

# DANGEROUS ENDEAVOR

The Tale of the  
Lewis and Clark  
Expedition,  
from Their Journals

PSALM 78 MINISTRIES

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# Dangerous Endeavor: The Tale of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, from Their Journals

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Alexander Novati *Arizona Storm* [back cover]

Bladerunner8u *Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake* [back cover]

Denali National Park and Preserve *Grizzly Bear* [page 55]

Gary Halvorson, Oregon State Archives *Cannon Beach Area Coast* [page 150]

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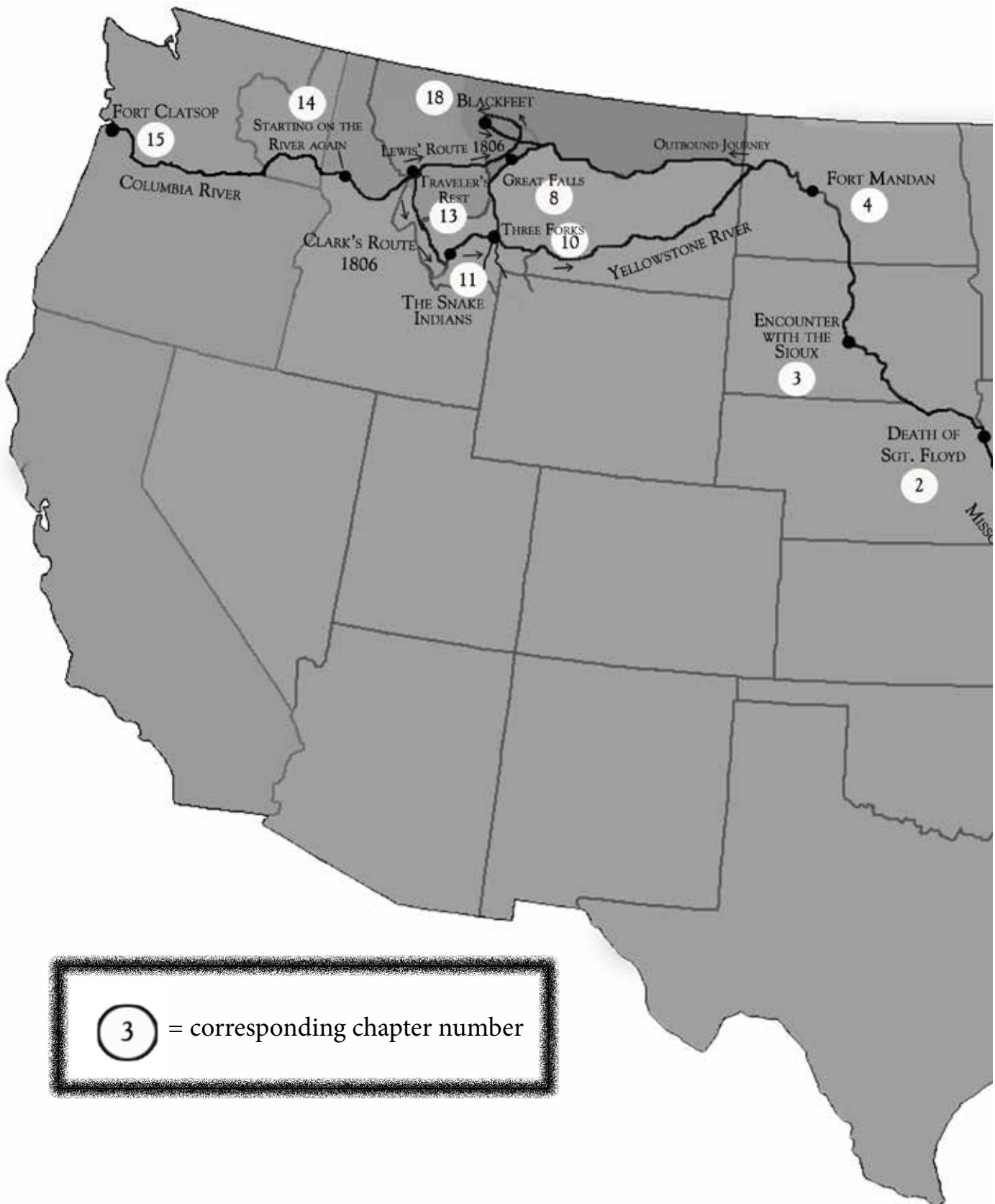
## A NOTE ON THE TEXT

In compiling *Dangerous Endeavor*, it has been the author's intention to provide the modern reader with understandable, yet accurate, texts of original journals and letters. To facilitate this process, punctuation has been updated and capitalization has been conformed to modern usage. Dates have also been standardized, and the journals have been abridged to ease the flow of reading. Verb tenses have been updated to reflect modern usage. Bracketed words have been added for clarity, and do not appear in the original journals.

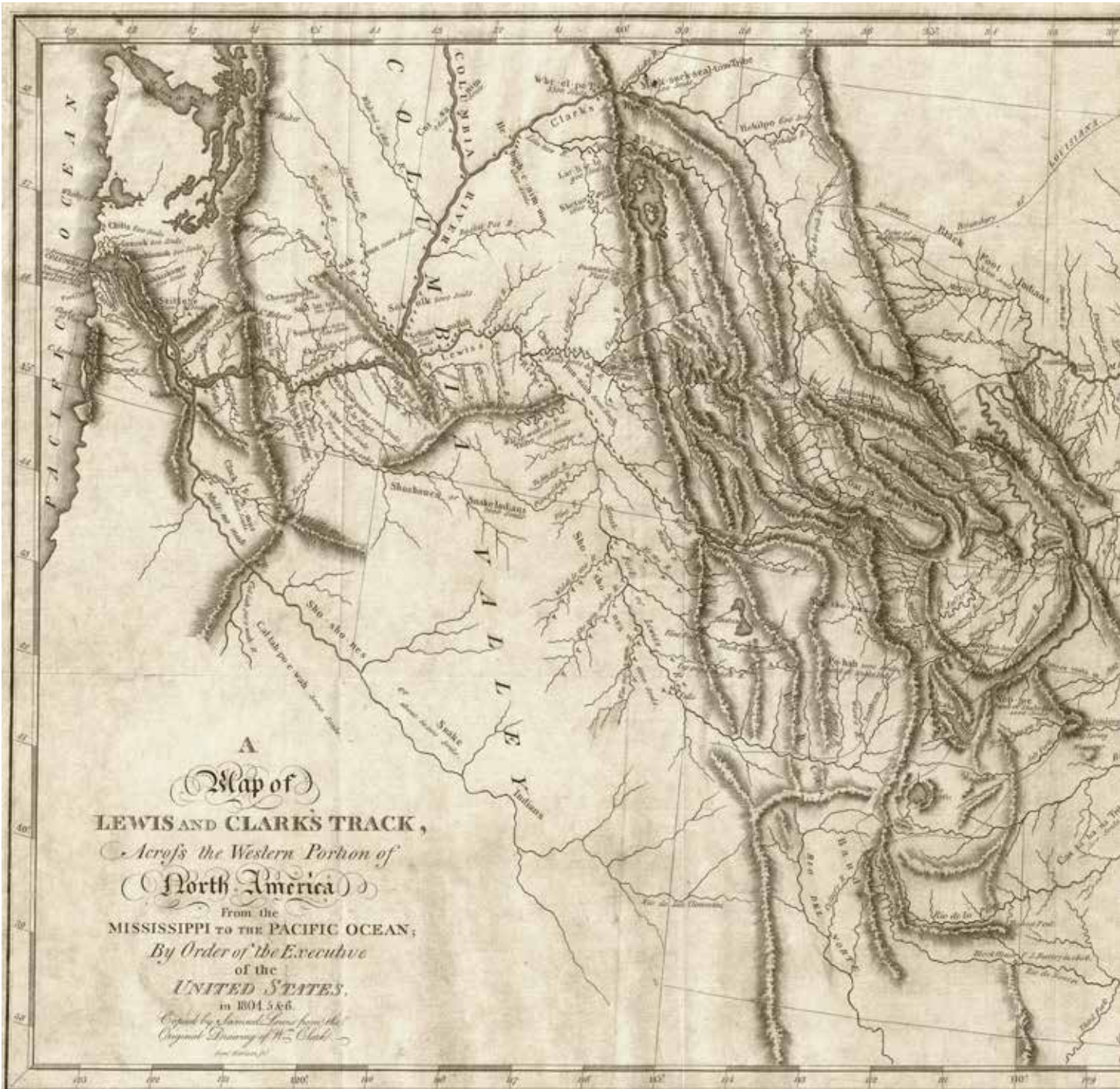
Throughout the current volume all illustrations of the American Indians are shown clothed. This portrayal is an intentional inaccuracy which has been deemed necessary for decency's sake.

Footnoted definitions of archaic and lesser-known words have been included to facilitate reading comprehension. Definitions have been taken from Webster's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) and other period dictionaries.

Excerpts from the journals of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Charles Floyd, and Joseph Whitehouse have been taken from the *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* by Reuben Gold Thwaites, LL.D. (Dodd, Meade, & Company, 1904-1905). Sergeant John Ordway's journal excerpts are taken from *The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway* by Milo M. Quaife (Wisconsin Historical Society, 1916). Quotes from Sergeant Patrick Gass' journal are taken from *Lewis and Clarke's Journal to the Rocky Mountains* (Ells, Claflin, & Company, 1847).

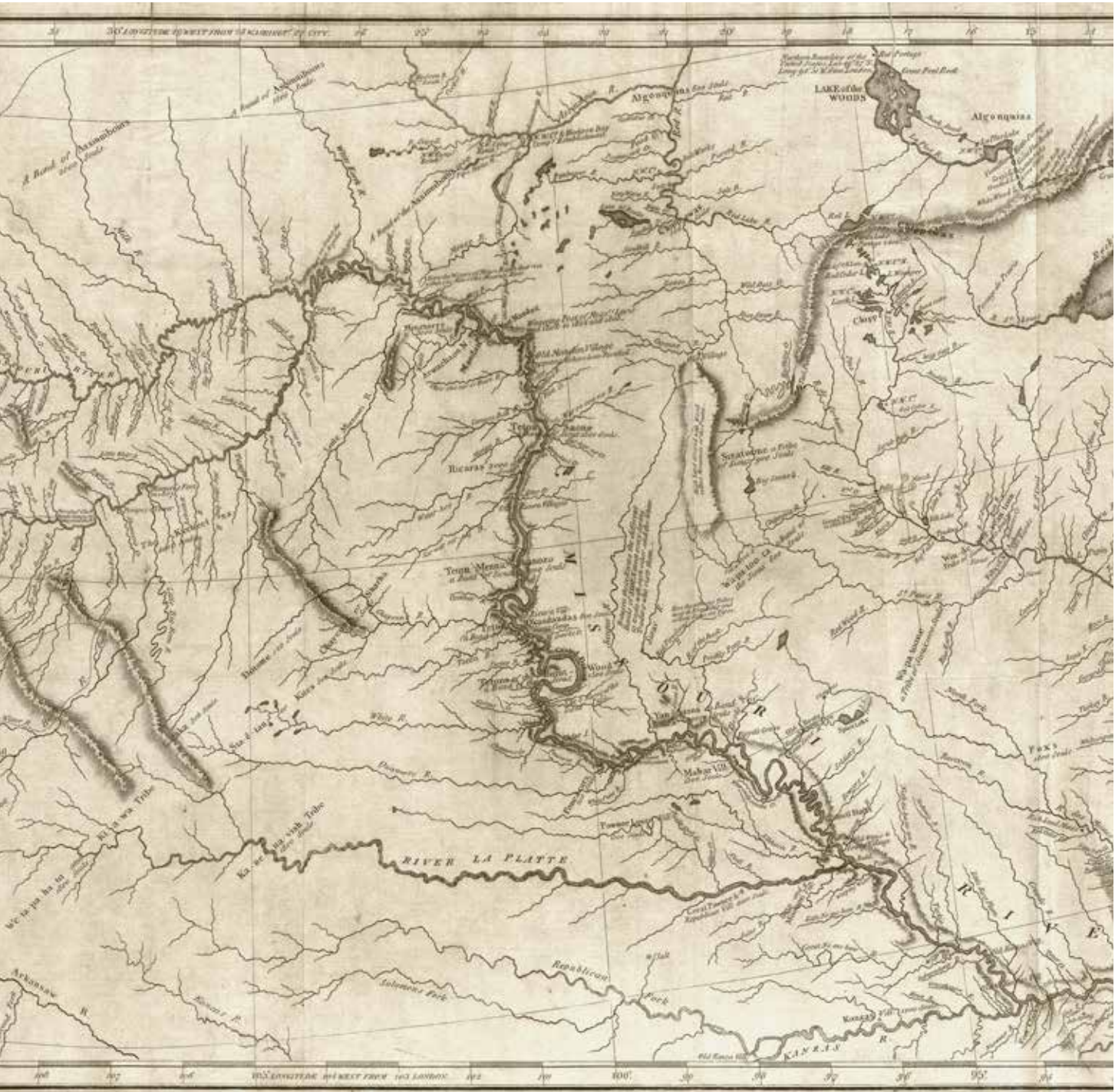


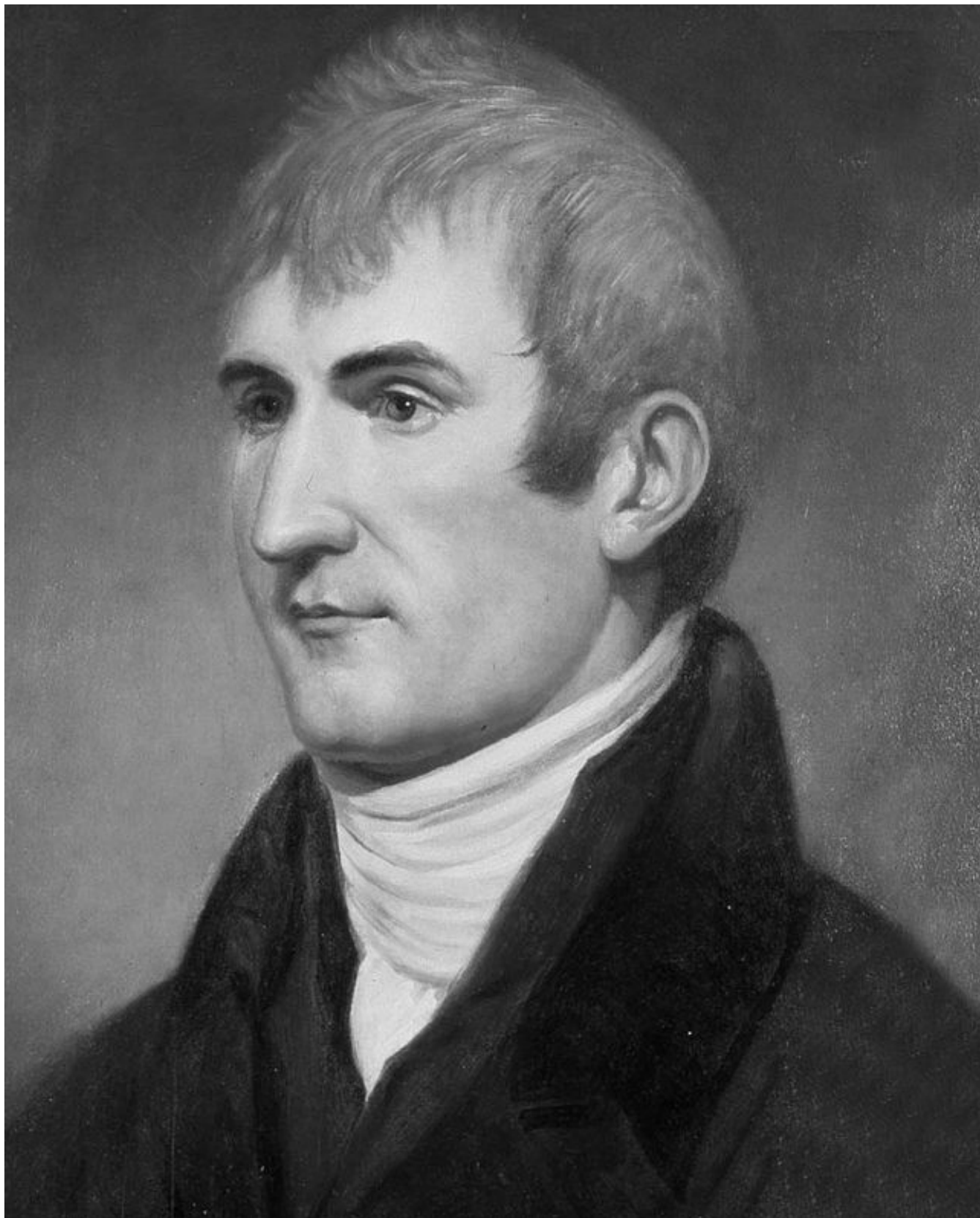




A  
*Map of*  
**LEWIS AND CLARK'S TRACK,**  
*Across the Western Portion of*  
**(North America)**  
From the  
**MISSISSIPPI TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN;**  
*By Order of the Executive*  
of the  
**UNITED STATES,**  
in 1804 & 6.  
*Copied by Giovanni Lewis from the*  
*Original Drawing of W. Clark.*







**MERIWETHER LEWIS**

## CHAPTER ONE

# PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

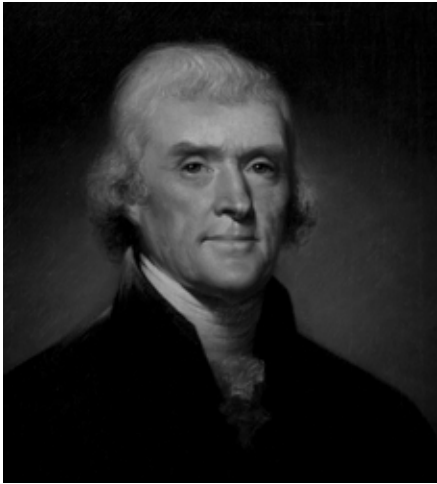
**M**eriwether Lewis was born August 18th, 1774, to a distinguished family in Virginia. His father, William Lewis, was credited by Thomas Jefferson as being a man of integrity and bravery.

William Lewis died during the American War for Independence when Lewis was but a young child. The boy's uncle Nicholas then became his guardian. Under this relative Lewis early learned of warfare and Indians. Thomas Jefferson described Uncle Lewis' actions during the war: "[Nicholas Lewis] commanded a regiment of militia in the successful expedition of 1776 against the Cherokee Indians; who, seduced by the agents of the British government to take up the hatchet against us, had committed great havoc on our southern frontier by murdering and scalping helpless women and children, according to their cruel and cowardly principles of warfare. . . ."

Lewis learned early of warfare and Indians. As a boy he was known for his initiative, discretion, and boldness. By the time he was eight years old he was a successful hunter of raccoons and opossums. At 11 his guardian took him to live with him until Lewis entered a Latin school. At eighteen he returned home to his mother and worked the family farm. In 1794, at the commencement of the Whiskey Rebellion, President Washington called for military assistance to end the troubles, and Lewis enlisted as a private and marched north. His military career progressed quickly, and by the time he was twenty-three he had risen to the rank of captain.

In 1801 the newly-elected president, Thomas Jefferson, wrote Lewis, “The appointment of Presidency of the United States has rendered it necessary for me to have a private secretary, . . . Your knowledge of the Western country, of the army, and of all its interests and relations has rendered it desirable for the public as well as private purposes that you should be engaged in that office.”

Lewis responded, “I most cordially acquiesce, and with pleasure accept the office.”



**PRESIDENT  
THOMAS JEFFERSON**

In 1802 the President began planning an expedition to the Western Ocean, and young Lewis asked to lead the endeavor. Jefferson gladly gave Lewis command, writing of his 28-year-old secretary, “I had now had opportunities of knowing him intimately. [He was] of courage undaunted, possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction. [He was] careful as a father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline.” The President wrote that “the Indian character, customs, and principles” were well known to Lewis, who was accustomed to the hunting life. Jefferson noted that he was also expertly trained in the classification of plants and animals,

which would be a necessary skill on the intended journey through unexplored territory: “[He is] of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous, that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves. With all these qualifications, as if selected and implanted by nature in one body for this express purpose, I could have no hesitation in confiding the enterprise to him.”

In giving Lewis command, Jefferson requested him to pick someone to accompany him whom he could trust and confide in. “Deeming it necessary he should have some person with him of known competence to the direction of the enterprise, in the event of accident to himself, he proposed William Clark, brother of General George Rogers Clark, who was approved.”

William Clark was the ninth of ten children, born on August 1st, 1770. The Clarks, whose ancestors had emigrated to America in the early 1600’s, were a highly-respected and greatly-esteemed family. William’s five older brothers

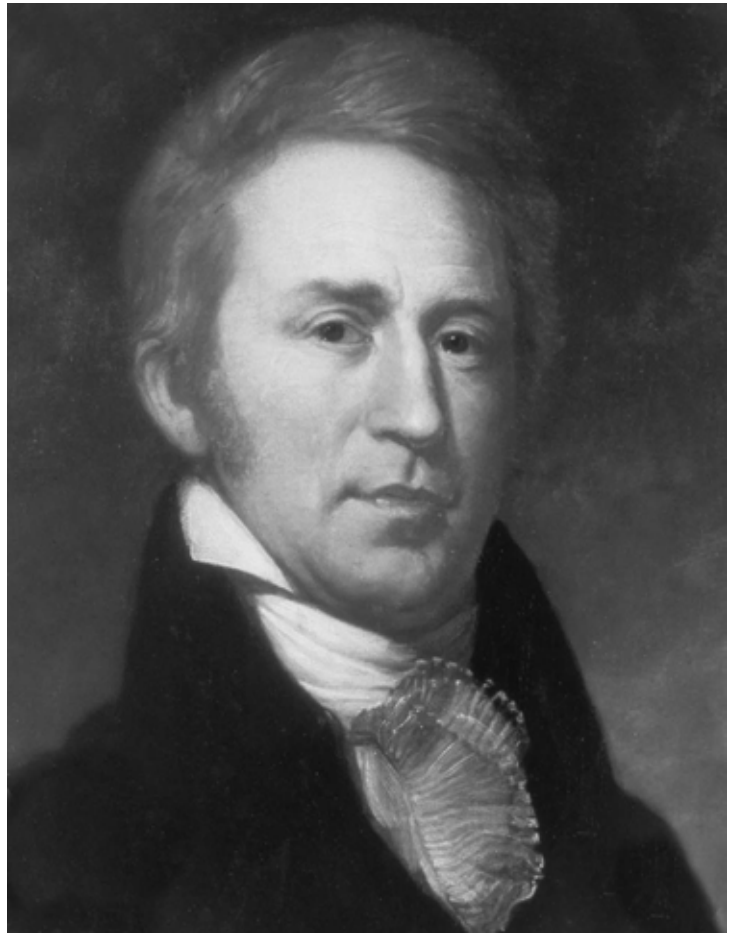
fought in the Revolutionary war. The second oldest, George Rogers Clark, greatly distinguished himself during the war by his feats of bravery and initiative.

Being a few weeks shy of 6 years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed, William Clark grew up in a very difficult time. Two of his brothers were taken prisoner by the British. After the war had ended the Clark family moved west to Kentucky.

Clark was described as being a young man “whose large and powerful frame was capped by a full, broad face, profoundly serious in composure, yet lit by kindly, sympathetic eyes that were windows to a persistent, dauntless soul . . . . His own words were few, his reputation being that of a youth who accomplished things rather than talked of them. Frequently he was a member of war parties

against the still troublesome aborigines. He had but entered on his seventeenth year when we find him enlisted in the Wabash expedition under his elder brother, now General George Rogers Clark.” An acquaintance of Clark described the young man as “a youth of solid and promising parts, and as brave as Caesar.”

Historian Reuben Gold Thwaites recorded of Clark’s military experiences: “[In 1794] we read of him as being in charge of a train of seven hundred pack-horses and eighty men, transporting supplies to Fort Greenville. Attacked by the savages, he lost five men, but gallantly repulsed the enemy and won praise from Wayne, under whom he later (August 20) fought in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Twice (1795) he was entrusted by his general with important commissions to the Spaniards. . . . It is said that no officer impressed the Spanish with a more wholesome respect than young Lieutenant William Clark. His four years’ service



**WILLIAM CLARK**



in the Western Army had familiarized him with the methods of handling large bodies of men under military discipline, and given him opportunity to exercise the courage and resource needed to deal with savage foes.”

Clark continued in the military several years, during which time Meriwether Lewis was appointed an ensign and placed under him in the company he commanded. Clark’s military career, however, ended early due to bad health, and the young man returned home.

After returning home Clark spent years working with the difficult financial situation of his brother George Rogers, who had never been repaid for the expenses he had incurred during his Revolutionary War service. The United

States government had not yet paid these debts, and George Rogers was now being hounded by creditors who feared they would never receive their money from the civil government. William Clark gave of his own funds and sold most of his land in an attempt to meet the demands of his brother’s creditors.

In 1803 Clark wrote to Meriwether Lewis, requesting some papers of him belonging to his brother George Rogers. Lewis mailed the papers in June of that year, and asked to be excused for the delay in sending them.

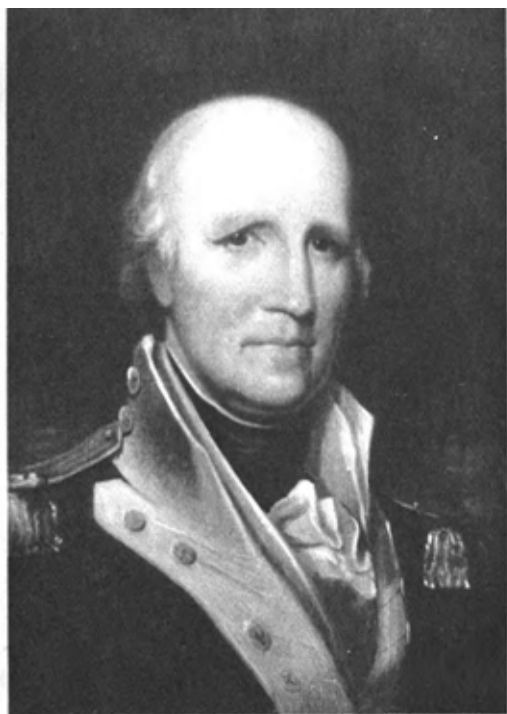
Dear Clark,

Herewith enclosed you will receive the papers belonging to your brother General Clark, which sometime since you requested me to

procure and forward to you. Pray excuse the delay which has taken place. . . .

From the long and uninterrupted friendship and confidence which has subsisted between us I feel no hesitation in making to you the following communication under the fullest impression that it will be held by you inviolably<sup>1</sup> secret until I see

<sup>1</sup> **inviolably** - unfaithfully, without fail



**GEORGE ROGERS CLARK**

you, or you shall hear again from me.

During the last session of Congress a law was passed in conformity to a private message of the President of the United States, entitled *An Act making an appropriation for extending the external commerce of the United States*. The object of this Act as understood by its framers was to give the sanction of the government to exploring the interior of the continent of North America, or that part of it bordering on the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. This enterprise has been confided to me by the President, and in consequence since the beginning of March I have been engaged in making the necessary preparations for the tour. . . . To aid me in this enterprise I have the most ample and hearty support that the government can give in every possible shape. I am armed with the authority of the Government of the United States for my protection, so far as its authority or influence extends. In addition to which, the further aid has been given me of liberal passports from the ministers both of France and England. . . .

Thus my friend you have so far as leisure will at this time permit me to give it you, a summary view of the plan, the means and the objects of this expedition. If therefore there is anything under those circumstances, in this enterprise, which would induce you to participate with me in its fatigues, its dangers and its honors, believe me there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasure in sharing them as with yourself.

I make this communication to you with the privity<sup>2</sup> of the President, who expresses an anxious wish that you would consent to join me in this enterprise. He has authorized me to say that in the event of your accepting this proposition he will grant you a Captain's commission, which of course will entitle you to the pay and emoluments<sup>3</sup> attached to that office, and will equally with myself entitle you to such portion of land as was granted to officers of similar rank for their Revolutionary services. The commission with which he proposes to furnish you is not to be considered temporary, but permanent, if you wish it. Your situation if joined with me in this mission will in all respects be precisely such as my

---

<sup>2</sup> **privity** - private or secret knowledge

<sup>3</sup> **emoluments** - compensations, profits

## DANGEROUS ENDEAVOR

own. Pray write to me on this subject as early as possible. . . .

Should you feel disposed not to attach yourself to this party in an official character, and at the same time feel a disposition to accompany me as a friend any part of the way up the Missouri, I should be extremely happy in your company, and will furnish you with every aid for your return from any point you might wish it.

With sincere and affectionate regard,  
your friend and humble servant,  
Meriwether Lewis

Due to slow mail through Kentucky, Clark did not receive the letter until the 16th of July, almost a month later. Clark responded the next day.

*Clarksville, July 17th, 1803*

Dear Lewis,

I received by yesterday's mail your letter of the 19th ultimo:<sup>4</sup> the contents of which I received with much pleasure. The enterprise and mission is such as I have long anticipated and am much pleased with. And, as my situation in life will admit of my absence the length of time necessary to accomplish such an undertaking, I will cheerfully join you in an "official character," as mentioned in your letter, and partake of all the dangers, difficulties, and fatigues, and I anticipate the honors and rewards of the result of such an enterprise should we be successful in accomplishing it. This is an immense undertaking freighted<sup>5</sup> with numerous difficulties. But, my friend, I can assure you that no man lives with whom I would prefer to undertake and share the difficulties of such a trip than yourself. . . .

With every assurance of sincerity in  
every respect, and with affection,  
your friend and humble servant,  
William Clark

As Clark readied himself for the journey, President Jefferson labored to obtain the French and English passports needed for the expedition to cross the French and

<sup>4</sup> **ultimo** - last (*that is, of last month*)

<sup>5</sup> **freighted** - filled, loaded



British territories, but a turn of events rendered these unnecessary. On May 2nd, 1803, James Monroe and Robert Livingston, the United States ambassadors to France, signed what has become known as the Louisiana Purchase.

Though the citizens of the United States received the news with mixed feelings, the President rejoiced that the expedition to the Pacific Ocean could proceed on a much safer footing now that they would be traveling through land belonging to the United States instead of France.

After receiving word of Clark's acceptance, Lewis responded with an update about his preparations, as well as directions about the men Clark would now be recruiting for the party. Lewis also sent word that the Louisiana Purchase was officially completed.

*Pittsburgh, August 3rd, 1803*

Dear Clark,

. . . I feel myself much gratified with your decision; for I could neither hope, wish, or expect from a union with any man on earth, more perfect support or further aid in the discharge of the several duties of my mission, than that which I am confident I shall derive from being associated with yourself.

. . . From the nature of this enterprise much must depend on a judicious<sup>6</sup> selection of our men. Their qualifications should be such as perfectly fit them for the service. Otherwise they will rather clog than further the objects in view. . . .

The cession of Louisiana is now no secret. On the 14th of July the President received the treaty from Paris by which France has ceded to the United States, Louisiana according to the bounds to which she had a right. Price: 11 1/4 millions of dollars, besides paying certain debts of France to our citizens which will be from one to four millions. . . .

Your sincere friend and obedient servant,  
Meriwether Lewis

Following Lewis' instructions, Clark began gathering men for the expedition, and soon had more applicants than he could accept. Lewis meanwhile waited for their boat to be finished by the boatbuilders and then set out to meet Clark. While traveling downriver Lewis stopped at several military forts and selected men to

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<sup>6</sup> **judicious** - wise, prudent

accompany him. Between the efforts of both commanders, a suitable party was soon formed, composed of both military and nonmilitary men.

In December of 1803 the party formed a camp along the Dubois River in Illinois. Lewis there left Clark in charge while he attended to other matters. Clark spent the winter organizing, disciplining, and training the party, while also laying in supplies.

Lewis, busy tying up loose ends and gathering any last-minute supplies, was unaware that a plot was being formed against him and his enterprise.

Across the river from Clark's quarters, the Spaniards had been plotting for months to stop the expedition. Even though the land on which they stood now belonged to the United States, the Spanish had not yet received official word of the Louisiana Purchase, and refused to accept the declarations of the Americans. Silently they watched the preparations for the expedition, secretly waiting for the commander to cross the river onto "Spanish soil," in order that they might arrest him.

Comandante Nemesio Salcedo, writing to Pedro Cevallos (Primer Secretario de Correos y Despachos) concerning Lewis (who they referred to as *Merry*), declared the necessity of arresting Lewis, and suggested that the Indians might be helpful in effecting it.

Nothing would be more useful than the apprehension of Merry, and even though I realize it is not an easy undertaking, chance might proportion things in such a way that it might be successful, for which reason it will not be superfluous<sup>7</sup> for Your Excellency to give notice of this matter to the Indians, interesting<sup>8</sup> their friendship and notions of generosity, telling them that they will be well compensated.<sup>9</sup>

When the Spaniards received definitive word that Louisiana was indeed American and not French, the comandante urged his superior to quicker action against "Merry." But, providentially, nothing came of their plots; the desperate attempts of the Spanish failed, and they soon found themselves constrained to formally cede upper Louisiana to the French, who in turn ceded it the next day to the United States.

Back at camp with the men, Clark spent countless hours packing, organizing, and disciplining. During this time his men, who had come from

<sup>7</sup> **superfluous** - unnecessary, more than sufficient

<sup>8</sup> *i.e.*, hiring

<sup>9</sup> Donald Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (University of Illinois Press, 1962), page 188

various military forts and country homes, started the process of learning how to work together. Those with military training performed the drills well, but often irritated the young men who had grown up on the frontier by their utter lack of practical knowledge of work. Spending the winter together certainly taught the men how to live and work together as a united force.

One night after dark a fight took place at the fort, from which the two men involved emerged with a fair amount of bruises. Clark ordered the men to work together to build another hut that was needed. With such exercises, differences were soon worked through, and the party grew closer together.

Shooting contests were soon a common amusement among the men. Clark encouraged them by sometimes offering small prizes to the winner. Before long the men expanded the competition to the men in the neighboring area. A proper "shooting match" was planned, and a pair of leggings was the prize. Reuben Fields won the competition.

As spring drew near the expedition looked forward to setting out. The final selection of men was made, and on April 1st they were divided into three messes with a sergeant over each:

The party consisted of nine young men from Kentucky, fourteen soldiers of the United States army who volunteered their services, two French watermen (an interpreter and hunter) and a black servant belonging to Captain Clark. All these, except the last, were enlisted to serve as privates during the expedition, and three sergeants appointed from amongst them by the captains. In addition to these were engaged a corporal and six soldiers, and nine watermen to accompany the expedition as far as the Mandan nation

As the days of April slipped away, Clark took a final inventory of their stores and wrote Lewis in St. Louis, informing him of several articles missing. Lewis sent what he could, and himself prepared to join Clark.

Finally, as the month of May opened, the expedition was ready to begin.

#### NOTE:

**In the following chapters journal entries are printed in regular type and editorial comments appear in *italics*.**

# MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION

Captain Meriwether Lewis      Captain William Clark

## *Sergeants*

John Ordway                      Charles Floyd  
Nathaniel Pryor                Patrick Gass

## *Privates*

William Bratton	Baptiste Lepage
John Collins	Hugh McNeal
John Colter	John Potts
Peter Cruzatte	George Shannon
Joseph Feilds	John Shields
Reuben Feilds	John B. Thompson
Robert Frazier	William Werner
George Gibson	Joseph Whitehouse
Silas Goodrich	Alexander Willard
Hugh Hall	Richard Windsor
Thomas P. Howard	Peter Wiser
Francis Labiche	

## *Interpreters*

George Drewyer                Toussaint Charbonneau

## *Non-Enlisted Members*

York                                Sacajawea

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE DISCOVERY BEGINS

“I set out at 4 o’clock P.M., in the presence of many of the neighboring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a gentle breeze up the Missouri.”

—William Clark

*Monday, May 14th, 1804*

**M**ay 14th, 1804, the Corps of Discovery started north. Captain William Clark directed the three boats forward toward St. Charles where they were to meet their other officer, Captain Meriwether Lewis. Captain Clark “determined to go as far as St. Charles, and wait at that place until Captain Lewis could finish the business in which he was obliged to attend to at St. Louis and join me by land.”

*One of the privates of the expedition, Patrick Gass, recorded his thoughts upon their departure.*

On Monday the 14th of May, 1804, we left our establishment at the mouth of the river Dubois [and] proceeded up the Missouri on our intended voyage of discovery, under the command of Captain Clark. Captain Lewis was



<sup>of the Continent p. 7.</sup>  
Monday May 14<sup>th</sup> 1804

Rained the fore part of the day  
I determined to go as far as St.  
Charles a french Village of Log<sup>s</sup>  
up the Missouri, and wait  
that place until Capt. Lewis  
could finish the business in  
which he was obliged to attend  
to at St Louis and join me by  
Land from that place 24 Miles;  
by this movement I calculated  
that if any alterations in the  
loading of the Vessel or other  
change necessary that they  
might be made at St. Charles  
I set out at 4 o'clock P.M. in  
the presence of many of the  
neighboring inhabitants, and  
proceeded on under jills broad  
up the Missouri to the upper  
Point of the 1<sup>st</sup> Island 4 Miles

to join us in two or three days on our passage.

The day was showery, and in the evening we encamped on the north bank six miles up the river. Here we had leisure to reflect on our situation and the nature of our engagements.

The best authenticated accounts informed us that we were to pass through a country possessed by numerous, powerful and warlike nations of savages of gigantic stature, fierce, treacherous and cruel, and particularly hostile to white men. And fame had united with tradition in opposing mountains to our course which human enterprise and exertion would attempt in vain to pass.

The determined resolute character, however, of the corps, and the confidence which pervaded all ranks dispelled every emotion of fear and anxiety for the present; while a sense of duty and of the honor which would attend the completion of the object of the expedition, a wish to gratify the expectations of the government and of our fellow citizens, with the feelings which novelty and discovery invariably inspire, seemed to insure to us ample support in our future toils, sufferings, and dangers.

*On May 20th Captain Meriwether Lewis joined the men at St. Charles, and the expedition began in earnest. With three cheers from the local inhabitants, the boats departed up the great Missouri River.*

*From the outset, the party found many obstructions to their progress. Sandbars and sawyers (fallen trees lying in the river, partly concealed by water) were the cause of multiple delays. Nor was danger confined to the river alone; the banks also provided their own difficulties. John Ordway, one of the party's sergeants, recorded an accident that broke the boat's mast.*

*June 4th, 1804, Monday*

Our mast broke by my steering the boat near the shore. The rope or stay to her mast got [caught] fast in a limb of a sycamore tree, and it broke very easy.

*While ascending the river, Lewis and Clark took turns walking on shore while the other directed the boats. They were thus able to record the animals, plants, and minerals found in the country through which they passed.*

*Traveling on the Missouri, the men found wind and rain frequent companions. Mosquitoes and gnats became a normal part of life, and snakes were sometimes particularly troublesome.*

*As Captain Clark traveled by land one day, the boat became delayed due to*

*contrary winds, and he found himself alone on shore as the sun set. He recounted the evening's adventures:*

I killed a deer and made a fire, expecting the boat would come up in the evening. [However,] the wind continuing to blow prevented their moving. As the distance by land was too great for me to return by night, I concluded to camp. [I] peeled some bark to lay on and gathered wood to make fires to keep off the mosquitoes and gnats.

During the time I lay on the sand waiting for the boat, a large snake swam to the bank immediately under the deer which was hanging over the water, and no great distance from it. I threw chunks and drove this snake off several times. I found that he was so determined on getting to the meat, I was compelled to kill him.



*On July 4th Joseph Fields was bit by a snake. Captain Lewis applied barks and the swelling was reduced. Sergeant Ordway recorded another unfortunate occurrence that happened soon after.*

*July 14th, 1804, Saturday*

Captain Clark's notes and remarks of two days blew overboard this morning in the storm, and he was much put to it to recollect the courses.

*On July 22nd, having traveled ten miles that day, the men formed a camp in preparation for meeting the Otoes, an Indian tribe inhabiting that part of the Missouri River. The captains sent two men to find the Indians, while they prepared, as Clark declared, "to let them know of the change of government, the wishes of our government to cultivate friendship with them, the objects of our journey, and to*



*present them with a flag and some small presents.” A week later the Indians had still not arrived. Sergeant Floyd wrote of the unexpected delay.*

*July 31st, 1804, Tuesday*

We lay by for to see the Indians who we expect here to see the Captains. I am very sick and have been for sometime, but have recovered my health again. The Indians have not come yet.

*August 1st, 1804, Wednesday*

Lay by all this day expecting the Indians every hour. Sent George Drewyer out to hunt our horses. Sent one man down the river to where we ate dinner on the 28th of July to see if any Indians had been there. He returned and saw no sign of them.

*Finally, on the 2nd of August, the Indians arrived. Lewis and Clark met with the chiefs and promised to hold a council the next day.*

*On the morning of the 3rd the council began. The two captains explained the change of government caused by the Louisiana Purchase, and declared the desires of*



*the President (or “Great Father”) to promote peace and safety throughout the land.*

*[Clark:] August 3rd, 1804, Friday*

Made up a small present for those people in proportion to their consequence, also a package with a medal to accompany a speech for the Grand Chief. After breakfast we collected those Indians under an awning<sup>1</sup> of our main sail, in presence of our party paraded and 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, medal, and some clothes.



<sup>1</sup> awning – a shelter made from a sail

After hearing what they had to say, [we] delivered a medal of second grade to one for the Otoes and one for the Missouri,<sup>2</sup> and presented medals of a third grade to the inferior chiefs, two for each tribe.

Those chiefs all delivered a speech, acknowledging their approbation<sup>3</sup> to the speech, and promising to pursue the advice and directions given them, that they were happy to find that they had fathers which might be depended on, etc.

*The order and discipline required by the captains soon brought the men into a state of unity with each other and their deeply respected leaders that would keep them alive through the difficulties ahead. Elliott Coues summed up the leaders' qualities during the expedition, stating that the two captains were, "dauntless, resourceful, indefatigable, vigilant, absolute in command, solicitous<sup>4</sup> for the welfare of their men, and imposing no privation<sup>5</sup> unshared by themselves."*

*On the morning of the 19th a meeting was held with another tribe of Indians. Lewis delivered a speech which was answered in kind by the chiefs and warriors, who approved what their "Great Father" had advised. The captains then gave a few gifts.*

*[Clark:] August 19th, 1804, Sunday*

A fine morning. Prepared a

---

<sup>2</sup> **Missouri** – an Indian tribe

<sup>3</sup> **approbation** - approval

<sup>4</sup> **solicitous** - careful, anxious

<sup>5</sup> **privation** - hardship



small present for the chiefs and warriors present. The main chief breakfasted with us and begged for a sun glass.<sup>6</sup> Those people are all naked, covered only with breech clouts,<sup>7</sup> blankets, or buffalo robes.

The chiefs requested we would not leave them this evening. We determined to set out early in the morning. We showed them many curiosities and the air gun,<sup>8</sup> which they were much astonished at. Those people begged much for whiskey.



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<sup>6</sup> **sun glass** - a glass used to concentrate the sun's rays and thus create fire

<sup>7</sup> **breech clouts** - loincloths

<sup>8</sup> **air gun** - a weapon which propels bullets by the force of air only

Sergeant Floyd is taken very bad all at once with a bilious colic.<sup>9</sup> We attempt to relieve him without success as yet. He gets worse and we are much alarmed at his situation. All [give] attention to him.

*By morning of the next day, Sergeant Floyd's sudden illness had grown much worse.*

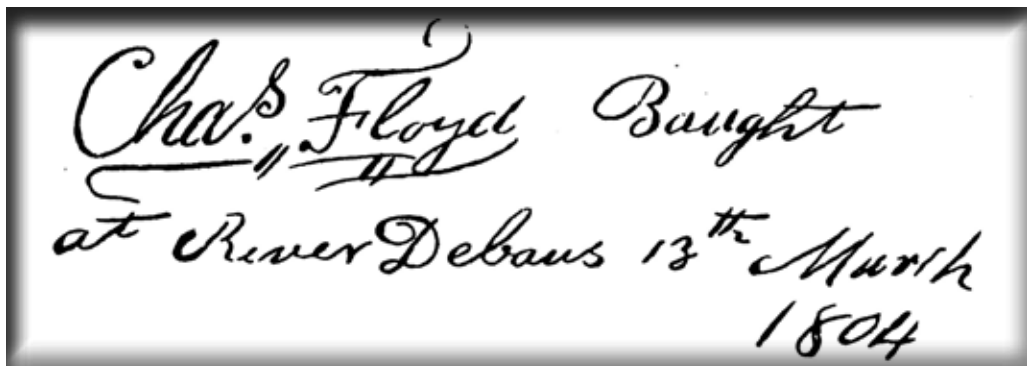
*[Clark:] August 20th, 1804, Monday*

Sergeant Floyd much weaker and no better. [He is] as bad as he can be, no pulse and nothing will stay a moment on his stomach or bowels.

Passed two islands on the starboard side<sup>10</sup> and at the first bluff on the starboard side Sergeant Floyd died with a great deal of composure. Before his death he said to me, "I am going away. I want you to write me a letter." We buried him on the top of the bluff half [a] mile below a small river to which we gave his name. He was buried with the honors of war, much lamented. A cedar post with the name "Sergeant C. Floyd died here, 20th of August, 1804" was fixed at the head of his grave. This man at all times gave us proofs of his firmness and determined resolution to do service to his country and honor to himself.

After paying all the honor to our deceased brother, we camped in the mouth of Floyd's River, about 30 yards wide.

*Private Gass, the carpenter of the expedition, who likely spent the afternoon building a coffin for their lost sergeant, records:*



*Chas. Floyd Bought  
at River Debaus 13<sup>th</sup> March  
1804*

**FLOYD'S INSCRIPTION ON THE INSIDE COVER  
OF HIS JOURNAL**

<sup>9</sup> **bilious colic** - severe pain in the intestines

<sup>10</sup> **starboard side** - right side

Here Sergeant Floyd died, notwithstanding every possible effort was made by the commanding officers and other persons to save his life. We then proceeded a mile further to a small river on the same side and encamped. Our commanding officers gave it the name of Floyd's River, to perpetuate<sup>11</sup> the memory of the first man who had fallen in this important expedition.

*With the death of Sergeant Floyd, another man was required to fill his place. Private Gass was appointed to the position:*

The Commanding officers have every reason to hope from the previous faithful services of Sergeant Gass that this expression of their approbation will be still further confirmed by his vigilant attention in future to his duties as a sergeant. The commanding officers are still further confirmed in the high opinion they had previously formed of the capacity,<sup>12</sup> diligence, and integrity of Sergeant Gass, from the wish expressed by a large majority of his comrades for his appointment as sergeant.

*The party continued forward, hunting and fishing for food, exploring the countryside, and measuring and mapping the river. While passing the mouth of the river Jacque, three Indians were seen. The boats landed and the Indians informed them that there was a large camp of Sioux Indians not far from them. The captains sent Sergeant Pryor and one of the Frenchmen with an interpreter to the Sioux camp. They took gifts of corn, tobacco, and kettles to the people of the camp and invited the chiefs to return with them to speak with their "chiefs."*

*As they awaited a response from the Sioux, the captains sent two men to look for George Shannon, one of their men who had been traveling on land with the horses. Having not returned to camp the previous night, they feared he was lost. Shannon was the youngest member of the party, and in Clark's words, "his character is without blemish."*

*[Clark:] August 28th, 1804, Tuesday*

John Shields and Joseph Fields who were sent back to look for Shannon and the horses joined us and informed that Shannon had the horses ahead and that they could not overtake him. This man not being a first rate hunter, we determined to send one man in pursuit of him with some provisions.

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<sup>11</sup> **perpetuate** - preserve

<sup>12</sup> **capacity** - ability

*August 30th, 1804, Thursday*

A very thick fog this morning. After preparing some presents for the chiefs which we intended [to] make by giving medals, and finishing a speech which we intended to give them, we sent Mr. Dorion [the interpreter living with the Sioux] in a pirogue<sup>13</sup> for the chiefs and warriors to a council under an oak tree near where we had a flag flying on a high flagstaff. At 12 o'clock we met and Captain Lewis delivered the speech and then made one great chief by giving him a medal and some clothes, one 2nd chief and three third chiefs in the same way. They received those things with the goods and tobacco with pleasure. We smoked out of the pipe of peace, and the chiefs retired to a bowery<sup>14</sup> made of bushes by their young men to divide their presents and smoke, eat, and council. Captain Lewis and myself retired to dinner and consult about other measures.

*The Indians gave a speech the next morning stating that they agreed with what Captain Lewis had told them, and Clark says they "concluded by telling the distresses of their nation by not having traders, and wished us to take pity on them. The[y] wanted powder, ball, and a little milk [i.e., spirits]."*

*When the council was finished the party moved on, continuing to keep a lookout for Shannon's tracks.*

*As they continued up the river, an animal unfamiliar to the captains quickly attracted their attention. A small rodent, they described it as a "barking squirrel," a "ground rat," or, as it is now commonly known, a "prairie dog."*

<sup>13</sup> **pirogue** - large canoe

<sup>14</sup> **bowery** - covered area







*[Gass:] September 7th, 1804, Friday*

We set sail early and had a clear day, passed high prairie land on both sides. Captain Lewis and Captain Clark with some of the men went to view a round knob of a hill in a prairie, and on their return killed a prairie dog, in size about that of the smallest species of domestic dogs.

Having understood that the village of those small dogs was at a short distance from our camp, Captain Lewis and Captain Clark, with all the party except the guard, went to it; and took with them all the kettles and other vessels for holding

water, in order to drive the animals out of their holes by pouring in water. But though they worked at the business till night, they only caught one of them.

*[Clark:] September 9th, 1804, Sunday*

I walked on shore all this evening with a view to kill a goat or some prairie dogs. In the evening, after the boat landed, I directed my servant York with me to kill a buffalo near the boat from a number then scattered in the plains. I saw at one view near the river at least 500 buffalo. Those animals have been in view all day feeding in the plains on the larboard side.<sup>15</sup> Every copse<sup>16</sup> of timber appear to have elk or deer. Drewyer killed three deer, I killed a buffalo, York two [buffalo], Reuben Fields one.

*Finally, after being missing for over three weeks, Shannon was found on the 11th of September.*

*[Clark:] September 11th, 1804, Tuesday*

The man who left us with the horses 22 days ago and has been ahead ever since, joined us nearly starved to death. He had been 12 days without anything to eat but grapes and one rabbit, which he killed by shooting a piece of hard stick in

<sup>15</sup> **larboard side** – left side

<sup>16</sup> **copse** - group of small trees or underbrush



place of a ball. This man, supposing the boat to be ahead, pushed on as long as he could. When he became weak and feeble [he] determined to lay by and wait for a trading boat, which is expected, keeping one horse for the last resource. Thus a man had like to have starved to death in a land of plenty for the want<sup>17</sup> of bullets or something to kill his meat.

*[Gass:] September 14th, 1804, Friday*

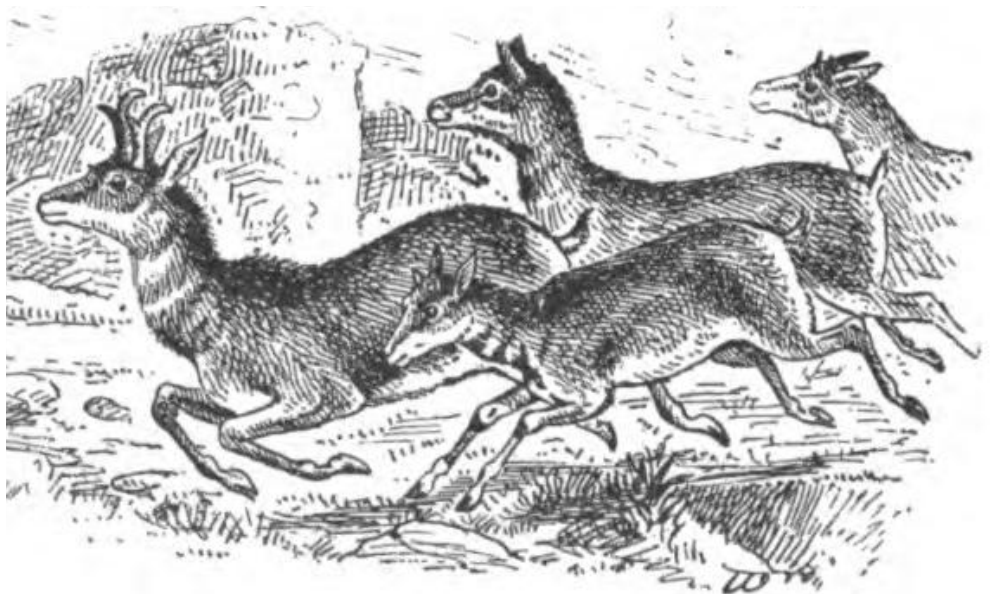
Had considerable difficulty in getting along, on account of the shallowness of the river. All hands in the water dragging the boat.

*On the 17th Lewis took a walk on shore to examine the country and hunt for provisions.*

*[Lewis:] September 17th, 1804, Monday*

Having for many days past confined myself to the boat, I determined to devote this day to amuse myself on shore with my gun and view the interior of the country. Accordingly, before sunrise I set out with six of my best hunters, two of whom I dispatched to the lower side of Corvus Creek, two with orders to hunt the bottoms and woodland on the river, while I retained two others to accompany me in the intermediate country.

This scenery, already rich, pleasing, and beautiful, was still farther heightened by immense herds of buffalo, deer, elk, and antelopes which we saw in every direction feeding on the hills and plains. I do not think I exaggerate when I estimate the number of buffalo which could be comprehended at one view to amount to 3000.



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<sup>17</sup> want - lack

*[Clark:] September 23rd, 1804, Sunday*

Passed a creek on the S.S. 16 yards wide we call Reuben Creek, as Reuben Fields found it. Camped on the S.S. below the mouth of a creek on the larboard side. Three Sioux boys came to us, swam the river, and informed [us] that the band of Sioux called the Tetongues (Tetons) of 80 lodges<sup>18</sup> were camped at the next creek above, and 60 lodges more a short distance above. We gave those boys two carrots of tobacco<sup>19</sup> to carry to their chiefs, with directions to tell them that we would speak to them tomorrow.

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<sup>18</sup> lodges - dwellings

<sup>19</sup> carrots of tobacco - tobacco rolled into carrot-like shapes

