-on field workshops related to managing visitors, information, and travel on the Lewis and Clark Trail.

In the months ahead, the Circle of Tribal Advisors will convene tribes around a position paper on the bicentennial and provide advice and guidance on events and programs. The Circle of State Bicentennial Advisors will launch with state tourism agencies a second survey to ascertain bicentennial visitation numbers. The Council will be working with the new administration to urge its involvement and leadership in the bicentennial.

Note: The Council has had problems with its e-mail server. If your e-mail message has not been answered, please call our offices at 503-768-7996.

—David Borlaug

—Michelle Bussard

Rehabilitating fire-damaged forests along L&C Trail

Even before fire fighting ended last summer, the U.S. Forest Service began rehabilitation work in western forests. Just in the Bitterroot National Forest, more than 300,000 acres burned in the summer of 2000.

Before winter set in over the Bitterroot National Forest, more than 4,000 acres of slope stabilization work was complete along with 254 acres of seeding, 200 miles of fireline rehabilitation, 195 acres of weed spraying, and steambank stabilization.

There is much more work to do in the Bitterroot, Helena, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge forests, where parts of the Lewis and Clark Trail burned.

In the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest, about 55 miles of trail are slated for maintenance work as a result of the Mussigbrod Fire Complex, along with another 18 miles of trail work in the Middle Fork Fire Complex area.

One of the concerns in the burned areas is the likelihood of a resurgent infestation of bark beetles. Fire intensity varied within the fire perimeter, causing a range of damage—in some areas trees were killed outright, while others had no apparent damage. Damaged and weakened trees provide prime brood habitat for bark beetles. Burned trees are rapidly colonized by beetles, and brood success is much higher than normal. It's important to protect trees that have survived the direct effects of fire from being killed by the secondary effects of bark beetle populations.

Dead and damaged trees along roadsides have been falling over from the weight of snow, as well as from wind and just plain gravity. Over the next few years, the majority of dead trees will continue to tip over as their root systems decay. The Forest Service proposes to cut and remove hazardous trees along roadways.

A restoration team has been set up in the Helena National Forest to plan,

manage, implement, and monitor fire restoration work. Its agenda includes reducing erosion, minimizing fire impact, improving water quality, combating noxious weeds, replacing fences and water developments, and inventorying heritage resources.

Forest Service personnel in the Bitterroots are working in areas to reduce fuel for forest fires. An environmental assessment, due in April, is expected to include proposals to reduce fuels by cleaning out underbrush and by prescribed burning. Other environmental assessments will look at watershed improvements, reforestation, and weed control. You can track post-fire assessments in the Bitterroot and other national forests at www.fs.fed.us/fire.

—Jeffrey Olson
Trail Coordinator



Learn more about trail stewardship and share information about chapter projects by contacting Jeffrey Olson at trail@lewisandclark.org (P.O. Box 2376, Bismarck, ND 58502; Tel: 701-258-1809 or 701-258-1960).

Passages

Jack Ritter

Eugene H. "Jack" Ritter, for 25 years the treasurer of the Washington State Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, died January 4 in Vancouver, where he was a retired assistant postmaster. He was 84. Knowledgeable about the Corps of Discovery along the lower Columbia, he served as a resource for many scholars, authors, tour guides, and bicentennial planners. He attended at least three LCTHF annual meetings, the last one in 1997 in Stevenson, Washington. He is survived by Echo, his wife of 63 years, two daughters, a son, a brother, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. ■

Silent auction details

The Foundation Library is pleased to announce the details of our long-awaited silent auction. This special event exclusively for Foundation members will feature a selection of our duplicate library books and books unrelated to Lewis and Clark. Items include a complete set of *We Proceeded On* (1974-2000); one set of the *Lewis and Clark Journals*, edited by Reuben G. Thwaites (Arno Press, 1969); a first-edition copy of *The History of the Lewis and Clark Journals*, by Paul Russell Cutright; and a first-edition copy of *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians*, by James Ronda.

The flyer enclosed with this issue of WPO will be your ticket to participate in the auction. It includes a bid form, rules for the auction, and the list of books that will be auctioned. The Friends of the Library will receive a five percent discount off any winning bid. For more details, please read over the flyer carefully. We hope you will all participate in this library fundraiser.

—Jeremy Skinner
Librarian, LCTHF

N.D. campaign tops \$2M

The North Dakota Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Foundation has passed its \$2 million fund-raising campaign goal, according to President David Borlaug. The campaign is funding the expansion of the Interpretive Center in Washburn. A new exhibit on Fort Clark is nearing completion there, in time for a grand opening set for July 7.

Agnes Sheldon Griffin, a former resident of Washburn now living in Seattle, pledged \$500,000. Other significant commitments include \$300,000 from the Bush Foundation, \$150,000 from Great River Energy, \$50,000 from USBank, and gifts from Governor and Mrs. Arthur Link, Walt and Norma Fiedler, MDU Resources Foundation, and TMI Systems Design. ■

THE “STUPENDIOUS”

The Corps of Discovery traversed a landscape born of lava and ice-age floods

BY GLEN KIRKPATRICK

“Saw great numbers of Dead Salmon on the Shores and floating in the water, great numbers of Indians on the banks viewing me and 18 [Indian] canoes accompanied me from the point— The Waters of this river are Clear, and Salmon can be Seen at the deabth of 15 or 20 feet.”

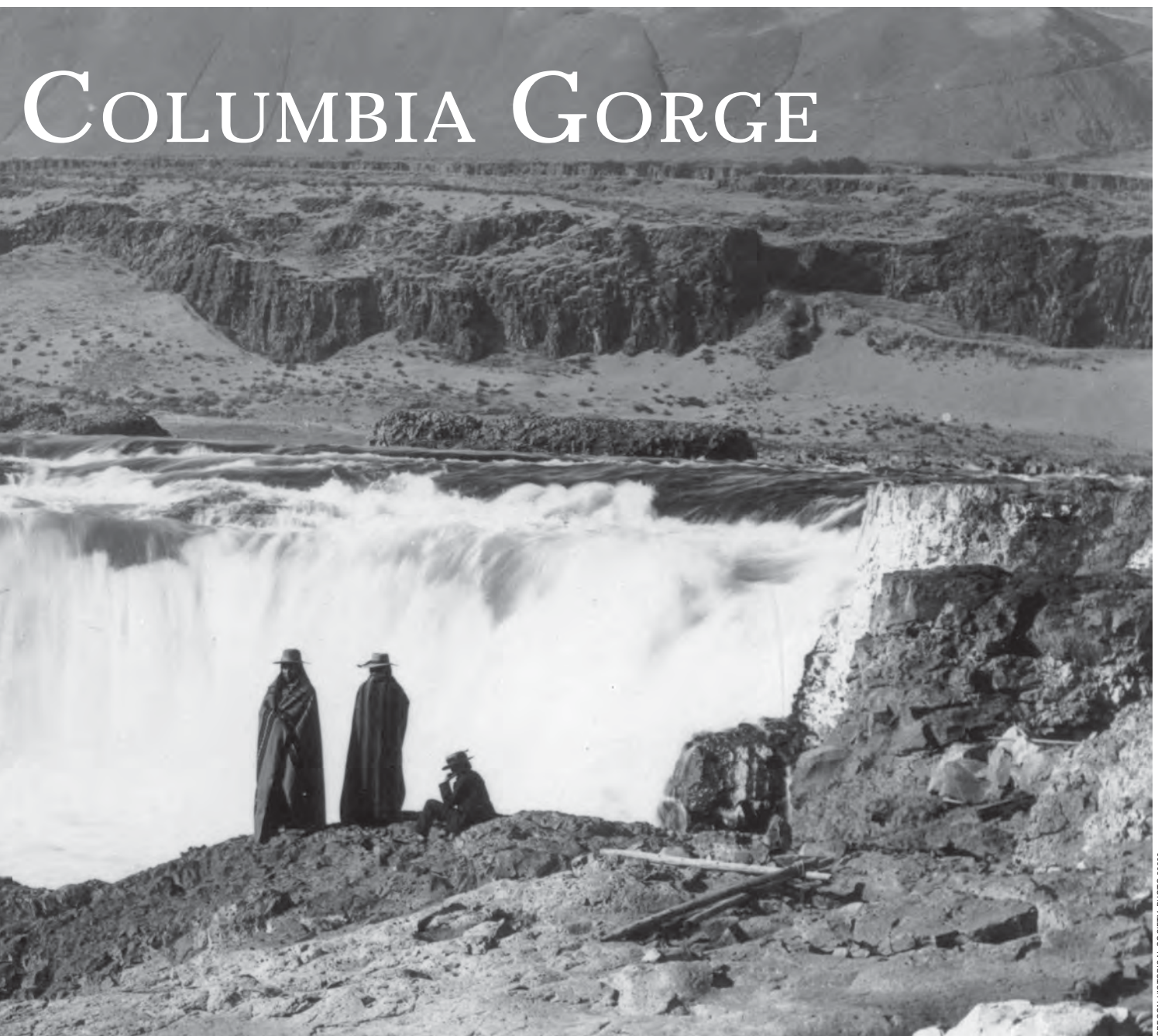
—William Clark, October 17, 1805, as the Corps of Discovery approached the Columbia River Gorge

In the fall of 1805, when Lewis and Clark passed through the Columbia River Gorge on their way to the Pacific, they bore witness to one of the great natural spectacles of North America. The members of the Corps of Discovery were the first people of European

descent to pass through the Gorge and record its wonders—the towering basalt cliffs and plunging rapids, the salmon that clogged the river, and the Indian cultures that had existed on the Columbia’s bounty for millennia. In just a wink of time the scene would be utterly changed. Over the next 30 years, smallpox and other diseases would ravage the tribes, and the flood of settlers who began pouring into Oregon in the 1840s would alter the landscape forever. Now, nearly 200 years later, dams have tamed the Columbia’s fearsome currents, turning most of it into a string of lakes, and the few salmon that still struggle upriver are a sad remnant of what was once the greatest run on earth.

The Great (Celilo) Falls of the Columbia as photographed ca. 1899 by Benjamin

COLUMBIA GORGE



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTO 88422

Gifford. This was one of many Indian fisheries inundated by The Dalles Dam in 1957.

Even in the time of Lewis and Clark western influences could be found on the Columbia, which had been named in 1792 by Robert Gray, the captain of an American trading vessel that was the first ship to explore its lower reaches. Clark estimated that 17,000 Indians lived along the river,¹ but smallpox had already taken its toll—the explorers passed many deserted villages during their passage down the Columbia, and as they moved closer to the ocean they noted that the Indians had western trade goods such as kettles, beads, buttons, muskets, and sailor’s jackets. Venereal disease was rampant.

The mountains that enclose the Columbia River Gorge, wrote Meriwether Lewis, “are high broken, rocky ... and

in many places exhibit very romantic scenes,” including “cascades [waterfalls] ... tumbling from the stupendous cliffs.”² Lewis could not even guess at the region’s geologic history as pieced together by scientists more than a century after the Corps of Discovery passed this way. This astonishing landscape had been formed by vast lava flows and a series of catastrophic floods that, beginning at the end of the last ice age some 15,000 years ago, had swept through the ancient Columbia watershed, scouring the land down to bedrock and cutting precipitous canyons. The floods were caused by the successive emptying and refilling of Glacial Lake Missoula, formed by an unstable ice dam that gave way at least 20 times over several mil-



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTO 21647, BY CARLETON E. WATKINS

The Short Narrows as photographed in 1867. The camera's long exposure smoothed out the fearsome rapids shot by the Corps of Discovery.

lennia, unleashing a wall of water 2,000 feet high.³

On October 21, 1805, the explorers left the vicinity of present-day Roosevelt, Washington, in five dugout canoes. Riding with them were Twisted Hair and Tero-harsky, two Nez Perce chiefs acting as guides and interpreters. They made rapid progress over the next two days, aided by a strong current and their desire to reach the ocean and inspired perhaps by the looming presence of snow-capped Mount Hood in the distance. After passing the mouth of a large tributary entering from the south (today's Deschutes River), they came to what Clark in his journal called the Great Falls of the Columbia; on later maps it appears as Celilo Falls. Sergeant Patrick Gass thought the scene "terrifying, with vast rocks, and the river below the pitch, foaming through different channels."⁴ The captains hired Indians to help them portage their gear. The men hauled the canoes overland a short stretch, then returned them to the water and lowered them down a narrow channel on elk-hide ropes. One of the canoes got loose when its rope broke in the strong current, but Indians downstream rescued it. Here and elsewhere on their 13-day, 85-mile traverse of the Gorge, the explorers were besieged by lice picked up in the bedding of the Indian camps they visited. With the portage complete, they stripped to the buff and did their best to brush away the "flees."⁵

Below the falls, Lewis exchanged their small canoe, along with a hatchet and trinkets, for a bigger and better Indian canoe. Clark admired the native vessel, whose hull was "dug thin" and braced by wooden thwarts. He pronounced the canoe "neeter than any I have even Seen and Calculated to ride the waves, and carry emence burthens."⁶

Game was scarce in this densely populated country, and the explorers depended on Indians to sell them provisions—salmon, dogs, roots, and berries. The salmon had been dried and pounded into powder, which in turn had been pressed into cakes and stored in airtight, fish-skin-lined baskets stacked 12 deep in homes throughout one of many villages they examined—by Clark's estimate some 10,000 pounds of fish.⁷ But by now they were heartily sick of salmon. Dogs were better. They purchased up to 40 at a time; although Clark never developed a taste for canine flesh, Lewis later wrote that he preferred it "vastly to lean Venison or Elk" and found it "very far superior to the horse in any state."⁸

Once below the falls, the explorers encountered what they assumed were sea otters—wishful thinking, perhaps. In fact they were harbor seals, another species associated with salt water. The seals feasted on salmon as they followed the fish upriver on their spawning runs. Clark took the occasional potshot at them, without effect.

Other creatures, both furred and feathered, scavenged

dead salmon that washed ashore. Clark frequently observed “polecats” (skunks) prowling the banks, and everyone in the party marveled at a huge type of vulture wheeling over the river. This was the now nearly extinct California condor. Clark correctly noted that these “buzzards” were larger even than the bald eagle (they are, in fact, North America’s largest bird). Later, on the coast, they shot a specimen and measured its wingspan at nine and a half feet. With his naturalist’s eye, Lewis found this homely and ungainly creature handsome—“the beatifull Buzzard of the columbia.”⁹ The man who shot the specimen told Lewis that when he approached the wounded bird, it barked at him like a dog.¹⁰ The condor’s appetite and strength astonished them; one bird consumed most of a deer carcass that hunters left briefly unattended, and another dragged a dressed buck 30 yards.¹¹

THE DALLES

Their next obstacle, about three miles downstream of the falls, was a stretch where basalt cliffs squeezed the river into a tight quarter-mile-long channel. This was the beginning of a section of river later called The Dalles, a name conferred on it by French-Canadian traders.¹²

The morning of October 24, Clark climbed a high rock on the north bank to study what he called the Short Narrows—an “agitated gut Swelling, boiling & whorling in every direction.” It offered no practical portage for their big canoes, and anyway they were in a hurry to get to the sea. By now the captains were confident river runners, and after consulting with Pierre Cruzatte, their best boatman, they determined to risk it. The Indians crowded onto the cliff to watch the sure disaster. All five canoes sailed through safely, to the great relief of Clark, who confessed that from the top of the rock the water “did not appear as bad as when I was in it.” A few miles farther downstream they encountered “a verry bad place” where the current raged past two huge rocks in the middle of the river. Here they divided the party, putting the abler boatmen in the canoes and sending the rest overland with critical baggage, including the journals and guns.

They spent the night camped near an Indian village of 20 houses. Upstream, in the arid, treeless reaches lying in the rain shadow cast by the Cascade Mountains, the Indians’ houses had been made of reeds, but here the houses were constructed of wood and roofed with cedar bark. These were the first timbered structures they had seen since leaving Camp Dubois, in Illinois, 17 months before—yet one more sign that they were nearing the coast.¹³

The following morning they successfully negotiated the



A composite of William Clark’s map of the Columbia River from the Great (Celilo) Falls and the Narrows to the Sandy River.



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTO 3891

Lewis observed dead trees like these upstream of the Cascades and correctly surmised that they had been flooded by a rockslide dam.

Long Narrows, a three-mile flume cut “through a hard rough black rock,” the water “swelling and boiling in a most tremendous maner,” wrote Clark. Like the day before, they sent the nonswimmers overland with the valuables and shot the rapids with the canoes. Some of the men stood by downstream with elk-hide ropes to throw to anyone who capsized. The first three canoes sailed through, the fourth nearly swamped but stayed upright, and the fifth shipped some water but otherwise had no difficulty. The flotilla’s safe passage left Clark “extreamly gratified.”¹⁴

The explorers spent the next few days regrouping and drying their baggage in a bowl-shaped depression on top of a rocky point “well Calculated for defence.”¹⁵ They named the place Rock Fort Camp. During their stay there they played host to some Indians journeying downstream, danced to Pierre Cruzatte’s fiddle, and ate steelhead trout gigged from the river and deer shot in the timbered bottomlands. The Nez Perce guides said goodbye and headed back upriver for home.

On October 28, they set off again and made a few miles before a brutal headwind forced them to lie to on the south bank. For the rest of the day they watched a flotilla of

Indian canoes slip downriver, unfazed by the steady gale. The next morning, the wind having abated, they proceeded on, making 35 miles. They passed the entrance to Hood River coming in from the south and a village whose inhabitants, noted Private Joseph Whitehouse, “made signs to us ... that they thought & supposed that we had rained down from the Clouds, and seemed very much surprized at seeing us, they not beleiving that we could possibly descended the River at that season of the Year.”¹⁶ This stretch of the Columbia was wide and relatively gentle, and before long they pulled up to an island to camp.



One of many Indian burial vaults on the lower Columbia River.

OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTO 427

THE COLUMBIA CASCADES

They stayed two days here reconnoitering the lower river’s last major obstacle. The explorers had reached the Columbia Cascades, a four-mile-long, boulder-studded stretch of rapids and standing waves hemmed by steep hillsides. Clark called it “the Great Chute.”

Above the Chute, along the south side of the river and extending far back from the bank, they had observed hundreds of large dead trees. It appeared as though some sort of natural, but temporary, dam had once backed up this part of the Columbia, flooding the forest.



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTO 71173, BY CARLETON E. WATKINS

The Cascades, or Great Chute, ca. 1867. Lewis and Clark portaged the worst of these rapids, which in 1937 were drowned by Bonneville Dam.

At the time, Clark had no idea how such a dam might have formed. On the return trip the following spring, Lewis, after examining the Chute from high ground, correctly—and astutely—surmised that the dam had been created by rocks falling from cliffs on its north side. His estimate that this rockslide had occurred perhaps 20 years before was not far off.¹⁷

On October 31, while walking the portage trail on the north shore, Clark came upon some Indian burial vaults, a common sight along the river. Made of pine or cedar planking, some of them had bones piled four feet thick. He noted an abundance of grave objects and offerings and speculated on whether certain wooden effigies, which he had previously observed in Indian houses, represented gods or were merely “Images of men Cut in wood.” In contrast to many whites who came after him, he took nothing and was careful to leave everything as he found it.¹⁸

The next day they began the two-day task of getting past the Chute. Most of the gear was portaged. “The morning was cloudy,” wrote Gass. “We unloaded our canoes and took them past the rapids, some part of the way by water, and some over rocks 8 or 10 feet high. It was the most fatiguing business we

have been engaged in for a long time.”¹⁹ They completed the portage the following day, running the canoes down the last mile and a half “without much damage,” according to Clark—“one Struck a rock & Split a little, and 3 others took in Some water.”

After clearing the rapids, they passed an island to their right. Clark had already named it Strawberry Island for the plants he had found growing there during his previ-

ous reconnaissance. Beyond it on the north bank, a black monolith—a “remarkable detached rock”—dominated the scene. In his notebook Clark called it “Beaten” Rock, but he obviously meant “Beacon,” the name it still goes by today. He estimated the height of this basalt block—a long-extinct volcanic vent—at 800 feet, a mere 40 feet short of its true elevation.²⁰

Two days before, while viewing the country downstream from the lower end of the portage trail, Clark had observed that the water “had every appearance of being effected by the tide.”²¹ Now that hope was

confirmed: on November 2, he recorded that the “ebb tide rose here about 9 inches.”

Later on the 2nd, they passed Reed Island on their right, and farther below it, coming in from the left, the Sandy or



GLEN KIRKPATRICK

Beacon Rock stands at the head of tidewater on the lower Columbia.



Rock Fort Camp, where the explorers camped three days after negotiating the Long Narrows and three days on the homeward journey.

Quicksand River (so named by Clark after he sank up to his knees on a bar at its mouth). Whitehouse noted that he could stick a pole into the sand to a depth of eight feet without touching bedrock.²² Four days earlier, when the explorers had passed the entrance to Hood River, they had observed similar sand deposits extending halfway across the Columbia and several miles downstream. Clark included this huge sandbar on the map he later drew of their route. On the return trip Lewis perceptively noted that the bed of the Columbia “is principally rock except at the entrance of Labuish’s river which heads in Mount Hood and like the quicksand river brings down thence vast bodies of sand.”²³ Both the “quicksand” (Sandy) and “Labuish’s” (Hood) River flow off Mount Hood, one of several active volcanoes in the Cascade Range. Geologists regard Lewis and Clark’s observations about the sand deposits at the mouth of both rivers as corroborating evidence that Mount Hood had erupted not too many years before, spewing massive flows of ash and mud which created the extensive sandbars they recorded.²⁴

The explorers were now on the outskirts of present-day Portland, Oregon. They had left the Columbia River Gorge and entered a wide, lush valley. Although they were unaware of it, they had also arrived at the highest point on the lower Columbia reached by a British party exploring inland from the coast 13 years earlier.²⁵ For the first time since leaving the Mandan villages on the Missouri seven incredible months before, they looked upon a landscape known to white men’s eyes.

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NOTES

¹Gary E. Moulton, *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedi-*

tion (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 12 vols., 1984-99), Vol. 6, pp. 474-75. All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, Vols. 5-11, by date, unless otherwise indicated.

²Moulton, Vol. 7, p. 118. This is Lewis’s entry of April 14, 1806, made on the return trip. Lewis did not keep a journal on the trip down the Columbia, or if he did it is lost.

³Geologists estimate that Glacial Lake Missoula held more water than present-day Lakes Ontario and Erie combined and that it emptied in just 48 hours, scouring much of the landscape down to its basalt bedrock (thus creating the aptly named scablands of eastern Washington and Oregon) before plunging through the Wallula Gap to carve out the canyons of the Columbia River Gorge. See David D. Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Washington* (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press, 1984), pp. 171-76.

⁴Moulton, Vol. 10, p. 161.

⁵Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 327.

⁶Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 328

⁷An estimated 16 million salmon and steelhead trout may have ascended the Columbia in 1805, compared to some 500,000 today. Jim Lichatowich, *Salmon Without Rivers: A History of the Pacific Salmon Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999), pp. 180-195.

⁸Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 162 and Vol. 7, p. 115.

⁹Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 162.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 321.

¹¹Moulton, Vol. 7, p. 24.

¹²Together, the Short and Long Narrows constitute The Dalles. The term, which means narrow rapids flowing over a flat-rock bottom, derives from a French word for flagstones.

¹³Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 333.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁵Rock Fort Camp is located in the town of The Dalles, Oregon. The Corps of Discovery camped here April 15-18, 1806, during the return trip.

¹⁶Moulton, Vol. 11, p. 378.

¹⁷Moulton, Vol. 7, p. 118. Recent carbon 14 studies indicate the flooding occurred between 1550 and 1750. (Richard Hill, “A New Look at an Old Landscape.” *The Oregonian*, September 29, 1999.)

¹⁸Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 359.

¹⁹Moulton, Vol. 10, p. 164. Gass’s measured prose is actually an editor’s paraphrase based on his journal, which has been lost.

²⁰Moulton, Vol. 5, p. 362.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Moulton, Vol. 11, p. 383.

²³Moulton, Vol. 7, p. 118.

²⁴U.S. Geological Survey: Oregon, Open-File Report 97-89, “Volcano Hazards in the Mount Hood Region.”

²⁵The party was led by Lieutenant William R. Broughton, a member of the expedition of Captain George Vancouver. Broughton ventured 100 miles upstream in October 1792, five months after Robert Gray discovered the Columbia.

DECISION AT CHINOOK POINT

*In determining the best place to winter on the Pacific,
the captains took a vote. Or did they?*

by MARTIN PLAMONDON II

There is a belief one hears expressed with growing frequency in the Pacific Northwest, where I live, that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark brought democracy to this part of the country. The story goes something like this:

On November 24, 1805, the Corps of Volunteers for North Western Discovery (as it was formally known) is encamped on a small, sandy beach on the north shore of the mouth of the Columbia River, a place later called Chinook Point. To the west, across a shallow bay, is the rocky crag of Cape Disappointment. To the north is a low, swampy area with few signs of large game. Directly to the east, along the north shore, is what the explorers call Blustery Point (today's Point Ellice). To the southeast, across five miles of estuary, is the southern shore. And to the southwest, directly in front of their camp, is the mighty Pacific Ocean, whose storm-tossed waves crash and roll onto the beach at their feet. They have succeeded in their objective of reaching the Pacific. Decisions must now be made concerning where to spend the winter.

All 33 members of the Corps of Discovery have assembled this evening in front of their make-do shelters. For the moment at least, the weather is reasonably calm. Lewis and Clark stand before their companions to describe



Clark's map of Chinook Point and vicinity

their situation and lay out options. Basically, the choices are to remain near the mouth of the Columbia—either here or on the south shore—or to camp somewhere upriver.

Moving upriver, they explain, would give them a jump on crossing the Rocky Mountains in the spring. They could camp with the Nez Perce, whose wintering grounds are close to the mountains but are also brutally cold and with little game. Or they

could camp farther down, at the Falls of the Columbia or at the mouth of Sandy River.

Staying near the ocean has several advantages: milder weather, access to salt for curing meat, and the possibility of reprovisioning from a trading ship, on the chance one should appear. The coast, they believe, also offers better hunting. The north shore has deer, but the Indians have told them that on the south shore they will find many elk, which are bigger and easier to hunt and would provide an ample and dependable source of meat. Elk also have better hides for clothing. The explorers' buckskins are ragged and soggy, they desperately need moccasins, and the constant rains are rotting the buffalo robes they use for bedrolls.

It's clear that the captains favor being near the ocean, and they propose exploring the south shore and staying



William Clark's elkskin-bound field journal opened to his entry for November 24, 1805, recording the "vote" on where to spend their winter on the Pacific.

there if it lives up to its promise. Still, the decision won't be made without a vote—an election, in effect, to decide where to build their winter camp. The delegation is polled, one by one. Even York, Clark's black slave, and Sacagawea, an Indian woman, get to vote. The south shore wins out, and so too does democracy.

A DIFFERENT VIEW

With the Lewis and Clark bicentennial just two years away, what better time than now to celebrate the above scenario and recognize Chinook Point as the cradle of democracy in the Northwest? Yet even if this account stands up to scrutiny—and I believe it does not—to claim Chinook Point as the western equivalent of Independence Hall is yet another affront to Native Americans, including those of the Northwest, who for centuries before the arrival of Europeans practiced various forms of democracy. However much we admire them for their extraordinary accomplishments, Lewis and Clark did not bring democracy to the shores of the Pacific.

The Corps of Discovery was a military expedition. In the early 19th century, no army officer would even consider letting a vote by his men dictate a decision. Then as today, the Army put an officer in charge and expected him to lead—to make decisions based on his training, experience, and judgment. An officer might poll his subordi-

nates, but he made the decisions and was held accountable for them. Lewis and Clark were professional officers who went by the book. They had no trouble making decisions or meting out orders and disciplining anyone who disobeyed them.

So what about that "vote" at Chinook Point? Was it the equivalent of an election or more like a nonbinding referendum? We know that on three other occasions the captains went to the men to obtain their thinking about one matter or another. We need to look at each of these events to understand what happened at Chinook Point.

THE "ELECTION" OF PATRICK GASS

The first took place early in the expedition, following the death, on August 20, 1804, near present-day Sioux City, Iowa, of Sergeant Charles Floyd. Two days later, with the corps short one noncommissioned officer, the captains, as Clark stated in his journal, "ordered a Vote for a Serjeant to chuse one of three which may be the highest number. the highest numbers are P. Gass had 19 votes, Bratten & Gibson." Clark's field notes have a slightly different wording: "ordered a Vote of the men for a Sergeant of the three highest numbers a choice to be made ... Gass Bratton & Gibson."¹

A careful reading of Clark's entries, especially the one in his field notes, reveals the captains' intentions: they

ordered a vote to determine which three men enjoyed the highest confidence among their peers; from among these three, Lewis and Clark would then choose the man to succeed Floyd. He was Patrick Gass, who also happened to garner the highest number of votes, 19 (the tallies for Bratton and Gibson weren't recorded).² But not until four days later, on August 26, did Lewis commit the following directive to the orderly book: "The commanding officers have thought proper to appoint Patric Gass, a Sergeant . . . he is therefore to be obeyed and respected accordingly." Lewis then discussed Gass's new duties, finishing with the following paragraph: "The Commanding officers have every reason to hope from the previous faithful services of Sergt. Gass, that this expression of their approbation will be still further confirmed by his vigilant attention in future to his duties as a Sergeant. the Commanding officers are still further confirmed in the high opinion they had previously formed of the capacity, deligence and integrity of Sergt. Gass, from the wish expressed by a large majority of his comrades for his appointment as Sergeant."

Note that the captains' high regard for Gass, which "they had previously formed," is "still further confirmed" by the "wish expressed by a large majority of his comrades" to have him appointed sergeant. What we have here is not a popular vote that ties the leaders to its outcome. They simply wanted to know the "wish" of their men in narrowing the field to three. It is no coincidence that from these three the captains picked the man who polled the most votes, for both the vote and the selection reflect the esteem in which Gass was held by all.

Finally, none of the other journal keepers—Gass, John Ordway, and Joseph Whitehouse—mentions the vote, another indication that they did not regard it as unusual.

DECISION AT THE MARIAS

The next occasion took place some nine months later, in early June of 1805. On June 2, Lewis wrote that "in the course of the day we passed 9 Islands all of them small and most of them containing some timber. we came too on the Lard Side in a handsome bottom of small cottonwood timber opposite to the entrance of a very considerable river."

The expedition had arrived at a fork in the river, which split into branches of nearly equal size. One branch, the south fork, would ultimately prove to be the main stem; the north branch Lewis would subsequently name Maria's River, for a cousin. At the time, it was not at all clear which fork to take. On June 3, Lewis recorded, "An interesting

question was now to be determined; which of these rivers was the Missouri. . . . to mistake the stream at this period of the season, two months of the traveling season having now elapsed, and to ascend such stream to the rocky Mountain or perhaps much further before we could inform ourselves whether it did approach the Columbia or not, and then be obliged to return and take the other stream would not only loose us the whole of this season but would probably so dishearten the party that it might defeat the expedition altogether."

Understandably, Lewis was worried about the devastating effect a wrong decision would have on the expedition's time table. He was also worried about the effect it would have on the men's morale.

For the next week the captains led exploring parties up the two rivers. In their journals they recorded and evaluated what they found. From the beginning—and at odds with most of the men—they leaned toward the south fork as the true Missouri, a belief that strengthened as the week wore on. The bottom of the south fork, wrote Lewis on June 3, was "composed of round and flat smooth stones like most rivers issuing from a mountainous country. the bed of the N. fork composed of some gravel but principally mud; in short the air & character of this river is so precisely that of the missouri below that the party with very few exceptions have already pronounced the N. fork to be the Missouri; myself and Capt. C. not quite so precipitate have not yet decided but if we were to give our opinions I believe we should be in the minority."

After rehashing the arguments for one fork or the other, Whitehouse entered the following in his journal: "our officers & all the men differ in their opinions which river to take."

On June 5, after exploring the south fork, Clark stated in his journal, "From the ridge at which place I Struck the river last, I could discover that the river run west of South a long distance, and has a Strong rapid Current." Lewis, meanwhile, had taken a party up the north fork. On June 6 he wrote, "I now became well convinced that this branch of the Missouri had it's direction too much to the North for our rout to the Pacific." Two days later, after returning to the main camp, he observed, "The whole of my party to a man except myself were fully peswaided that this river was the Missouri."

Whitehouse, after again recapping the captains' arguments, noted on June 8, "So the Capt. conclude to take the South fork & proceed." Gass and Ordway record the same decision.³ Although the men obviously knew of the decision, Lewis and Clark did not formally announce it

until the next day. After mustering the party, Lewis reviewed the evidence. "Those ideas," he wrote on June 9,

as they occurred to me I endeavoured to impress on the minds of the party all of whom except Capt. C. being still firm in the belief that the N. Fork was the Missouri and that which we ought to take; they said very cheerfully that they were ready to follow us any wher we thought proper to direct but that they still thought that the other was the river and that they were affraid that the South fork would soon termineate in the mountains and leave us at a great distance from the Columbia. Cruzatte who had been an old Missouri navigator and who from his integrity knowledge and skill as a waterman had acquired the confidence of every individual of the party declared it as his opinion that the N. fork was the true genuine Missouri and could be no other. finding them so determined in this beleif, and wishing that if we were in an error to be able to detect it and rectify it as soon as possible it was agreed between Capt. C. and myself that one of us should set out with a small party by land up the South fork and continue our rout up it untill we found the falls or reached the snowy Mountains by which means we should be enabled to determine this question prety accurately. this expedition I prefered undertaking as Capt. C best waterman.

There is nothing explicit here to suggest that Lewis ever called for a formal polling on the issue, but it is clear that he realized that none of the men shared his and Clark's opinion about the south fork. There was surely a give and take of ideas. It must have been a bit unnerving to see the men so set in their view. As a leader, Lewis had two options: either take at face value the men's declaration "to follow us any wher we thought proper" and order the expedition to proceed up the south fork, or look for a way to make it easier for them to accept the decision. Whatever the merits of that decision, their willingness "to follow us" was a show of respect for the captains' leadership and needed reciprocating. So Lewis ordered a small, fast-moving party up the south fork far enough to settle the issue quickly. (It's doubtful that he came up with this plan on the spot, which would have required discussing the matter with Clark in front of the men; probably they decided on it that evening.) Speaking jointly for himself and Clark, Lewis said, in effect, "We hear your doubts regarding the wisdom of our decision. We admit that we may be making a mistake. Because of your concern, we will put the decision to the test." It worked.

In his book *Lewis & Clark: Voyage of Discovery*, writer Stephen Ambrose contrasts the decision at Chinook Point with the one at the Marias. At Chinook Point, he states, the captains put the matter to a vote "instead of imposing

Vote? Poll? Consultation?

How different writers have interpreted the events at Chinook Point

"[These considerations were] reached by consultation with the whole party, a rare thing in military life."

—Elliott Coues, ed., *The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1893, 3 vols.), Vol. 2, footnote, p. 720.

"Gass tells us ... that the commanders held a consultation with their men The present statement [Clark's tally] is apparently the vote taken on this occasion."

—Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *The Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1904-05, 8 vols.), Vol. 3, footnote, pp. 246-47.

"At length, after much consideration and various consultations with their men and the Indians, the Captains decided to remove to the south side of the river for the winter."

—Olin D. Wheeler, *The Trail of Lewis and Clark* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), Vol. 2, p. 189.

"Officers and men went into council together, and a vote was taken, in which even the slave York, and the squaw, Sacagawea, joined—for Regular Army officers a desperately unorthodox expedient."

—John Bakeless, *Lewis and Clark: Partners in Discovery* (New York: William Morrow, 1947), p. 285.

"They began to wonder whether to spend the winter on the north or south of the river mouth. ... The captains allowed the men to settle the matter with a vote. Even Sacagawea, or 'Janey' as Clark now called her, had a voice in the issue. She, with the majority, cast her vote for the south because she wanted to go where there were plenty of wappatos, a root resembling potatoes, which she liked."

—Albert and Jane Salisbury, *Two Captains West: An Historical Tour of the Lewis and Clark Trail* (New York: Bramhall House, 1950), p. 143.

"Lewis and Clark put the question of a permanent location for their winter camp to a vote. Hunting had been bad on the north side of the river. Should they proceed to the south? The vote was almost unanimous that they should."

—Gerald Snyder, *In the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1970), p. 165.

“Wanting their command to be satisfied with the decision during the long winter ahead, on November 24 Lewis and Clark put the matter to a vote.”

—Robert G. Ferris, *Lewis and Clark: Historical Places Associated with Their Transcontinental Exploration* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975), p. 193.

“[T]he captains and their men came to a conclusion—they would leave this miserable camp, cross the river to the Clatsop territory, where (the natives said) there were plenty of elk, and locate there a site for their winter camp.”

—John Logan Allen, *Passage Through the Garden: Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 319.

“On November 24, the entire party held a council on the subject of where they should camp during the winter. Even York and Sacagawea were asked to express their preferences ... [in] this vote.”

—Ella E. Clark and Margot Edmonds, *Sacagawea of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 51.

“Late in November, York did something else no black man had ever done before. Finding little game on the north side of the Columbia, Lewis and Clark allowed the contingent to vote as to where winter quarters should be located, a concession boldly disregarding military custom. At the same time, an even more unheard-of concession was made by the captains—and the soldiers as well. Gathered there at the far end of the continent in the year 1805, they allowed York, a slave, to cast a vote. Not only did this make him the first black American known to have participated in an election west of the Mississippi River, but his being given a voice in the councils of the expedition seems to signify that he had come to be accepted as an almost equal member of the group.”

—Robert D. Betts, *In Search of York: The Slave Who Went to the Pacific with Lewis and Clark* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1985), p. 41.

“The issue was put to a vote, and in a ceremony that would predate the exercise of democracy in the United States by sixty-five and one hundred and fifteen years, respectively, York (a black slave) and Sacagawea (a woman and an Indian) were allowed to participate.”

—Dayton Duncan, *Out West: American Journey Along the Lewis and Clark Trail* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), p. 381.

“[T]he captains called for a vote from everyone, soldiers,

interpreters, black York and red Sacagawea.”

—David Lavender, *The Way to the Western Sea: Lewis and Clark Across the Continent* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 296.

“As with the crucial decision at the junction of the Missouri and Marias rivers ... [the expedition’s] members were again to vote their preference. The votes of York and Sacagawea were recorded with the rest.”

—Emory and Ruth Strong, *Seeking Western Waters: The Lewis and Clark Trail from the Rockies to the Pacific* (Oregon Historical Society Press, 1995), p. 144.

“So the captains made up their own minds, but on this occasion they decided to let everyone participate in the decision. They put it to a vote. ... This was the first vote ever held in the Pacific Northwest. It was the first time in American history that a black slave had voted, the first time a woman had voted.”

—Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 308.

“Once again the captains broke with protocol in reaching an important decision. As military commanders ... Lewis and Clark could simply have imposed their own choice.

Instead, the Corps of Discovery would face this issue ... together, as a collection of diverse individuals who had molded themselves into a cohesive unit that was stronger than the sum of its particular parts. E pluribus unum. ...

Clark’s slave, York, was allowed to vote—nearly sixty years before slaves in the rest of America would be emancipated and enfranchised.

Sacagawea, the Indian woman, voted too—more than a century before either women or Indians were granted the full rights of citizenship.

—Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns, *Lewis & Clark: An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p. 160.

“The captains wanted to stay close to the coast ... But rather than simply announcing their decision, Lewis and Clark polled their comrades. Everyone got a vote, including Sacagawea and York. Nearly everyone voted to examine the south shore.”

—Thomas Schmidt, *The Lewis & Clark Trail* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1998), p. 136.

“Eager to reach a consensus before winter, the captains decided to put the matter to a vote on November 24, 1805, extending the franchise to York and Sacagawea as well as to the enlisted men.”

—Julie Fanselow, *Traveling the Lewis & Clark Trail* (Helena, Mont.: Falcon Publishing, 2000), p. 291. ■

their decision, as they had done at the mouth of the Marias.”⁴ Yet even if the Marias was a case of leaders imposing their decision, that is the military way. And there is nothing in what happened at the Marias that would have persuaded Lewis and Clark to hold an election at Chinook Point. The men were dead wrong at the Marias, and the events there did nothing to cause the leaders to doubt their ability to make correct decisions with limited information. Leadership—not democratic principles and majority rule—was the order of the day.

COLTER’S EARLY DISCHARGE

The fourth and last time the captains polled the men occurred in August 1806, on the return trip. Upstream of the Mandan villages the expedition encountered two trappers headed upriver to harvest furs. The trappers needed a guide, and John Colter, one of the Corps of Discovery’s ablest members, agreed to join them provided the captains would grant him an early discharge. The captains told Colter they would release him if the other men did not object and agreed to stay with the expedition until it reached St. Louis. On August 15, Clark wrote:

as we were disposed to be of Service to any one of our party who had performed their duty as well as Colter had done, we agreed to allow him the privilage provided no one of the party would ask or expect a Similar permission to which they all agreeded that they wished Colter every Suckcess and that as we did not wish any of them to Seperate untill we Should arive at St. Louis they would not apply or expect it.

Certainly this was not a bidding vote, but the phrase “to which they all agreeded” suggests that Clark in some fashion did poll the members to find out if anyone objected. The poll also served notice to the others not to expect similar treatment.

None of these events—Gass’s promotion, the Marias decision, and Colter’s discharge—constituted a democratic vote whose result would decide a course of action and bind the captains to it. One might argue this point in Colter’s case, but here Clark set the parameters of the poll to include only what he was willing to accept, thus controlling the outcome to some degree.

THE SPECIAL NATURE OF CHINOOK POINT

To return now to the incident at Chinook Point: the first mention of it comes in Clark’s entry of November 24, 1805, in his field notes. The first half of the entry records data for astronomical sightings. Other notes about weather, hunting, and visits by Indians are included with

the data in a random way. Clark writes, “The old chief of Chinn-nook nation and Several men & women Came to our camp this evening & Smoked the pipe.”

The next 29 lines tabulate the poll—which otherwise isn’t mentioned—in a three-column format. [illustration, page 14] The left column states the man’s name, the middle column indicates his vote on whether to cross to the south shore or proceed directly upriver, and the right column states his view about going upriver if the south shore proves unsuitable for a winter camp. Sergeants are listed first, followed by enlisted men, with the civilian Charbonneau (“Shabono”) inserted two thirds of the way down. York is listed last. Ordway’s name heads the list; he opts to cross to the south shore and examine it, and if it is found unsuitable to proceed to “S,” which probably stands for Sandy River. Other probable votes for the Sandy River are noted by “S” or by “S. R.” or variations thereof. The notation “falls” means the Falls of the Columbia, while “up” and “lookout” presumably indicate a general desire to search for a campsite upriver, without a predetermined opinion about a specific place.⁵ Clark’s tally—6 for the Falls, 10 for Sandy River, and 12 for “lookout up”—do not square exactly with the recorded votes but are fairly close. (Sandy River actually garnered 9 votes and “lookout up” 14.) Every man stated his wish to cross to the south side of the river and inspect it, with two exceptions: John Shields opted to proceed directly to Sandy River, and Charbonneau appears to have offered no opinion. The totals are followed by the notation “Janey in favour of a place where there is plenty of Potas.” Evidently, Sacagawea (Janey) didn’t care where they camped so long as the site had plenty of roots for forage.

Clark then presents the opinion of Lewis (“Cp L”) and his own (“W C.”):

Cp L . . . Proceed on to morrow & examine The other side if good hunting to winter there, as salt is an objt. if not to proceed on to Sandy it is probable tht a vestle will come in this winter, & that by proceeding on at any distance would not inhanse our journey in passing the Rocky Mountains, &c.⁶

W C. In favour of proceding on without delay to the opposite Shore & there examine, and find out both the disposition of the Indians, & probilaty of precuring Subsistance, and also enquire if the Trading vestles will arrive before the time we Should depart in the Spring, . . . the Climent would be more favourable on the Sea Coast for our naked men than higher up the Countrey where the Climate must be more Severe— The advantage of the arival of a vestle from whome we Can precure goods will be more than an over ballance, for the bad living we Shall

have in liveing on Pore deer & Elk we may get in this neighbourhood. If we Cannot subsist on the above terms to proceed on, and make Station Camps, to neighbourhood of the Frendly village near the long narrows & delay until we can proceed up the river.

That the captains agreed with their men about going to the south side should not lead automatically to a conclusion that an election must have taken place. When looking at all the pros and cons of the several options, the decision was fairly obvious. Nor does Clark mention either a “vote” or an “election.” In his journal entry for the same day, however, he reiterates the arguments for and against going to the south shore, which “together with the Solici-tations of every individual, except one of our party in-duced us Conclude to Cross the river and examine the opposit Side.”

It would be nice to have some record of the event from Lewis, but regrettably this was one of his periods of silence: either he wasn’t keeping a journal or his journal has been lost. Here is what the other journal keepers said on November 24:

In the Evening our Officers had the whole party as-sembled in order to consult which place would be the best, for us to take up our Winter Quarters at. The greater part of our Men were of the opinion; that it would be best, to cross the River. (White-house)

At night the party were consulted by the Command-ing Officers, as to the place most proper for winter quarters, and the most of them were of the opinion, that it would be best, in the first place, to go over to the south side of the river, and ascertain whether good hunting ground could be found there.” (Gass)

our officers conclude with the oppinion of the party to cross the River and look out a place for winter quarter Some where as near the ocean as possible on the account of makeing Salt.” (Ordway)

The journals of Whitehouse and Gass reveal that the captains “consulted” with the men, and Ordway tells us the captains “conclude” with the “opinion of the party.” Again, there is no mention of a “vote” or any implication that a majority opinion would necessarily prevail. The captains were assessing the situation, which involved tak-ing the views of the others into account.

Like the other three incidents discussed, the “vote” at Chinook Point was nonbinding. Taken together, however, the four polls (a more accurate term than “votes”) taken by Lewis and Clark tell us something significant about their qualities as leaders. Allowing all members of the party to have some voice in a decision said to them, in effect,

that they valued every member. Three of these four polls came at exceptionally critical times, and all of them surely helped to keep up morale. The captains’ sensitivity to the views of their men—and, at Chinook Point, to the views of a black slave and an Indian woman—exemplifies the leadership that enabled them to weld a diverse group into a cohesive, disciplined unit and get it across the continent and back.

There will be those who persist in believing that what happened at Chinook Point was an act of democracy. Mythology has its place. As Rex Ziak, my friend and fel-low member of the Governor’s Washington Lewis and Clark Trail Committee suggests, historical interpretation often reflects the times in which it is written. We live in a period when Americans are justly proud of our nation’s role in fostering democracy around the world, but our pride should not blind us to the facts.

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NOTES

¹Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Ex-pedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986-99, 12 vols.), Vol. 2, p. 501. All quotations of journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, Volumes 2-11, by date.

²The first (1814) edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, which are actually a narrative by Nicholas Biddle based on the journals, give this account: “In order to supply the place of Sergeant Floyd, we permitted the men to name three per-sons; and Patrick Gass, having the greatest number of votes, was made a sergeant.” *The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1814), p. 50.

³Gass: “The officers concluded that the south branch was the most proper to ascend” Ordway: “Captain Lewis thinks that the N. fork bears too far north So our Captains con-clude to assend the South See fork and burry some articles which we can do without.”

⁴Stephen E. Ambrose, *Lewis & Clark: Voyage of Discovery* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1998).

⁵For an analysis of Clark’s abbreviations, see Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 86, note 3.

⁶The ellipsis in this passage is for an obscure notation that ap-pears to read “& F.” It is a shame that when Biddle edited the first edition of the journals and had access to William Clark he failed to ask him for a clarification. Perhaps “F” means “friend” and was a reference to Lewis’s dog, Seaman. Such humor was typical of Clark.



CORPS OF DIS

What did they really

by Bol

You see them on every Lewis and Clark highway marker in every trail state from Illinois to Oregon, and for that matter they are also part of the logo of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation [below]. The silhouettes of the explorers tell the story—Meriwether Lewis and William Clark wore coonskin caps and tricorne hats. These images are so deeply imbedded in our collective mind that it is difficult to imagine the captains or their men dressed any other way. That they almost certainly did not dress this way—the coonskin cap, à la Davy Crockett, is mostly a 20th-century convention, and a tricorne like Paul Revere's had passed from fashion well before Lewis and Clark set out for the Pacific—does little to dispel the myth.

If not coonskins and tricorns, then, what did the explorers wear? It is difficult to know for sure, because the men who kept journals on the expedition were seldom specific about the type and appearance of their clothing. However, hats issued by the military at the time are well documented,



L&C in tricorne and coonskin cap.

and fragmentary pieces of evidence, both written and pictorial, help give us some picture of the hats of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

CHAPEAUS DE BRAS (COCKED HATS)

The military hierarchy of the early 19th century was very fashion conscious, and military fashion had more to do with appearance than with function. Thus, the two types of hats used by the U.S. Army in Lewis and Clark's day were a tall cocked hat like those worn by Napoleon and Italian *carabinieri* and a "top hat" seemingly more suited to an evening at the opera than a military campaign.

The cocked hat of the type worn by Lewis and Clark evolved from earlier styles. In the late 1600s, it took the form of a broad-brimmed flop hat (à la the Three Musketeers) turned up on one side, or "cocked," to keep it secure on windy days. Before long three sides were cocked, forming an equilateral triangle, and by the 1770s the style had further evolved into a triangle flattened across the front; the hat became narrower, and by 1800 the three sides had evolved into two. In silhouette the cocked hat presented the shape of a crescent moon. Army officers wore

COVERY HATS



Why wear on their heads?

by Moore



it with the long transverse facing forward, either parallel to the shoulders or at an oblique angle to them, while naval officers wore it fore-and-aft. Because it fit easily under the arm, it was called a *chapeau de bras*.¹

Chapeaus de bras were made of three pieces of beaver-felt cloth sewn together: the crown, the “cock” or front portion, and the “fan” or rear. On army versions the fan was generally a bit taller than the cock.²

No chapeau de bras was complete without a cockade—a large circular decoration, usually of silk or leather, with an eagle at its center, and pinned to the left front—and a plume, which might be made from feathers or the dyed tail of a whitetail deer.³ The size of military chapeaus de bras varied widely, depending on the particular unit. Museum specimens of those worn by militia officers range from 15 to 23 inches in width (end to end) and from 7 to 13 inches in height—the biggest ones look like sails. No regular-army examples from the Lewis and Clark era seem to have survived, but we know they were relatively moderate in size: an order dating from 1810 specifies that an artillery officer’s hat should be between 16 and 18 inches long, with a fan between 9 and 11 inches tall.⁴

Both Meriwether Lewis, as a captain of infantry, and William Clark, presenting the appearance of a captain of artillery, wore chapeaus de bras as part of their full-dress uniforms. Their hats would have differed in the colors of the plume (white for infantry, red for artillery) and the cockade eagle (silver for infantry, gold for artillery). In keeping with army style of the period, the hats would have been blocked so they rested on the wearer’s head at a rakish angle—turned counterclockwise some 30 degrees if viewed from above.

We know that Lewis carried his chapeau de bras beyond the Mandan villages and presumably all the way to the Pacific and back. It is specifically mentioned in one of the crucial episodes of the expedition, after Lewis had made contact with the Shoshone Indians on the west slope of Lemhi Pass and was desperately trying to show them he was friendly. Describing the incident in his journal notes for August 16, 1805, Lewis wrote that “to give them further confidence I put my cocked hat with feather on the

Left to right, above: Infantry round hat with cockade and bearskin crest. Leather cockade with tin eagle. Meriwether Lewis wearing an infantry officer’s chapeau de bras.

chief and my over shirt being of the Indian form my hair dishvled and skin well browned with the sun I wanted no further addition to make me a complete Indian in appearance the men followed my example.”⁵

In other words, Meriwether Lewis was wearing his cocked hat, a chapeau de bras with plume and cockade, at the crest of the Rocky Mountains; it would appear that this was the only hat he had with him on this portion of the trek. Lewis’s statement that his men “followed his example” suggests that they, too, were wearing European-style felt hats unknown to the Shoshones.

ROUND HATS

The infantry uniform of 1803 was accented by a peculiar piece of headgear that we might describe today as a top hat. A letter from Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to Purveyor of Public Supplies Israel Whelan, dated April 17, 1801, provides more information on what the Army called “round hats”:

Small round Hats, bound with strong white binding, one inch in width, to shew equally on each side of the edge of the brim, the crowns moderately high with a strip of Bear Skin, four inches in width, to extend from the Hat-band in front to the band on the hinder part of the Crown, with a good strong Cockade near the top of the crown, and a Deer’s tail plume, white.”⁶

Round hats had first been issued to the infantry in 1794, replacing cocked hats, and were used until replaced by leather shakos in 1812.⁷ The round hat of 1803 [illustration, p. 20] was made of wool felt. It was five inches tall, with a diameter of seven inches and a brim three inches wide. Its most distinguishing feature, the bearskin crest, was held in place by a hidden wire.⁸

A soldier was issued a new hat every year and used his old hat, stripped of its crest, plume, and cockade, for fatigue duty.⁹ The woodcuts illustrating the 1810 edition of Patrick Gass’s expedition journal depict nearly all the men wearing round hats without decorative ele-



An illustration from the 1810 edition of Patrick Gass’s journal shows Lewis and Clark’s men wearing round hats stripped of decorations.



Conjectural drawing of a simple wool fatigue cap the explorers may have worn. It is similar to those favored by European armies at the time.

ments.¹⁰ Round hats were also part of the off-duty wardrobe of officers, and it is easy to imagine Lewis and Clark wearing them as the Corps of Discovery ascended the Missouri.¹¹

Military uniforms are often inspired by civilian fashion, and round hats were no exception. They were universal in the early 19th century, worn by all segments of male society, from day laborers to upper-class swells. Round hats were so popular that we can reasonably assume that some of the civilians recruited by Lewis and Clark may have brought them on the expedition and that Lewis may have obtained some for the Nine Young Men from Kentucky to wear with the uniform coats he designed.¹²

By 1801, round hats had changed military protocol regarding salutes, which went from the broad sweeping gesture of removing the hat, combined with a bow, to the simpler motion of bringing the flat of the hand up to touch the brim of the hat.¹³

Colonel John Francis Hamtramck, commander of the First U.S. Infantry (Lewis’s unit) spelled out the way in which newly issued or “dress” clothing should be treated when a man was locked up for bad behavior:

Whenever a Soldier is confined his new coat is to be taken from him, and his new Hat, and no Man on Guard is to be permitted to lye on the Guard Bed with his hat on. The Men are to provide themselves with Foraging Caps, which they will, when on Guard put on at dusk and wear them during the night.¹⁴

Thus, soldiers on guard duty could not lie on the beds



A blacksmith's cap of the sort that might have been worn by John Shields.

in the guard house while wearing their round hats. The men probably were tempted to do this because they were awakened every few hours during the night for their watch and were liable to be roused at any hour to challenge an enemy. Hamtramck evidently felt so strongly about preserving the new round hats that he ordered the men to wear foraging caps while on nighttime guard duty.

FATIGUE CAPS AND CIVILIAN HATS

We have no evidence regarding what foraging hats in the Lewis and Clark period looked like, but we know from contemporary accounts that soldiers had them. Colonel Hamtramck not only ordered his men to make them, but specified that they “be blue, Bound with red.”¹⁵ Individuals may have been free to choose among different styles—possibilities include toques, tams, Canadian hats, and voyageur-style handkerchiefs. Unlike the U.S. Army, many European armies issued regulation fatigue hats whose basic design resembled (and perhaps was the inspiration for) the modern “overseas cap,” peaked in front and rear [opposite, above]. It was made of wool, usually of the same colors as the formal military coat. The European-style fatigue cap had been formally adopted by the U.S. Army by 1812, and it is possible that it was the unofficial standard when Lewis and Clark set off for the Pacific.¹⁶

In addition to the round hat, other popular styles of headgear were surely carried on the expedition. These might have included wide-brimmed “flop” hats, which

contemporary paintings show were prevalent in rural areas, and blacksmith’s caps [left], which were made of heavy linen canvas to protect from flying sparks. Several of the expedition’s men (most notably John Shields) were blacksmiths and might have worn these symbols of their craft.¹⁷

We can be certain that the French engagés brought toques on the expedition. Toques [below] were woolen stocking caps whose folded-over tops hung down on one side to about the level of the wearer’s ear. Some toques were knit, while others were cut from woven cloth. These caps were decorated or individualized with feathers and metal ornaments, usually made of brass or pewter. They came in a variety of colors—white, brown, blue, red, and green.¹⁸

Another item of head covering common on the Missouri was the kerchief or bandana. Sometimes the kerchief was used to tie a hat with a brim securely to the man’s head, particularly when working on the windy rivers of the Midwest. Blue was the most popular color. It is reasonable to assume that the soldiers of the expedition, particularly as their wool felt hats wore out, copied this practice from the engagés.¹⁹ Several references in the journals mention trading “handkerchiefs” to the Indians; these were worn as bandanas.

COLD-WEATHER HATS

We know that during their winters at Forts Mandan and Clatsop the explorers made fur caps for themselves. What-



A toque, a cap popular with French engagés.

ever these hats may have looked like, they almost certainly would not have been the coonskin cap, whose existence in Lewis and Clark's day cannot be documented.

It's also doubtful that they would have resembled the curious rounded, short-peaked fur cap often depicted in paintings of the expedition. This type of cap first appears in sketches made in the U.S. and Canada in the 1830s; it was a popular hat, made either of wool felt or fur and worn by both soldiers and civilians. The Montana artist Charles M. Russell invariably placed it on the heads of Lewis and Clark in his paintings of the expedition [inset], and other artists, including Edgar S. Paxson, John Clymer, and Richard Schlect, favored it as well.²⁰ Regrettably, there is no evidence that this style of cap existed in the Lewis and Clark era.



Clark as depicted by Charles M. Russell in a peaked fur cap.



Meriwether Lewis in fur cap with two tails.

Meriwether Lewis painted in 1807, less than a year after his return from the West, by C.B.J. F  vret de Saint-M  min.²¹ The portrait [inset] shows Lewis wearing a large, furry cap; it appears to be round and brimless, with two tails hanging off the back. A figure in one of the woodcuts used in the 1811 edition of Gass's journal wears a similar hat, but without tails.²² A popular style of fur hat in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was called a Canadian cap [below], and this may be the type depicted here. It is likely that the explorers' fur caps were similar in construction



A Canadian cap, made of wool felt and fur.



A blanketing cap, made of blanket wool sewn into a hood.

to a Canadian cap, which was formed of four wedge-shaped pieces of wool felt sewn into a kind of beanie. Pieces of fur were then added to a cloth headband about 3 inches wide which was sewn to the outside of the cap. Many Canadian caps also sported a fur piece, pompon, feather, or tail.²³

The type of fur used to make such hats must have varied. In his journal entry of December 12, 1804, early in the Fort Mandan winter, Clark noted that he had "a cap made of the Skin of the *Louservia* (*Lynx*) (or wild Cat of the North), the fur near 3 inches long." On October 5, 1805, Joseph Whitehouse reported that two of the men acquired "otter Skins for caps" from the Nez Perce. At Fort Clatsop on December 27, 1805, Clark mentioned that Lewis gave an Indian chief a cap made from the skin of a mountain sheep; whether it was a fur cap—i.e., made from skin with the hair left on—he didn't say.

Members of the Corps of Discovery may also have made "blanketing caps" [above] by folding a piece of blanket wool and sewing it into a simple hood. Alfred Jacob Miller, Karl Bodmer, and other artists of the fur-trade era depicted trappers and Indians wearing such caps.²⁴

CLATSOP AND CHINOOK HATS

During their winter at Fort Clatsop, the explorers acquired some grass and bark hats from the local Indians. Evidently, one style was made for barter with white traders visiting the coast and was based on a Western design—a hat, noted Clark in his journal entry for No-



A Chinook hat of the sort purchased in quantity at Fort Clatsop.

vember 21, "made of Splits & Strong grass ... in the fashion which was common in the U States two years ago." On January 19, 1806, Lewis described this style in more detail. The hats were

composed of Cedar bark and bear grass interwoven with the fingers and ornamented with various colours and figures, they are nearly waterproof, light, and I am convinced are much more durable than either chip or straw.²⁵ These hats form a small article of traffic with the Clatsops and Chinooks, who dispose of them to the whites. the form of the hat is that which was in vogue in the Ued States and great Britain in the years 1800 & 1801 with a high crown reather larger at the top than where it joins the brim; the brim narrow or about 2 or 2 1/2 inches.

The other style of bark hat was indigenous, and far more unusual [above]. On November 1, 1805, Clark recorded that a group of Indians "Sold me a hat of their own taste without a brim." His entry in his elkskin-bound journal for December 29 states that he gave a Clatsop chief "a piece of red ribin to tie around the top of his Hat which was made with a double Cone, the diameter of the upper about 3 Inches the lower a about 1 foot." He also drew a picture of it [inset].

Lewis described the Clatsops' hat in detail in his journal entry for January 30:

they wear a hat of a conic figure without a brim confined on the head by means of a stri[n]g which passes under the chin and is attached to the two opsite sides



Hats: a sampling of journal entries

"Some time before we got to the hill we obsevd. great numbers of Birds hovering about the top of this Mound when I got on the top those Birds flw off. I discovered that they wer Cetechig [catching] a kind of flying ant which were in great numbers about the top of this hill, those insects lit on our hats & necks."¹

—Clark, August 25, 1804

"At 9 I went out with one of our men, who had killed a buffaloe and left his hat to keep off the vermin and beasts of prey; but when we came to the place, we found the wolves had devoured the carcass and carried off the hat."

—Gass, September 8, 1804

"hat got burnt exedantly this morning."

—Ordway, February 2, 1805

"the hail & wind being So large and violent in the plains, and them naked, they were much brused, and Some nearly killed one knocked down three times, and others without hats or any thing on their heads bloodey & Complained verry much."

—Clark, July 29, 1805

"the men were mostly naked, and but few with hats or any covering on their heads."

—Clark, July 1, 1805

"sent Drewyer to keep near the creek to my right and Shields to my left, with orders to surch for the road which if they found they were to notify me by placing a hat in the muzzle of their gun."

—Lewis, August 11, 1805

NOTES

¹All quotations from Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Vols. 2-11, 1986-1997).

of a secondary rim within the hat. the hat at top terminates in a pointed knob of a conic form also, or in this shape. these hats are made of the bark of cedar and beargrass wrought with the fingers so closely that it casts the rain most effectually in the shape which they give them for their own uce or that just discribed. on these hats they work various figures of different colours, but most commonly only black and white are employed. these figures are faint representations of whales the canoes and the harpoonneers striking them. sometimes squares diamonds triangles &c."

Apparently the captains were so taken with these hats that they ordered a batch of them for the enlisted men

and had several custom-made for themselves. On February 22, wrote Lewis, they were

visited today by two Clatsop women and two boys who brought a parcel of excellent hats made of Cedar bark and ornamented with beargrass. two of these hats had been made by measures which Capt Clark and myself had given one of the women some time since with a request to make each of us a hat; they fit us very well, and are in the form we desired them. we purchased all their hats and distributed them among the party.

The hat's tight weave and sloping sides made it an excellent design for the inclement winters of the Pacific Northwest. The men must have blessed their captains for buying them in quantity to ward off the rain during guard duty at Fort Clatsop. The image of the soldiers dressed in soggy elkskins under broad, conical hats is a humorous one, and contrary to our heroic vision of the Corps of Discovery.

Lewis continued to trade for these double-coned hats, and there is evidence that they were a standard item of attire on the trip home; because they were cool, shed rain, and shaded both the head and neck, they were practical for spring and summer travel on the plains, and one of them, at least, wound up in Charles Willson Peale's Museum, in Philadelphia.²⁶ And from the journals we know that on August 7, 1806, when Lewis arrived at the junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers and was looking for Clark's party, he spied a cooking fire and sent Sergeant John Ordway to investigate. Ordway found "a part of a Chinook hat which my men recognized as the hat of Gibson." The hat had served Private George Gibson for five hard months, until he cast it aside in the vicinity of present-day Trenton, North Dakota.

So on the return trip we know that at least some of the men had Clatsop and Chinook woven hats, and perhaps other hats acquired from tribes like the Nez Perce, Hidatsa, and Mandans. The journals say little more about the headgear of the expedition, and we know only that they arrived in St. Louis looking, as one newspaper reported, like so many "Robinson Crusoes."²⁷

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NOTES

¹A literal translation of the French would be "hat of the arm."

²Edgar M. Howell and Donald E. Kloster, *United States Army Headgear to 1854; Catalog of United States Army Uniforms in the Collections of the Smithsonian Institution*, Volume 1 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969), pp. 2-5.

³Enlisted men in the artillery wore traditional cocked hats, similar in size to those of officers, although the felt used in their construction was made of wool rather than beaver fur. In 1801, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn outlined the requirements for an enlisted artilleryman's cocked hat: "moderate sized ..., with good strong cockades, and red plumes, (to be of Deer's tails if they can be dyed a good colour,) and bound with strong yellow binding one inch in width." Record Group 92, National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), Entry 2118, Box 1169, Envelope 38, letter, Henry Dearborn to Israel Whelan, April 17, 1801.

⁴Record Group 92, NARA, Entry 2118, Box 1169, Envelope 38, note on chapeaus, c. 1810. These regulations were still in force in February of 1812 for officers of infantry and artillery. See René Chartrand, *Uniforms and Equipment of the United States Forces in the War of 1812*, Appendix I, which reprints the entire uniform regulations for 1812 and 1813, pp. 129-134. Of the six original specimens surveyed, only the chapeaus at Fort Malden and the Erie Maritime Museum fit within these qualifications. The chapeaus at Old Sturbridge Village and the Smithsonian are within the correct specifications for the width but stand 1 to 1 1/2 inches too short in height.

⁵Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 12 vols., 1984-1999), Vol. 5, p. 104. All quotations or references to journal entries in the ensuing text are from Moulton, Vols. 2-11, by date, unless otherwise indicated.

⁶Record Group 92, NARA, Entry 2118, Box 1169, Envelope 38, letter, Henry Dearborn to Israel Whelan, April 17, 1801.

⁷Although shakos were prescribed in 1810, they were not actually issued until 1811 and 1812. See J. Duncan Campbell and Edgar M. Howell, *American Military Insignia, 1800-1851* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1963), p. 11.

⁸Record Group 45, NARA, Naval Records Collection, Entry 376, Estimate Book No. 1, "Register of Estimated Requirements 1797-1805," p. 249.

⁹The records in the Company Book of the Second U.S. Infantry show that expedition members Thomas P. Howard and Hugh Hall were issued new hats on October 23, 1803, just a month before their departure from South West Point, Tennessee, for Camp River Dubois. In fact, two hats were issued to Hall on the 23rd. Apparently, neither Richard Warfington nor John Potts (two other members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition) needed new hats that fall, and neither had been issued hats for over a year prior to October 23. We know that all four men had hats, since leather cockades and tin eagles for the dress versions were issued to them on the 23rd. Hall was issued three sets of cockades and eagles, indicating that he needed one set for each of his new hats and perhaps a reserve set. Hall, who had served out his first five-year enlistment, reenlisted on October 1, 1803, entitling him to an entire new issue of clothing. So, on November 24, just before the departure of the four men for Camp River Dubois, he was issued yet another new hat, cockade, and eagle. This means that Hall had at least three new round hats, com-

plete with cockades, eagles, and probably bearskin crests, when he set out on the expedition, and perhaps an older hat in reserve. Each of the other three men probably had at least two hats apiece. In the four years after his enlistment, Warfington was issued three hats. Potts, who had been in the Army for three years, had been issued four. Howard, in the service for just two years, had been issued three.

Warfington wintered with the expedition at Fort Mandan, then returned to St. Louis in the spring of 1805 with dispatches, natural history specimens, and other materials. Back at his old command in Tennessee, he was issued two new hats and two new sets of cockades and eagles. By the end of the winter at Fort Mandan, then, we can assume that the use of round hats was coming to an end as they became lost, worn, or damaged. See Record Group 98, NARA, No. 2, Vol. 104, Company Book, Cpts. John Campbell and Robert Purdy, 1803-07.

¹⁰See Carol Lynn MacGregor, ed., *The Journals of Patrick Gass* (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press, 1997).

¹¹Col. Hamtramck, the commander the First U.S. Infantry, ordered that "All Officers in Camp, Garrison or Quarters ... when off duty ... wear round Hats. Record Group 98, NARA, Orderly Book, Clemson's Company, 1st Infantry Regiment, 1807, Standing Orders of the 1st U.S. Infantry, 1801.

¹²This last is pure speculation on the part of the author; no original records note that Lewis obtained hats for any purpose as he prepared for the expedition. For more on the civilian popularity of round hats, see Elisabeth McClellan, *History of American Costume, 1607-1870* (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1937), especially pp. 548-549.

¹³This type of salute wasn't new, for cavalymen and light infantrymen during the American Revolution wore leather helmets rather than cocked hats and used it. The British army also approved the salute for their men not wearing cocked hats.

¹⁴Record Group 98, NARA, Orderly Book, Clemson's Company, 1st Infantry Regiment, 1807, Standing Orders of the First U.S. Infantry, 1801.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶René Chartrand, *Uniforms and Equipment of the United States Forces in the War of 1812* (Youngstown, N.Y.: Old Niagara Assn., 1992).

¹⁷Some of the drawings of Lewis Miller, a western Pennsylvania artist of the early 19th century, show men in flop hats. See Ellen J. Gehret, *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing* (York, Penn.: George Shumway, 1976). Round hats and chapeaus in contemporary illustrations outweigh flop hats by a large degree, however. Silhouettes of Quaker men included in Gehret's book show four wearing flop hats, two of which are cocked at the back and secured with strings. Some of the earliest known illustrations of St. Louis, made in 1818 by a young woman named Anna Maria Von Phul, show men wearing round hats almost to the exclusion of any other type. See Charles Van Ravenswaay, "Anna Maria von Phul" in the *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, Vol. X, No. 3, April 1954.

¹⁸Mary Moyars Johnson, Judy Forbes and Kathy Delaney, *Historic Colonial French Dress* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Ouabache Press, 1982), pp. 18-19; James Austin Hanson and Kathryn J. Wilson

The Mountain Man's Sketchbook, Volume 1 (Chadron, Neb.: The Fur Press, 1976); James Austin Hanson, *The Voyageur's Sketchbook*, (Chadron, Neb.: The Fur Press, 1981), p. 11.

¹⁹Johnson, Forbes and Delaney, pp. 18-19; Hanson, p. 10.

²⁰See "Lewis and Clark on the Lower Columbia" by Charles M. Russell, watercolor on paper, 1905; "Lewis and Clark at the Three Forks of the Missouri," Charles M. Russell, pen and ink; "York in the Camp of the Mandans," Charles M. Russell, oil on canvas; "Captain William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Meeting with the Indians of the Northwest," Charles M. Russell, pen and ink, Sid Richardson Collection; "Lewis and Clark Crossing the Bitterroot Range" by Edgar S. Paxson; "Lewis and Clark's Camp at Lolo Creek" by Edgar S. Paxson; "Arrival of Sgt. Pryor" by John Clymer; "Visitors at Fort Clatsop" by John Clymer, and "Buffalow Gange," 1976, by John Clymer. Many of these works are reprinted in Robert B. Betts, *In Search of York: The Slave Who Went to the Pacific with Lewis and Clark* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1985); Frederic G. Renner, *Charles M. Russell, Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture in the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974) and John Willard, *The Charles M. Russell Book* (Seattle: Salisbury Press, 1970).

²¹This painting was copied in an aquatint engraving made by artist William Strickland in 1816. The original St. Mémin painting is in the collections of the New-York Historical Society. The Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, Missouri, the Oregon Historical Society, and the Massachusetts Historical Society all have original Strickland engravings.

²²The woodcut is captioned "Captain Lewis shooting an Indian." See MacGregor, p. 208.

²³Although most of the information is late for the Lewis and Clark period, there are many illustrations worth examining in *The Mountain Man's Sketchbook, Volume 1*, by James Austin Hanson and Kathryn J. Wilson (Chadron, Neb.: The Fur Press, 1992). An illustration on page 6 showing a Canadian cap may be based on "Colonists on the Red River in North America," ca. 1825, a pen-and-ink drawing in the collections of the Public Archives of Canada. Canadian caps are prominently featured in John Trumbull's painting *The Death of General Montgomery at Quebec* (1786), owned by the Yale University Art Gallery; at least five separate figures wear Canadian caps in this painting. See also *Sketchbook '76*, by Robert L. Klinger (Arlington, Va.: Cooper-Trent, 1967); and John Mollo and Malcolm McGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution in Colour* (London: Blandford Press, 1975), fig. 17, description p. 159.

²⁴James Austin Hanson, *The Voyageur's Sketchbook*, p. 7, after Alfred Jacob Miller, 1837. The figure on the far left of Miller's *The Trapper's Bride*, owned by the Joslyn Art Museum of Omaha, Nebraska, wears a blanketing cap. Karl Bodmer depicts *Pasesick-Kaskutau, Assiniboin* with a similar cap, which Prince Maximilian described as being made of badger fur. The original of this watercolor is also owned by the Joslyn Art Museum.

²⁵Chip is palm leaf, straw, or wood, split into thin pieces for making hats. See Moulton, Vol. 6, p. 223.

²⁶Moulton, Vol. 6, pp. 381-382; Vol. 7, p. 9; Vol. 6, p. 142-45.

²⁷*Baltimore Federal Gazette*, October 1806.



DEPENDABLE JOHN ORDWAY

The Corps of Discovery's top sergeant was also its most consistent chronicler, but he left scant record of his post-expedition life

BY LARRY E. MORRIS



COURTESY DON NELL AND THE HEADWATERS CHAPTER OF THE LCTHF

In January 1807, less than four months after the Lewis and Clark Expedition returned from the Pacific, Meriwether Lewis sent a roster of members of the Corps of Discovery to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn.¹ The captain paid a quiet compliment to John Ordway by listing him first, with the simple notation *Sergeant*. Ordway was next in command after Lewis and Clark, and from the record we know he performed his duties with what Gary E. Moulton has called “steadiness, diligence, and dependability.”² Arlen J. Large rightly described him as “the outfit’s top soldier.”³

Ordway’s journal keeping is perhaps the surest indicator of his reliability: he was the only diarist to record an entry for every single day of the voyage, including such difficult periods as the Great Falls portage and the cross-

ing of the Bitterroot Mountains. And his consistency is matched by careful attention to detail. As historian James P. Ronda has observed, “The young soldier could capture a scene or event with colorful, memorable language of the sort that often eluded his superiors.”⁴ So there is a sad irony in the incomplete record of Ordway’s own life: we know very little of his first or last years. Indeed, not a single vital record for John Ordway has yet been found—not the date of his birth, marriage, or death, nor the births of his children.

Still, the documents that are available indicate that he

Above: In this detail from a recent painting by Montana artist Robert Morgan, Clark (in fur hat, facing right) bids goodbye to John Ordway (holding canoe paddle and facing viewer) as the sergeant and his party set out from the Three Forks on July 13, 1805.

continued with the same steadiness and stability he manifested in the trek west. The record also shows that Ordway, already witness to some of the most memorable moments in American history, would witness another five years later.

“AN EXPEDITION TO THE WESTWARD”

John Ordway was reportedly born in the Bow/Dunbarton, New Hampshire, area in 1775, although no birth record has been found. Around 1800, he enlisted in the United States Army, and by 1803 he was serving as a sergeant in Captain Russell Bissell's First Infantry company, at Fort Kaskaskia, Illinois. Lewis and Clark came through Fort Kaskaskia late that year, adding to their party as they traveled toward St. Louis. The 28-year-old Ordway volunteered, beginning his official duty with the corps on January 1, 1804.⁵

Three months later he sent this report to his parents in New Hampshire: “I am well thank God, and in high Spirits. I am now on an expedition to the westward, with Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clark . . . We are to ascend the Missouri River with a boat as far as navigable and then to go by land, to the western ocean, if nothing prevents, &c. . . . I am So happy as to be one of them pick'd Men from the army.”⁶

Ordway's elation at joining the expedition was no doubt tempered by the rigors of command. During that first winter at Wood River (Camp Dubois) he was left in charge whenever Lewis and Clark were away—usually in St. Louis—making preparations for the journey. The men, as Stephen Ambrose puts it, “were in great shape, strong as bulls, eager to get going, full of energy and testosterone—and bored.”⁷ Several of them did not take kindly to Ordway's authority, even though Lewis had made it perfectly clear that “the party shall consider themselves under the immediate command of Sergt. Ordway.”⁸ On one occasion, John Shields threatened Ordway's life and talked of deserting; John Colter took the threat one step further and loaded his gun. When they returned, Lewis and Clark promptly court-martialed Shields and Colter, but the two repentant privates were not punished. (Tolerance for insubordination decreased sharply once the expedition officially began, with some soldiers being lashed or expelled from the permanent party.)

“OUR URGENT LABOURS”

Five or six men besides Lewis and Clark were assigned to keep journals. Ordway responded with an obedience that became devotion, making an entry for each day of the 863-day adventure. Milo M. Quaife, the first editor

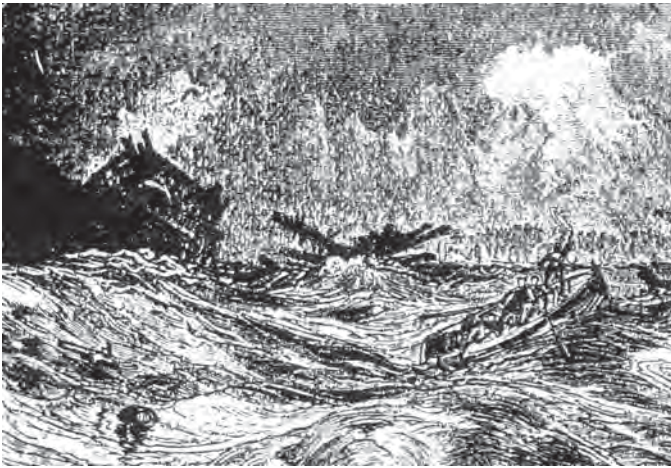
of Ordway's journal, said it was “written by a man possessed by evident shrewdness and keenness of observation” and concluded that Ordway's record was probably “more important than those of Whitehouse, Gass, and Floyd combined.”⁹ (Robert Frazer's journal was lost, as well as at least one other, probably written by Nathaniel Pryor.)

Ordway's “keenness of observation” is well illustrated by his description of the company's first Christmas (spent at Fort Mandan, North Dakota):

Tuesday 25th Decr. 1804. cloudy. we fired the Swivels at day break & each man fired one round. our officers Gave the party a drink of Taffee. we had the Best to eat that could be had, & continued firing dancing & frolicking dureing the whole day. the Savages did not Trouble us as we had requested them not to come as it was a Great medicine day with us. we enjoyed a merry christmas dureing the day & evening untill nine oClock—all in peace and quietness.¹⁰

Ordway's faithful record keeping was particularly valuable during the return trip, when the corps split into five separate groups to explore present-day Montana as carefully as possible. (As Ambrose points out, this perilous plan was probably ill advised, given the Indian war parties roaming the area.)¹¹ On July 3, 1806, at Traveler's Rest (11 miles southwest of today's Missoula), Lewis and nine other men traveled overland to explore the Marias River. With the rest of the party, including Ordway, Clark went south to Camp Fortunate (now covered by Clark Canyon Reservoir, 20 miles southwest of Dillon), then followed the Jefferson River to Three Forks. On July 13, Clark led a group of 13 east on horseback, across Bozeman Pass to the Yellowstone River, while Ordway's 10-man detachment traveled by canoe down the Missouri—with the current this time—to the Great Falls, where they reunited with Lewis's party on July 28. Ordway's journal thus provides the only record for this part of the return journey.

Ordway's group, which included John Colter, carried out its duties in an efficient military manner, despite the absence of both captains. On July 25, Ordway noted with pride: “hard rain comd. about noon and continued the remainder of the day, but did not Stop us from our urgent labours. halted as much as we were able to help the horses as the place So amazeing muddy & bad. in the evening we got to portage Creek [Great Falls] and Camped. rained verry hard and we having no Shelter Some of the men and myself turned over a canoe & lay under it others Set up by the fires. the water run under us and the ground was covred with water.”¹²



Ordway was living near New Madrid, Missouri, in 1811 when it was rocked by an earthquake that may have killed 1,000 people.

“NO BETTER LAND IN THE WORLD”

After the expedition, Ordway assisted Lewis and Indian diplomat and fur merchant Pierre Chouteau in escorting a delegation of Osage and Mandan Indians to Washington, D.C. He then journeyed to New Hampshire, where he described his grand adventure to relatives and friends; in the process he inspired a future explorer, John Ball, who 25 years later joined Andrew Wyeth's expedition to the Pacific coast. As Ball wrote to his parents in 1833, “I have seen the country the description of which John Ordway gave you so interestingly when he returned from his tour with Lewis and Clark in 1806.”¹³

By the fall of 1807, John Ordway had married and taken up farming near New Madrid, on the “boot heel” of southeastern Missouri. While many expedition members bartered their land grants for quick cash, Ordway kept his and purchased additional land, owning 1,000 acres within a year. He wrote his brother Stephen that he was breeding horses and cattle and had “two plantations under good cultivation peach and apple orchards, good buildings &c &c.”¹⁴ Ordway developed a genuine affection for the region and told his brothers and sisters “there is no better land in the world there is not one foot of waist [waste] land on all i own.”¹⁵ His description was convincing: by 1808, his brothers William and Daniel and his sister Sarah and their families had all joined him in Missouri. (John's brother Stephen and sisters Hannah and Polly remained in New England.)

Ordway's activities the next few years are well chronicled in public records: he frequently bought and sold land; he served briefly as constable in New Madrid; and he occasionally appeared in court—both as a plaintiff and a defendant.¹⁶ By 1811, the year he turned 36, he appeared to have a prosperous, steady future. In November,

he closed the last of several land transactions conducted that year, carrying on business as usual. But everything was about to change.

“WATER AS HIGH AS THE TREES”

December 15, 1811, was a Sunday. It had been a rainy month, but the weather that day was clear and cold. Many of the 1,500 inhabitants of the district of New Madrid, including John Ordway and his family, probably secured their livestock, put out their fires, and retired for the evening expecting a normal Monday the next day. Thoughts of Christmas were no doubt common among the predominantly Roman Catholic population. But at 2:30 A.M., residents of this peaceful farming area close by the Mississippi River were jolted awake by the unearthly roar of an earthquake, followed by crashing timber and bricks and the ground itself rippling in waves.¹⁷

Fleeing damaged or demolished homes, the populace scurried outside, only to find the night black from dust and fog. The sounds of injured people, terrified livestock, and falling trees merged into a chaotic din. A pungent, sulfur-like stench filled the air. British botanist John Bradbury, traveling the Mississippi on a keelboat, wrote that the steep banks “began to fall into the river in such vast masses, as nearly to sink our boat by the swell.”¹⁸ Others reported violent whirlpools, spontaneous waterfalls, and geyser-like fountains, and the Mississippi actually flowed upstream.

Aftershocks continued throughout the night, but the weak daylight brought no relief: another major earthquake struck around 8 A.M. and another three hours later. The stunned residents had no way of knowing they had just witnessed three of the most powerful earthquakes ever to strike North America. Amazingly, two more major quakes hit during the next six weeks; all five quakes are believed to have measured between 8.0 and 8.8 on the Richter scale. Earthquake scholars estimate that between 500 and 1,000 people perished in the New Madrid quakes, most of them unreported deaths of river travelers and Indians.¹⁹

John Ordway's precise residence at the time of the earthquakes is unknown, but he definitely lived in the New Madrid District, possibly near his sister-in-law Elizabeth Robison, who later wrote: “I lived on the Mississippi in the time of the earthquake which was a dreadful Sight to see the ground burst and threw out water as high as the trees and it threw down part of our houses so that it apeard like present distruction.”²⁰

Regardless of his exact location, Ordway—like most of the area's residents—must have lost virtually everything.

The surging waters of the Mississippi, damaged homes and outbuildings, and quicksand and sand boils combined to make the once prosperous land unusable. Eyewitness Eliza Browning wrote that in “all of the hard shocks the earth was horribly torn to pieces; the surface of hundreds of acres was from time to time covered over of various depths by the sand which issued from the fissures.”²¹

What became of the Ordway family during this time is unknown. If John Ordway wrote of the quake, that document has been lost. In fact, the historical record is completely silent on the fate of John Ordway between November 30, 1811—when his last land transaction was recorded (just two weeks before the first earthquake), and February 5, 1818—when a court record lists him as deceased.²²

“THE ONLY HEIRS OF JOHN ORDWAY”

No record of John Ordway’s death has been found, but Ordway family tradition places the event in 1817, which seems likely.²³ However, the commonly held notion that Ordway’s wife also died that same year and that the couple left no survivors²⁴ is not accurate: early in 1818, Ordway’s widow, Elizabeth,²⁵ and his children, John and Hannah, were officially declared “the only heirs and legal representatives of John Ordway, Deceased, of the county of New Madrid.”²⁶ In this same document—which indicates the Ordways stayed in the area—Elizabeth Ordway and her children applied for compensation for losses suffered in the 1811-12 earthquakes. (In 1815, the U.S. Congress had passed a disaster relief act that allowed land owners from the earthquake region to receive equal parcels of property elsewhere in Missouri.)

If John Ordway lived until 1817, why is there no trace of him in the New Madrid County records between 1812 and 1817? One possible answer is that Ordway was no longer buying and selling land, as he frequently did between 1807 and 1811. The devastating impact of the earthquakes on the economy was followed by the War of 1812, which disrupted commerce on the Mississippi. Then came 1816, “the year without a summer,” when survivors of the earthquake experienced snow or frost repeatedly throughout the months of May, June, July, and August.²⁷ Considering this series of catastrophes, it is conceivable that a man as prosperous before the earthquake as John Ordway could live on the edge of poverty afterwards (and thus have little reason to be listed in the public record).

In November 1821, a New Madrid court ordered that “Betsy Ordway appear . . . to show cause why Isidore

Johnson, David Johnson, Hannah Ordway, and John Ordway, her infant children, should not have a guardian appointed to take care of their estate.” Three months later, John H. Walker was appointed guardian.²⁸ No other details are known, but one could infer from the court order that after John Ordway’s death, Betsy married a man named Johnson and had two children by him; then he too presumably died.²⁹ Ordway’s daughter, Hannah, may be the same person who married Oliver Cunningham (or Cunningham) in 1843 in Calloway County, Missouri.³⁰ However, Elizabeth, John Jr., and Hannah are all believed to have died by 1847 because none is mentioned in a document from that year discussing power of attorney for John Ordway’s estate.³¹

The sparse record thus implies—but hardly proves—that Sergeant John Ordway, Lewis and Clark’s top soldier, died in poverty at age 42, a sad end to an honorable life. (The author’s genealogical research has failed to uncover any living descendants of Ordway; but they may yet be found, just as his journal was discovered more than a century after it was assumed lost.)³² We should remember Ordway, however, not for his obscure demise but for the inestimable value of his faithful record of the expedition, a 100,000-word text that concludes in typical fashion:

... about 12 oClock we arrived in Site of St. Louis
fired three Rounds as we approached the Town and
... the people gathered on the Shore and Hussared
three cheers. we unloaded the canoes then the party
all considerable much rejoiced that we have the Ex-
pedition Completed and now we look for boarding
in Town and wait for our Settlement and then we
entend to return to our native homes to See our par-
ents once more as we have been So long from
them.— finis.³³

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NOTES

¹See Meriwether Lewis to Henry Dearborn, January 15, 1807, in Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2 vols., 1978), Vol. 2, pp. 364-69.

²Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 12 vols., 1984-99), Vol. 9, p. xiv. The author thanks the staffs of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, and the Missouri Historical Society for their kind, professional assistance.

³Arlen J. Large, "Expedition Specialists: The Talented Helpers of Lewis and Clark," *We Proceeded On*, February 1994, p. 9.

⁴James P. Ronda, "The Writingest Explorers," from James P. Ronda, ed., *The Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1998), p. 318

⁵Charles G. Clarke, *The Men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1970), p. 40.

⁶John Ordway to his Parents, April 8, 1804, in Jackson, p. 176.

⁷Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 130.

⁸Moulton, Vol. 2, p. 174.

⁹Milo M. Quaife, "Notes and Documents: Some New-Found Records of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, June 1915, p. 110.

¹⁰Moulton, Vol. 9, p. 106.

¹¹Ambrose, p. 366.

¹²Moulton, Vol. 9, p. 340.

¹³John Ball to his parents, February 23, 1833, in *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No.1, March, 1902, p. 102. Ordway probably reached New Hampshire early in 1807 because a government record lists him as assisting Lewis from October 11, 1806, to January 19, 1807; see Jackson, p. 325. There is no record of Ordway's discharge, although it presumably occurred after the deliverance of the Indians to Washington. Wyeth, a Boston merchant trying to break into the fur trade, is memorably portrayed by Bernard DeVoto in *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947).

¹⁴John Ordway to Stephen Ordway, November 15, 1807, in *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 11, No. 4, July, 1908, p. 282.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁶New Madrid County, Missouri, Deed Records, 1805-1916, Books 3, 4, 5, 9, 10; New Madrid County, Missouri, Court Orders, 1816-1825.

¹⁷Norma Hayes Bagnall, *On Shaky Ground: The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), pp. 21-22, 55.

¹⁸*Bradbury's Travels in the Interior of America*, in Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), p. 204.

¹⁹David Stewart and Ray Knox, *The Earthquake That Never Went Away* (Marble Hill, Mo: Gutenberg-Richter Publications, 1993), p. 19. David Stewart and Ray Knox, *The Earthquake America Forgot* (Marble Hill, Mo: Gutenberg-Richter Publications, 1995), p. 209. The quake of February 7, 1812 is estimated at 8.8. The only North American earthquake of equal or greater magnitude is the one that struck Anchorage, Alaska, in 1964, which was measured at 8.8 or 8.9.

²⁰Elizabeth Poor Ordway Robison to Much Respected Brother and Sister Mother, no date, Ordway Collection, Oregon Historical Society. Probably because John Ordway and his brother Daniel both married women named Elizabeth—and because John and Daniel both died in Missouri and left widows—some historians have mistakenly concluded that the author of this letter

was John's widow. Some have even speculated that John and Daniel were a single individual named Daniel John Ordway. However, New Hampshire and Missouri records clearly show that John and Daniel were separate individuals and that Elizabeth Poor married Daniel Ordway in 1803, that he died by January 1811, and that Elizabeth married Kinsay Robison in March 1811, while John Ordway was still alive.

²¹Bagnall, p. 28. Olin D. Wheeler states that expedition veteran William Bratton was near New Madrid at the time of the 1811 earthquake; see *The Trail of Lewis and Clark, 1804-1811* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), Vol. 1, p. 114. In the author's search of the New Madrid deed and court records he did not find any primary documents confirming this. Serendipitously, he did find that Alexander Willard, another expedition member, sold land in New Madrid in early 1811.

²²New Madrid County, Missouri, Deed Records, 1805-1916, Book 5, p. 40.

²³See, for example, the well researched *Descendants of James Lowry*, by Jerome D. and Patricia G. (Lowery) Koetting, 1996.

²⁴Clarke, p. 41. Clarke's other details are quite accurate.

²⁵In his November 1807 letter to his brother Stephen (see note 14), John Ordway refers to his wife as Gracey. However, beginning as early as July 1809—and in subsequent documents—John Ordway's wife is listed as Elizabeth or Betsy. Whether John Ordway married twice or whether his wife went by both Gracey and Elizabeth is unknown. What is known, however, is that his wife Elizabeth is not the Betsey Crosby mentioned in an 1803 letter (Jackson, p. 120), as sometimes has been assumed. According to the Hebron, New Hampshire, town record, Betsey Crosby had married and died by 1806, before Ordway returned from the expedition.

²⁶Document signed by Elizabeth Ordway, John Ordway, and Hannah Ordway, February 5, 1818. Meriwether Lewis Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²⁷Cold weather in many parts of North America during the summer of 1816 is generally attributed to the volcanic explosion of Mt. Tambora, Sumbawa, Indonesia, the previous year. Stewart and Knox, *The Earthquake America Forgot*, p. 262.

²⁸*New Madrid County, Missouri Court Orders, 1816-1825* (Miami Beach, Fla.: T.L.C. Genealogy, 1990), pp. 25 and 28.

²⁹This explanation, admittedly, does not take into account that the court record refers to Betsy Ordway, not Betsy Ordway Johnson.

³⁰Missouri Marriages to 1850, Ancestry.com.

³¹Mississippi County, Missouri, Deed Records, 1823-1959. Book 2, pp. 56-57.

³²Upon the expedition's return, Ordway sold his journal to Lewis and Clark for \$300. Clark later sent it to Nicholas Biddle, who used it as source material for his *History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, published in 1814. Ordway's journal was subsequently lost until 1913, when Biddle's grandsons found it among his papers. It was edited by Milo M. Quaife and published in 1916 by the Wisconsin Historical Society along with Lewis's Ohio River journal. See Moulton, Vol. 9, pp. xvi-xvii. The original Ordway journal is in the American Philosophical Society, in Philadelphia.

³³Moulton, Vol. 9, p. 366.

Clay Jenkinson's multifaceted view of Meriwether Lewis

The Character of Meriwether Lewis: "Completely Metamorphosed in the American West"

Clay Straus Jenkinson

Marmarth Press
131 pages / \$12.95 paper

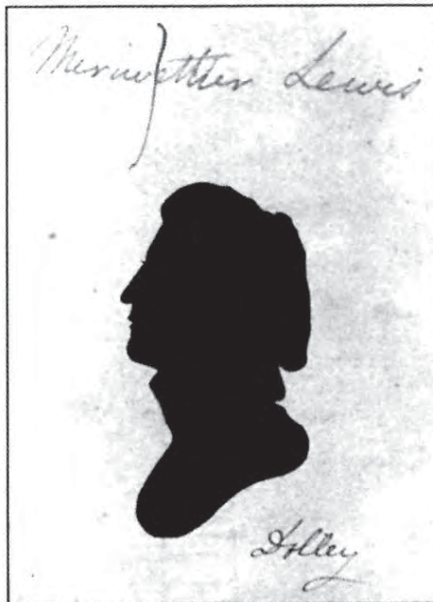
In Meriwether Lewis, a unique American life sketched a trajectory that reached a lyrical zenith at the Continental Divide, only to be driven to self-destruction at a lonely roadhouse in Tennessee. In *The Character of Meriwether Lewis*, Clay Jenkinson has given us a felicitously unique essay on the persona of the talented but quirky visionary that is as methodical as Thomas Jefferson's instructions to the Corps of Discovery. Lewis's physiognomy, clothing styles, culinary preferences, and addictions all come under Jenkinson's minute scrutiny.

Lewis was an individual of many parts who may have seemed to outward appearances to be equally at home in an elegant eastern salon or a Mandan earth lodge. However, Jenkinson theorizes that Lewis "metamorphosed" by sampling various identities on the expedition, overtly symbolized by Shoshone tippets, Clatsop hats, exotic trail food, sign language, and his own sun-darkened skin. In a child of the Enlightenment the tensions generated by these evolutions ultimately overtaxed the jealously guarded inner core of his self.

Jenkinson probes Lewis's sexuality as an area of inner conflict, focusing on the spectacle of Lewis exploiting the dishabille of Pacific Coast women for voyeuristic opportunities that he records in an oddly droll journal entry. Such earthy predilections would have had to be laundered through a particularly penetrating intellect and parsimonious conscience. Lewis's evident duality calls to mind psychologist Erik H. Erikson's observation likening the mind of self-conscious mankind to the mythical centaur. But Erikson noted that the human ego seems discomfited

by its equine lower regions, while the centaur makes the most of it.

Jenkinson notes that "Lewis's pretentiousness is one of his most remarkable characteristics," a claim he documents with many examples, particularly Lewis's tendency to overwritten prose. Some of Lewis's loftier flights of rhetoric, of course, add to the special charm of the journals. Lewis's affection for the erudite turn of phrase may indicate that he brought his perfectionism to his writing desk, a direct route to writer's block.



This silhouette of Meriwether Lewis was probably traced by Dolley Madison in 1803.

Lewis also emerges as something of a prima donna anxious to husband the glory of the expedition for himself. Jenkinson questions his decision at Lemhi Pass to seek the rendezvous with the Shoshones without Sacagawea, whose very purpose was to facilitate this critical meeting. From a military perspective, however, Lewis was "taking the point," conducting an armed reconnaissance in potentially hostile territory. Both humanity and the needs of the Corps of Discovery may have counseled against putting Sacagawea at risk until Lewis's advance party had made first contact.

Jenkinson acknowledges that Lewis pulled off the encounter admirably. I find the scene of Lewis anointing the cheeks of the Shoshone women with vermilion one of the most endearing images of the expedition, although Jenkinson sees in its details more evidence of Lewis's chronic condescension toward Native Americans. Lewis must have possessed a delicate touch as a face painter, and Jenkinson essentially concedes that by the time Cameahwait thundered up with his mounted warriors, the captain had won over the Shoshone women.

It's hard to deny that Lewis could be stiff, haughty, ill tempered, and as critical of others as he was of himself. Still, Jenkinson may strain a bit much to distill unseemly impulses from journal entries that are amenable to more than one interpretation. He admits that we have access to unexpurgated material in the journals and speculates that Lewis, but for his writer's block, might have bequeathed a bowdlerized version that would have cast him in a more favorable light.

Reading Lewis's relatively uncensored impressions, we may succumb to moralizing about his emotions rather than judging him more squarely by his performance. Most of us would not willingly reveal so much and thus set ourselves up for this kind of post-mortem evaluation. Lewis's actions reveal an individual who regularly displays great adaptability in the field, no matter what inner doubt, distaste, or rigidity may hover around his decisions. Jenkinson concedes as much and avows that his pointed inquiry is not intended to besmirch the escutcheon of a man "who deserves to be considered an American hero."

The cause of Lewis's presumed suicide? Jenkinson attributes it to "one too many mirrors." Indeed, the perennially introspective captain seemed to live by the Socratic maxim that the unexamined life is not worth living. However, even Freud believed that a success-

ful analysis was no panacea for personal bliss. A major life change, coupled with the isolation from intimates during his stay at Grinder's Stand, may have unleashed a flood of memories, causing remorse and doubt to seep through chinks in Lewis's psychic masonry.

Jenkinson places Lewis in the company of other Americans, including Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin, who confront a crisis of doubt over whether the future holds a meaningful second act. One thinks of an American infantryman surviving a blizzard of steel on Omaha Beach, only to spend most of the next 40 years driving a cab in Brooklyn. It was one metamorphosis Lewis could not achieve. Shakespeare's Henry V assured his soldiers that their moment at Agincourt would forever after "gentle" their condition. To our sorrow, no such consoling voice whispered to Meriwether Lewis that his legacy would suffice for any lifetime.

—Dennis M. O'Connell

In Brief: photo journey

Lewis & Clark: A Photographic Journey, by Bill and Jan Moeller (\$18; Mountain Press). The Moellers are professional photographers specializing in historical landscapes. This book on the Corps of Discovery is the fifth of its sort they've done; others have focused on the Oregon Trail, Chief Joseph,



Mt. Hood

Crazy Horse, and Custer. The format juxtaposes photos, text blocks, and journal quotations in a chronological narrative from Camp Dubois to Fort Clatsop. Their retracing of the Lewis and Clark Trail, of course, follows a path trod by many a photojournalist before them. In composition, color, and detail the Moellers' 73 images stand with the best. ■

GIB FLOYD
LAPTOP DESK
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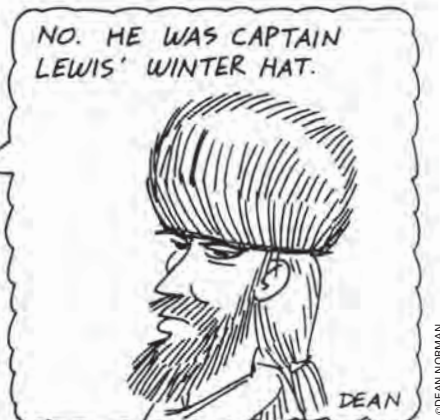
NORTH
AMERICAN
TRADE BLANKET
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Dean Norman, a cartoonist from Cleveland, Ohio, had added Lewis and Clark to his weekly online comic strip, *Wally's Woods* [below]. The Corps of Discovery debuts in the May 14 strip and will appear through the end of the year. The artist says he has been a L&C buff since 1968, when he and his son and daughter canoed on the Missouri between Great Falls and Fort Benton, Montana. He has since visited other parts of the Lewis and Clark Trail. "The cartoon story is mostly a science fantasy," he says, "but I have been careful to be accurate to history (when history is certain), and settings for

[illegible]

The Navy has decided to name the first two vessels of a new class of support ship after members of the Corps of Discovery. The first of the new ships, designated T-AKE 1, will be named U.S.S. *Lewis and*

The Jefferson Valley Theater, an outdoor venue near Whitehall, Montana, will present its debut performance with a production of *Journey of Discovery*, a new presentation about Lewis and Clark by Lucy B. Holmes and starring Hal Stearns, a historian and professional L&C presenter. The play will run Fridays and Saturdays for five weekends beginning June



CLASSIFIEDS

L&C MEMORABILIA

FOR SALE: Mint-condition set of Alpha Industries, Lewis and Clark decanters. The set was created by artist Gary Schildt in the 1970s and consists of 12-inch figures of Lewis, Clark, Sacagawea, Charbonneau, and York. Price \$500. Clete Daily, POB 223, Helena, MT 59624. Tel: 406-449-2566.

TRAVEL & EXCURSIONS

TOURS of the Lewis & Clark Trail. Via Motorcoach, Plane, Train, Cruise Ship, Keelboat, Canoe, Raft, Horse, Hiking and more. Can customize for individuals or groups. Three Motorcoach Tours this summer: 8-Day in June, 18-Day in July, 14-Day in August including historians Joe Mussulman and Hal Stearns. 14-Day Tour starts in Pierre, SD on August 9th just after the Annual Meeting of the LCTHF and travels thru SD, ND, MT, ID, WA, OR to the Pacific Ocean. Includes Boat Tours on the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. For a unique experience that you'll never forget contact: Rocky Mountain Discovery Tours in Missoula

1-888-400-0048 or www.rmdt.com.

CLASSIFIED RATES: 50 cents per word for Foundation members; 75 cents per word for nonmembers; \$10 minimum. Address, city, state, and Zip code count as one word. Payment must accompany ads. Goods and services offered must relate to Lewis and Clark. Send ads with payment (checks only, please) to Jim Merritt, Editor, WPO, 51 N. Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534.

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Address inquiries to Rebecca Young, P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403. 406-454-1234/fax:406-771-9237 membership@lewisandclark.org.

LUDD TROZBEK

1/3rd square

29. The performance recreates the camps, portages, and adventures of the Corps of Discovery as it ascended the nearby Jefferson River and other waterways of southwestern Montana. The theater, located in a natural amphitheater eight miles east of Whitehall, is opposite the Cardwell exit of I-90. For more information, contact June Severance (353 Waterloo Rd., Whitehall, MT 59759; 406-287-5348) or Lucy Holmes (406-287-3454; lucyb@in-tch.com).

PIERRE MEETING

There's still space for the Foundation's 33rd annual meeting, to be held August 5-8 in Pierre, South Dakota. The theme is Encounters on the Prairie. Field trips include visits to the Missouri Narrows and Pierre's Cultural Heritage Center. Historian James Ronda will deliver the keynote address. Other presenters include Clay Jenkinson as Thomas Jefferson and Lakota flutist and storyteller Kevin Locke. For more information, contact Cindy Tryon (605-773-3301; cindy.tryon@state.sd.us).

CHAPTER NEWS

The LCTHF's Philadelphia Chapter has selected the Loews Philadelphia Hotel as the site of the Foundation's annual meeting for August 10-13, 2003. Built in the 1930s and recently renovated, the 33-story hotel is located six blocks from Independence Hall and many other historic buildings known to Meriwether Lewis and Thomas Jefferson, including the house of one of Lewis's scientific mentors, Caspar Wistar. Thanks to efforts by the chapter, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission unveiled a historical marker outside the house in a ceremony last December 5.

The Loews, an architectural landmark, was the original home of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society and the nation's first skyscraper built in the International Style. For more on the Loews and the 2003 annual meeting, check the chapter's new Web site, www.lewisandclarkphila.org.

The Foundation has a new chapter, its 30th. Located in Sioux City, Iowa, and organized by Beverly Hinds and others in the area, the **Sergeant Floyd Tri-State Chapter** is named for the only member of the Corps of discovery to die during the expedition. Floyd is buried in Sioux City. ■

L&C CANOE
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LCTHF
MERCHANDISE
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Bulletin Board

SEEKING BOARD CANDIDATES

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the Foundation's board of directors. The Foundation has grown to 3,000 members with a salaried staff, a relatively large budget, and the complexities of a small business.

In the past, board nominees were put forth because Nominating Committee members knew the individuals and had direct knowledge of their performance in committee assignments. That time has passed. It would be nice to have board members with experience in law, accounting, financial planning, personnel or resource management, and other areas of expertise. But persistence and determination more than offset any specific professional qualifications. The Foundation's success has always depended on board members who were enthusiastic, willing to commit time, and were either amateur or professional historians of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Those qualities remain as important as ever as the Foundation continues to grow and evolve.

If you are interested in being considered for a board position or would like to nominate someone meeting the above criteria, let us know. Please forward names to Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 47, Hartland, WI 53029-0047. You can also call me at 262-691-9886 or send e-mail to pthomsen@datatek.net.

—Patti Thomsen

Chair, Nominating Committee

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Philadelphia Chapter is accepting proposals for papers for presentation at the LCTHF meeting in Philadelphia, to be held in August 2003. To commemorate the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition it hopes to showcase the latest scholarship on the social, cultural, and scientific worlds of Philadelphia in 1803. The theme is "The Quest for Knowledge: Lewis in Philadelphia."

The chapter encourages papers that explore the history of Philadelphia and its place in the new nation or that examine the history of science in the early republic. Abstracts should be submitted by September 4. For guidelines and a list of possible topics, visit the chapter's Web site (www.lewisandclarkphila.org) or write to the Program Committee, P.O. Box 54803, Philadelphia, PA 19148 (e-mail: papers@lewisandclarkphila.org). ■

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SOUTH DAKOTA
TOURISM
half page

White House ceremony honors Clark, Sacagawea, and York

After nearly 200 years, William Clark has been promoted from army lieutenant to captain, the rank promised him before he and Meriwether Lewis set off on one of America's greatest explorations.

"It was wonderful," said Payton "Bud" Clark, of Portland, Oregon, one of two Clark descendants on hand January 17 for the White House ceremony that honored the coleader of the Corps of Discovery.

Having President Bill Clinton present the promotion (which came with no back pay) was part of an extraordinary day for Lewis and Clark enthusiasts. At the same ceremony, Clinton named two sites on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail as national monuments and made honorary noncommissioned officers of expedition members Sacagawea and York.

"It was an incredible day for us," said LCTHF President Barb Kubik. "The President recognized two very important areas of the trail at Pompey's Pillar and the Upper Breaks of the Missouri River." About 50 acres of the Pompey's Pillar area are now under monument status, as are some 150 miles of the Missouri River in north-central Montana.

Clark gets his bars

Clark's promotion was a pleasant surprise for Bud Clark and his brother, John, of Brighton, Michigan, who also attended the festivities during Clinton's last week in office. The Clark brothers are great-great-grandsons of William Clark.

Last fall, Congress passed legislation to give Clark his promotion. Clark "shall be deemed for all purposes to have held the grade of captain, rather than lieutenant, in the Regular Army,



President Clinton applauds as Rose Ann Abrahamson, left, of the Lemhi Shoshone and Amy Mossett of the Three Affiliated Tribes accept the certificate making Sacagawea an honorary sergeant.



Bud Clark, left, and brother John display ancestor William Clark's promotion to captain.

effective as of March 26, 1804, and continuing until his separation from the Army on February 27, 1807," read the bill sponsored, by Representative Doug Bereuter, a Nebraska Republican.

Louisville sculptor Ed Hamilton and Jim Holmberg, a Foundation team leader and former board member, accepted the certificate from Clinton naming Clark's slave, York, an honorary sergeant. Hamilton will produce a York sculpture in the Louisville area for the 2003-06 L&C Bicentennial.

Rose Ann Abrahamson, a collateral descendant of Sacagawea from the Lemhi Shoshone of Idaho, and Amy Mossett, a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota and a

Sacagawea interpreter, received the certificate from Clinton naming Sacagawea an honorary sergeant.

The recognition for York and Sacagawea adds to their list of "firsts." In November 1805 on the lower Columbia, when Lewis and Clark polled the Corps of Discovery about where to spend the winter, Clark's slave became the first black slave to cast a vote in America, and the teenaged interpreter and mother became the first woman and first Native American to do so. With their honorary sergeant stripes, retroactively York becomes one of the first black

men to serve in America's armed forces and Sacagawea becomes the first woman to serve.

"In all, it was wonderful to be treated with respect and hospitality at the White House," Abrahamson said. "I truly appreciated this opportunity to have been there on behalf of our family, relatives, and elders." Abrahamson and her sister Rozina are collateral relatives of Sacagawea, "our great-great-grand aunt."

Foundation member and L&C author Dayton Duncan, who also attended the ceremony, commented on the significance of holding it in the East Room of the White House. Now ornate with chandeliers and parquet floors, the East Room was where President Thomas Jefferson and Lewis, his personal secretary, hatched the plans to travel up the Missouri River to its headwaters and descend the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean.

—Jeffrey Olson

Jeff Olson is the Foundation's trail coordinator. He thanks the many Foundation members who helped him with this article and contributed photographs of the ceremony, all of which will be deposited in the Foundation's archives in Great Falls.