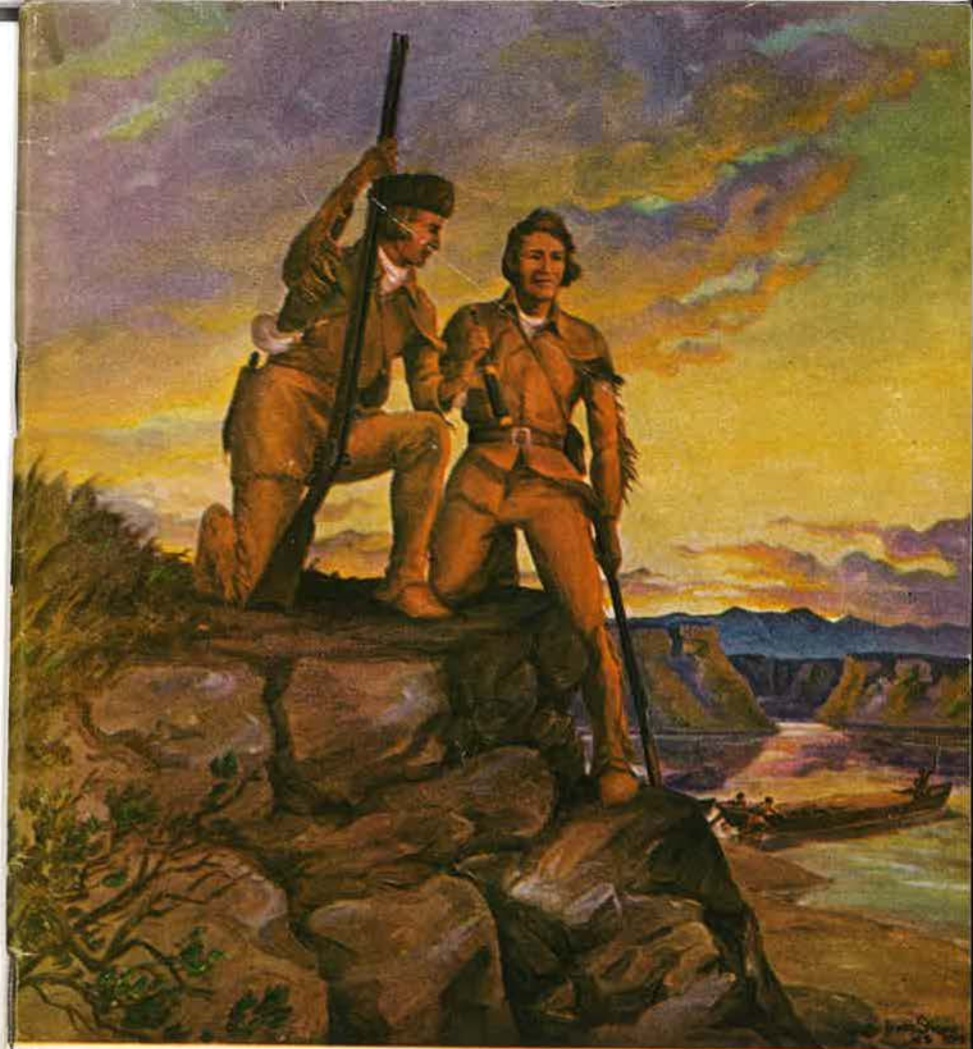

AMERICAN ADVENTURE

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Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

1804--1806

American Adventure

Story of the

LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

By

ROBERT H. FLETCHER

Illustrations by Irvin Shope

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FOREWORD

High adventure fired by youthful, all-American spirit is in the epic of Lewis and Clark. Bold, far-seeing statesmanship had added a vast region to our national domain. These intrepid leaders with a band of loyal, courageous men, faced the challenging task of charting an unknown realm.

For two years they were lost to the world. Then back they came down the old Missouri to frontier St. Louis with a simple, thrilling record of achievement. They had dared the wilderness, with its plains and mountains and woods and streams — its tribes of barbaric Redmen and its wild animals — and had won.

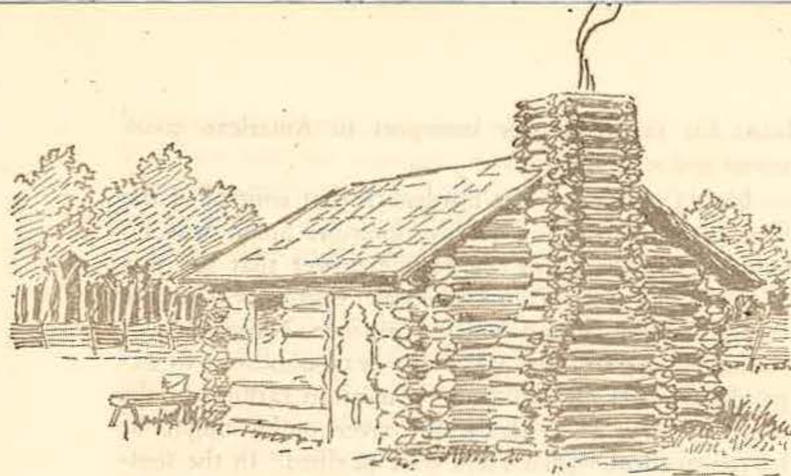
No longer was our farther Northwest an unknown realm. Days of hardship and danger were closed round embers of campfires by making priceless records. Not only Captains Lewis and Clark, but five of their men wrote the story as it was lived. Truth told simply, directly, — truth stranger than fiction — was preserved. No parading heroism, yet between the lines of the faithful diaries was drama of gripping quality. It has grown more entrancing with the years.

Robert H. Fletcher, author of this booklet, has caught and kept in his delightfully human style the facts and the spirit of the great story. Irvin Shope, the illustrator, has helped with his artistry to make it live.

This attractive brochure is a reminder of our indebtedness to Montana which has generously accepted a large responsibility for the memorialization of the Lewis and Clark Trail, and to one of Montana's distinguished leaders, Cornelius F. Kelley, the active National Chairman of the Lewis and Clark Commemoration.

The American Pioneer Trails Association takes pleasure in presenting it to boys and girls, their teachers, to our members and to many others who have contributed to the great cause for which our organization stands: *The teaching of America truthfully and impressively to Americans.*

Howard R. Driggs, President.



CHAPTER I

By treaty with England our nation's frontier boundary leaped westward from the Ohio river to the Mississippi at the close of the War for Independence. Then through mountain gaps, along rutted traces and down winding water courses poured a flood of self-reliant men and women eagerly seeking land. They followed in the moccasin tracks of the adventurous long-riflemen just as the earlier settlers of Tennessee and Kentucky followed trail blazers like Daniel Boone.

In the new "Northwest Territory" flashing axes felled trees for cabins and split fence rails to surround clearings just ahead of the plow. Commerce as always followed settlement. Luxuries and certain manufactured goods could bear the cost of wagon haulage from the East but farm and plantation produce to be shipped back required cheaper transportation. The Ohio and the Mississippi became the moist, convenient thoroughfares to market. Tobacco, corn, wheat, lumber and pork could be floated downstream to the Spanish port of New Or-

leans for further water transport to American coast towns and to Europe.

New Orleans was the bottleneck that controlled the flow of river traffic from the interior. Spain was no longer the enterprising, aggressive power that she was in the days of the Conquistadores. Europe was in the throes of military and political intrigue. Napoleon was riding the crest of the wave and was ambitious to expand his power and influence. American farmers of the back country were afraid the river outlet might be barred to them. Their fears were justified. In the summer of 1802 Spain closed New Orleans to American commerce and not long afterwards the news leaked out that France had taken over Louisiana.

In the western country, now known as Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, resentment ran high. The independent settlers were neither slow nor soft spoken in expressing their opinion. They emphatically suggested that unless the government took immediate steps through diplomatic channels to open the port of New Orleans, they would do it themselves by force. It was a ticklish situation.

President Jefferson heeded this clamor from the backwoods and instructed Robert Livingstone, our Minister to France, to determine Bonaparte's attitude toward selling us that part of Louisiana which controlled the mouth of the Mississippi. The Louisiana of that day included an undetermined area, as originally claimed by LaSalle, stretching west from the Mississippi to the continental divide. James Monroe was given the impressive title of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary and sent to reinforce Livingstone.

So the first negotiations that resulted in the Louisiana Purchase had the opening of the Mississippi river to American trade as their objective rather than expansion to the West.

Napoleon had laid plans to renew war in Europe. He needed funds. The French fleet was no match for the seafaring British and he was certain to lose his American possessions to that rival power. He made a quick decision. He could kill two birds with one stone. The unexplored backcountry of La Louisiane was worthless to France. Why not let the tail go with the hide? By selling it *all* to the United States he could replenish his treasury and at the same time embarrass England by enlarging lusty young America as a barrier to England's ambitions for New World development.

He offered the whole vast, vague expanse to our agents for a consideration amounting to $15,000,000. Our representatives had no specific authority to commit the United States to such a proposal. It momentarily rocked them back on their heels. But there were no cables, radio nor planes for rapid communication. They were on their own and it was now or never. To the everlasting credit of Robert Livingstone and James Monroe, they had the courage to sign on the dotted line, April 30, 1803. The world's greatest real estate deal was made.

When news of the commitment reached America, anguished wails of protest arose from the Atlantic seaboard where there was small sympathy for the rough hewn West. Eastern manufacturers and merchants had misgivings that the balance of political power might

shift in that direction. The pessimists complained that we had no need for so extensive a territory and no money to pay for it. Within less than a hundred years the "worthless wilderness", acquired with such startling abruptness, was valued well into billions of dollars, seven full states and parts of six others had been whittled out of it and millions of people were living there.

It so happened that trans-Mississippi horizons had long interested Thomas Jefferson. John Ledyard who had sailed the west coast with Captain Cook had told him of its possibilities for trade. Robert Gray, exploring the northwest coast for Boston traders in 1792 had discovered a mighty river and had named it after his ship, the Columbia. By virtue of Gray's reports we had laid claim to the region of unknown area called Oregon.

The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, better known as the Hudson's Bay Company, was employing French-Canadian voyageurs, couriers du bois, geographers and explorers to extend their fur trade to the West. Already, they and their Canadian rivals, the Northwest Fur Company, were encroaching on American borderland.

In January, 1803, before the Louisiana Purchase was thought of on this side of the Atlantic, President Jefferson sent a confidential message to Congress asking for a $2,500 appropriation to finance an expedition to the northwest coast by land. He pointed out that such an expedition could make valuable contributions to scientific and geographic knowledge and without giving too much public emphasis to its true purpose, it might forestall a British claim to the half-legendary Oregon coun-

try which separated La Belle Louisiane from the Northwest Pacific Coast. Congress approved the plan and appropriated the money. The amount was based on an estimate of expense prepared by the President's private secretary, Meriwether Lewis. It was enough.

Then came word of the Purchase, and the start of the expedition was delayed until formal transfer of ownership could be made. In light of subsequent events, Jefferson's plan was not a bad idea. Lady Luck, inspiration and American enterprise were busily shaping the destiny of this continent.

CHAPTER II

There were hardy silvertips among the frontiersmen but America was vibrant with youth. What they lacked in scholastic opportunities was offset by natural acumen and good horsesense whetted to a razor edge by practical experience. The leaders and most of the personnel of the exploratory expedition were chosen from the younger generation. It could be no hit and miss affair. There were thousands of miles of turbulent rivers to be navigated, formidable mountain ranges to cross and dense forests to be threaded. They must depend upon their skill and ingenuity to "live off the country", on their courage and diplomacy to gain safe passage through the hunting grounds of savage tribes, and on their determination and physical stamina to overcome other obstacles. It was no chore for tenderfeet.

The men who made up the party were handpicked for their especial qualities. Twenty eight year old Meriwether Lewis was to head the expedition. Born and raised near Monticello, the President's Virginia home, Jefferson had known and observed him from childhood. He had attended a "Latin School" for several years and when twenty years old had joined the militia. He soon transferred to the regular army and was given a Captain's commission when twenty-three. He combined studious qualities with vision and imagination. The President had the utmost confidence in his judgment. Lewis had sought the assignment and was overjoyed when he received the appointment. He immediately gave evidence of his executive ability and unselfish traits by asking to have his friend, William Clark, made co-commander. This was a wise move for it allotted authority

and responsibility in case one of the leaders was killed or incapacitated.

Captain Clark was four years older than Meriwether Lewis and they had served together in the army. Clark, too, was a Virginian by birth. When a boy he moved with his family to Kentucky. His oldest brother, General George Rogers Clark, had given the family name military prominence through his exploits in the Northwest Territory during the Revolution. His Scottish grandmother, Mary Byrd, had bequeathed him her red hair. His experience, disposition, and natural talents made him particularly well fitted to share the leadership with Lewis.

The party, as it finally left the vicinity of St. Louis, comprised forty-five men. Besides the two leaders, there were twenty-one soldiers recruited at frontier army posts from men who had volunteered for the expedition. Three of them, Charles Floyd, his cousin, Nathaniel Pryor, and John Ordway, were made sergeants by the Commanders. There was one corporal, named Warfing-

ton, and seventeen privates. Nine other members of the party were young frontiersmen from Kentucky. Cruzatte and Labiche were French watermen employed for their boating experience. Then there was Captain Clark's negro servant, big York, Drewyer, who had enough Indian blood in his veins to qualify him as hunter and interpreter for the party, and nine voyageurs. The men represented every part of the United States.

Captain Lewis, Bill Bratton, Alex Willard, and no doubt others of the party were in their twenties, while handsome George Shannon was a boy of eighteen when the expedition started. The traits and training which made the men acceptable recruits were evidenced in their later careers. Young Shannon returned to become a college graduate, then a circuit judge in Kentucky and finally United States Attorney for Missouri. The light-hearted Pat Gass was the last survivor. He died in West Virginia, 1870, when almost 99 years old.

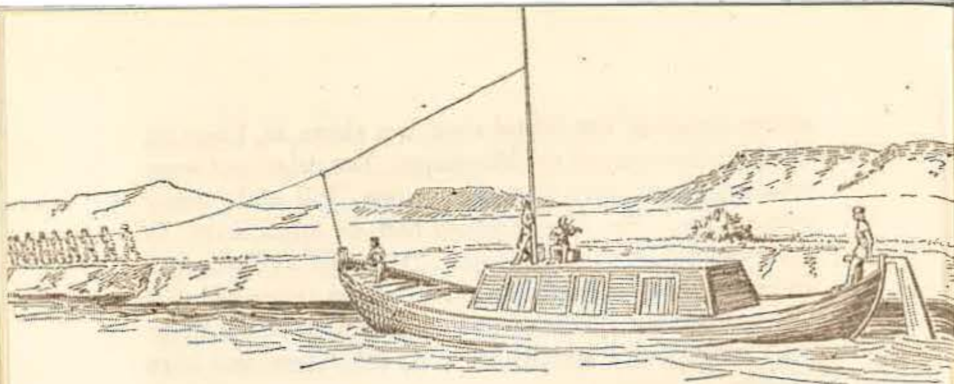
Corporal Warfington and six of the soldiers were attached to the party for the first stage of the journey only, as were the nine voyageurs. The extra military detail was taken to serve as a reinforcement through the lower country dominated by Indian tribes. The voyageurs were to help get the heavily laden boats through the lower river to the first winter's camp and were then to bring the Corporal and six privates back to St. Louis.

The original plan was to start in the fall of 1803. They were disappointed as the Spanish Commandant had not received official advice regarding the transfer of Louisiana and so could not give permission for the Americans to enter what might still be Spanish or French territory. That long, severe winter was spent in camp

at the mouth of the Wood river just above St. Louis on the American side of the Mississippi. The delay had some advantages. It gave time for further drill and further preparation. The Commanders had an opportunity to observe and appraise their men. The men had a chance to become well acquainted and to adjust themselves for a long period of forced companionship. One misfit might well have caused serious friction, discontent and even disaster.

Captain Lewis acquired a valuable friend in St. Louis. Little Dr. Antoine Saugrain was a Parisian scientist who had studied with Benjamin Franklin. A royalist, he had escaped from France at the beginning of the Revolution, finally settling in St. Louis to practice medicine. He found an eager student in Meriwether Lewis. Before joining Clark on the Mississippi, Lewis had spent a few months of concentrated study in Philadelphia where he was coached in such subjects as astronomy, surveying and botany. Dr. Saugrain supplemented those studies with other timely information. He made thermometers and barometers for Lewis and taught him the rudiments of medicine and surgery,. . . . probably a sort of first aid course.

The active little Doctor showed him how to make matches at a time when they were unknown to the world at large and supplied Lewis with sulphur and phosphorus so that he might make them himself. Dr. Saugrain presented the Captains with a supply of smallpox virus received from Paris besides donating and recommending simpler remedies with which he helped Lewis and Clark stock a medicine chest. All of this proved very helpful later on.



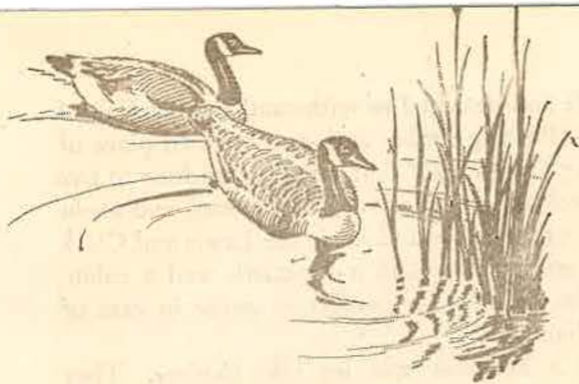
Other supplies and equipment were carefully chosen and collected. Arms and ammunition, clothing, tools, surgical and astronomical instruments and a generous supply of Indian presents were boxed and bailed. Powder was ingeniously packed in lead canisters, each canister containing enough lead, when melted and cast in bullet molds, to match the powder. This arrangement kept the powder dry and the canisters could be easily cached. They also had a repeating air gun, no details of which are now known. It was frequently exhibited to Indians and never failed to produce the desired amount of astonishment as being "big medicine". Obviously food for so long a journey could not be carried with them. They must depend on barter with the Indians and on their own prowess as hunters, so provisions were restricted to staples such as flour, salt pork, meal and salt.

Their large "batteau" was of the keelboat type in common use at the time on the Ohio and lower Mississippi. It was 55 feet long and equipped with "one large square sail and twenty-two oars". Keelboats were used extensively on the rivers up to 1830. However awkward they may have been in appearance, they were stoutly built crafts of large cargo capacity, comparatively

shallow draft and designed to withstand the mauling of rapids, snags, floating timber and sand bars. In place of the customary "cargo box" that usually rose four to five feet above deck and which was cut off at each end about twelve feet from the bow and stern, the Lewis and Clark batteau was constructed with a forecastle and a cabin. These were to be used for protective cover in case of storm or Indian attack.

Propelling a keelboat was no idle pastime. They were cordelled or towed upstream with a line running from a high mast stepped a little forward of midship. The line was rove through a ring which was connected by a short line to the bow. This arrangement was to carry the tow line clear of brush along the shore. It took considerable man power on the free end of the line to tow one of those bulky boats when heavily laden.

The space fore and aft of the cabins as well as a narrow strip along each side was decked over. Under certain conditions the boat was poled. Each boatman was provided with a setting pole equipped with a knob at the upper end which fitted the hollow of his shoulder. The men would set their poles on the river bed slanting downstreams and walk aft in single file on the narrow deck strip pushing as they went. When the first man reached the stern, he would retrieve his pole and return to the bow to start again. In this fashion, with a large enough crew, there was an endless chain of boatmen in action. There is a technical question involved in such procedure. At the end of the day had these stalwart gentlemen been riding upstream or walking downstream and if they walked downstream as fast as they rode upstream how did they manage to get anywhere? In any event



they were surely working their passage the hard way. In deep water the crew manned the oars and rowed. When fortunate enough to have a favorable breeze, the square sail was set. Twelve to fifteen miles a day upstream was considered a good average.

Besides the batteau, the expedition started with two "pirogues", probably of the type known later as "mackinaws". They were flat-bottomed, open affairs, one provided with six oars, the other with seven. Two horses were to be led along the banks of the river for use in hunting and packing game to the party.

At St. Louis on May 9th, 1804, the Spanish flag was lowered and the French banner raised. Major Stoddard of the U. S. Army and Captain Lewis and Captain Clark were present. The French flag was to be taken in at sunset but in deference to the pleading of the French inhabitants of the little river settlement, it was permitted to remain aloft all night. On the following day it was lowered to be replaced by the Stars and Stripes. The river was now free of ice and in midafternoon of the following Monday, May 14th, Captain Clark gave the order to shove off and the expedition was at last launched on the great adventure to the Pacific Coast.

CHAPTER III

In 1804 the wild West literally began at the backdoor of St. Louis. Wild game and equally wild Indians were only a whoop and a holler from the settlement which even then had developed a very sizeable fur trade with the interior. It was spring and the Lewis and Clark party frequently met trappers and Indian traders bouncing down the river on rafts in haste to reach St. Louis to dispose of the winter's catch.

The seasonal high water that was so favorable to downstream travel was just an added obstacle to the explorers. They struggled heroically against the current that built restless sandbars to block channels and then unpredictably washed them away with astonishing speed. Banks crumbled and menaced them overhead while vicious, underwater snags tried to claw holes in the hulls of their boats. Broken branches and whole trees thrown into the giant sluiceway by caving banks, came swirling down the rapids. As minor nuisances there were rattlesnakes on the ground and mosquitoes in the air.

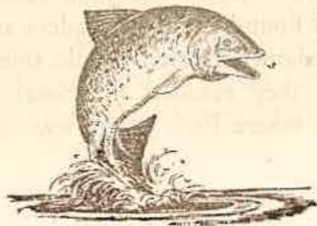
In about three weeks and a half they had reached the central portion of the present State of Missouri, a distance that any motorist could make today in three and a half hours without exceeding the speed limit, and there they killed three bears. Two days later they passed Arrow Rock, a formation from which Indians obtained material for arrow heads. On June 12th they camped with a St. Louis bound party of traders and engaged an old Frenchman named Dorion to join them to act as interpreter when they reached the Sioux nation. They passed the spot where Fort Osage was soon to become

important and at the present site of Kansas City they noted paroquets. Parrots as well as paroquets were found in that vicinity in the early days.

Both of the Captains had been instructed to keep journals wherein they were to enter the distances and courses travelled each day and to record events in diary form. They described the country, commented on the flora and fauna, kept account of the temperature and weather, in short wrote a comprehensive daily report. Their spelling and punctuation were hardly up to Harvard standards but it was asking too much for men of the frontier to sit down in a crude camp at the end of a hard day and write polished English. The men were encouraged to keep journals, too. Seven of them did.

By July 4th they had reached the present site of Atchinson, Kansas where they camped after being lucky in making fifteen miles by sail. Sergeant Floyd's diary states that they camped on that Independence Day at "*one of the Butifules Prairies I ever saw Open and butifulley Divided with Hills and vallies all presenting themselves.*" It gives you the idea even if the spelling and punctuation are a trifle sketchy.

The country was full of game,. . . deer, turkeys, geese with new varieties appearing as they progressed. They were just two months out of St. Louis when they saw their first elk at a point about seventy five miles south of where Omaha now stands. A month later Sergeant



Floyd's journal says, "*Capt Clark and 10 of his men and mySelf went to the Maha's (Omaha's) Creek a fishen and Caut 300 and 17 fish of Difernt Coindes.*" On the following day he wrote "*Capt Lewis and 12 of his men went to the Creek a fishen Caut 709 fish Differnt Coindes*".

That is a lot of fish of *any* "Coinde". When they reached the Dakota country they found buffalo, antelope, prairie dog towns, wolves, and more deer and elk. It took lots of meat to feed the party, but in this land of plenty they were living high.

Part of the detailed instructions given Captain Lewis by President Jefferson stipulated that the explorers were to hold councils with as many Indian tribes as possible. They were to tell them of the new Great White Father and his people, impress them with the power and prestige of the United States, and cultivate friendly trade relations. In addition they were to delve into the history of the various tribes and record something of their vocabularies, legends and customs. It was an assignment for a trained ethnologist but the young Captains, as their reports testify, seriously tried to comply with their orders.

Their first opportunity came after they had travelled almost 700 miles. The following quotations from Captain Clark's Journal explain the meeting and council. They are typical of later meetings and powwows with Indians in the course of their journey.

July the 28th Saturday 1804 —

. . . . . . G Drewyer brought in a Missourie Indian which he met hunting in the Prarie This

Indian is one of the fiew remaining of that nation, & lives with the Otteauz, his Camp about 4 Miles from the river, he informs that the "great gangue" (most) of the Nation were hunting Buffalow in the Plains. his party was Small Consisting only of about 20 Lodges....this Indian appear'd Spritely ......

July 29th Sunday 1804 —

Sent a french man la Liberty with the Indian to Otoeauze Camp to envite the Indians to meet us on the river above.

July 30th Monday 1804 —

Set out this morning early proceeded on to a clear open Prarie on the L. S. (left side) on a rise of about 70 feet higher than the bottom which is also a Prarie (both forming Bluffs to the river) of High Grass & Plumb bush Grapes & situated above high water, in a small Grove of timber at the foot of the Riseing Ground between those two preraries, and below the Bluffs of the high Prarie we Came too and formed a Camp, intending to waite the return of the frenchman & Indians......Cat fish is cought in any part of the river Turkeys Geese & a Beaver Killed & Cought every thing in prime order men in high Spirits.

July 31st Tuesday

R. & Jo. Fields returned to Camp they killed 3 deer;......Drewyer Killed a Buck one inch of fat on the ribs......The Indians not yet arrived.

August the 1st 1804 —

......The Indians not yet arrived we fear Something amiss with our messenger or them.

August 2nd Thursday 1804 —

......at Sunset......a pt of Otteau & Missourie Nation Came to Camp. among those Indians 6 were Chiefs, (not the principal Chiefs) Capt. Lewis & myself met those Indians & informed them we were glad to see them, and would speak to them tomorrow, Sent them Some rosted meat, Pork flour & meal, in return they sent us Water millions. every man on his Guard & ready for any thing. Three fat Bucks Killed this evening, the 4 qrs. of one weighed 147 lbs.

August 3rd Friday 1804 —

Mad up a Small preasent for those people in perpotion to their Consiquence, also a package with a Meadle accompany a Speech for the Grand Chief after Brackfast we collected those Indians under an owning of our Main Sail, in presence of our Party paraded & Delivered a long Speech to them expressive of our journey the wishes of our Government, Some advice to them and Directions how they were to conduct themselves. The principal Chief for the Nation being absent, we Sent him the Speech flag Meadel & Some Cloathes. after hering what they had to say Delivered a Medal of Second Grade to one for the Ottos & one for the Missourie and present 4 medals of a third Grade to the inferior Chiefs two for each tribe......Those Chiefs all Delivered a Speech, acknowledgeing their approbation to the Speech and promissing two prosue the advice & Derections given them that they wer happy to find that they had fathers which might be depended on &.

We gave them a Cannister of Powder and a Bottle of Whiskey and delivered a few presents to the whole, after giveing a Breech Cloth some Paint guartering & a Meadell to those we made Chiefs, after Capt. Lewis's Shooting the air gun a fiew Shots (which astonished those nativs) we Set out...

The Situation of our last Camp Councile Bluff or Handsom Prarie, (25 Days from this to Santafee) apepars to be a verry proper place for a Tradeing establishment & fortification. The Soil of the Bluff well adapted for Brick, Great deel of timber above in the two Points....many other advantages of a small nature. and I am told Senteral to Several nations viz. one Days march from the Ottoe Town, one Day & a half from the great Pania village, 2 days from the Mahar (Omaha) Towns, two ¼ Days from the Loups village, & convenient to the Countrey thro: which Bands of the Soux rove & hunt. perhaps no other Situation is as well Calculated for a Tradeing establishment.

The air is pure and helthy so far as we can judge.

* * * * * * *

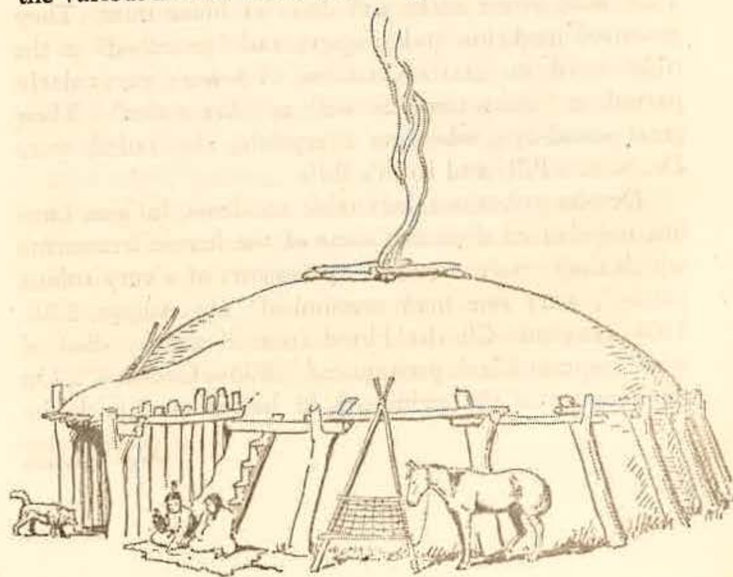
Council Bluffs, as named by Lewis and Clark, was about twenty miles upstream from Omaha and on the opposite side of the river from the site of the present city of Council Bluffs, Iowa.

They often camped on islands as protection from unwelcome visitors. Some of the men under stress of physical exertion, heat and almost constant drenching, developed boils or abcesses on their legs. They were poulticed with decoctions made from the bark of elm trees or with Indian meal, which seemed to bring relief. In the two and a half years of the round trip they had recourse to many simple remedies. They drank vile teas brewed from choke-cherry twigs. They made a "volatile" liniment with alcohol, camphor, laudanum and castile soap. They took sweat baths and doses of horse mint. They practised medicine and surgery, and "practised" is the right word, on grateful natives who were particularly partial to "eye-water" as well as "fire-water". Their great stand-bys, whenever everything else failed, were Dr. Scott's Pills and Rush's Pills.

Despite privations, inevitable accidents, fatigue, famine, unbalanced diets and some of the heroic treatments which they referred to as "experiments of a very robust nature", only one man succumbed. On August 20th, 1804, Sergeant Charles Floyd from Kentucky died of what Captain Clark pronounced "Biliose Chorlick".. On the evening of the eighteenth he had danced with the

other men to the music of Cruzatte's fiddle. Dancing was a favorite relaxation with the men and it is certain that their steps were fast and vigorous. The Sergeant became overheated and laid down on a sandbar to cool off. This may have been the cause of his trouble because he developed symptons of "bilious colic" on the following day. He grew steadily worse and crossed the Great Divide on the afternoon of the twentieth. He was reverently buried by his companions on a bluff overlooking the river and his grave was marked with a cedar post. On Memorial Day in 1901, a beautiful stone shaft, erected on Floyd's Bluff, now in one of the parks of Sioux City, Iowa, was dedicated to his memory. On that May evening in 1804 the saddened pioneer band camped about a mile upstream at the mouth of a tributary flowing into the Missouri from the northeast. They named it Floyd's River.

The Captains had made every effort to parley with the various Indian tribes who ranged within a reasonable



distance of the river but sometimes these copper-hued nomads were hard to find. When they weren't off on a buffalo hunt they were on hair-raising forays against the neighbors. Emissaries sent from the expedition did manage to induce a few to visit the main party. Chiefs and their followers were received with suitable ceremonies and presents. They usually departed with every appearance of friendliness.

The expedition camped September 24th at the mouth of the Teton or Bad River opposite the site of Pierre, South Dakota, and lay over the following day to hold a powwow with the Teton Sioux. The chiefs were entertained aboard the batteau and seemed well pleased with their reception. In fact, they were loath to go ashore. Captain Clark and five men finally took them off in a pirogue. When they reached shore they and their friends were reluctant to let the whites return. A few intimated as much by clinging to the mast and cable. Others fitted arrow nocks to bowstrings and but for prompt and aggressive action in bringing a swivel gun to bear on them there might have been a disastrous clash. Three days later the explorers had a similar experience with these same Tetons. These two incidents were exceptions. Only on one other occasion did they have serious trouble with Indians.

The weather was getting sharp and the Captains were anxious to reach the Mandan Indian villages where they had planned to camp for the winter. A council of several days duration was held with the Arikaras near the mouth of Grand River north of the present town of Mobridge, South Dakota, after which they pushed on, passing the sites of Bismarck and Mandan, North

Dakota on the twenty-first of October. On the twenty-sixth they reached the Mandan village to finish the first lap of their trip. They had been out 165 days and by their calculations had travelled 1,600 miles, averaging about ten miles a day.

CHAPTER IV

The Mandan villages were located on the west bank of the Missouri a few miles below the mouth of the Knife River where the Minnatarees were camped. After carefully scouting the terrain, the Captains chose a spot in a timbered bottom close to wood and water, downstream and on the opposite bank from the Mandans. The Indians were close enough for convenient communication, yet far enough away to afford the expedition some privacy. Hunting grounds were also reasonably near.

Work was started on log quarters roofed with hand hewn planks which were covered with grass and clay for insulation. The "Fort" was built in an L shape with four adjoining rooms to a side. The right angle, where the two sides cornered, was enclosed by a circular wall back of which two store rooms were constructed. The roof of this quarter circle served as a sentry post and commanded the outer walls of both rows of rooms. Stone fireplaces were built and when this portion of the Fort was done, a picket stockade was erected to connect the far ends of each side of the L, thereby serving as the hypotenuse of a triangular enclosure. On Christmas Eve the entire structure was completed. On Christmas Day the American flag was raised and the men celebrated by dancing to the scraping of Cruzatte's violin.

Their neighbors, the Mandans, were above average in intelligence, culture and dependability. Many of them

were fair haired and blue eyed. They lived in permanent villages where they made unglazed pottery, wove mats and baskets and cultivated corn, beans and squashes. Their houses were large and roughly circular in shape. The hard packed earth floor was about eighteen inches below natural ground surface. Posts set around the circumference supported rafters which formed a dome shaped roof. The exterior was well daubed with clay. These houses were warm and commodious shelters far more pretentious than the skin covered teepees of the wandering tribes of the plains.

The Captains had presented the village with an iron corn mill. This contrivance was greatly appreciated by the Mandans. They promptly reduced it to scrap to make arrow heads and hammers for breaking marrow bones. Lignite coal was plentiful in the vicinity and the blacksmith of the party was popular with the braves because of his skill in fashioning arrow points, hide-scrapers and other utensils for them.

The party spent much time hunting, groups going as

far as sixty miles afield. Their meat diet was varied with corn, beans and squash obtained by barter with the Indians. The leaders talked often with the Mandans, and neighboring Arikaras & Minnatarees. They were visited several times by Northwest Fur Company traders who had headquarters on the Assinniboine River to the north.

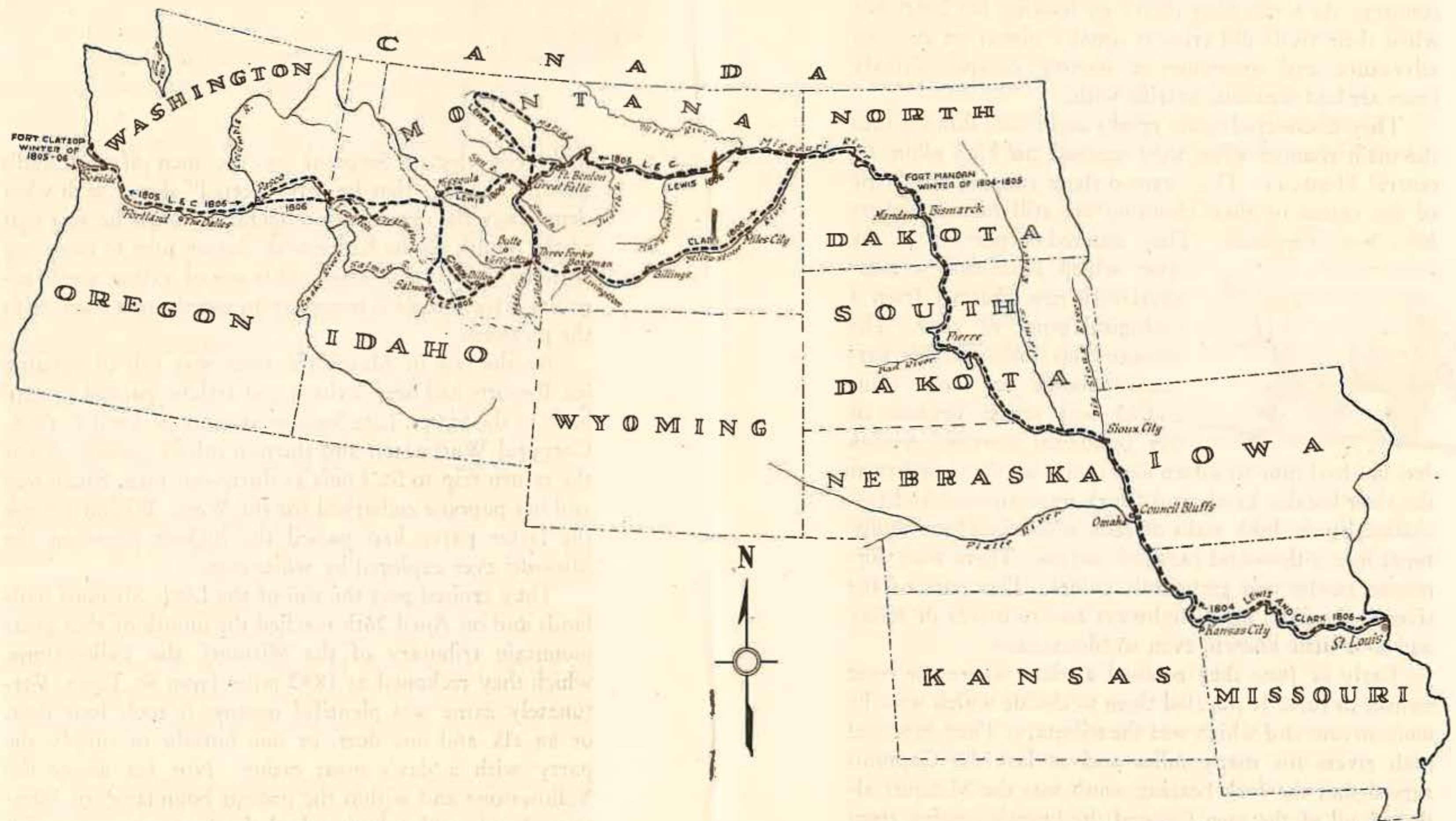
Most important and lucky was their meeting with Chaboneau. He was a French Canadian who had lived a half savage life with the Indians for many years. He had frequently been employed as an interpreter for the British fur companies. The youngest of his three wives was a sixteen year old squaw named Sacajawea, meaning Bird Woman. When a little girl she had been captured by the Minnatarees in a raid on a band of Shoshone Indians at the three forks of the Missouri. Chaboneau bought her from her captors. The Captains hired the Frenchman to accompany them in the spring as an interpreter and Sacajawea was to go, too. By the time they were ready to start, another small, beady-eyed member of the Chaboneau family had arrived. This wee papoose became a great traveller at an early age. He journeyed to the Pacific Coast and back on a cradle board. However indifferent Chaboneau proved to be as an asset to the expedition, Sacajawea was invaluable. She was familiar with much of the country ahead of them, she was intelligent, resourceful and uncomplaining. Without her, things might not have gone as well as they did.

The winter passed quickly and soon ducks and geese were flying north. It was time to prepare for the spring take-off. Patrick Gass, Irish wit and carpenter,

had been elected Sergeant by the men after Floyd's death. The fact that he was "elected" shows with what democracy the organization operated. Now he was sent to the mouth of the Knife with sixteen men to construct cottonwood canoes. They made six of rather small capacity which made it necessary to supplement them with the pirogues.

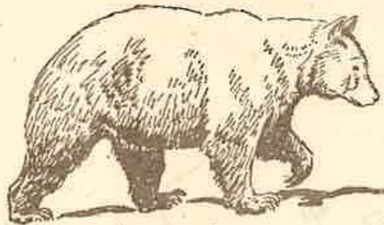
By the last of March the river was full of running ice. Reports had been written and articles packed to send back to the States. Late Sunday afternoon, April 7, 1805, Corporal Warfington and thirteen others pushed off for the return trip to St. Louis as thirty-one men, Sacajawea and her papoose embarked for the West. Within a week the latter party had passed the highest point on the Missouri ever explored by white men.

They cruised past the rim of the Little Missouri badlands and on April 26th reached the mouth of that great mountain tributary of the Missouri, the Yellowstone, which they reckoned as 1880 miles from St. Louis. Fortunately game was plentiful because it took four deer, or an elk and one deer, or one buffalo to supply the party with a day's meat ration. Not far above the Yellowstone and within the present boundaries of Montana, Lewis and a hunter had the first encounter with grizzly bears. Those huge, sultry-tempered animals are


C A N A D A
WASHINGTON
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
OREGON
IDAHO
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
IOWA
KANSAS
MISSOURI
FORT CLATSOP WINTER OF 1805-06
Seaside
Portland
The Dalles
Missoula
Butte
Three Forks
Bozeman
Billings
Great Falls
Ft. Benton
Miles City
Missouri R.
FORT MANDAN WINTER OF 1804-1805
Mandan
Bismarck
Pierre
Sioux City
Council Bluffs
Omaha
Platte River
Kansas City
St. Louis
N

now never seen except in remote mountain areas. The expedition however met many of them in the lower country. As a rule they didn't go looking for bears but when their trails did cross it usually meant an exciting adventure and sometimes a narrow escape. Grizzly bears are bad medicine to trifle with.

They discovered many creeks and rivers flowing into the main channel when they reached the high plains of central Montana. They named these streams and some of the names of their choosing are still in use. Others have been forgotten. They entered a portion of the river which represents a comparatively new channel from a geological point of view. The Missouri has followed this particular course for only some 20,000 odd years. Because of this geological newness, erosion has not had time to soften and round off the contours of the river breaks. Lewis and Clark were amazed and fascinated by the high walls of rock which had been sculptured into a thousand fantastic shapes. There were fortresses, castles and cathedrals galore. This part of the river is far from main highways and railroads of today and so is little known, even to Montanans.



Early in June they reached a place where the river seemed to fork. It puzzled them to decide which was the main stream and which was the tributary. They explored both rivers for many miles and at last the Captains agreed that the fork bearing south was the Missouri although all of the men favored the branch coming from the west. Sacajawea, as well as other Indians, had told

them that the main river had a series of falls. If they could find them they would be sure of their course. So they cached some of their goods at the forks and Captain Lewis named the stream from the west, Maria's River in honor of his cousin, Maria Wood. It was intended as a compliment but the young lady might have wondered had she ever learned that the Indian name for this far western stream was "The River-that-scolds-at-all-others".

On June 11th, Lewis and four men started out on foot along the west side of the river while Clark and the others worked the boats upstream. Lewis made good time and reached the great falls of the Missouri on noon of the thirteenth. He was elated to know that their judgment about the main channel was correct and he was overwhelmed by the beauty and grandeur of the falls. In his own words, "......*the water in its passage down ......brakes into a perfect white foam which assumes a thousand forms in a moment sometimes flying up in jets of sparkling foam to a hight of fifteen or twenty feet and are scarcely formed before large roling bodies of the same beaten and foaming water is thrown over and conceals them......from the reflection of the sun on the sprey or mist which arrises from these falls there is a beautiful rainbow produced which adds not a little to the beauty of this majestically grand senery......after wrighting this imperfect discription I again viewed the falls and was so much disgusted with the imperfect idea which it conveyed of the scene that I determined to draw my pen across it and begin again, but then reflected that I could not perhaps succeed better than pening the first impression of the mind......I hope still to give to the*

world some faint idea of an object which at this moment fills me with such pleasure and astonishment; and which of it's kind I will venture to ascert is second to but one in the known world."

He continued up the river past four other falls to reach the broad valley at the mouth of the Medicine River, now called the Sun River. The prairie where the city of Great Falls, Montana now stands was black with herds of buffalo. Grizzly bears prowled the river banks feeding on carcasses of buffalo which had been swept over the cataracts. When the buffalo went down the narrow, steep draws to water, those in the rear often crowded the leaders into the current so that they were carried downstream to plunge over the falls. Captain Lewis could see the main range of the Rocky Mountains to the west and other ranges to the south and east. He was looking at magnificent vistas never before seen by white man and he stood on the threshold of the great mountain area that stretched west to the ocean.

In the meantime Clark and his men were stubbornly fighting a swift current in a river bed studded with rocks. They finally stopped on the east bank of the river where Lewis joined them on Sunday, June 16th. They decided that this was the proper area from which to start the portage around the falls and so pushed their canoes a mile and a half up a little tributary which they called Portage Creek.

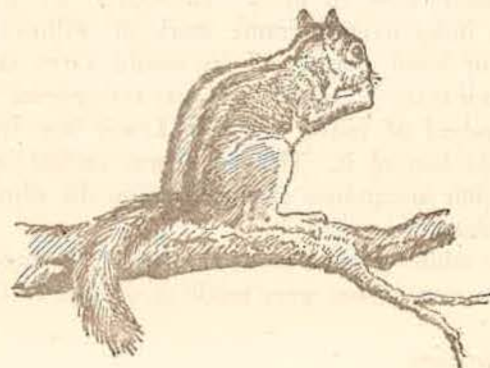
There was plenty of work ahead. Clark started out to locate and stake a portage route; men were sent in search of a tree large enough to cut into cross-sections for wheels; hunters were sent out for game; others were busy packing canoes and stores. The men who were looking

for timber found a twenty-two inch cottonwood not far away,....the only tree of suitable size within twenty miles.

The portage took nearly two weeks. Thousands of buffalo hooves had pockmarked the prairie during wet weather and the gumbo mud had later baked to the consistency of concrete under the hot sun. Add a certain amount of prickley pear and the moccasined feet of the men suffered tortures. Makeshift willow and cottonwood axles and tongues broke under the strain. A cloud burst caught Captain Clark, Chaboneau and Sacajawea in a cutbank coulee and almost swept them away. Heat, hail, wind and sun seemed combined against them until the last pound of luggage reached the upper camp at White Bear Islands above the mouth of the Medicine (Sun) river.

The 4th of July was spent at White Bear Island Camp. Patrick Gass, in his journal, laconically commented on the day as follows, —

"Thursday 4th.-A fine day. A part of the men were busily engaged at the boat and others in dressing skins



for clothing, until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when we drank the last of our spirits in celebrating the day and amused ourselves with dancing till 9 o'clock at night when a shower of rain fell and we retired to rest."

The weather man couldn't spare a Fourth of July celebration even in such a remote spot!

The time had come to try Meriwether Lewis' pet project. A ninety pound iron frame for a boat had been made to his specifications at Harper's Ferry. They had packed it up the river for months. When assembled it was thirty-six feet long, four and a half feet wide and twenty-six inches deep. It took twenty-four elk and four buffalo hides to cover it. It was liberally smeared with a preparation made of charcoal, beeswax and buffalo tallow and launched on July 9th. To Lewis' chagrin and disappointment the waterproofing became brittle in the cold water and flaked off. The seams could not be caulked and the hides themselves became sodden and let water through. Lewis' idea was a good one and might have been successful if they had been able to obtain tar or pitch. Fur trappers a few years later learned from the Indians how to make "bull-boats" by stretching buffalo hides over a frame work of willows. These saucer or bowl shaped affairs would carry enormous loads and many a pack of fur was transported in them for hundred of miles. Captain Lewis was forced to make the best of it. The frame was cached and with philosophic acceptance of the situation the whole camp went fishing.

The white pirogue had been left at Portage Creek and two new canoes were made to replace it. On July

15th they were off to a fresh start and that day entered the Missouri River canyon and left the plains country behind. New wonders unfolded at every turn of the route. It was now Clark's turn to take a few men and strike overland while Lewis brought on the canoes through the limestone canyon near Helena, Montana, which he named the Gates of the Mountains. On July 27th the boatmen reached the three forks of the Missouri. The reunited party camped a mile above the junction of the west and middle forks on the spot where Sacajawea had been captured by the Minnatarees five years before. Strangely enough they had traversed hundreds of miles of Indian country since leaving the Mandans, without sighting a single Indian. By their own estimate they were now 2,849 miles from St. Louis, which was about twelve per cent over later official and more accurate measurements.

Here were three forks to chose from, each one a major and majestic river. Sacajawea's knowledge of the country and their own reconnaissance of the neighborhood decided them in favor of the west fork. They named the east fork after Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the United States Treasury, the middle fork was named for James Madison, then Secretary of State, and the west fork was named the Jefferson in honor of the President. "Celestial observations" were taken, the men had improved the breathing spell to dress hides, make new leggins, hunting shirts and moccasins; Sacajawea had repeated the story of her capture; the canoes were reloaded and on July 30th it was once more "Canoes West"!

CHAPTER V

They were in beaver country now and the beaver dams and ponds had the bottom land well covered. Clark had been sick and so stayed with the boats while Lewis went ahead on foot searching for signs of Indian camps. There were the usual moments or hours of indecision when the canoes reached a fork. The work of progressing against the current was daily growing more difficult because of swift water and shoal rapids, but the country was new and grand and they were spurred forward by the belief that they had almost reached the backbone of the continent and would soon be sliding down hill to their destination.

By the time the Clark division of the party was halfway up the Beaverhead fork of the Jefferson, Lewis with three men, well in advance, was ascending the Horse Prairie fork of the Beaverhead and trailing horse tracks on an old Indian road. They camped August 10th near the top of the continental divide in a pretty basin which they named Shoshone Cove. Next morning while scouting to pick up the horse trail which had dimmed out the day before, Captain Lewis saw a mounted Indian approaching. The Indian soon espied the Captain and his men and in spite of the Captain's signs of friendship, reined his cayuse to the rear and very diligently went

away from there. It was a great disappointment in one way, in fact Captain Lewis was "sourly chagrined" according to his journal. But in another way it was most encouraging. At least and at last they were within shooting distance of the Indians they had hoped to reach.

The next day Captain Lewis and his men hiked hopefully on and were rewarded by finding a broad, plain Indian road that led through a pass over the divide, and the day after that they came upon an old Shoshone squaw, a young woman and a little girl. The Indians were terrified. The young woman took to her heels while the old squaw and the little girl crouched on the ground expecting the worst. By means of presents and signs, the Captain convinced them of his friendly intentions and with the help of Drewyer succeeded in having the old woman recall the one who had run away. The squaws then guided the three explorers to their people.

This mountain tribe was camped on the banks of the Lemhi River (Idaho). They were short of provisions and were making plans to meet other mountain tribes near the three forks of the Missouri for a big hunt. Lewis explained to them as best he could without an interpreter familiar with the Shoshone tongue, that his brother chief was advancing with a much larger band of men; that there was a Shoshone woman with them; that they wanted to travel west to the big salt water; and that they needed horses to pack their goods over the divide.

They told him in return that it would be impossible to navigate the Salmon River into which the Lemhi flowed. They agreed to go with Lewis to meet the boatmen and were willing to parley and trade for horses. Captain Lewis used great diplomacy in handling these

temperamental natives and when they wavered or grew suspicious of his motives he aroused their curiosity by telling them about the strange black man, York. York's skin and hair had astonished all Indians encountered en route who had never seen a negro.

It had taken days to persuade the Indians to go with him to the forks of the Beaverhead so imagine Lewis' dismay upon reaching the forks to find no sign of Clark. Fortunately he bethought himself of a note he had left for Clark attached to a stick placed in the center of the stream. He pretended to find this epistle and explained to the Indians that it had been left for him by a scout sent out from Clark's contingent and it said that the other white chief would be there soon. Well, that was big medicine and he induced the restless reds to linger until Clark arrived at the eleventh hour.

What a sigh of relief Captain Lewis must have heaved when he heard the boatmen coming! It had been a delicate situation. But the dramatic climax came when Sacajawea recognized the Shoshone chief as her brother,

Cameahwait. Here was truth stranger than fiction and fortune had once more lavished favors on the young explorers. With Sacajawea to plead their cause they rose high in the esteem of her people.

They had reached the limit of water travel on the east side of the divide. In fact, one of the men had planted a foot on either side of a small branch near the crest of the divide and exclaimed, "Thank God, I have lived to bestride the Missouri River"! They now needed enough horses to pack their outfit over the mountains to navigable waters of the Columbia drainage system. Cameahwait agreed to sell them the ponies and while he and his people went after them to the camp on the Lemhi, accompanied by Captain Clark and eleven men, Lewis and the rest of the expedition cached supplies that would not be needed until the following year, and went about the business of making pack saddles in anticipation of the horses to come.

The eleven men who went with Clark were to build canoes. Apparently it had never occurred to Lewis and Clark that the upper tributaries of the Columbia might not be navigable. They were skeptical when the Shoshones told them that they couldn't get through by way of the Salmon River and Captain Clark proceeded to make an investigation for about seventy miles downstream. He came to the conclusion that the Indians were right and the expedition must find a more practicable route.

An old Shoshone, "Old Ocean", who had been Clark's guide on this exploratory excursion volunteered to guide them across the mountains to reach an Indian

trail which they could use to advantage. Lewis and his men had reached the Shoshone camp in the meantime and on the last day of August the entire expedition left from near the present site of Salmon, Idaho, and started to cross the Bitterroot Range where it merges with the continental divide. The old guide's intentions were good but before they reached the crest of the mountains the trail had petered out and they were having difficulties in a maze of rocks and down timber. There is no true pass in this vicinity although U. S. highway No. 93 crosses at a point now called Lost Trail Pass.

Upon descending the steep north slope they came to a little valley at the head of the Bitterroot River (Ross' Hole) and found a camp of some 400 Flathead Indians with a herd of 500 horses. It didn't take long for Lewis and Clark to augment their pack string by trading for more cayuses with this friendly tribe. An oil mural depicting this episode and painted by Charley Russell, Montana's famous cowboy artist, is in the House Chamber of the State Capitol at Helena, Montana.

By September 6th they were headed north down the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana with forty horses

and three colts. They travelled until they reached *"a fine bold creek of clear water about twenty yards wide and we call it Traveller's Rest Creek for...... we determined to remain for the purpose of making celestial observations and collecting some food"*.

They lingered for two days then were off on the old Nez Perce Indian trail to cross the Bitterroots once more via Lolo Pass. The next two weeks were to test their endurance beyond anything they had encountered so far. The Idaho country south and west of Lolo Pass is a jumble of mountains, ridges and spurs, slashed with deep rugged gulches and canyons. The old Shoshone was constantly leading them astray, game was scarce and food supplies ran precariously low. In fact, they were glad to eat bear grease, horse meat and even coyote before they emerged from this forested geographical maze to reach the Clearwater River in Idaho and the camps of friendly Nez Perce Indians.

As a result of their fasting, privations and partial diet of roots, most of them were sick and exhausted yet they established a camp and began building canoes. On October 7th, they left their horses with a band of Nez Perce Indians and took to the water once more. On October 10th they camped at the junction of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers opposite the present Lewiston, Idaho. On the eighteenth they reached the main channel of the Columbia at the present site of Pasco, Washington, and started down the big river. They were able to make as much as thirty to forty miles a day. In less than a week they had reached the falls and portaged around them. They navigated the Dalles, camping at the present site

of The Dalles, Oregon, and negotiated the "Long Narrows". They met Indians all along the river and signs of white traders began to appear.

They passed the Cascades and at long last reached the mouth of the Columbia where, drenched with rain, cold, hungry and without shelter, they were very miserable for a while. Hunters immediately began scouring the hills for game, the Captains explored the coast in search of a suitable camp site for building winter quarters, and they traded with the Indians for a stock of edible roots and dried fish. On December 8th they went three miles up the stream now called Lewis and Clark River on the south side of the Columbia, and there built "Fort Clatsop" in a pine grove well above high tide.

CHAPTER VI

The winter of 1805-06 was a decided contrast to the one spent at the Mandan villages. Broken hills, swamps and ocean replaced the Dakota prairie and cottonwood-lined river bottom of the previous year. Their neighbors, the Clatsops and other Columbia River Indians, were expert canoe and salmon fishermen but had no horses. The rain and fog of the coast bit through their clothes worse than the cold, dry air of the Mandan country. There were no buffalo nor antelope. Their menu was restricted to lean and hard-to-get elk, fish and roots. They were out of salt, too, though they soon cured that shortage by establishing a salt works on the beach at the present site of Seaside, Oregon, where by boiling sea water in a kettle they could obtain three to four quarts of salt a day.

They moved into their Fort Clatsop cabins on Christmas Eve. By way of preserving the Santa Claus tradition, the Captains divided the small remaining tobacco supply among the smokers and presented each of the non-smokers with a handkerchief. The winter continued very wet and the dampness and exposure made the men "rheumatic." The time was spent in improving the defenses of the Fort, hunting, making salt and trading with the Indians. From the first of December to the twentieth of March the hunters killed 131 elk and twenty deer. Even smoked meat spoiled quickly in that climate.

One unusual incident broke the regular routine. News came by word of mouth, perhaps verified by the breeze from that direction, that the carcass of a whale

was stranded on the beach a few miles away. An excursion was organized at once to investigate this pheonomenon and the plan evoked the only real complaint that Sacajawea made on the entire trip.

No one had thought to include her in the whaling jaunt. That was too much. She protested that she had trudged and worked her passage from the Mandans to the great salt water. She had helped them with her people and had pointed out the way. Now, when there was something really remarkable to see and smell they were snubbing her and leaving her behind. She was just as interested in seeing the monster of the deep as they were. Her arguments carried weight with Captain Clark. Sacajawea saw the whale.

The Captains had plenty of ammunition though they had few goods left for barter. They needed some of the well built Indian canoes, in addition to their own, for the return trip up the Columbia. They succeeded in getting two from the Clatsops. Anxious to be backtracking, the little flotilla started on the long journey east, March 23, 1806.

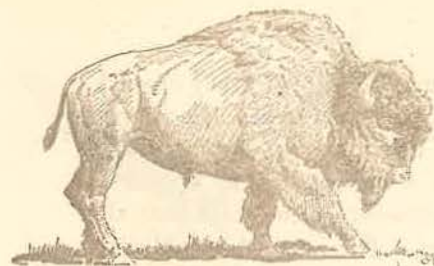
Strangely enough they missed the Multnomah or Willamette River when they passed its mouth, both coming and going. By chance, Indians from that vicinity told them about it and so Clark went back down the

Columbia with them and ascended the big tributary as far as the present site of Portland, Oregon.

Paddling, poling and portaging up the Columbia took time and energy. The light-fingered thievery of the river Indians didn't make that portion of the trip any more pleasant either. In due time they had run the gauntlet of cascades, falls, and primitive pickpockets and were back on the Clearwater in May with their good friends, the Nez Perce Indians.

Impatient to reach the east side of the continental divide, they started to cross the Bitterroots on June 15th. They were well equipped with horses but found snow drifts twelve to fifteen feet deep blocking their trail. They were forced to turn back and wait a week. Starting again on the twenty-fourth with two Indian guides, they crossed the range on June 29th still bucking snow drifts, and that afternoon bathed in the waters of Lolo Hot Springs. Next evening they reached their old camp ground on Traveller's Rest Creek.

The Captains planned to take different routes from here and to meet six weeks later at the junction of the Yellowstone and the Missouri. Captain Lewis with nine men was to return to the falls of the Missouri by the most direct route possible. When they reached the old camp at White Bear Islands, three of the men were to prepare running gears to portage canoes and luggage that were to be brought down the Missouri from the cache at the fork of the Beaverhead River. Lewis and the other six men were to explore the Maria's River drainage basin. Captain Clark and the rest of the party were to go up the Bitterroot Valley and find their way back to the canoes and supplies cached at the Beaverhead forks. They were then to go down to Three Forks where Sergeant Ordway and nine men would continue by canoe down the Missouri to meet the three men awaiting them at White Bear Islands. Captain Clark with Chaboneau,



Sacajawea and the rest of the men were to strike east from Three Forks to the Yellowstone, make canoes and descend that river to join the Lewis party on the Missouri.

Considering the distances involved and the unexplored country yet to be crossed, it was a very ambitious schedule requiring a lot of self-confidence. The amazing thing is that it went through with no serious hitch.

They separated at Traveller's Rest on July 3rd. The Lewis party went down the Bitterroot River to its junction with the Missoula or Hellgate River, usually considered the main channel of the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. They crossed below the junction and then turned up the Missoula River for a few miles and camped. They continued up the Missoula or Hellgate to cross the present site of Missoula, Montana, on the Fourth of July. Seven miles further upstream they reached the Cokalahishkit (River-of-the-Road-to-the-Buffalo), now called the Big Blackfoot.

A broad trail well worn by the travois poles, horses and moccasined feet of the Salish (Flathead) and Nez Perce Indians led up this beautiful river into the very

heart of the Rocky Mountains. On July 7th they crossed the continental divide via a pass now called Lewis and Clark pass, although Clark never saw it. It was not a difficult descent to reach a tributary of the Missouri. They were close to buffalo country again and it was all down grade going to St. Louis. The party was jubliant. Once on the flat they struck north to the Medicine or Sun River and reached its mouth at the Missouri on July 11th. As they estimated more than 10,000 buffalo within a two mile radius, they had no trouble next day getting enough hides to make a bullboat and a small canoe with which they ferried themselves and their equipment across the Missouri to their old White Bear Island camp. On July 16th, leaving six men instead of three to wait for Sergeant Ordway and his nine men who were to come down the Missouri from Three Forks, Captain Lewis with Drewyer and the Fields brothers struck out on saddle horses to survey the Marias River country. They were all to meet at the mouth of the Marias on the fifth of August.

The Ordway party reached the falls on July 19th. Nine days later the portage had been successfully accomplished and the sixteen men were approaching the rendezvous to await Captain Lewis' return.

The Lewis side excursion across the rolling plains of the Teton and Marias river country would have been uneventful if they had not chanced to meet eight Blackfeet Indians. They held a council and camped together that night apparently on peaceful terms. Next morning the wily reds rose early and although James Fields was awake and on guard, they attempted to make off with the rifles of the four whites. Fields seeing them run away aroused Reuben and the brothers overtook the warrior who was departing with their guns. In the melee that followed Reuben Fields stabbed and killed the Indian. The disturbance had aroused Drewyer and Lewis. Back at the camp they were in action too and managed to recover their rifles. The Indians next tried to drive off their horses. Lewis shouted a warning to them which they disregarded, so he shot one of them.

This took place on Two Medicine River about four miles below the mouth of Badger Creek. After the fracas, Captain Lewis burned the Indian lodge and the

party mounted their horses and hurriedly headed southeast in a race to reach their companions on the Missouri before the surviving Indians could be down on them with reinforcements.

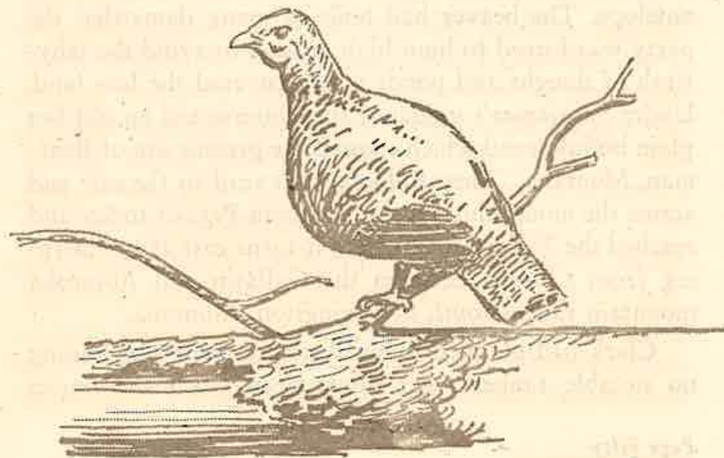
They rode about 120 miles in a little over twenty-four hours and reached the Missouri just in time to see their friends coming down the river. No melodramatic climax could have been timed more closely. The horses were abandoned and the entire party dropped fifteen miles downstream by canoe and camped for the night. It was a great relief for the exhausted Lewis and his three men.

From here they made a fast run down the Missouri to reach the mouth of the Yellowstone on August 7th. They found a note from Clark indicating that he was in advance of them and would wait further downstream.

On August 11th, Captain Lewis was accidentally shot by Cruzatte while they were hunting elk. The bullet went through his left thigh just below the point of the

hip, fortunately missing the bone. On the twelfth they overtook the Clark contingent and the expedition was united once more.

When Captain Clark and his men left Traveller's Rest, they went up the Bitterroot Valley to the little basin (Ross' Hole) where they had met the Flatheads the year before. Then instead of following their former route across the Bitterroot range to the Salmon River country, they turned south to cross the continental divide at or near the present Gibbon's Pass. It was a long steep climb although Clark refers to it as a "jintle" slope, but once on the crest the descent on the east side was comparatively easy. It led to the beautiful, broad mountain valley now called the Big Hole. Bearing southeast, they crossed forks of the river they had named the Wisdom and passed the site of Bannack, Montana, on Grasshopper (Willard's) Creek. Bannack, now a ghost mining



camp, was the first capital of Montana, and marks the spot where the first commercial discovery of gold was made in the Treasure State 56 years later. During the portion of the trip that took them through the mountains of Montana and Idaho, they walked over or passed close to gold and other mineral deposits that could have paid the Louisiana Purchase price a hundred times over.

Reaching the cache at Shoshone Cove, Clark started Sergeant Pryor and six men with fifty head of horses for the three forks of the Missouri while he and the rest of the party took to the canoes once more. The two parties arrived at the forks within an hour of each other without mishap. As previously arranged, Sergeant Ordway with nine men continued down the Missouri to meet Lewis' men above the falls while Captain Clark with the remaining ten men guided by Sacajawea headed east to reach the Yellowstone River.

Sacajawea led them up the Gallatin Fork of the Missouri. The country was alive with deer, elk and antelope. The beaver had built so many dams that the party was forced to hunt high ground to avoid the labyrinth of sloughs and ponds which covered the low land. Under Sacajawea's guidance they intersected an old but plain buffalo road which crossed the present site of Bozeman, Montana. They followed this trail to the east and across the mountains via the Bozeman Pass of today and reached the Yellowstone where it turns east after emerging from a notch between the Gallatin and Absaroka mountain ranges south of Livingston, Montana.

Clark had planned to build canoes there, but finding no suitable timber went downstream with the horses

about eighty miles before locating cottonwood trees large enough for that purpose. Even then the trees were so small that the two canoes which they made were lashed together catamaran style for safer navigation. They had noticed signal smokes in the distance but had seen no Indians. When twenty-four head of horses came up missing they didn't have to be code experts to know that those smoke signals and the disappearance of the cayuses were connected.

On July 24th they shoved off. Pryor, Shannon and Windsor had been assigned the chore of driving the remaining horses across country. They immediately ran into difficulties because those sagacious ponies had learned their buffalo hunting lessons so well that whenever they saw a herd of bison they would take after them, rider or no rider. Once in among the buffalo, the horses would get separated and it was a tedious, temper-straining chore to round them up. An additional man named Hall was transferred from the canoe division to the cavalry detail because he couldn't swim. Captain Clark said of him "*(as) he was necked I gave him one of my too remaining shirts a par of Leather Legins and 3 pr. of mockersons which equipt him completely and sent him on with the party by land to the Mandans*". The well dressed man of the mountains apparently needed no elaborate wardrobe.

Captain Clark really expected the horses to be delivered to the Mandan villages.

On the afternoon of July 25th, the river party paused at a formation of sandstone which forms a small flat-topped butte on the south side of the Yellowstone.

Closer examination showed that it had been used as a signal or lookout point by Indians and some of the walls were embellished with pictographs. Captain Clark cut his name and the date in the soft rock and named the structure Pompey's Tower, in honor of Sacajawea's baby boy, whom he called Pompey, or Pomp. He later changed it to Pompey's Pillar, the name it still bears. Clark's name has been protected from vandals by a metal screen placed over it by the Northern Pacific Railway.

The twin canoe arrangement made good time down river. On the twenty-ninth they passed the mouth of the Tongue River where Miles City now stands and just below there they shot the Buffalo, Bear and Wolf rapids in that sequence.

They camped just above Glendive, Montana, on the night of July 31st and just below there were delayed by buffalo herds swimming the river. They reached the Missouri in the afternoon of August 3rd and camped on the same spot as in April of the year before. The mosquitoes were too much for them so they left a note for Captain Lewis and moved down stream. Clark went ashore on the fifth to shoot a "big horn" or mountain sheep but the mosquitoes were so numerous that he couldn't keep them off his rifle barrel long enough to take aim.

On August 8th, Sergeant Pryor and his men sans ponies overtook Captain Clark and his party. Three days after they had separated, the horse-stealing Crows set them afoot so the chagrined herders travelled by hand as far as Pompey's Pillar and there constructed two boats by stretching buffalo hides over willow frames and

in these bowl-shaped contraptions came cruising down the river in great comfort. It certainly must have been more satisfying than forking a jug-headed Indian pony intent on mingling with every itinerant buffalo herd that crossed the trail.

On August 11th, the Clark outfit met two traders, Dickson and Hancock from Illinois, coming upstream on a hunting expedition. They were the vanguard of the hundreds of mountain-men to come within the next few years in search of fur. On August 12th, while pausing to mend a leak in one of the bull-boats, they were over taken by the Lewis party. There was great rejoicing and many adventure tales were exchanged. Two days later they reached the Mandan villages where they lingered for three days. Here John Colter, who later became famous for his exploits in the West, asked for and received his honorable discharge so that he might join Dickson and Hancock in their fur trapping enterprise on the Yellowstone. Chaboneau was paid off and of course Sacajawea stayed with him.

She lived to be an old woman. She died among her own people, the Shoshones, and was buried on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. Her papoose, nicknamed "Pomp", by Captain Clark, grew to manhood and was reported as a member of a fur brigade operating in Idaho about 1830.

After leaving the Mandan villages they passed the same tribes which they had encountered on the westward trip. They noticed changes in the river channel, evidence of the restless character of the Big Muddy, and when they reached the lower river found many new settlements that had sprung up during their absence.

On September 23rd, 1806 they reached St. Louis where the expedition was enthusiastically welcomed. On their way west, the Captains had orginally planned to dispatch messengers from the falls of the Missouri to convey news of their progress to Congress and the President. Their failures to do so led many people in the States to believe that disaster had befallen them. On September 26th according to their own records, "*We commenced wrighting &*"

The members of the expedition were widely scattered in after years and had varying careers. As a group of courageous, enterprising young Americans, they were of notable and significant service to their country. Their names should be revered and perpetuated by the youth of America.