

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

An Historical Summary

William C. Everhart
San Francisco
November, 1958

PM -
All in all a very ^{fine} statement -
opening ^{see details noted}

not
true -
both
have
come
back
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re-stocking

The Lewis and Clark exploration was an essential element of the fiercely contested struggle for possession of the Pacific Northwest which lasted for nearly a century. Nations competing for this worthy prize first sought a short cut to Cathay. Their nationals exterminated the sea otter, then tracked the beaver through the mountain wilderness until it suffered the same fate. Enduring unspeakable hardships for the glory of company and country, they explored and exploited, seeking ready land and water passages to coastal and interior trade. Because of their incredible toils, the land was settled and civilized. All of this constituted a war for empire, and there were many persons representing diverse nations, who contributed to the final outcome. Among these men, some known and many unknown, Lewis and Clark were pioneers, the first ^{white men?} to see, to explore, to map and to report upon much of the vast region. Their contribution must be considered as an enormously important first step, that behind them, following in their pathways, came the procession of trappers, hunters, missionaries, farmers and artisans who civilized the wilderness and extended the domain of the United States to the Pacific. With Lewis and Clark, on their brave and memorable journey across the continent, went the ambitions and the destiny of a nation.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE STORY

There is substantial agreement that the Lewis and Clark expedition constitutes one of the epic feats of exploration in all of American history. It may well fall short of the somewhat extravagant claim made by Chittenden, that it "stands as incomparably the most perfect achievement of its kind in the history of the world."¹ Nevertheless, as a magnificent example of an exploration astutely conceived and brilliantly executed under gifted leadership, the Lewis and Clark saga stands as a great milestone in the history of the West. For this reason alone, sites importantly associated with the journey are worthy of consideration by the National Park Service as possessing exceptional significance.

The expedition is also of outstanding significance because of its "scientific" achievements, for previously the vast territory between the Great Bend of the Missouri and the mouth of the Columbia River was an unknown region. In any discussion of the overall importance of the expedition, the contribution which it made to knowledge of the immense new territory must be carefully evaluated.

But additionally, the journey of the Corps of Discovery had far-reaching "political" overtones. This is perhaps the most complex phase to evaluate. Coming at a critical time in the history of the Northwest, when the nations of the world were casting speculative glances toward this promising region, when the vast and uncharted territory of Louisiana through which the expedition passed, had recently changed

¹Hiram Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West (3 vols., New York, 1902), I, 81

from Spanish to French to American control, and when restless Americans were already spilling into the Mississippi Valley, eager for new lands to conquer, the Lewis and Clark expedition contributed importantly to the later development of the far West.

To properly assess the place of the Lewis and Clark expedition in that phase of American history which we call "Westward Expansion," the three above-discussed elements should be examined: its importance as a remarkable example of pioneer exploration; its contribution to contemporary knowledge of the American West; its significance to the ultimate American occupation of the trans-Mississippi West.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EXPEDITION

Political

Thomas Jefferson was the principal architect of early American policy in the trans-Mississippi West. He should, perhaps, receive equal credit with Lewis and Clark for the successful outcome of the great exploration. It was for Jefferson the culmination of a lifetime of active interest in the West as a potential resource of unknown but promising magnitude. The exploration, in its inception, was also indicative of his distrust of British imperialism, commercial and territorial, which he long considered to be a threat to future American interests.

In 1783 rumors of British expansion had prompted Jefferson to suggest sending an exploring party to the West under George Rogers Clark. While minister to France he had listened sympathetically to the visionary schemes of John Ledyard, and in 1793 he had thrown his support to the badly-prepared and unsuccessful effort to explore the West by the French botanist Andre Michaux.

Jefferson's ultimate purpose in sending the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific has been variously interpreted. In January, 1803, he presented his now famous message to Congress, asking for an appropriation of \$2500 for the innocuous purpose of "extending the external commerce of the United States." In this secret message to Congress and in his lengthy instructions to Lewis, Jefferson enumerated a long list of objectives of the exploration, and undoubtedly there were others which the President preferred not to put in writing. The

difficulty lies in attempting to determine which of many objectives--stated or implied--Jefferson believed the most important.

Certainly Jefferson's preoccupation with establishing American control of the Western fur trade was a key objective. Washington Irving aptly summarized the influence of the fur trade upon the opening of the West: "Two leading objects of commercial gain have given birth to wide and daring enterprise in the early history of the Americas: the precious metals of the south, and the rich peltries of the north.... These two pursuits have thus in a manner been the pioneers and precursors of civilization."² Many authorities agree that the story of pioneer America is substantially the story of the fur trade. The Lewis and Clark expedition, as will be shown, was an important factor in this trade.

In one of the few serious studies concerned solely with Jefferson's purpose in sending out the Lewis and Clark expedition, the writer flatly declares that the primary concern of the expedition was the extension of the fur trade. In his message to Congress, Jefferson referred to the need for continuing government trading houses among the Indians, thereby excluding private traders and removing the cause of Indian resistance to federal purchase of lands east of the Mississippi. Discovery of new fur trapping areas along the Missouri by Lewis and Clark

² Washington Irving, Astoria, (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1839), I, 17

would compensate the private traders. "Nor was that exploration before, or after, the Louisiana purchase designed as a scientific exploring expedition, but rather that it was an undertaking to develop the fur trade along the Missouri in foreign territory."³

Another student of the field has enumerated a considerably longer but supportable list of objectives which he believes were explicit or implicit in Jefferson's instructions, a list which strongly emphasizes the heavy burden of responsibility carried by Lewis and Clark: to explore the Missouri to its source, tracing the course of the Columbia--the long sought River of the West-- to the Pacific, thus culminating a search three centuries old for the passage to India; to establish direct over-land connection with the maritime trade of the Northwest coast, and to amass information by which American fur traders could challenge the Northwest Company in the rich beaver country of the Northern Rockies; to prepare Indian tribes for the coming of American traders, to work for inter-tribal peace and to notify the natives of their new allegiance to the United States; to record the shape and resources of the West--its weather, seasons, natives, plants and animals.⁴ And the possible importance of such an expedition in laying a future legal claim to new territory by right of exploration could hardly have been overlooked by Jefferson.

³Ralph B. Guinness, "The Purpose of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," in The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II (June, 1933), 90-100

⁴Bernard De Voto, The Course of Empire (Cambridge, 1952), 430

The effective overland expansion of British authority in western North America, the work of her far-ranging fur traders pushing farther and farther westward, was an important factor in Jefferson's conception of the expedition. The rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company of Canada had produced the earlier British counterpart to the Lewis and Clark expedition--Alexander Mackenzie's equally magnificent achievement in crossing the North American continent in 1793, the first white man to accomplish this heroic feat north of Spanish Mexico. From Mackenzie's voyage came his blueprint for British imperial expansion, published in his account of the journey in 1801, in which he advised opening a water route to the Pacific for commerce, establishing a boundary line "south of the Columbia," and binding the northern continent together under British commercial control.

Mackenzie ended his book with this challenge: "By opening this intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and forming regular establishments through the interior and at both extremes, ...the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from 48° North to the pole.... Such would be the field for commercial enterprise and incalculable would be the produce of it."⁵

The book was instantly popular and two editions were published in the United States within a few years. Lewis and Clark took the book west with them.

⁵Alexander Mackenzie, Voyages From Montreal Through The Continent of North America, (2 vols., New York, 1904), II, 358-9

Many historians believe Mackenzie's challenge was a weighty factor in formulating the idea of an American exploring party. Coming to the attention of Jefferson, "the most acute geopolitical thinker of his time,"⁶ the volume made the President even more acutely aware "of the Pacific Northwest's importance to the future destiny of the American Republic and of the inherent danger in the British advance toward the mouth of the Columbia River. The result was the Lewis and Clark expedition...."⁷

Scientific

That the members of the expedition considered the quest for knowledge to be an integral purpose of their exploration is obvious by the meticulous attention with which they recorded in their journals every scrap of information which they could garner concerning the country and its resources. Both Lewis and Clark devoted the largest portion of their chronicles to descriptions of plants and animals.⁸ Few explorations have produced such comprehensive information on the country explored.

Geographic information was probably the most critically needed at the time. In 1804 the vast expanse stretching from the Dakotas to the Pacific was unknown. From Indian accounts St. Louis fur traders had pieced together a shadowy picture of the Missouri

⁶De Voto, Course of Empire, 422

⁷Ross Cox, The Columbia River (Norman, 1957) xxiii

⁸Elijah H. Griswell, "Lewis and Clark: Linguistic Pioneers," in University of Missouri Studies, XV (April, 1940), lx

leading up to or perhaps through a range of mountains which paralleled the Pacific Ocean at a distance of no more than 100 miles. This conception was held by Jefferson, who hoped for a "single portage" passage to the Pacific by way of the Missouri. The discovery of an easy commercial water route to the Pacific would be of incalculable value.

The following extracts from Jefferson's instructions to Lewis give only a hint of the wide range of subjects on which the party was enjoined to bring back information, and reveal clearly the breadth of Jefferson's interest in the West.

...you will take observations of latitude and longitude, at all remarkable points on the river and especially at the mouths of rivers, at rapids, at islands and other places and objects distinguished by such natural marks and characters of a durable kind, as that they may with certainty be recognized hereafter.... You will therefore [in the case of Indian tribes] endeavor to make yourself acquainted as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations and their numbers... their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war arts and the implements for these...peculiarities in their laws, customs and dispositions.... [concerning natural phenomena] climate as characterized by the thermometer, by the proportion of rainy, cloudy and clear days, by lightening, hail, snow, ice, by the access and recess of frost, by the winds prevailing at different seasons, the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flowers, or leaf, times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects.⁹

⁹Jefferson to Lewis, 20 June 1803, in Reuben G. Thwaites, Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806 (7 vols. and atlas, New York, 1904-05), VII, 248-9

The two captains were not the only members of the party who kept records of their observations, and whose journals later proved valuable. Lewis wrote to Jefferson at Fort Mandan in April of 1805, "...in order as much as possible to multiply the chances of saving something. we have encouraged our men to keep journals, and seven of them do so, to whom in this respect we give every assistance in our power."¹⁰

Regardless of present interpretations of the results of the expedition, political or otherwise, which Jefferson might have foreseen, his instructions were clearly and simply stated. "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by its course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce."¹¹

Still, as one authority has pointed out, if Jefferson's purpose as stated in his message to Congress was merely to explore a river route to the Pacific, have conferences with the natives and obtain permission from them for the entry of American traders, it is difficult to explain why such a venture required "an expedition secretly organized, military in personnel and supply, including no trained scientific observer, nor any experienced Indian trader, but equipped for winning friends and reconnoitering a strategic area."¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., 319

¹¹ Ibid., 248

¹² Dorothy O. Johansen and Charles M. Gates, Empire of the Columbia (New York, 1957), 88

THE RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION

More than one authority on the history of the Northwest has come to the conclusion that it is not an easy task to sum up the concrete results of the exploration. "An accurate and full appraisal of the Lewis and Clark expedition is difficult."¹³ The question is chiefly one of degree; to what degree did the expedition arouse the interests of Americans in and strengthen the American legal claim to the Oregon country, to what degree did the rapid penetration of the Far West by American and British fur traders proceed from the findings of the Corps of Discovery?

It is difficult also to separate the "scientific" from the "political" results of the expedition, for to a considerable degree, the later developments proceeded logically from the information brought back by the Corps of Discovery. One fact can be stated with certainty, however. The return of the Lewis and Clark expedition marks an historic milestone, the point at which the status of the Upper Missouri, the Northern Rockies and the Upper Columbia changed from unknown to known. Events of infinite magnitude would naturally follow this recording of a known pathway across the continent.

¹³Oscar O. Winther, The Great Northwest (New York, 1947), 89

The expedition through the last area of North American which might contain a water route to the Pacific (and thence to the Orient) demonstrated that the long sought passage to India did not exist. It is the premise of both Brebner and De Voto that the Lewis and Clark expedition definitely marked the conclusion of 300 years of persistent exploration begun by Columbus, to find a commercial water route through or across the North American continent.¹⁴ Lewis and Clark offered unshakable proof that the Rocky Mountains were an effective barrier to easy water communication with the Pacific. But they had revealed "the last great natural pathway across the North American continent."¹⁵ This route was used until hostile Indians forced fur traders to seek a more southerly route to the Columbia, which became the Oregon Trail.

Political

Whether the expedition of Lewis and Clark had a decisive influence upon the settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute is difficult to document. It is generally held that such was the case, that the exploration "strengthened the claims of the United States to this region,"¹⁶

¹⁴ John Bartlet Brebner, The Explorers of North America, 1492-1806 (New York, 1933); De Voto, Course of Empire

¹⁵ Brebner, Explorers, 403

¹⁶ Oscar Winther, The Great Northwest (New York, 1947), 89; see also Johansen and Gates, Empire, 110, Bernard De Voto, ed., The Journals of Lewis and Clark (Boston, 1953), 1

although a standard authority in the field does not mention Lewis and Clark in his discussion of the competing claims.¹⁷ Certainly it is true that the exploration was presented as evidence by the American government in every discussion of the dispute between United States and Great Britain over the years.¹⁸

While Secretary of State in 1823 John Quincy Adams presented the American case in a note to the U. S. ambassador to Great Britain. There was little if any change in the American argument down to the final settlement.¹⁹

The right of the United States to the Columbia River, and to the Interior Territory washed by its waters, rests upon its discovery from the Sea, and nomination by a citizen of the United States [Gray]; upon its exploration to the Sea by Captains Lewis and Clarke; upon the settlement of Astoria, made under the protection of the United States, and thus restored to them in 1818, and upon the subsequent acquisition of all the rights of Spain, the only European power, who prior to the discovery of the River, had any pretensions to territorial rights on the Northwest Coast of America.

The first to profit from the exploration were the fur traders, who were "aroused by the exciting news brought back by Lewis and Clark" of rich beaver prospects in the Upper Missouri.²⁰

¹⁷Ray Billington, Westward Expansion (New York, 1949), 507-09

¹⁸William R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Canadian Relations 1784-1860 (3 vols., Washington, 1940-43) I, 878-9, II, 56, 61, 461, 556-57, 564

¹⁹Ibid., II, 56

²⁰Billington, Westward Expansion, 453

Chittenden declares that the history of the American fur trade begins with the return of the Lewis and Clark expedition.²¹ That Lewis considered of paramount importance the information obtained concerning the opportunities in the fur trade is revealed in his report to Jefferson written the day the expedition arrived in St. Louis. In this important summary of his findings he devoted more space to the fur trade than to any other subject, reporting that the Missouri and its tributaries were "richer in beaver and Otter than any country on earth."²² The National Intelligencer published a widely-printed report within a week of the expedition's return, noting that Lewis "Speaks of the whole country furnishing valuable furs."²³

This news had an impact upon followers of the fur trade similar to the effect which later gold strikes had upon the miners. Quickly learning of the conditions reported by the expedition--mountain streams teeming with beaver, friendly natives and an all-water route to the rich hunting grounds--the adventurous fur traders flocked into St. Louis. Within a year more than 100 traders at St. Louis were licensed to trade with the Indians along the Missouri, and perhaps that many more were doing so illegally.²⁴

Manuel Lisa led a party of 50 trappers into the Rockies in 1807, building a fort at the mouth of the Big Horn and returning the

²¹ Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, I, vii

²² Thwaites, Journals, VII, 335

²³ Ibid., 349

²⁴ Johansen and Gates, Empire, 110

following summer with a wealth in furs. In 1809, the Missouri Fur Company was organized; Andrew Henry, one of the partners, built a post at Three Forks in 1810, and the following year built the first American trading post west of the Rockies. Former members of the Lewis and Clark expedition, men such as the legendary John Colter and the incomparable woodsman George Drewyer, with their invaluable knowledge and experience, were in the vanguard of these early activities of the American fur traders.

The North West Company knew that the expedition had reached the Pacific almost as soon as the American government, possibly sooner. "Above all, they wanted to know whether the Americans would lay claim to the rich fur trade of the Upper Missouri River and the territory west of the Rockies."²⁵ Moving to secure footholds against the expected competition from expanding American commercial interests, the Nor 'Westers by 1809 had established two fur posts in present-day Montana and Idaho, as well as others north of the present international boundary.

The reports of the Lewis and Clark expedition are given credit for the entrance into the Western fur trade of the man destined to become its leading figure--John Jacob Astor.²⁶ Believing the practicability of establishing a line of interior trading posts along

²⁵ Marjorie W. Campbell, The North West Company (New York, 1957), 170

²⁶ Irving, Astoria, 34, John Bakeless, Lewis and Clark, Partners in Discovery (New York, 1947), 456

the Missouri and Columbia, as Lewis had recommended, Astor dispatched the now famous "Overland Astorians," along the route blazed by Lewis and Clark. Five years almost to the day that the Corps of Discovery left Fort Clatsop, Astor's supply ship, the Tonquin, crossed the Columbia River bar and founded Astoria. In terms of the fur trade, the Lewis and Clark expedition had opened the race for empire in the Northwest between Britain and the United States.

A Classic Pioneer Exploration

If "political" rewards of the expedition are difficult to measure precisely, there is no such obstacle to describing the event as a classic example of pioneer exploration seldom if ever equalled in American history. One is tempted to use superlatives in describing the conduct of the members of the party and the two leaders.

Although Jefferson was the creator, the compelling force behind the expedition, once the keelboat and pirogues departed from St. Louis for the 7500 mile trek through the wilderness, the awesome responsibility for the expedition, and for the life or death of its members, fell squarely upon the shoulders of Lewis and Clark. Few persons could have accepted the burden more capably. Both were veteran soldiers, Indian fighters and frontiersmen. Clark was the more practical, having a natural gift for mapping and handling Indians; Lewis was the better educated, with an instinct for leadership. Jefferson said he was "Of courage undaunted...careful as a father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline...."²⁷

²⁷ Jefferson in his "Life of Lewis," in Paul Allen, History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the Source of the Missouri (Hosmer edition, 2 vols., Chicago, 1905), xlvi

The success of the expedition on a mission which was exceedingly difficult and consistently dangerous was in large part due to the character of the leaders and to their intelligent direction, "In fact, intelligence was the principal reason for the success of the expedition."²⁸ They expertly adapted themselves to new wilderness techniques, were masters of every emergency, and were never troubled by disloyalty in the ranks--excellent proof of the high regard of their men.

In their relations with the Indian tribes, the two captains displayed almost flawless instinct for doing the right thing. While they showed genuine sympathy for the Indians' taboos and personal dignity, they were also unswayed by shows of strength and obviously ready to meet force with force. As a result, there were no battles with the Indians, except for the skirmish in which two Blackfeet were killed on the return journey. It is possible that many Indian tribes were permanently influenced by the fair treatment received from the official representatives of the Great White Father.

Despite the rigors, the uncertainties and the dangers of the long journey through an unknown wilderness of empty plains, great rivers and stark mountains, the statement is often made that the journey was "undramatic," that "nothing happened."²⁹ Except for the upper stages of the Missouri, where the labor was enormous, and the crossing of the Bitterroots, when the food gave out, the journey

²⁸ De Voto, Journals, xlv

²⁹ David Lavender, Land of Giants: The Drive to the Pacific Northwest 1750-1950 (New York, 1958), 71

apparently for many seems relatively uneventful. Perhaps this viewpoint, a debatable one, is due in part to the journals, the only information concerning the details of the journey. "They drone on and on, occupied with each pinprick of time in the making; there is a repetitious, almost tedious quality to the entries; there is a matter-of-factness, a preoccupation with soil and game, with humdrum minutiae, that obscures the continuity and the heroic mission."³⁰

Scientific

Intent upon observing and recording every detail of plant, animal and native life, consciously preparing an official document for official use, Lewis and Clark, unlike Parkman and Prescott, made no effort to produce enduring literature. And yet, the drama, the color, the tense and anxious moments, the ingenuity, resourcefulness and courage are all there. How could the dramatic race between England and the United States for an empire on the Columbia, or the remarkable adventures of two great explorers, be more vividly told than in the simple acts of Clark and Mackenzie upon reaching the Pacific, the long sought goal.

Alexander Mackenzie, completing his crossing of the continent far to the north, had proudly painted with vermilion upon a rock, "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three." In the rough bark of a tree at the mouth of the Columbia, Captain William Clark carved his

³⁰Jeanette Mirsky, The Westward Crossings (New York, 1946), 252

reply, "William Clark December 3rd 1805. By land from the U. States in 1804 & 1805."

The journals written by members of the expedition were, and still are, a treasury of knowledge. They constituted the first authentic report on the American West, and the era of knowledge of this region can truly be said to originate with the charts, tables, statistics, maps and descriptions in the journals of the expedition. The journal of Sergeant Gass was published only a few months after the expedition returned, with new American editions in 1810, 1811 and 1812. The Biddle edition of Lewis and Clark's journals, which became the traditional history of the expedition, was not published until 1814. Meanwhile, of course, much of the information was disseminated by other means. Biddle's History was immensely popular, reprinted, translated and pirated. That the complete journals were not published for a century afterward, despite the efforts of Jefferson and other public figures, is one of the great inexplicable disappointments of the entire project.

The journals can well be called a classic in the field of North American exploration. For several decades there were no improvements made on Clark's fine map of the West, on which the Columbia, the Missouri, the Yellowstone and the Rockies--the heartland of the "Mountain Men" who followed--was accurately charted. "The information gathered was so exhaustive and correct that Lewis and Clark continued to be the standard authority on the region traversed by the expedition for fully forty years."³¹

³¹ Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, I, 81

Still needed, however, is a comprehensive study of the exhaustive anthropological and ethnographic information recorded in the journals. More than 150 years later a satisfactory study of the scientific results of the expedition has not yet been attempted by scholars, although this ostensibly was the original objective of Jefferson in sending out the expedition.

Mainly worthy of mention in any discussion of the results of the Lewis and Clark expedition is the legend of Sacajawea, whose fame rivals that of the two captains, whose exploits have not suffered from the imagination of her chroniclers, and whose chance inclusion in the party was an introduction to immortality. Down through the years she has been pictured with calm, fearless countenance Pointing The Way West to Lewis and Clark, Little Pomp peeping out from the cradle board swinging from her sturdy shoulders. In American folklore she occupies a prominent place in the romantic company of Pocahontas and Barbara Freitchie.

Historians have tirelessly gone about their appointed task of proving that Sacajawea was less familiar with the route than Lewis and Clark and therefore no "guide;" regardless, a guide she will doubtless remain. This is unfortunate, for as one searcher for the truth has concluded, it is not necessary to embellish the facts concerning Sacajawea in order to accord her a high place among the women who helped to build the United States.³² She could interpret, she had courage, she performed many useful services, and her presence

³²C. S. Kingston, "Sacajawea As Guide: The Evaluation of a Legend," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXIV (1944)

convinced suspicious tribes that the intent of the party was peaceful. Clark admired her highly, believing that she deserved a higher reward for her services than it was possible to grant her.

Henry Adams remarked that the annexation of Louisiana was too portentous an event to be measured, and perhaps the first great American exploration of Louisiana and the Oregon country, if not equally portentous, is also equally difficult to measure. But in President Jefferson's message to Congress in December, 1806, he proudly summed up the factual accomplishments of the expedition, for which he could have taken much credit.³³

The expedition of Messrs. Lewis and Clark, for exploring the river Missouri, and the best communication from that to the Pacific Ocean, has had all the success which could have been expected. They have traced the Missouri nearly to its source, descended the Columbia to the Pacific ocean, ascertained with accuracy the geography of that interesting communication across our continent, learned the character of the country, of its commerce, and inhabitants....

An invitation to occupy and settle new land, this was the achievement of Lewis and Clark which made the trans-Mississippi West a reality to the American people. There was no practical water route for commerce across the continent, as had been hoped. But from the time of the Corps of Discovery "no American would ever forget the exhilarating sweep of the continent on which he lived. The Northwest would no longer be pictured merely as a dim coastline offering a few savage ports of call for a handful of sea peddlers. It was a land, huge and varied and rich. As such, it would henceforth always be, in one way or another, desirable."³⁴

³³ Inwaites, Journals, VII, 346

³⁴ Lavender, Great Northwest, 76

It might be said, finally, that the most important contribution of the Lewis and Clark expedition was psychological--a contribution to the spirit of their countrymen. The success of the intrepid band of pioneers in making their way unerringly across the continent without loss was an inspiring feat of courage and skill in which a young country took great pride. Perhaps the grateful citizens of Fincastle, Virginia, in paying official tribute to their neighbor, Captain Clark, a short time after his return, best summarized the accomplishment of the expedition for all Americans.

"You have the further satisfaction to reflect that, you have extended the knowledge of the Geography of your country; in other respects enriched Science; and opened to the United States a source of inexhaustible wealth...."³⁵

³⁵ Thwaites, Journals, VII, 351

JWC

Memorandum (AIR MAIL)

To: Regional Director, Region Two
Acting

From: /Chief Historian

Subject: The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: The
Lewis and Clark Study

We wish to acknowledge and thank you for the negatives of the Lewis and Clark expedition which we received November 24. We will see that the negatives are returned to you promptly as soon as prints can be made from those chosen to illustrate the Study.

We shall be glad to send you copies of the revised report as you have requested.

Perhaps we have misinterpreted the last paragraph of Mr. Gregg's memorandum of November 20, transmitting the negatives. It seems to imply that the guidelines and instructions for preparation of the Survey Studies are inadequate. When the guidelines were forwarded to the Regions we specifically asked for suggestions as to their improvement; none were received. We will welcome any comments you may care to make on this topic.

(SGD) CHARLES W. PORTER III

Acting Chief Historian

In duplicate

NOV 13 1958

Memorandum (Air Mail)

To: Regional Director, Region Two

From: Acting Chief, Division of Interpretation

Subject: Lewis and Clark Expedition Report, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

The Service is committed to the members of the Advisory Board to submit to them by January the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings Report on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This report will need some revision as it now stands before it can be submitted. In view of Mr. Mattison's current obligations to revise the Santa Fe Trail Study by January for the same purpose, we have asked Mr. Appleman to undertake revision of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Study.

One of the problems will be to prepare multilith plates for illustration of the report. In this connection we will need the photographic negatives made by Mr. Mattison this past summer. Please forward immediately by air mail all of Mr. Mattison's negatives plus negatives of any other illustrations such as those by George Grant that Mr. Mattison used in his report. Each negative should have a full caption and when panoramic views involving more than one negative are involved, this should be indicated.

(SGD) JOHN E. DOERN

Acting Chief
Division of Interpretation

In duplicate



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
October 24, 1958

IN REPLY REFER TO

L-3-154
L & C

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Two

From: Chief Historian

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Photographs
of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Thank you very much for the photographs, taken by
Mr. Mattison, of the sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Chief Historian

In duplicate



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Miscellaneous
Lewis & Clark
IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 17, 1958

Mr. Ray H. Mattison
5612 Woolworth Street
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Ray,

I meant to write to you before I left on my field trip, but in the rush of getting ready I wasn't able to get it off.

The memo from Washington certainly left me confused. There was, also, a brief note from Roy.

I He asked me to send him copies of all the better pictures he took on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He also asked me what contributions I had made to the study, and I told him as well as I could.

Frankly, I am not sure just what they want from me. I asked Ronnie Lee when he was here, and Ronnie said that he had debated a long time before signing the memo. I didn't get much more information, except that he felt there was no immediate hurry about it, and that the report will be submitted at the spring meeting of the board. Naturally, I don't know what Roy has in mind, or what use he plans to make, if any, of the statement which I am to get out by November 1st.

I just got back from my trip this morning and found your blast in reply to the Washington memo. Bravo! Incidentally, I wonder what part John Littleton is playing. Apparently Roy is not bothering to go through him or check with him at all.

I had an excellent trip and covered mostly mining, frontier, and missionary sites in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Now I have about four theme studies to review and a hundred or so site inventories. Looks like a long, hard winter.

I beat the stork and we are awaiting his arrival any day.

Best regards,

B. C.

(over)

Friday -

Been carrying this around in my briefcase for some time.

Meanwhile I've been horsing around with two of my contract studies, which had to be returned for extensive revision. One of them was rather unpleasant. A guy who could have done an excellent job, had he so desired, sent us one which wouldn't have done much credit to an undergraduate - and really got his ass up when I sent it back ~~for~~ to be done over.

By the way John Hussey tells me that he discussed your blast about Roy's comments on the L&C study with Ronnie Lee. Ronnie apparently was delighted with it, and remarked that the only way to meet Roy's heavy handed criticism was to come right back with the same weapons. He was also pleased that they backed you up in the Division.

We are now expecting hourly - or some boom in San Francisco and I'm a father!

B

M'Gard - it's now November 3 - & I've just found this in DeVoti's Course file. Well - baby arrived Nov 1 - 8 lb. boy! We're really delighted altho he's about as attractive as cold coffee. P.S. Haven't gotten off that dam L&C statement yet!

OCT 21 1958
OCT 22 01 1958

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Acting Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:
Photographs of the Lewis and Clark Study

We are attaching herewith copies of the photographs which Historian Mattison, of this office, took on his reconnaissance of the Lewis and Clark Route during June and July of this year in company with Messrs. Littleton, Appleman, and Everhart. Also included are several other photographs of sites on the Route taken by Mr. Mattison at other times.

Merrill J. Mattes

Merrill J. Mattes
Acting Regional Chief of Interpretation

In duplicate

Attachments (148)

RHMattison:vb

OCT 9 1958

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:
Photographs of the Lewis and Clark Study

We are pleased to learn from Mr. Lewis' memorandum of October 2 that the photographs in Mr. Mattison's Lewis and Clark report have met with such favorable reaction in the Washington Office.

While on this field trip, Mr. Mattison took some eleven film packs of photographs. Only a few proved defective and were discarded. We have in all about 85 photographs, a number of which are panoramic shots which Mr. Mattison took on the Lewis and Clark reconnaissance, of which only about 35 were used in the report.

Mr. Mattison provided the Region Four Office with a set of prints, and negatives of duplicate subjects. In view of your interest in a larger collection of photographs on the subject, we think you will want a full set of Mr. Mattison's subjects, as well as those you have requested from Mr. Everhart. Mr. Mattison is leaving on an eleven-day field trip to Colorado and Wyoming. Upon his return, he will supply you with a complete set of all photographs additional to those included in the report.

Mr. Mattison did not feel it necessary to call upon Mr. Everhart for additional photographs. Such correspondence might have delayed the final submission of the report.

(Sgd) H. Raymond Gregg

H. Raymond Gregg
Regional Chief of Interpretation

In duplicate

RHMattison:jf

OCT 8 1958

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two

Subject: Draft of Study on Lewis and Clark Expedition

We have Mr. Lee's memorandum of October 3 regarding Mr. Mattison's draft of the Lewis and Clark special study prepared in connection with the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.

Frankly, we are disappointed in the statement, "This report will need extensive revisions before it is submitted to the Advisory Board." No other information is supplied concerning the shortcomings of this report. It is our understanding that Mr. Littleton reviewed two drafts of the theme analysis of this study. The first review was during Mr. Littleton's visit to this office in March. Mr. Littleton reviewed Mr. Mattison's second draft in April, and made a number of pencilled suggestions which Mr. Mattison incorporated in his final draft. The general conclusions in Mr. Mattison's theme analysis are in broad agreement with those of John Bakeless and the late Bernard DeVoto, two of the best authorities on the Expedition.

Throughout his reconnaissance of the western segment of the Lewis and Clark route, Mr. Mattison solicited the opinions of Messrs. Littleton, Appleman, and Everhart. The Regional Historian considered it an adequate presentation of background information, field analysis, and evaluation. He and Mr. Mattison frequently consulted on the evaluation problems and were in final agreement on the recommendations. Several of Mr. Mattes' suggestions were incorporated in the final report, but he made no effort to rewrite large sections, believing that this should stand as Mr. Mattison's report. It is not irrelevant to point out that Dr. Kent, of the Museum Branch who was here recently, stated that he was quite impressed with the level of scholarship and general competence of this report, which can well serve as a guide to the preparation of new Lewis and Clark exhibits at St. Louis.

The content and emphasis of Mr. Mattison's report as submitted by this office were within the framework of the theme analysis, and was believed to be a full and proper interpretation of the joint conclusions of the participants in the summer field studies.

Mr. Lee's memorandum and the imminence of the Advisory Board's fall meeting suggest the report will not be submitted at this session. We should like to emphasize that Mr. Mattison has been under a great deal of pressure to meet the deadlines for both the Santa Fe and the Lewis and Clark special studies, so that now if leisure in preparing this report in polished form is possible, we feel sure he can meet a higher standard of preparation. In neither instance has there been ample opportunity to give each study the time it deserves. Perhaps in other future assignments, the pace can be gauged to the size of the task involved.

(Sgd) H. Raymond Gregg

H. Raymond Gregg
Regional Chief of Interpretation

In duplicate

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Four

RHMattison:HRG:MJM:vb

5612 Woolworth
Omaha, Nebraska
October 8, 1958

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of October 2 and your note on the Lewis and Clark study. I couldn't figure out the implications of WASO's memo of the 3rd and neither could anyone else in this office. It looks as though you will get an opportunity to try your teeth on the study. Of course, none of us has enough to do. As you know, I have been hard pressed to get out both the Lewis and Clark and the Santa Fe Trail studies completed. I am not particular proud of either jobs as I have been hurried too much.

With regard to the Oregon Trail Study, I am leaving tonight for Colorado. On the request of the Recreational Resources Planning boys upstairs, I am going to take a 3-day excursion on the Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad from Alamosa to Silverton and return. I then plan on picking up a car in Colorado Springs and visit a number of mining towns in the Pike's Peak and Leadville vicinity. From Leadville, I plan to drive to western Wyoming and follow the Oregon and Mormon trails back to Nebraska. I did not propose a joint trip to Oregon Trail sites as I feel WASO takes a dim view of our traveling together. I don't know which of us is the corrupting influence.

I have not had much of an opportunity to review the mining study. I also have one on the Indian-Military Frontier from Bob Utley. So I am in the same boat as you are. I am going to be hard put to use up my annual leave this year.

~~My best wishes to you and your wife when the baby arrives.~~

I hope that all will be well with you and your wife when the baby arrives. I know these are difficult days and one hates to take field trips when one's wife is in that condition. One time I returned from a trip to the East and found my wife in the hospital with a miscarriage. Subsequent events proved that it probably would have happened anyway but at the time I blamed myself.

With best wishes.

My regards to Dan Burroughs and Jim Cole. I am wondering how Jim likes his new job.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
180 New Montgomery Street
San Francisco, California

October 2, 1958

Mr. Ray Mattison
5612 Woolworth Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Ray,

Have received the final draft of the Lewis and Clark study and think it is a nice production. You certainly have been most generous in giving me credit for assistance on the study. Actually, you should have pointed out that if it hadn't been for my complete lapse of sanity the study would have been completed much sooner. I think your wife had the right idea -- that it's just the sort of thing one can expect from a historian.

I shall be anxious to hear how the Washington Office receives the opus.

Herb Kahler will be here for a week or two beginning tomorrow, so I probably will get some of the Washington news from him.

What are your plans for the Oregon Trail study? I am leaving about October 8 for a ten-day jaunt to the Northwest, which I want to get in before the baby arrives about November 1st.

Things are really piling up. I have about four theme studies to review and I seem to be falling farther and farther behind. Expect you are probably in the same boat.

Best regards,

SEP 26 1958

Memorandum (AIR MAIL)

To: The Director

From: Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region Two

Subject: Sergeant Floyd Monument, Sioux City, Iowa

Reference is made to Mr. Kahler's memorandum of September 22 requesting the citation to the Federal Law which appropriated the money for the Sergeant Charles Floyd Monument near Sioux City. He also requests the language that describes the reason for Federal participation in this project and a copy of any hearings on this appropriation item.

The following excerpt is taken from Volume 30, U. S. Statutes at Large, page 1225, 55th Congress, 3d Session (March 3, 1899):

"Chap. 427. An act making appropriation to supply deficiencies in the appropriations for the fiscal year ending [date written in full] June 30, 1899, and prior years, and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled: That the following sums and the same are hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to supply deficiencies in the appropriation for the fiscal year 1899 and for prior years and for other objects hereinafter stated, namely:

Monument to Sergeant Charles Floyd. To enable the Secretary of War, in cooperation with the Floyd Memorial Association, to cause to be erected over the remains of

Sergeant Charles Floyd, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who died and was buried August twentieth, eighteen hundred and four, near the present site of Sioux City, Iowa, a fitting monument commemoration of the expedition and of the first soldier to lay down his life within the Louisiana Purchase, five thousand dollars: PROVIDED, that the total cost and expense to the United States of erecting said monument shall not exceed five thousand dollars.

Field Solicitor Morris Cook, who looked up this information for Mr. Mattison, advises us that there were no references to any hearings on this appropriation item. It is our belief that committee hearings on appropriation items are not normally published.

(Sgd) H. Raymond Gregg

H. Raymond Gregg
Regional Chief of Interpretation

In duplicate

RHMattison:vb

SEP 23 1958

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Two

From: Chief Historian

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:
Lewis and Clark Special Study

We wish to acknowledge and thank you for the original and one copy of the Lewis and Clark study coordinated by Historian Mattison, which reached us September 22.

We have not yet had time to review this study but as soon as members of the staff can go over it, we will do so and make our observations and suggestions by memorandum to you.

We note that the section on evaluation and recommendations is appended to your cover memorandum, and this is as it should be. There is a point, however, which should be called to Mr. Mattison's attention. The appendix part of the study (which included other sites noted, etc.) should have been included in the major portion of the study, and not sent in as a detached section. Our memorandums of August 29, 1958, September 4, 1958, and the memorandum with the revised outline, September 10, 1958, instructed that only the part on recommendations for additions to the System should be detached from the study proper. However, this is a matter of no great concern and can be easily remedied when the study is revised.

We do appreciate the effort that Mr. Mattison and other members of your staff have made in getting this study so far along toward final completion. A hasty glance shows that it is a good job.

(SGD) HERBERT E. KAHLER

Chief Historian

In duplicate

or C file

Vol. 30, U. S. STATUTES AT LARGE, pg. 1225, 55th CONGRESS,
3d SESSION (March 3, 1899)

[date written in 1897]

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Monument to Sergeant Charles Floyd. To enable the Secretary of War, in cooperation with the Floyd Memorial Association, to cause to be erected over the remains of Sergeant Charles Floyd, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who died and was buried August twentieth, eighteen hundred and four, near the present site of Sioux City, Iowa, a fitting monument commemoration of the expedition and of the first soldier to lay down his life within the Louisiana Purchase, five thousand dollars: PROVIDED, that the total cost and expense to the United States of erecting said monument shall not exceed five thousand dollars.

SEP 16 1958

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Regional Director, Region Two

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Lewis and Clark Special Study

We are attaching herewith the original and a copy of the Lewis and Clark Special Study coordinated by Historian Ray H. Mattison, of this office. In accordance with instructions, Section VII, "Evaluation and Recommendations," and Section VIII, "Appendix" are submitted herewith separately. This report, which is some 120 pages in length and is supplemented by 45 photographs and two maps, represents several months' research, and reconnaissance by Messrs. Mattison and Everhart. This report has had the benefit of historical review of all the members of Region Two and Four.

We concur in the recommendation that the following sites be considered of "exceptional value:" Council Bluff, near Fort Calhoun, Nebraska; Sergeant Floyd's Grave and Monument, near Sioux City, Iowa; Three Forks; Lemhi Pass; Lolo Trail; Canoe Camp, near Orofino, Idaho; and Point Ellice in Washington.

Of these the National Park Service may wish to recommend establishment of Council Bluff as a National Monument and Three Forks, Lemhi Pass and Lolo Trail as National Historic Sites. However, final action in these cases should be dependent upon more detailed study.

The analysis and recommendations made in the attached report supersede any recommendations on the same subject submitted previously.

(Sgd) Howard W. Baker

Howard W. Baker
Regional Director

In duplicate

Attachment (original and 1 copy)

Copy to: Reg Director, Reg Four w/att

RHMattison:jf

September 16, 1958

Memorandum

To: Regional Chief of Interpretation

From: Historian

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Lewis and Clark Special Study

I am attaching herewith copies of the special study on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, coordinated by me as a sub-theme of "The Advance of the Frontier, 1763-1830."

In preparing this study I wish to acknowledge the assistance given me by Mr. William Everhart, Historic Sites Historian of the Region Four Office, who provided me with the material on the sites included in this study, which are located in Region Four. Mr. Everhart also reviewed the draft of this study, and several changes were made in the report in accordance with his comments. Mr. Burton Coale of the Publications Office of the Region Two Office edited the first draft of this report and improved the composition a great deal.

It is regretted that more time could not be given to this study. I am sure several weeks' more research and revision would have produced a more finished and complete report.

Signed
Ray H. Mattison
Historian

Attachments

Copy to: Director
Reg Dir, Reg Four

Concurred in:

(Sgd.) EDWIN C. ALBERTS

Edwin C. Alberts
Acting Regional Chief of Interpretation

Date: _____

SEP 16 1958

Approved by

(Sgd) Howard W. Baker

Howard W. Baker, Regional Director

Date: _____

SEP 16 1958

RHMattison:jf