

Lewis & Clark Trail 2016

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CHAPTER 1. EN ROUTE TO ST. LOUIS

April 18 to May 3 – Texas

(Bert) Carrying a torrent of horizontal rain, the gale force winds propel off the Gulf Coast, hitting the RV broadside as we struggle along the highway paralleling the dunes. The RV operates sluggishly because the winds deactivated the ESP function, an oxymoronic situation since now is the time I'd appreciate the extra stability.

Relieved, we reach our resort site on Mustang Island to wait out the storm. Water trickles out onto the wooden floor between our beds. This is a single body RV, so there is no way water should be leaking inside. I investigate the compartment under the bed and find a thin stream of clean rainwater coming from the heater exhaust pipe to the outside. Horizontal rain!

Easily sponged up, that leak problem is solved. Next we notice water accumulating below the refrigerator, but this water is yellow and a bit oily. When the rain subsides, Shari goes outside and removes the vent to the back of the refrigerator. Oily yellow water covers the bottom of the compartment, the same as has been leaking inside.

The next day we head back into Corpus Christi to an RV dealer we've visited years ago. As we expected, the yellow water is dyed refrigerator coolant and we have a leak. The cooling unit needs to be replaced, fortunately under warranty. They can order it immediately, get it shipped from Dallas in a couple of days and work us into their busy schedule next Wednesday. It is a delay, but we have no better alternative.

On Wednesday the service technician disassembles the wooden façade, front doors, electrical control unit, and removes the backside cooling unit. Then we hear the second bad news. The replacement cooling unit is damaged and leaking coolant. This time the manufacturer can rush another cooling unit and we can have it tomorrow.

Thursday we are back in Corpus Christi awaiting the shipment. In early afternoon the technicians check the new cooling unit. Lightning strikes twice; the new unit is dented and damaged. It cannot be installed. This time our schedule cannot be delayed further, so Shari arranges for work to be completed in Dallas. The technician loads our RV with the disassembled refrigerator parts, including the original cooling unit which is in a heavy 5-ft. x 3-ft. x 5-in. box that we slide between the twin beds. At Wal-Mart I buy two ice chests and three bags of ice to store our contents which we had temporarily placed in a refrigerator at the resort. We start out in late afternoon and reach the south side of Houston and spend the night at a Love's truck stop.

On Friday we move the refrigerator contents to a unit at the caravan company for which we run tours. We spend two days finishing up work for the upcoming tours and on Sunday morning head for Dallas. On Tuesday, the replacement unit arrives at the Hickory Creek dealer. Would you believe: damaged!



Refrigerator with front paneling removed

May 4-5 – Texas

(Bert) On Wednesday we grow impatient waiting at the Lewisville Lake RV Park and in midafternoon we pack up and go to the repair center. Coincidentally, Central Freight has just unloaded the large box containing the fourth replacement for the cooling unit. Together, the service technician, the truck driver, and I inspect every detail of the pipes and coils of the unit, looking for dents, loose welds, or leaks. Somewhat surprised, we find none. It is too late in the day to begin the replacement, so we arrange to be back tomorrow at 9 AM when they will do the work.

Thursday, 11 AM, the service tech comes into the office to inspect the old cooling unit. Something has gone wrong. A thermostat is not coupled to the replacement unit, nor is it on the damaged unit. We piece the puzzle together and recognize that damaged unit is one of the replacement shipments, not the one that came out of our RV. That one is still in Corpus Christi. The tech says he will take a thermostat out of one of rental units on their lot. Whew! That was a close call!

An hour later he returns to the office with another problem. Two other components are missing and he doesn't have those parts lying around. Two men are now on the phones trying to find a quick solution. Aware of our delayed schedule, they are bending over backwards to help us. They locate the parts at the Dometic warehouse in Mansfield and arrange of us to pick them up. It's a 95-mi. round-trip through Dallas, Fort Worth, and D-FW airport, but by taking the toll roads we make it back in 2 hr. At 6 PM the refrigerator is back in its slot and the façade is reinserted.

(Shari) I am doing a happy dance in my head as we depart the RV shop for points north. The freezer is cooling down and we are told we are good to go. We stop for the night at a Wal-Mart just south of Oklahoma City. I check the frig and my ballet shoes hit glass. The freezer is cold but the frig is not. Oh d***! Bert goes for ice to refill the ice chest and I put what I can in the freezer. On top of it all when we start the generator to heat up supper in the microwave all the frig lights go out. Fortunately we were told by the tech if that happens to hit the reset inside the outside access panel. We spend the next 15 min. looking for the reset. Finally, me, myself, and I find it and jokingly tell Bert \$40 please. It is time now for bed and I will be looking for new tap and ballet shoes.



Refrigerator lying on its front. White panel on right is the cavity where it will be inserted.

May 6-7 – Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin

(Bert) The refrigerator cools to about 40° and we have learned to turn it off before starting the generator. For the moment this will suffice until we get to another repair shop. Our plans are to visit my 93-year-old mother in Wisconsin for Mother's Day, though we are now several days behind schedule. We are up at 5 AM, stop at MacDonal'd's for breakfast and have the petal to the

metal by 6 AM. The best part of the day is lunch at Lambert's, the famous restaurant where they throw the dinner rolls at you and you hope you catch them. By 6 PM we have covered 678 miles and are north of Springfield, IL, again parking at Wal-Mart for the night.

The next day we reach southern Wisconsin and are surprised that the trees are just beginning to leaf out. The fields are either unplanted or the sprouting crops are only a few inches high. It's all so different compared to South Texas where spring was two months ago and summer has begun. At our Mission home the temperature as already broken 100°.

We park the RV at the farm where I spent my childhood. I grab my binoculars and check out the birds singing from atop the yard trees. I'm always interested in which birds I find that were rare or non-existing when I started birding here at age 10.

CHAPTER 2. MISSOURI

Day 0. May 17 – St. Charles, Missouri

(Bert) The tour group has been arriving that past two days here near St. Louis. They've come from all over the United States. On this same date in 1804, the Corps of Discovery gathered here too. Meriwether Lewis came from Washington D.C., his long-time friend William Clark came from Virginia, and the other Corps members came from scattered parts of the U.S. which at that time included only 17 states, the most recent being Ohio. Lewis and Clark attended to gathering goods from the warehouses of St. Louis and supervising the construction of the keel boat. Lewis wrote, "All the forepart of the Day arranging our party and procureing [sic] the different articles necessary for them at this place."

We modern day caravaners are stocking up on supplies at Wal-Mart and Costco and getting maintenance parts at Camper's World. Our group numbers 33, the exact same number in the Corps of Discovery that completed the route from Fort Mandan to the Pacific. Likely, after a long-day's work the Corps men visited a tavern bordering the Missouri River. Our caravan group does the same tonight at Big A's, a restaurant with a view of the river.

Day 1. May 18 – St. Charles, Missouri

(Bert) Sue relates, "As a child I attended Indiana schools which drilled me on Lewis & Clark. Now I want to experience where they traveled." And, so, we go around the room with each introducing their self and telling us why they chose to come on this tour. Something in their lives touched them and left a curiosity about the Corps of Discovery. One lives near the trail, one helped rebuild Fort Clatsop after it burned down a few years ago, one was a teacher with historical interest, two live near the grave of Meriwether Lewis at Natchez Trace in Tennessee, one visited the Lewis & Clark Interpretative Center in Great Falls and wanted to learn more, one developed a curiosity about Lewis and Clark in high school. "It's on my bucket list," says another. "I came because a friend recommended this tour," says another. Finally, Evie states, "Dave wanted to do it and whatever Dave wants I do" which produced groans from the other ladies in the group.

I am also impressed that more than three-fourths of the group has read at least one book about Lewis and Clark. I talk about the three books that I have read, besides portions of the on-line 5000-page transcripts of the journals. I recommend a book I just bought and was about to start reading until yesterday when it got crusted into a paper ball by the RV slide. While I continue talking, Dick attempts to twist the ball and flatten the pages. It looks better and, perhaps, if I park my RV wheel over it for a day it might be readable again.

(Shari) I don't think Lewis and Clark ate as well as we do tonight, but they could have had the same menu items. After our orientation meeting, Bert's very interesting PowerPoint presentation about the role the Louisiana Purchase had in instigating the famous journey, and a rather disjointed travel meeting with too many papers to hand out, we have a delicious meal of beef, chicken picante, mashed potatoes, green beans, and chocolate cake or apple pie. My, it is good and tastes even better because I did not have to cook it or clean up afterwards. I doubt if anyone went home hungry. Now if we could just wear off the calories like those on the expedition certainly did, we'd be set. After all we will be following the same trail. Seems only fair, doesn't it?





Day 2. May 19 – St. Louis, Missouri

(Bert) Not everything on this tour is directly related to Lewis and Clark's expedition. We will stop for other sights and sounds en route. Today it's St. Louis.

"We should come here again sometime and visit the park for two days," Shari says to me as our motor coach tour slowly drives through Forest Park, the site of the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Only a few buildings still exist from the fair, but the waterways and forested lawns are

intact, as is the zoo made famous by Marlin Perkins when we watched Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom on TV in the 1960s.



One of the few buildings from the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair

We move on to the Missouri Botanical Garden where we have leisurely time to explore the remarkable floral collections, garden sculptures, and reflection ponds. I am most impressed with the glassed-dome enclosed Climatron kept warm and humid for the many orchids and bromeliads clinging to large trees. I wish I had my binoculars when I see a few birds flittering through the vines and branches. They look like honeyeaters from Australia and there are dozens of those species so I cannot be sure which these are.



Reflection pond at Missouri Botanical Garden with Climatron in background



Outside the Climatron



Inside the Climatron

After lunch at Golden Corral, we head to the Anheuser-Busch brewery for a tour and beer tasting. Cameras are clicking for a portrait backgrounded by an antique Budweiser wagon and a gigantic Clydesdale horse.



Portraits at Anheuser-Busch Brewery



Horsing around at the Anheuser-Busch Brewery

(Shari) You know people are having fun when they can't stop taking pictures. And today during our bus tour of St. Louis cameras are clicking all day.

Bert and I have been through St. Louis on our way from Texas to Wisconsin numerous times. We never stopped because we thought there was nothing worth seeing. My goodness were we wrong. Now I'd like to rent one of those fancy condos across from the city's Forest Park and stay a month. The park alone could entertain me for a week. It is huge! It has 30 miles of trails,

numerous paddle boats and lakes, a famous zoo, three museums (art, history, science), a theater, and restaurants, just to name a few of its attractions. The neighborhood around the park offers restaurants, shopping, entertainment, universities, and hospitals. Our delightful bus driver, Albert, tells us stories of the park as he bicycled through it as a young boy growing up nearby.

Our group visits the botanical gardens next and mentions the stay there as too short. After lunch we are treated to a tour of Anheuser-Busch, complete with free samples of beer. Having such a fun day, convinced me that next time on our travels north we will stop to stay awhile longer.



Missouri Botanical Garden



Many in our group toured the Botanical Garden by train

Day 3. May 20 – Camp River Dubois, Illinois

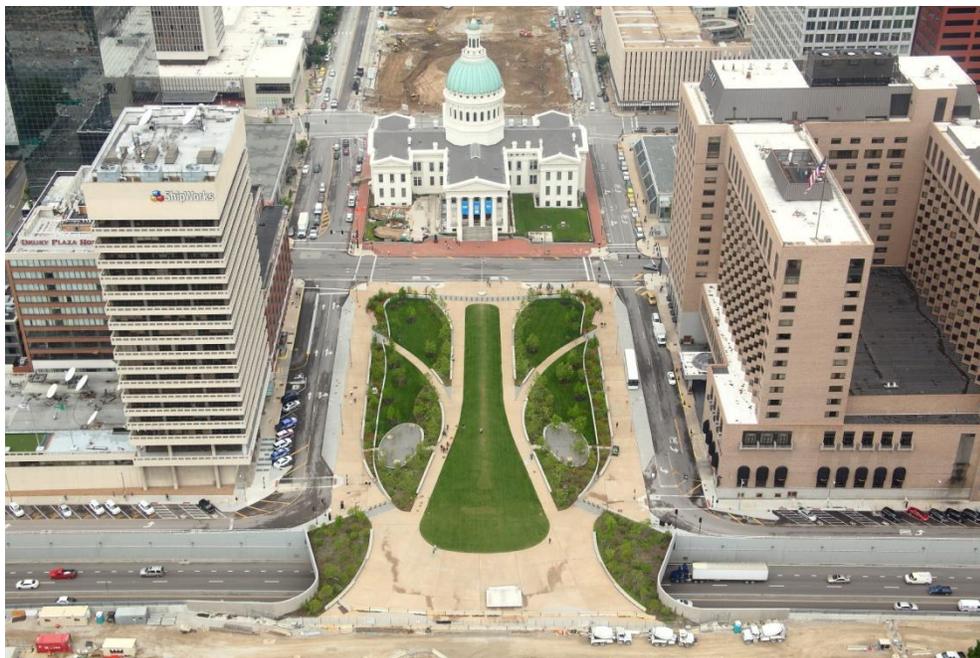
(Bert) “We are to ascend the Missouri River with a boat as far as it is navigable and then go by land, to the western ocean, if nothing prevents ...,” John Ordway, writes in a letter to his parents. Sergeant Ordway is one of the few educated men among the recruits. Ordway is 26 years old at the time and like the other military men that Lewis and Clark picked up along the Ohio River on their way to St. Louis, he is excited about the adventure ahead. So are we as we continue to visit the historic places where the action started.

This afternoon we walk the grounds of Camp River Dubois where Fort Dubois has been rebuilt from timbers, based on a recently found blueprint of the one the Corps of Discovery constructed here in 1803. By the time the keelboat was designed and built in Pittsburgh and the Ohio River was traversed to the Mississippi, it was too late in the year to start the expedition on the iced over Missouri, so the small fort was to be home for the duration of the winter.

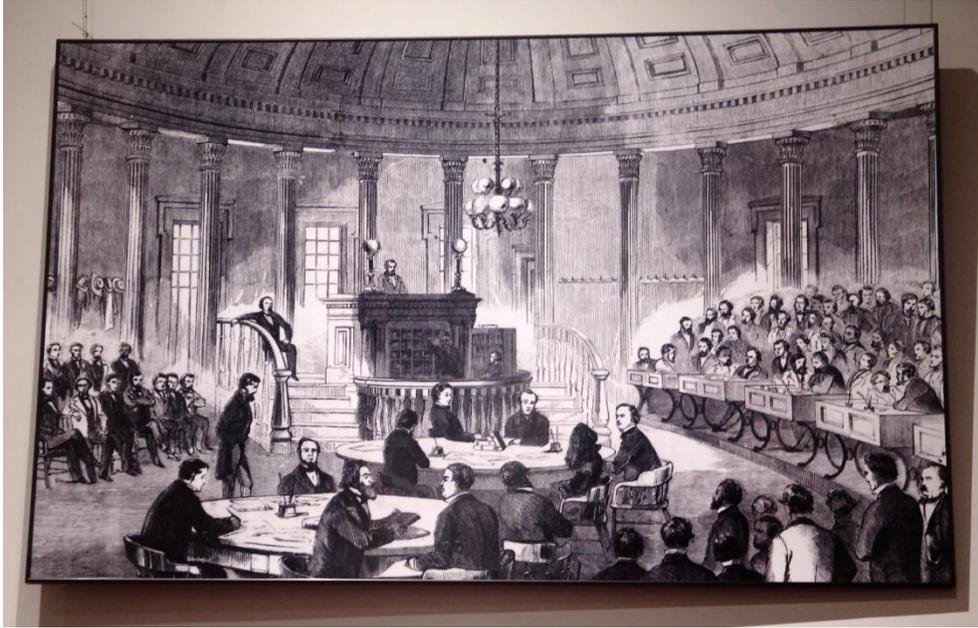


Yellow tape blocks our entrance to the fort as many of the perimeter timbers have fallen in a windstorm. The original fort long ago also succumbed to the elements and its exact location is unknown. At that time Captain Clark took charge of the Corps at camp while Captain Lewis visited St. Louis and gathered stories from Missouri River traders. On their advice he acquired gifts and trinkets that he would give or trade with Indians en route. We visit St. Louis today too, but it is to ascend the Gateway Arch for a bird’s eye view of the river and the modern city.





A few blocks away we visit the old Courthouse and its museum exhibit on Dred and Harriet Scott, slaves who sued the State of Missouri for their freedom. They won in lower court but the case was overturned in the state supreme court. At the U.S. Supreme Court they were declared slaves and private property not to be taken from their owner. Furthermore, they and all black slaves were declared inferior, were not citizens, and had no rights to sue, a decision that agitated the Civil War.



William Clark owned a slave too. York was inherited by William and he accompanied the Corps of Discovery, and he was the fascination of the Indians as they had never seen a black man before.

In two days we leave St. Charles and follow the Missouri River, "if nothing prevents ...". On May 14, 1804 the Corps did the same as they left Rivière du Bois, then in the Indiana Territory, and crossed to the convergence of the Mississippi and Missouri before turning upstream on the Missouri. In late afternoon we drive to the convergence, now called the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, and stand across from the point where the mighty rivers coalesce.





Day 4. May 21 – St. Charles, Missouri

(Bert) "... Proceeded up the Missouri under Sail to the first Island on the Missouri and Camped ... men in high Spir," William Clark wrote on May 14, 1804.



Mouth of the Missouri River

It's a special day at the Lewis and Clark Boat House in St. Charles with people dressed in period costumes. One of them is the Great-great Grandson of Meriwether Lewis.



Behind my photo of the gentlemen are the replicas of the three boats of the Corps of Discovery which were used for a reenactment of the trip up the Missouri River a few years ago. The keelboat is the largest of the three, about the same length as a semi's trailer, and had a large square sail and 22 oars. I photograph Shari as she climbs a short ladder to peer into the deck of the keelboat. After reading the original journal text, obviously without the aid of photos, I was anxious to see what the boats looked like and to appreciate their sizes. I especially wanted to see the vessels Lewis referred to as perogues, Perogues, or Perogus, but apparently are spelled pirogue and pronounced "per row." The pirogues are about the length and width of large motor homes. The red one had seven oars and the white one six. The three vessels carried about 40 men at the start of the trip, plus tons of supplies.



The keelboat



Cabin at stern of the keelboat



The white pirogue beside the somewhat larger red pirogue

In the second-floor museum miniature replicas of the boats better show them in full sail. The sails were not always useful, so the men rowed and often had to pole the boats in shallow water or pull them with ropes while wading in the river or from the shore.



Miniature boats with sales up. Missouri River in background.

Day 5. May 22 – St. Charles to Platte City, Missouri

(Bert) "I guess when they say the road is closed, they really mean it," Ray tells me after today's drive. I'll tell you about Ray's misfortune, but first let me fill you in on the start of our road trip.

We are finally traveling in our RVs, following the Lewis & Clark Trail alongside the Missouri River. We are weaving through densely forested limestone cliffs when Shari spots a coyote jump into the woods. That reminds me that the Corps of Discovery was much farther west before they saw their first coyote, which they called a Prairie Wolf. Lewis's notes on it were new to science. It was a western species in 1804, but now, of course, we know the coyote's range spans the Lower 48.

A right hand turn would take us to Daniel Boone's home which we visited yesterday morning. Daniel Boone lived near La Charette when the Corps of Discovery stopped here May 25, although Clark does not mention Boone. Boone died in his home in 1820. Notably, at the time of the expedition La Charette was the last European habitation along the Missouri.



Daniel Boone's home

The next stop I want to see is the mouth of the Osage River where Lewis and Clark made celestial observations. In the museum yesterday we saw a sextant and a chronometer similar to those the captains used to determine the latitude and longitude of the confluence of the Osage and Missouri Rivers.



Sextant

However, our path is blocked by a road closure and the detour keeps us from reaching the confluence point. We detour and Shari texts a message back to the caravan, or at least those for which we have smart cell phone numbers. Ray and Roxanne decide to behave as Missourians and challenge “show me!” Through scattered messages back and forth, limited by cell phone coverage in this somewhat remote area of marshes and farm fields, we eventually hear they are forced to detach their tow and make a U-turn. On the way back they encounter Duane and Peggy who also took the closed route. Later we hear that Dick and Marsha, at another intersection, turned left instead of right. Admittedly, our road log did not advise which way to turn, but a sign near the intersection pointed to the campground. With all of our GPS equipment, cell phones, maps, and our printed road logs, we can still get confused. It makes you marvel how pioneering Lewis and Clark managed.

(Shari) "Pretend you just finished a long day on the river and you are starved," I tell the group as I prepare them for our Corp of Discovery meal.

"We don't have to pretend," is the answer many retort. Like us, I would imagine Meriwether Lewis felt many a day as he gazed out over the land and asked himself, "Where in the heck am I?"

Bert and I struggled with our road log four times. At two points I texted the group alerting them to problems. The first happened at a detour. About 30 min. after my text I get a call from Ray. "There is a detour," he says and then asks, "Can I get through anyway?" No, he can't and a bit later I get a text that he has to unhook to turn around. Oh dear! He tells me he meets another in the caravan who made the same turn but who decided to go ahead anyway based on the advice of a local. Oh dear again. The detour ends but the sign is placed a bit too far back and a few take the first turn instead of the second. Oh dear, oh dear. Nora relates that a farmer later put a sign up that said don't turn here. Then there is the direction to take when highway 29 splits right and left. I think we all did that one correctly. The last “oh dear” is about 4 mi. from camp. We are

to turn right to exit the freeway and then right again and then left. Unfortunately the second right turn log entry is omitted. Dick calls me on the phone and said he is lost. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. I tell him where he should have turned right and soon I hear his wife say on the radio that they made it into the RV park.

On caravan days like this, it is good to have an attitude readjustment. It is a lucky thing I planned a Lewis and Clark meal—something the Corps ate close to this location: pancakes made from cornmeal, syrup, stewed apples, and bison sausage. I got the recipes from my Lewis and Clark cookbook. In addition, since we have two birthdays and one anniversary in May, Terry and I each made a chocolate cherry cake in our slow cookers to celebrate the occasion. The campground here in Platte City has wonderful facilities with a complete kitchen for our use. Sweet! We get a lot of compliments on our efforts as the group departs. All the bison sausages were consumed so that must have been a hit.





Day 6. May 23 – Kansas City, Missouri

(Bert) Our day is filled with activities and although I could write about our tour of the Harley-Davidson Assembly Plant or the Hallmark Visitor Center I'll mention my favorite, the Steamboat Arabia Museum and a brief comment on Ermine Case Jr Park.

Pouring rain dampened much of the day and at the time our motor coach circles the Lewis & Clark Monument at Case Park, the rain is a deluge. Nonetheless, I step out of the coach to take a few photos of the statue of the adventurers and Lewis's Newfoundland dog Seaman. Case Park is positioned at the promontory where the Missouri and Kansas River meet and, again, it is one of those places where Lewis and Clark stayed up past midnight to measure the positions of the stars and derive their latitude and longitude. Now, it's Kansas City.



Lewis & Clark Monument on a wet and dreary day

At the Historic City Market, we have a late lunch of Kansas City BBQ and then skip through the rain to the Steamboat Arabia Museum. I never would have thought of visiting this museum were it not included in our caravan tour. Yet it is a real surprise both because of its origin and its contents.

Churning along the Missouri River on September 5, 1856, the Steamboat Arabia hit a snag and sunk in 15 ft. of water. All passengers and crew escaped unharmed, but the Arabia, loaded with cargo for stores up river, disappeared in river silt. In succeeding years the river shifted course and in 1988 five intrepid brothers—local businessmen—located the boat buried deep in Kansas farmland. Over a 4-mo. period and with the aid of a 100-ton crane and 20 pumps, each 60 ft. long, for pumping water from the hole at a rate of 20,000 cu.ft. per min., they recovered the cargo of the Arabia and portions of the boat. It is here in the museum that we see thousands of historic artifacts they cleaned and preserved. I've been to dozens of museums and seen a few similar artifacts, but those were damaged and worn, often just pieces patched together for display. What is different here is that these are new, unused, and cleaned to their original quality and sheen.



Our guide explains how the Arabia was uncovered



The pit, pumps, and portions of the boat



Colorful beads, including trade beads of the type Lewis & Clark used for Indian trade



Complete vases in pristine condition



Liquor bottles, including a case of champagne still bubbly and drinkable



Bottled sweet pickles, still edible



Clay pipe bowls, by the hundreds



Wooden matches, previously not known to have been invented by this date



A room full of new leather boots: men's, women's, children, all paired

Day 7. May 24 – Independence, MO

(Bert) How many amendments to the U.S. Constitution have been proposed?

Of the many places we visit today, my favorite is the Truman Library and Museum, and of the exhibits I found one an interesting curiosity and another, an education. The curiosity is that 11,000 amendments have been proposed, many of which sound comical today: abolish the U.S. Senate, change the country's name to "United States of the Earth," abolish the Army and Navy, limit personal wealth to \$1 million, etc.

HARRY S. TRUMAN: HIS LIFE AND TIMES



Truman's Oval Office

My educational pick for best exhibit would be the Cold War. Although I lived through the origin of the Cold War, I was too young to be cognizant of the conflict, but I certainly was aware of the latter stages. In the aftermath of World War II, Russia started the expansion of communism as a buffer zone protecting Moscow from a third war with their feared enemy, Germany. Meanwhile, Truman and undersecretary of state Dean Acheson confronted the Soviet Union with their policy of containment, i.e., blocking the spread of communism, a plan that became known as the Truman Doctrine. Secretary of State George Marshall called for massive aid to devastated

European countries, the Marshall Plan. As defense against the Soviet Union, the U.S. and Canada allied with ten European countries to form NATO. In 1948 Truman faced another challenge when the Soviet Union blockaded ground transportation to West Berlin in an attempt to prevent Allied plans for establishing West Germany. Rather than face another war, Truman ordered the Berlin Airlift whereby U.S. planes flew in supplies, a program that lasted a year until the Soviets backed down and lifted the blockade May 12, 1949. The challenges continued with the Korean War, the retreat to Formosa/Taiwan, and the Vietnam War, events more clearly in my memory.

I'll report the rest of the day in photos and captions.



The Courthouse in Independence, MO, where Truman was Jackson County judge



The Truman home, which was also Bess Truman's childhood home



At the National Frontier Trails Museum we found a circa 1800 "gill" (pronounced "jill") cup of the type each man in the Corps of Discovery used to receive his daily allotment of 5 ounces of whiskey. Lewis brought 120 gallons of whiskey for the expedition but after a particularly hard day crossing the Bitterroot Mountains, the captains issued the last of the whiskey for a 4th of July celebration in 1805.



Spire of Christ Temple in Independence, MO

Day 8. May 25 – St. Joseph, MO

(Bert) July 7, 1804, William Clark wrote, "... we came to a sandbar, at a point opposite a fine rich prairie on the north, called St. Michael's. The prairies of this neighborhood have the appearance of distinct farms, divided by narrow strips of woodland, which follow the borders of the small runs leading to the river... Saw a large rat on the side of the bank, killed a wolf on the bank." [Whitehouse wrote Lewis wounded the animal and Colter killed it.]

Hardly a rich prairie anymore, from the third story window of the Wyeth Mansion in an old section of St. Joseph, through a dense stand of tall trees and pocketed with other mansions, I can see the Missouri River where the Corps of Discovery passed. The mansions are stacked beside steep San Francisco style streets and have the smell of old money, although they now can be bought for chunk change as the remodeling, upkeep, and utility bills stretch any buyer's pocketbook.



Third floor window view of St. Joseph and the Missouri River



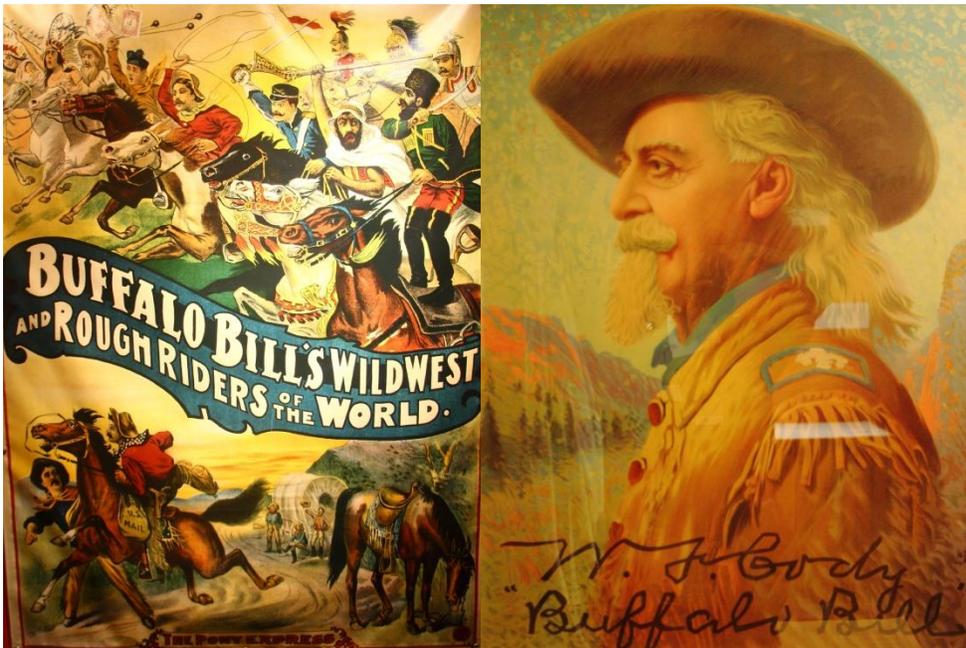
Wyeth Mansion

Catching my attention is one room in the mansion that features bird paintings and a mounted collection of extinct birds, two dead specimens and two carvings. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was a resident of East Texas, Louisiana and southeast U.S. at the time of Lewis and Clark. Although now extinct since the 1940s, a close relative is the Pileated Woodpecker that resides at our campsite. The former range of the Passenger Pigeon would have extended through the first part of the Corps route. On July 12, 1805, William Clark reported, “musquitos & knats verry troublesom all day. a few wild pigions about our Camp.” As for the Carolina Parakeet,

Meriwether Lewis reported on June 26, 1804 he “observed a great number of Parrot queets” near the mouth of the Kansas River where we were just two days ago. The species disappeared from Nebraska by 1875 and it was last seen in South Dakota in 1884. The last specimen recorded in Kansas was one shot in 1904.



Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet



Before Buffalo Bill became a performer he was a Pony Express rider. The Pony Express, initiated April 3, 1860 in St. Joseph and discontinued mid-November 1861 filled the brief gap between the reach of the railroad to St. Joseph and the completion of a coast-to-coast telegraph line. After visiting the original Pony Express stables, we move two blocks to the Patee House which housed the Pony Express offices and had a long history of other visitors, including Jesse James. Now it's a museum of anything and everything old, including the dentistry equipment of Walter Cronkite's father. Walter was born in St. Joseph, but I know his history better for his relocation to Houston when he was one year old. I read Cronkite's autobiography last year and remember his stories about his father. Many of the museum exhibits have one object that does not fit. Can you see it in this photo?



CHAPTER 3. IOWA

Day 9. May 26 – Missouri River bordering western Iowa

(Bert) Borrowing Lewis’s favorite phrase, “We set out” in the morning along the Missouri River. It is easier to see the river as a blue serpentine curve on the left side of our GPS screen. Looking west, I see a flat plain culminated by a thick border of tall trees that block our view of the Missouri. Looking east, I see a ridge of low hills. In between are farmlands.

The Missouri River is a relic of glaciers from the last Ice Age, 18,000 years ago. At the time Lewis and Clark worked their boats upstream on the Missouri, the river was much wider and today’s highway would have been beneath shallow water in spring and summer, or dry silt in winter. Predominant northwesterly winds pushed the dry silt away from the river to the east bank and formed dunes of loess (pronounced “luss”) which we see today. The loess hills extend to Council Bluffs. The Corps of Discovery saw open prairie when they studied the loess hills, but nowadays they are forested, the result of manmade changes to the river, making it narrower and deeper, the draining of marshlands for agricultural purposes, and the suppression of wildfires.

At one time mammals in this area included mammoths, giant beaver, and sloths. Although Thomas Jefferson knew of their extinction in the east—the United States of 1800—he thought they might still exist in the west. Hence, one of his issues to Lewis was to verify their existence or to find archeological evidence of them.



Forest-covered loess hills near Council Bluffs, Iowa



The Missouri River as we cross from Iowa (left) into Nebraska (right)

In the evening, powerful rainstorms rock our RV. Our cell phones warn of severe thunderstorms and when we tune into TV the weathermen talk of the threat of tornadoes. Should they reach us, we are to vacate our RVs and pile into the men's bathroom and are allowed to take pets along. We pass the word to others in the caravan. No tornados are spotted and when the storm passes, a rainbow covers the sky.

Ironically, we hear on the national news that a tornado hit Bryan-College Station, Texas quite close to where we lived from 1971-1996. We had thought a tornado would never hit that triangle between the Brazos and Navasota Rivers and none did during all the years we lived there. I get an e-mail from one of the readers of this blog and still a resident of College Station about a block from where our second home was. He tells me about the tornado which did property damage, but left no injuries in its wake. One of the touchdowns was at an apartment complex where my Grandfather stayed when we lived one block away in our first home.

Day 10. May 27 – Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Boys Town, Nebraska

(Bert) Will Clark of Virginia, in period costume, boards our bus. Although his buckskin clothes fit the role, I doubt William of 1804 wore sunglasses. His wife of 2016 directs the bus driver past beautiful homes bordering a manmade lake to Manawa River. It is here Will tells us they camped on August 3, 1804. Here Silas Goodrich caught a white catfish which Lewis described as having a tail like a dolphin and a fish he had not seen before. They called the place Camp White Catfish and stayed five days while the men mended clothing that became worn during the first ten weeks of the expedition.



Our guide “Will Clark” and his wife Jan



Silas Goodrich showing off his white catfish



Manawa River, site of Camp White Catfish

Next we drive to one of the highest points in Council Bluffs where a monument to Lewis and Clark overlooks the Missouri River, its floodplain, an airport, and U.S. Interstate 29. Formerly

called Kanesville, in 1853 it was renamed Council Bluffs to commemorate the council Lewis and Clark held with the Oto and Missouri Indians. As instructed by Jefferson, Lewis represented to the native Indians the goodwill of the President, the Great Father, and his desire for peaceful trade between the United States and natives.



Clark atop Council Bluffs pointing to Missouri River below



Missouri River and Highway I-29

(Shari) I have not written for a few days because I knew Bert would tell you all you needed to know or cared to know about our day. Today I just feel a need to write. I want to tell you about

Boys Town. It is a tour that is interesting, entertaining, and one that also touches my heart. I remember Boys Town as a movie with Spencer Tracy and as seals sent during Christmas to elicit donations.



“He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother”

I had no idea of its scope, of its size, or of its positive life-changing work. When we arrive at the visitor center, our guide Cathy gets on our bus and takes us around their town for the next two hours, with frequent stops to tour buildings. The campus is so big that it is a town of its own, complete with its own fire department and post office.

Our first stop is the museum where we learn the Boys Town history. In 1917 Father Flanagan borrowed \$90 to start a home for five homeless boys of Omaha. Today Boys Town houses over 500 boys and girls from age 10 to 18 that live on campus with individual families. Cathy tells us there is an 87% success rate of converting at-risk youth to productive successful citizens. Father Flanagan’s theory is that no kid wants to be bad. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example, bad thinking. His theory gives these youth structure, responsibility, and love.



The family couples live in nice houses on campus and are required to work five days a week with one weekend off per month. They get free room and board and an additional \$26,000 per year (2009). They have a minivan at their disposal to take their charges to appointments, church, etc. An average stay is 18 months. I personally cannot see how a change can occur in such a short time but they stress the need to get the child back to his or her family if at all possible. The children attend school right on campus and the facilities are remarkable. Its high school has a theater arts building and field house. We then visit the splendid church and location of Father Flanagan's tomb. Apparently his name has been submitted to the Vatican with the hope of the staff at Boys Town that he be added to the Catholic list of saints. His life's work indeed is impressive and the concept has spread to more Boys Towns scattered across the United States and in other countries too. I wish there were more. We learn 90% of the donated money goes to the children, 5% to facilities and 5% to marketing. That is impressive. At the end of our tour we are taken to their gift shop and I see a long line of our guests buying things to help the cause and even adding a donation to their purchases. I am included in that bunch and at Christmas when I see the Boys Town stickers in the mail, I will put some money in an envelope and send it off. Truly my heart was touched today.

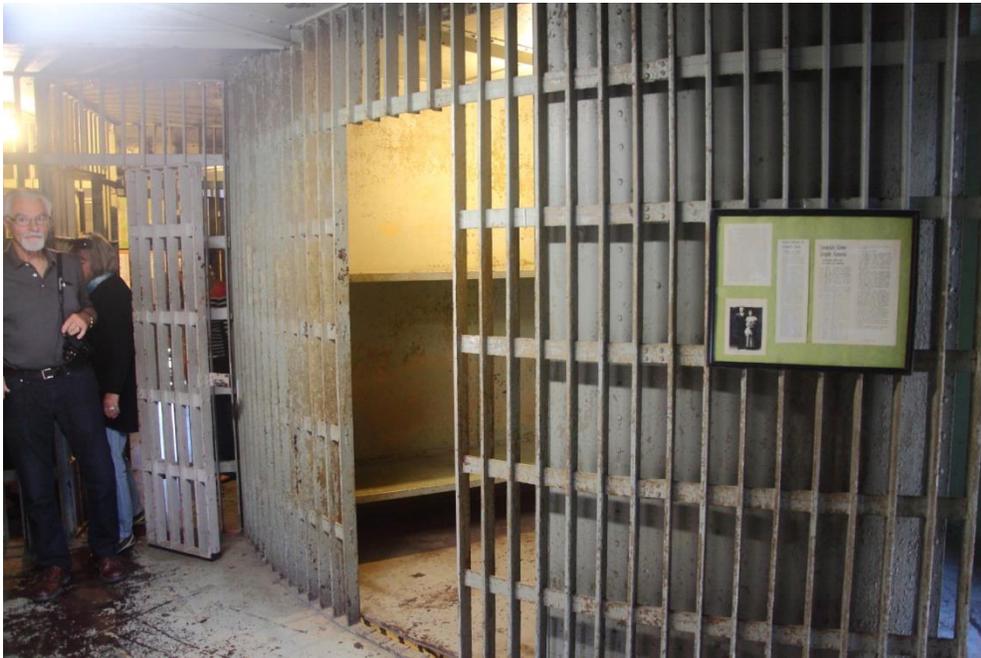


Day 11. May 28 – Council Bluffs, Iowa

(Bert) Jake Bird confessed to 44 murders in 1949. His criminal career started in the 1920s when he was held on an assault charge at Pottawattamie County Jail. During prohibition in 1932, Mrs. Bessie Zike, 50, joined her husband in the county jail after pleading guilty to a charge of maintaining a liquor nuisance. Judge Wheeler fined her \$400 and sentenced her to three months in jail, but since she couldn't pay the fine the judge increased her jail sentence to seven months. These inmates and hundreds more lived out their sentences in the "squirrel cage," a nickname for a 3-story rotating prison. To reduce opportunity for escapes a circular arrangement of cells, like slices of a layered cake, rotated on an axis passing the jailor's vantage point. While in concept this may have been practical, in construction it was abominable. The tiny all-metal cells were Spartan with a metal frame bed and a pail for a toilet. No freedom for exercise, food shoved in on a tray, a once-a-week shower while wearing the only set of clothes which usually were the same as when arrested.



Scale model of rotating prison



Rotating cell behind bars with stationary jailor in view of the rotation

The Squirrel Cage Jail was built in 1885. In addition to rotating jail cells, there was a solitary confinement closet framed by steel bars and so small that the prisoner could only stand, straddling the pot that served as a toilet. Typical confinement was a few hours, but some prisoners were forced in this confinement for weeks. Other jail cells with slightly more freedom were reserved for children of prisoners if both parents were in jail and no one else could keep them.



Solitary confinement was this steel closet behind the vertical bars



Cells for children if both parents were in jail

The jail was certainly “cruel and unusual punishment” by today’s standards. Perhaps one might accept this as old history of the late 1800s or maybe condone it for hardened criminals a hundred years ago. However, among the inmates was a lady jailed for three days for letting her chickens loose. And, amazingly, the Squirrel Cage Jail was still operational until 1969.



Rotating jail cells stacked three floors high

Jailor's Record of Prisoners

1933

NAME	Date of Commitment			CAUSE OF COMMITMENT	Term of Commitment	Personal Property	Money	Date of Discharge			BY WHOM DISCHARGED
	Mo.	Da.	Yr.					Time	Mo.	Da.	
E. J.	7	28	33	Intoxication	5 days	Paroled		7	28	33	J. L. Blanche
Frederick	7	28	33	Breaking & Entering	1 yr.	\$200.00 Bond		7	27	34	J. L. Blanche
Chas.	7	29	33	Assault & Battery		\$100.00 Bond		7	31	33	J. L. Blanche
W. E.	7	31	33	Lodging - Harrison County				8	1	33	Sheriff Cro
W. Gilbert	8	2	33	Assault & Battery		\$50.00 Bond		8	3	33	J. L. Blanche
W. E.	8	2	33	Lodging				8	25	33	Sheriff Cro
James	8	3	33	Obstruction		\$300.00 Bond		8	5	33	J. L. Blanche
Earl A.	8	4	33	Investigation	1 year from 8-4-33			8	4	34	J. L. Blanche
Errett	8	4	33	Desert. & Non-support		\$300.00 Bond		8	7	33	Joe J. Perry
John	8	4	33	Disorderly Conduct	10 days	Fine Paid		8	9	33	E. J. Schatz
Hugh	8	5	33	Transportation	30 days			9	14	33	J. L. Blanche
James E.	8	5	33	Intoxication	10 da.			8	15	33	J. L. Blanche
Earl	8	7	33	Security to keep peace		\$200.00 Bond		8	8	33	J. L. Blanche
Robert	8	8	33	Desertion	bond jury	\$100.00 Bond		8	10	33	J. L. Blanche
Felix	8	9	33	Disorderly Conduct	10 da.	Paroled		8	10	33	J. L. Blanche
Salvas	8	9	33	"	10 da.	Paroled		8	10	33	J. L. Blanche
Harry	8	10	33	Intoxication	10 da.			8	20	33	J. L. Blanche
Duke	8	10	33	"	10 da.			8	20	33	J. L. Blanche
Al	8	10	33	Security to keep peace		\$300.00 Bond		8	10	33	J. L. Blanche
Phillip	8	10	33	Forceful	bond jury	\$100.00 Bond		8	19	33	J. L. Blanche

Prisoner records including crime and length of confinement in 1933

Day 12. May 29 – North Sioux City, South Dakota

(Bert) A quiet travel day with little to report gives me opportunity to answer the question posed May 25. In the exhibit of the dental equipment for Walter Cronkite, Sr. what was the one object that does not fit?



I would hate for a dentist to use that large saw on my teeth!

We usually don't favor KOA campgrounds, preferring instead state, provincial, and national parks and often dry camping (RV jargon for no electricity, etc.), but I'd make the Sioux City KOA an exception. Staff service has been exceptional and very friendly. This evening, following our 5 PM social and travel meeting, KOA heated 12 pizzas, Shari made a huge and healthy salad, and Terry baked delicious chocolate brownies. All of us ate until we could eat no more.

Day 13. May 30 – Sioux City, Iowa

(Bert) Today is a Memorial Day weekend holiday and many places we would otherwise visit are closed, so Shari and I have declared it a free day, i.e., no specific agenda. However, we offered a L.E.O. (Let's Eat Out) opportunity for lunch at Hard Rock Casino in Sioux City, just a few miles from our South Dakota campsite. Almost everyone in our group decides to join us.



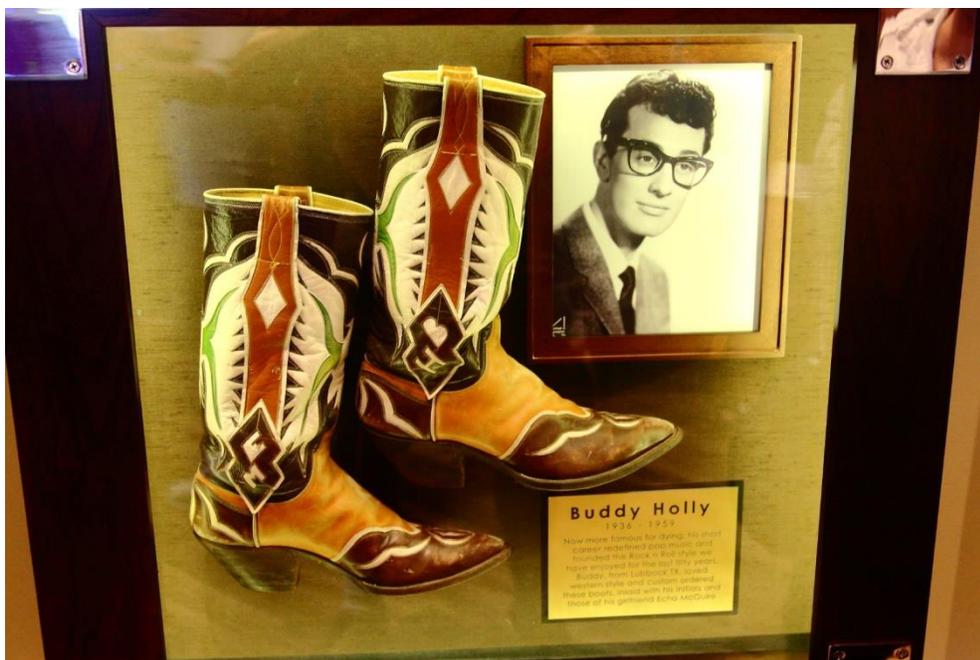
While waiting in line to enter the restaurant, we study a display of license plates. Other than the obviously unusual license plate words/numbers, can you see the two distinct patterns in the arrangement?



Like many casinos the variety of foods on the buffet line is far more than we can sample. After eating too much, some visit the casino (Shari takes a half hour to lose \$10 on the slot machines) and I study the historic collection of rock music memorability mounted on the walls. Dozens of rock stars are represented, including many whose names I do not recognize. Mostly the items are guitars and clothing used in performances. Here are a few:



Paul McCartney's autographed guitar



Buddy Holly's custom made boots

Day 14. May 31 – Sioux City, Iowa

(Bert) If the ghost of Sgt. Charles Floyd were to come back 212 years after his death—presumably the result of a ruptured appendix—he would be shocked on how famous he became. Born in Kentucky, his family moved to Indiana to what is now called Floyd County. At the age of 21, he enlisted in the army on August 1, 1803 and became the first member to join the expedition. He wrote detailed journals describing land quality and soil conditions. Floyd died at what is now Sioux City and the Corps of Discovery conducted a military funeral and buried him

on a high hill overlooking the Missouri River. Because of changes in the river banks, he is now buried a bit farther from the river and in his memory a 100-foot obelisk has been erected, second in height only to the Washington Monument.



Sgt. Floyd's gravesite, Sioux City, Iowa

Many places and things now bear his name, including Floyd River, Floyd's Bluff, Sergeant Floyd Memorial Bridge, Floyd Boulevard, Floyd Cemetery, Sgt. Floyd River Museum, and the Motor Vessel Sgt. Floyd, a riverboat.



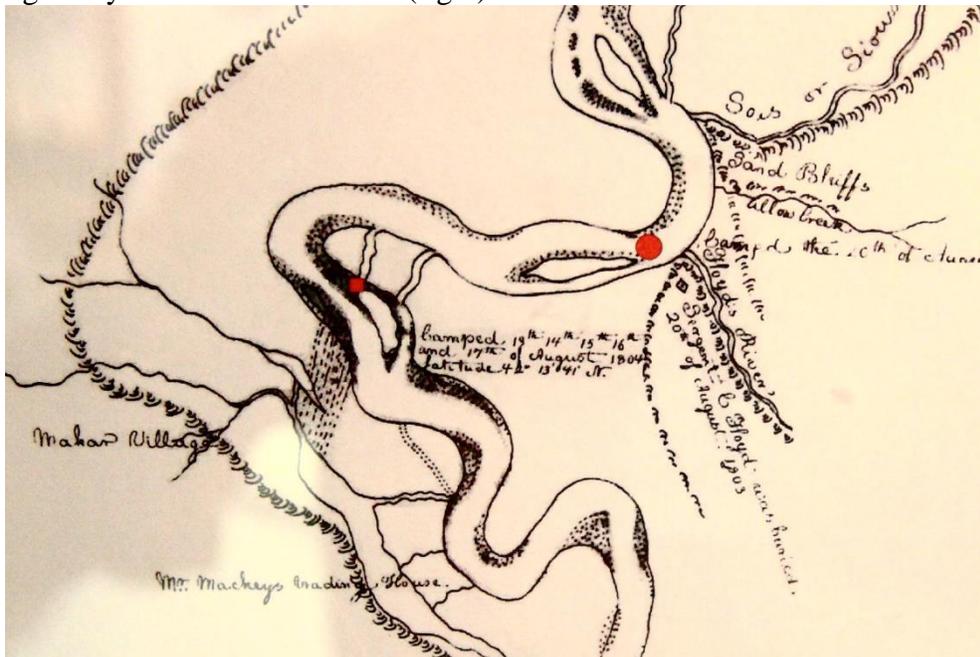
M.V. Sgt. Floyd, now the Sgt. Floyd River Museum

My best find at the Sgt. Floyd River Museum is a “carrot of tobacco,” an item I read about in the Lewis and Clark journals but didn’t recognize. It was commonly used by the Corps members and was a trade item with the Indians.



Jefferson medallion, quill pen, and carrots of tobacco

Another item that caught my interest was William Clark’s extremely detailed and accurate map of the Missouri River between Vermillion, SD and Onawa, IA. The red square (left) is where Sgt. Floyd died and the red dot (right) is where he was buried.



William Clark’s map of the Missouri River



Missouri River with farmland beyond, as viewed looking west from Sgt. Floyd's gravesite



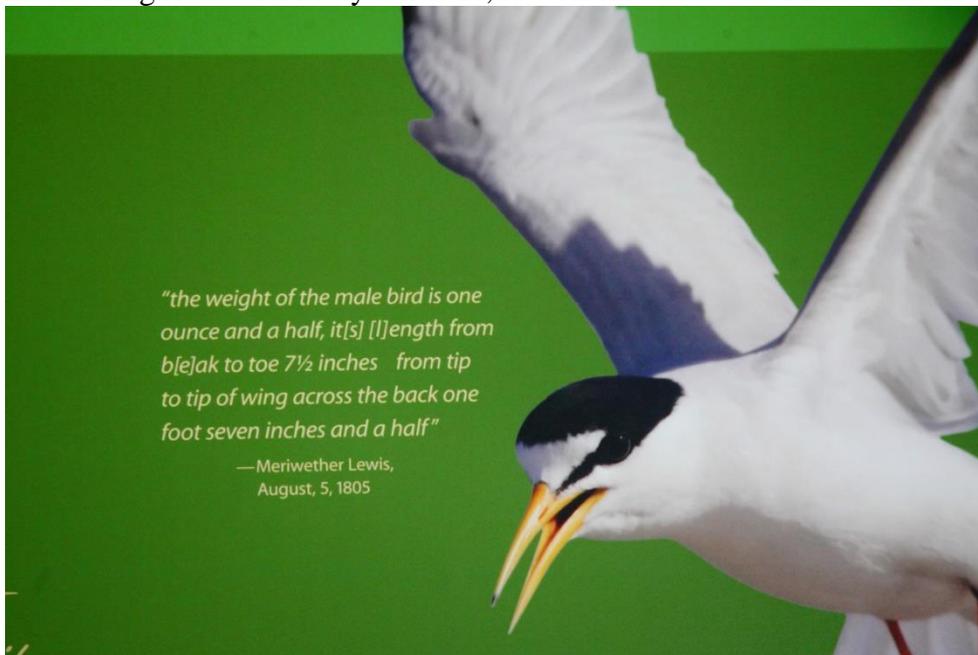
Missouri River beyond Interstate 25 and, in the distance, South Sioux City, Nebraska, as viewed looking north from Sgt. Floyd's gravesite in Sioux City, Iowa

In the afternoon Shari and I visit Lewis and Clark State Park, a very pleasant campground on Blue Lake in the type of setting where we like camping. The special feature here is the Lewis and Clark exhibits. One replica of the keelboat floats at the dock and another is inside the museum. Still another is a wall sized painting with a hole in the bow through which extends a thick braided rope. The rope is attached to a scale that measures how strongly it is pulled. In the photo below Shari does not manage to pull the rope enough to balance the strength of the

Missouri River, so if she were working with the Corps of Discovery the keelboat would drift downstream. I try it next, yet even my full strength only moves against the current at 2 mph.



On August 5, 1805, Meriwether Lewis described Least Terns nesting on the Missouri River, “They lay their eggs on the sand bars without shelter or nest, and produce their young from the 15th to the last of June.” I ask the museum attendant, who I noticed is also a birder, if she has seen any nesting Least Terns on the Missouri and she tells me about one location she has found them. The interior Least Tern is an endangered species because of loss of nesting habitat. In the case here, the dramatic manmade modification to the Missouri River has changed it from a meandering river with many sandbars, to a channeled river with few sandbars.



Day 14. May 31 – Sioux City, Iowa – addendum

(Bert) I have to be careful what I say. With 475 readers, many of whom share our travel journal with others, there is bound to be someone who knows more about a blog subject than me. So, Marilyn, one of our astute readers, commented on my list of Floyd namesakes and specifically Floyd County. As a child in school in Iowa she had to learn the origin of the county names and remembered that Floyd County, Iowa was named after Sgt. Charles Floyd. That prompted me to check my sources. While Charles Floyd did move to Indiana with his parents, the county named after him is in Iowa, not Indiana as I stated. Since I knew there was also a Floyd County, Texas I was curious about its namesake and an Internet search gave me more details than I expected. There are at least six U.S. states with a Floyd County. Charles's uncle John Floyd was governor of Virginia and its Floyd County is named after John. Floyd County, Indiana, is named after John Floyd whose uncle is Davis Floyd. Georgia named their county after John Floyd and Kentucky's is named after Col. John Floyd. That leaves Texas whose Floyd County is named after Dolphin Ward Floyd.

I was also questioned on whether the 100-ft Floyd Monument was actually the second highest obelisk in the U.S. What about the San Jacinto Monument in Texas? So, I Googled the monuments and found San Jacinto is either 567 or 570 ft. and the Washington Monument is shorter at 555 ft. However, I said obelisk, not monument, and San Jacinto is not an obelisk, namely, "a tall, four-sided, narrow tapering monument which ends in a pyramid-like shape or pyramidion at the top."

Bottom line: I got Floyd County, Indiana wrong and Floyd Monument right. Keep your comments coming!

CHAPTER 4. SOUTH DAKOTA

Day 15. June 1 – North Sioux City to Mitchell, South Dakota

(Bert) With the demise of Sgt. Floyd, the Corps of Discovery needed a replacement quartermaster. Although this was a military expedition, Captains Lewis and Clark allowed the men to vote on his replacement. Clark wrote, "ordered a vote for a Serjeant to chuse one of three which may be the highest number ... the highest numbers are P. Gass had 19 Votes, Bratten & Gibson." This is the first of several votes taken during the expedition and the first election west of the Mississippi River. That day Clark also noted a "great deel of Elk Sign," and the site of the encampment August 22, 1804 is now called Elk Point, first settled in 1859. Nowadays there are no wild elk in South Dakota and most of North Dakota.



Corp of Discovery campsite at Elk Point, South Dakota



Heritage Park in Elk Point

William Clark tells a curious story in his journal of August 24, 1804.

“Capt Lewis and my Self Concluded to visit a High Hill Situated in an emence Plain three Leagues N. 20 W. from the mouth of White Stone river, this hill appear to be of a Conic form and by all the different Nations in this quater is Supposed to be a place of Deavels or that they are in human form with remarkable large heads and about 18 inches high; that they (remarkably) are very watchfull and ar armed with Sharp arrows with

which they can kill at a great distance; they are said to kill all persons who are so hardy as to attempt to approach the hill; they (have a) state that tradition informs them that ma[n]y indians have suffered by these little people and among others that three Maha men fell a sacrifice to their murceyleless fury not meany years since—so much do the Mahas Souix Ottoes and other neibhbouring nations believe this fable that no consideration is sufficient to induce them to approach this hill.”

The next day Lewis, Clark and several of their men hiked inland several miles from the Missouri River in order to confirm the story. They did not find the little people, but they did find their first big herd of bison as well as elk, burrowing holes of coyotes or badgers, meadowlarks, swallows, and their first bat. It is the Bank Swallows, or perhaps Northern Rough-winged Swallows that could have accounted for the spirits that haunted the Indians, as they nest in burrows of hillsides and seem magically to appear from the hill.

Near Vermillion, South Dakota we make a short detour to visit Spirit Mound. Even from a mile off, the conical mound oddly pushes up like a pimple on a flat plain. If we had more time we would love to hike to the mound. No spirits, no bison, no badgers. Instead, I take photos and listen to the Dickcissels singing from the prairie grass.

We continue toward Mitchell, passing miles of farmlands with shallow ponds of rainwater. A few host flocks of Franklin’s Gulls, probably in migration farther north. The rain has been so plentiful that the farmers have delayed planting. To make a statement, one farmer has hitched a motorboat to a tiller and set it flat on the soggy ground and an inch of water.



Spirit Mound



Spirit Mound, probably looking much like it did when viewed by Lewis and Clark

Day 16. June 2 – Mitchell, South Dakota

(Bert) Although the hillside was often visited by Mitchell residents, for years no one questioned why the ground was so uneven. Finally, one man did and that led to the discovery of the Prehistoric Indian Village. The uneven ground marks the walled outlines of 70-80 lodges in a village surrounded on two sides by a wall and a moat.



Scale model of the prehistoric Indian village with its fence and moat

Now archeology students come in the summer, one month per year, to remove one inch of soil from the site. A large building called an archeodome was constructed over the remains of one lodge that is being excavated inch by inch to reveal how this tribe of Indians lived along the James River 1000 years ago. Inside the enclosure we see the cache pit where they stored corn and other food, and a midden containing thousands of bone fragments from the bison they hunted.



Archeodome over a single Indian lodge



Archeological dig site of Indian lodge



Cache pit for storing food



Midden or garbage dump with thousands of bison bone fragments

In the museum is a recreation of what archeologists think the wattle and dab lodges looked like. They resemble the Mandan lodges that Lewis and Clark described 800 years later, farther up the Missouri River from where we are now. By the time of the Corps of Discovery, the Indians were using horses acquired from the Spanish in the 1500s. However, at the time of the James River site, the Indians used dogs for work animals, especially to pull a travois, a pair of poles stretching a buffalo hide and dragged on the ground.



Recreation of lodge on right and photo of 1870 Mandan lodge in background

Corn was an important part of the Indian diet, a crop that had been domesticated 5000 years ago in the Tehuacan Valley of what is now Mexico. Now corn cobs are used in Mitchell to decorate the famous Corn Palace.



Map tracing the movement of the knowledge of domesticated corn



World's only corn palace in Mitchell, South Dakota. It is decorated each year with a different theme

Day 17. June 3 – Chamberlain, South Dakota

(Bert) “This Camp is Situated in a butifull Plain Serounded with Timer to the extent of 3/4 of a mile in which there is great quantities of find Plumbs,” wrote William Clark on September 16, 1804.

From the towering hillside, now a highway rest stop, we look down to where Clark’s Plum Camp once lay beside the Missouri River. Now we see Oacoma across the river and Chamberlain on the other side of I-90. The Corps of Discovery camped three days to dry out their equipment after days of rain and cold wind. For us, it has rained the last few nights and we certainly have experienced very strong winds, although not cold in June. Lewis reported seeing pronghorns, coyotes, magpies, mule deer, prairie dogs, and jackrabbits. Hoping to see some wildlife, a few of us hike the trails near the visitor’s center. Birdlife is plentiful, if elusive, and I tally 18 species, but not a magpie. The “Timer” now is cedar, perhaps the same Clark reported.



View of Missouri River toward Oacoma, South Dakota



Western Kingbird found on nature trail at Chamberlain rest stop

(Shari) Bert is at it again. Proselytizing, i.e., making birders out of non-birders. We stop at a rest area with nature trails. At least four other couples depart camp early enough to join Bert on a nature walk. Binoculars go up and down as movement is seen from tree to tree across the sky. I get bored pretty quickly and walk my own direction. I understand later that there was a nice variety of birds seen if only for a second or two.

(Bert) We descend the hillside and Shari and I eat a leisurely lunch in Chamberlain since our museum tour does not start until 1 PM. The Akta Lakota Museum is at a difficult-to-access site adjacent to St. Joseph's Indian School and street parking for our 18 RVs is challenging. We string them up and down the streets and around the loop circling the school.

(Shari) After a leisurely time at the visitor's center Bert and I check out parking arrangements at the Indian museum. We are told to park the group along the street. Well you can see what's coming next. As soon as most have parked an official meets us and doesn't like where we parked. I convince him we will be okay for a few hours—really, the reason is our guests won't like moving—and he allows it. It is a bit of a mess but all are parked safely.

(Bert) Unlike the permanent Mandan style lodges we saw at the previous museum the Lakota lived in portable teepees. A film illustrates how easily two squaws could erect a tall teepee, and later Peggy tells me how as a Girl Scout she helped her father erect teepees. Browsing the museum exhibits, the ones that catch my interest are the cradleboard of the type Sakakawea carried her pappoose Jean Baptist, a cap adorned with porcupine quills, and the arrangement of adz that are similar to the ones my grandfather found on his Wisconsin farm while plowing.



Shari and a decorated Lakota teepee



Cradleboard of the type Sakakaweia used



Adz



Porcupine quill bonnet

(Shari) After the museum visit, film showing, and tour, we head to the next campground beside a lake and, amazingly, all get parked lickety split. Best of all, later we all have either a steak or shrimp dinner at a restaurant overlooking the lake. Great food! Great company! Great time!



Short Bull Family Indian sculptures near Pierre, South Dakota

Day 18. June 4 – Pierre, South Dakota

(Bert) Tensions were tight September 25, 1804. Two days before, Clark wrote, “three Souex boys Came to us Swam the river and informd that the Band of Seaux called the Tetongues [Tetons] of 80 Lodges were Camped at the next Creek above, & 60 Lodges more a Short distance above.” The next day Clark wrote, “passed a Island on the S.S. on which we Saw Several Elk, about 1½ Miles long Called Good humered Isld.”



Good Humored Island on Missouri River, Pierre, South Dakota

We stand opposite Good Humored Island now, separated by the Missouri River. On our left is the mouth of another river. Clark had found out that the Sioux were camped about two miles up that river, so he wrote, “we Shall Call the River after that Nation, Teton.”



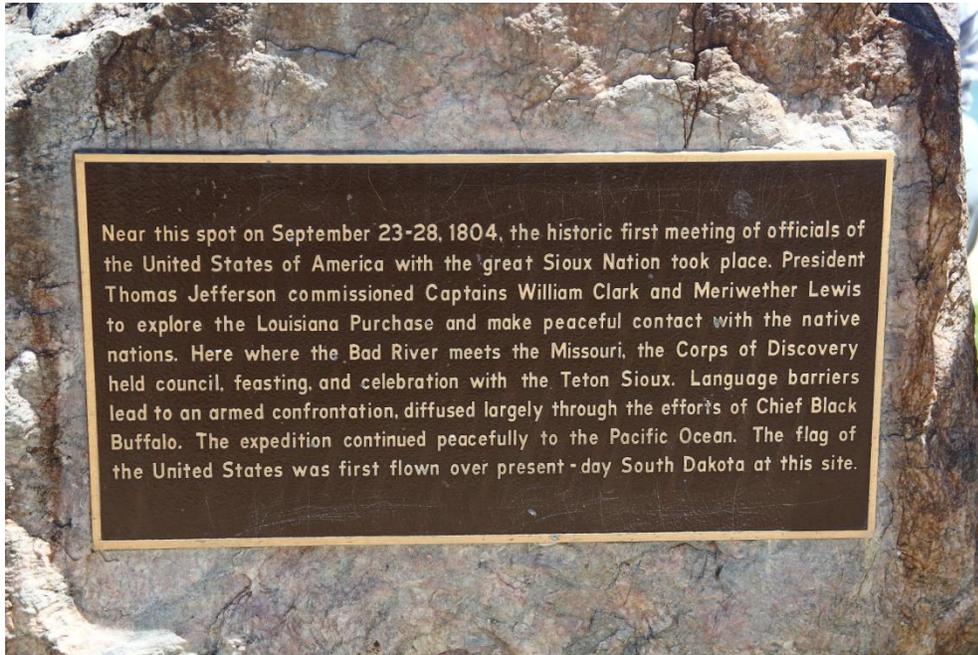
Teton River (Bad River) confluence with Missouri River

Lewis and Clark were expecting trouble with the Teton Sioux, as they had received reports from French and Spanish traders that this tribe stopped trade farther upstream and confiscated trade items at ruinously low prices. The meetings with the Tetons did not go well. At one point the young men strung their arrows, an action equivalent to cocking a rifle. Lewis and Clark refused to be bullied by the Tetons, even though their Corps was severely outnumbered 10 to 1. On the 25th Lewis delivered his speech, but it was cut short because they lacked a good interpreter. They “gave a Medal to the Grand Chief Calld. *In Indian Un ton gar Sar bar* in French *Beeffe nure Black Buffalow*, Said to be a good Man.”



Jefferson medal of the type Lewis and Clark presented to the most important chiefs

They invited the chiefs on the keelboat, but the Teton became very troublesome and Captain Lewis ordered the men to arms. The men took the boats about a mile upstream, then camped and posted guards. The Corps of Discovery had survived their first conflict with Native Americans. Clark ends his September 25 journal, "I call this Island bad humered Island as we were in a bad humer." The river he called Teton is now called Bad River.



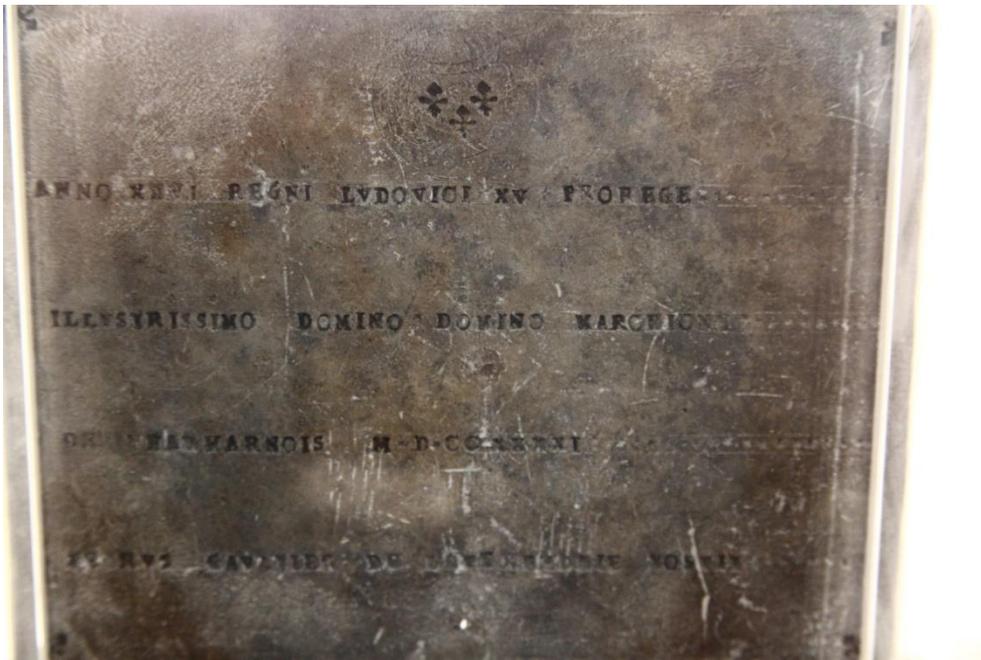
Plaque marking Lewis and Clark's meeting with the Teton Sioux

Standing on the spot of these actions, our guide repeats the above story and tells us how Chief Black Buffalo aided in calming the young warriors. As I listen I rotate my cap, putting the rim to my back to keep it from flying off my head in the strong winds this afternoon.

The wind is even stronger, perhaps 40 mph, when we drive to the cliff overlooking Fort Pierre and the Missouri River. Here fly three flags—United States, South Dakota, and France—marking the spot of an amazing discovery. On February 16, 1913, teenagers found a lead plate partially buried beneath some rocks. Thinking they could get money for its lead, they took it to a local print shop. Instead, the owner contacted State Historian Doane Robinson. The plate was engraved with French translated as "In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Louis XV, the most illustrious Lord, the Lord Marquis of Beauharnois being Viceroy, 1741, Pierre Gaultier De La Verendrye placed this." Earlier in the day, we saw the original lead plate and its engraving at the Cultural Heritage Center. The La Verendrye brothers visited the confluence of these two rivers 63 years before Lewis and Clark.



Town of Fort Pierre along the Missouri River



Lead plate left by the La Verendrye brothers in 1741

CHAPTER 5. NORTH DAKOTA

Day 19. June 5 – Pierre, South Dakota to Bismarck, North Dakota

(Bert) I mentioned earlier that at Plum Camp, Lewis reported seeing pronghorns, coyotes, magpies, mule deer, prairie dogs, and jackrabbits. We've missed most of those species so far, but today 130 miles north of Plum Camp we start seeing some. Shari and I spot a coyote on the edge of a plowed field and later Jeff tells us he saw three coyotes there beside a dead deer. I spot a live mule deer and on our way to the Sakakawea and Sitting Bull Monuments I see my first Black-billed Magpie of the trip and we stop to see a prairie dog town.

One bird we see that Lewis and Clark did not is Ring-necked Pheasant, a game bird introduced to the U.S. from Asia. We had an early 7 AM start this morning and just outside of Pierre we start seeing the pheasants in the green space beside the highway and also in the fallow fields. Shari and I start a count and by the time we pass through Sully County we see 25 pheasants. After passing through Potter County the total reaches 43 pheasants. Most are males that catch rays of the rising sun as gold and red medallions on their colorful feathers. Western Meadowlarks sing from 4-ft. posts along the road and ducks—mostly Mallards—float in small ponds that collect in low spots in the farm fields.

We cross the Missouri River at the mouth of Grand River. It is here that Lewis and Clark found three Arikara villages of earth lodges October 8-15, 1804. Once 32 villages, much of the population was wiped out by smallpox in the 1780s. Lewis and Clark had friendly relations with the Arikara, especially in regard to future trading, and the Indians agreed to send a delegation to see President Jefferson when the Corps returned the next year.



Near mouth of Grand River, Missouri River blocked by Oahe Dam to form Lake Oahe

We continue down a side road paralleling the Missouri River until we come to the monuments, one for Sakakawea and another for Sitting Bull in the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Although sometimes disputed, Sakakawea died of putrid fever at Fort Manuel at the age of 25, six years after the expedition.



Monuments to Sakakawea and Sitting Bull along the Missouri River

Continuing along the Standing Rock National Native American Scenic Byway we see herds of Bison and more prairie dog towns. The treeless rolling hill countryside stretches verdant for miles in every direction.



Endless plains extend beyond Sakakawea monument and our RV



Bison at Standing Rock Indian Reservation

(Shari) The group starts singing, “Here we are like birds in the wilderness, birds in the wilderness, birds in the wilderness. Here we are like birds in the wilderness, awaiting Bert and Shari.” Social starts at 5 PM and we are late arriving because we are stuck at the main gate paying for our group, telling the attendant who is where, getting pole stickers, getting car stickers, and deciphering who has a tow and who does not. This takes longer than we anticipate as we do not factor in time for a new attendant to learn the system. So, yes we are late. Oh well, hope they can carry on without us. Our travel meeting occurs on time though.

The day is so pretty and the campground so nice that we buy some firewood to make a campfire. A large group gathers after dinner and we roast s'mores over the fire with ingredients supplied by Marsha and Dick. Bert wants me to get out the ukulele but since I have not practiced in months, I am afraid I will hit too many wrong notes. The group starts chanting "Ukulele" over and over until I finally relent and get it. We pass out song sheets and have a surprising amount of good singers. Thank goodness as they cover up my wrong notes. One song did not work out so well and Ray remarks it sounded like a dirge. Bert retorts that I can't play it faster. Ha, ha, very funny but actually true.



Making s'mores over a campfire, followed by a sing-along

Day 20. June 6 – Mandan and Bismarck, North Dakota

(Bert) "If we eat, you shall eat, if we starve, you must starve also," said Sheheke. It was October 26, 1804 and the Mandan Indian chief was addressing Meriwether Lewis. The Corps of Discovery had maneuvered their three boats upstream until ice started forming on the Missouri River and winter was setting in. It was time to stop, build a fort, and spend the winter with the Mandans. Today we stand on the hillside in the midst of On-A-Slant, the recreation of a Mandan village that before the advent of Europeans encompassed 85 earthen mound lodges in a five acre plot. We can still see the outlines of the lodges in the grassy hillside.



Scale model of On-A-Slant village based on earthen depressions

In 1575 On-A-Slant was the southernmost of the Mandan villages along the Missouri. Smallpox, the same disease that ravaged Athens and killed 2000 people per day in Rome, spread from Texas to the Mandan in 1781, reducing the population from 10,000 to 15,000 people to a few thousand. Sheheke, which means “White Coyote,” was age 15 at the time and with other surviving Mandans left On-A-Slant Village and moved north to Mitutanka, near Knife River.



Recreation of several lodges at On-A-Slant, a Mandan village

Today we walk through the village and inspect the inside of the lodges. Their spacious quarters are perhaps deceiving and would seem more crowded if they were filled with three generations, dogs, favorite horses, a large central campfire, and all the necessities for cooking, sleeping, hunting, and farming.



Mandan lodge



Artist's depiction of the inside of a Mandan lodge



Painting of Mandan village as it was expected to appear when the Corps of Discovery wintered

Some 70 years after Lewis and Clark's visit, the site of On-A-Slant became part of the Fort Abraham Lincoln Military Reservation, established by President Ulysses S. Grant. We are camping on the reservation, now a state park, and visit the home of its most famous resident, General Custer. We are guided through the spacious and well-appointed home by a military man dressed in period uniform and fixed in time to 1876. When asked questions about Custer's death or his infamous Battle of the Little Bighorn, the military man is confused and says, "Well, I hope he isn't dying soon." We can't stump him on a question as he only knows 1873-76, the period when Fort Abraham Lincoln existed.



General Custer and Mrs. Custer's home at Fort Abraham Lincoln Military Reservation



Inside the Custer home, showing many original pieces owned by the Custers

Day 21. June 7 – Bismarck, North Dakota

(Bert) When Lewis and Clark met Sakakawea it was a surprise. Their expectation was that translator French-Canadian trader Toussaint Charbonneau was not bringing along his wife (he left his other wife at home). Not only was Lewis adding the only woman to the expedition, but also she was pregnant.

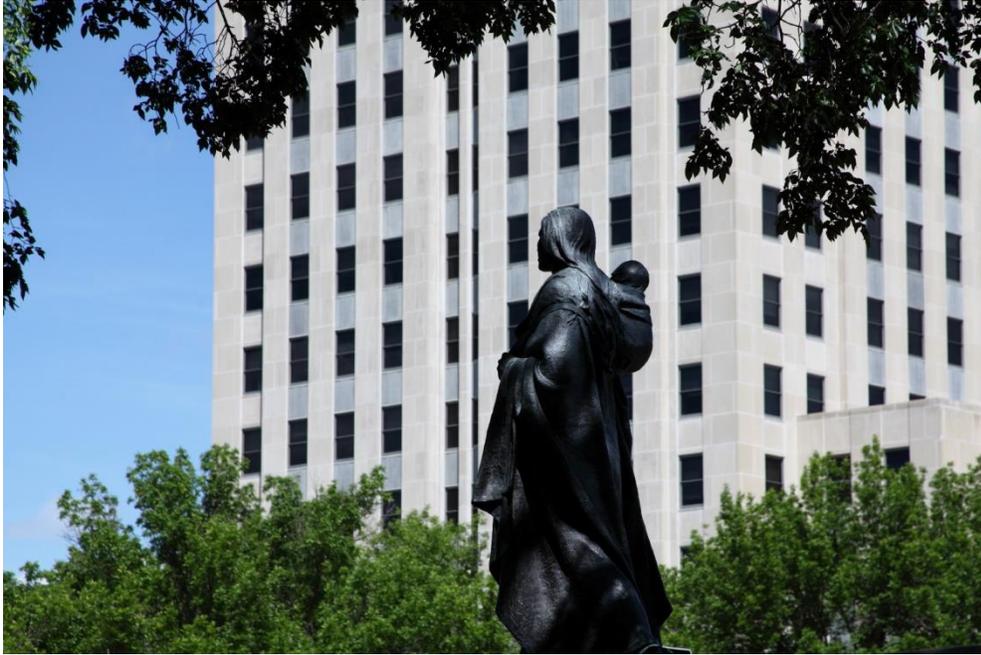
Sakakawea was a Shoshone and at an early age was captured by the Hidatsa and was raised by them thereafter. Charbonneau obtained Sakakawea by trading with the Hidatsa. As we will see in our journey along the Missouri, Sakakawea plays a key role in the expedition. Here in Bismarck at the North Dakota Heritage Center State Museum, a strikingly modern building, I find a photo of Sakakawea's great-great-granddaughter, Mink Woman. Mink served as a model for the 1901 statue of Sakakawea. I ask the docent for the location of the Sakakawea statue and then lead the group outside and up the sidewalk shrouded by old trees. We photograph the statue from many angles and on one photo I catch the tall state capitol building in the background.



North Dakota Heritage Center State Museum



Sakakawea's great-great-granddaughter, Mink Woman



1901 statue of Sakakawea with North Dakota capitol building in background

While at Fort Mandan, Sakakawea was in a troubled labor. Lewis, who had been briefly trained by Dr. Benjamin Rush, the most noted doctor in America, attempted to help her. Lewis also learned a lot from his mother about herbal remedies, so he was willing to try the suggestion of making a drink from the rattles of a rattlesnake. After taking the solution, Sakakawea quickly gave birth to Jean Baptiste. I suspect Lewis scratched his head, wondering if the rattlesnake potion did the trick or the timing was just coincidental.



Statue of Sakakawea and Jean Baptiste Charbonneau

Day 22. June 8 – Fort Mandan, North Dakota

(Bert) Its exact location is not known and the fort is thought now to lie beneath the Missouri due to changes in the river channel. In the winter of 1804-05 the Corps built a fort from the numerous cottonwood trees along the river's edge, barely finishing its construction before the cold winter set in—a winter which eventually reached a low of -44°F , as recorded by Lewis.



Fort Mandan recreation



We walk through the gate of Fort Mandan, refabricated from good historical details. Surrounding a central courtyard is a succession of small rooms built on three sides of the fort, the fourth being a stockade wall of upright timbers. In the recreation, each room is furnished to display a particular aspect of their winter retreat: woodworking, hunting, games and music, local food, gunpowder storage, blacksmithing, trade goods, journal writing, military attire, and fur tanning.





Our guide brings out a blunderbuss and allows us to hold this very heavy gun. That quickly becomes a photo op as it is passed from one to another.



The site of Fort Mandan was near the five Mandan and Hidatsa villages at the mouth of the Knife River, so the men were able to learn much about the life of the Native Americans. Twenty-eight years later, German Prince Maximilian and Swiss artist Bodmer came to the area and Karl Bodmer painted many scenes of the life of the Mandan and Hidatsa. We see some of his prints on display at North Dakota Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center.



Print from Maximilian's "Travels in the Interior of North America in the Years 1832-1834"



Dog-Sledges of the Mandan Indians, Vignette XXIX by Karl Bodmer

CHAPTER 6. MONTANA

Day 23. June 9 – Newtown, North Dakota to Fort Peck, Montana

(Bert) On April 17, 1804 the Corps of Discovery passed, “immense quantities of game in every direction ... consisting of herds of Buffalow, Elk, and Antelopes with some deer and woolves.” They were near modern day Williston, North Dakota. Fast forward to 2016 and imagine Lewis sending out his hunters to shoot game for dinner. What would they find?

Except for a very few deer and pronghorns, wild game is gone. Instead, they would find strange giant metal objects scissoring up and down like jackknives and they would see fire spurting from a metal pipe stuck in the ground, a fire that seems to burn without wood or buffalo chips. The moving jackknives spread everywhere across the treeless prairies, as far as the eye could see and the hunters would walk for miles through a town filled with immense buildings and many metal carriages that moved faster than a horse on strange looking wheels.





If the hunters visited their campsite they would be surprised to see a sign named after their captains, Lewis and Clark State Park. There, the Missouri River would look different, far wider than they remembered and if they ask a stranger they would hear that it really isn't a river but rather a wide lake bearing the name of the Indian woman Sakakawea who accompanied them.



Lake Sakakawea at Lewis & Clark State Park, North Dakota

If they followed us for a day to their campsite at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, they would learn a history of what happened to the Indians they had met. Lewis and Clark carried with them Jefferson's message for the Indians to be at peace and to establish trade

with the white men. The good news is that it happened in spades at Fort Union, the most successful highest grossing trade fort in North America. Tribes of many nations traveled from as far away as 600-700 mi. and set up their tents along the Missouri River and the grasslands surrounding the fort which they called the Great White House on the Prairie. They negotiated a trade price, perhaps settling on one buffalo robe for one English wool blanket. They traded their beaver pelts and buffalo robes for metal cooking pots, knives, beads, and, most preciously, calico cotton cloth desirable because it was cooler in summer and was already colored.



Fort Union, “Great White House on the Prairie”



Fort Union recreation



Cotton calico cloth

At the Yellowstone confluence, Clark wrote, “I find it entirely impossible to hunt in the bottoms, those insects being So noumerous and tormenting.” As I walk on the concrete sidewalk beside the river, the mosquitos are still troublesome.



Confluence of Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers

It was at the Yellowstone confluence that Sitting Bull set up his tents in front of Fort Buford. Now on that spot is the Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center and a quarter mile away is Fort Buford where Sitting Bull surrendered. Later, I stand in the room where on July 20,

1881 Sitting Bull handed his Winchester rifle to his son Crow Foot who then handed it to Major Brotherton.



Fort Buford where Sitting Bull surrendered

Sitting Bull became a celebrity during the one year he traveled the U.S. with Buffalo Bill's western show. Later, Sitting Bull organized resistance to U.S. western expansion. He was shot to death in 1890 in a skirmish between his braves and soldiers trying to issue a warrant for his arrest to prevent him from attending a Ghost Dance revivalist ceremony.



Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill



Sitting Bull

Day 24. June 10 – Fort Peck, Montana

(Bert) Before Lewis & Clark, before Native Americans crossed from Siberia, before birds and most mammals, *Tyrannosaurus rex* roamed this part of Montana. We see the reconstructed skeleton of the first found *T. rex* fossil at the visitor's center for Fort Peck dam and power plant. Fort Peck Lake covers the former confluence of the Milk and Missouri rivers where the Corps of Discovery camped on May 8, 1805. Camping at nine different locations in a two-week stay, they had easy hunting of grizzly bear, beaver, bison, deer, and elk.

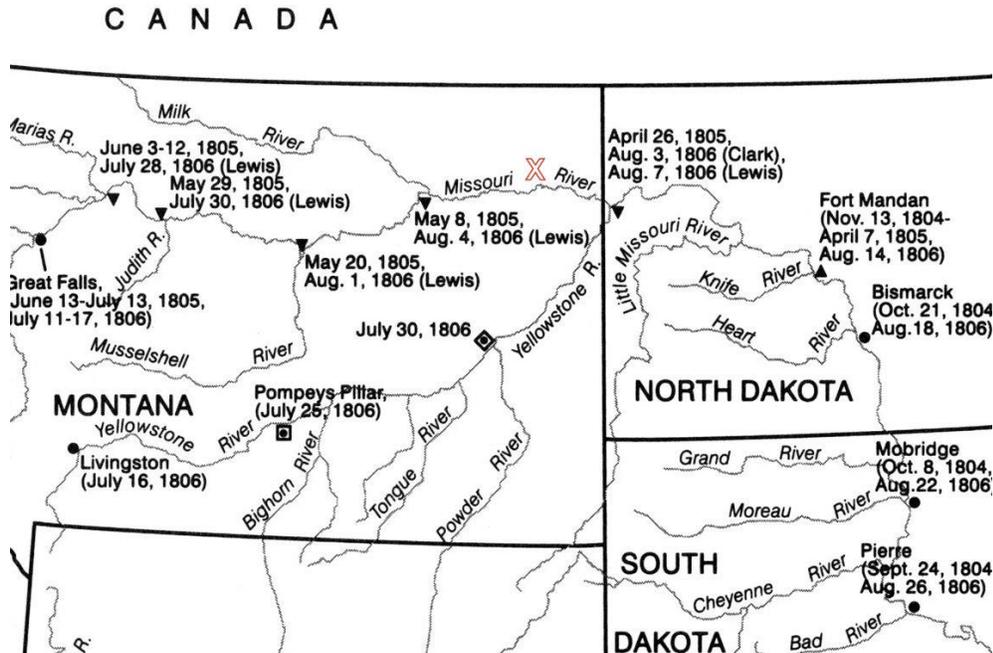


Tyrannosaurus rex found in eastern Montana in 1903



Fort Peck Lake and schematic of former course of Missouri River

It was near here on April 29, 1805 that the party first encountered a grizzly bear, a ferocious animal they had never seen before. I had prepared a PowerPoint presentation on grizzly bears for our caravan. It is a collection of some of Lewis's writings about their bear encounters. After reading a thousand pages of Lewis and Clark journals, it is my opinion that grizzly bears were the most life-threatening experiences of their long journey. The Indians would not attack a bear except in a party of 6-8 braves. The Corps hunters shot them but often could not kill them.



Red X marks the spot where the Corps of Discovery first encountered a grizzly bear

On June 25 Lewis writes about Joseph Fields, “in attempting to get a shoot them had stumbled upon a third which immediately made at him being only a few steps distant; that in running in order to escape from the bear he had leaped down a steep bank of the river on a stony bar where he fell cut his hand bruised his knees and bent his gun. that fortunately for him the bank hid him from the bear when he fell and that by that means he had escaped.”

On July 2, one bear “made at Drewyer and he shot him in the breast at the distance of about 20 feet, the ball fortunately passed through his heart, the stroke knocked the bear down and gave Drewyer time to get out of his sight.”



Mammal exhibit at Fort Peck

On July 15, “a little before dark McNeal returned with his musquet broken off at the breech, and informed me that on his arrival at willow run he had approached a white bear within ten feet without discover him the bear being in the thick brush, the horse took the allarm and turning short threw him immediately under the bear; this animal raised himself on his hinder feet for battle, and gave him time to recover from his fall which he did in an instant and with his clubbed musquet he struck the bear over the head and cut him with the guard of the gun and broke off the breech, the bear stunned with the stroke fell to the ground and began to scratch his head with his feet.”

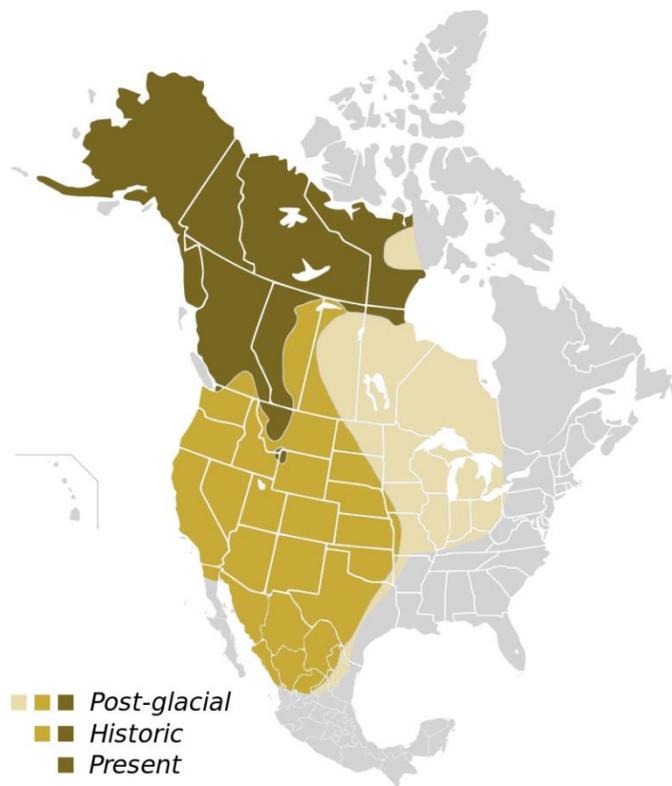
The story I find the most interesting is about the time Lewis could have been killed by a grizzly. If you can get past his phonetic spelling, Lewis is a fascinating writer capable of getting you wrapped up in the tale. His journal for June 14 begins with him hunting a buffalo.

“I slected a fat buffaloe and shot him very well, through the lungs; while I was gazing attentively on the poor anamal discharging blood in streams from his mouth and nostrils, expecting him to fall every instant, and having entirely forgotton to reload my rifle, a large white, or reather brown bear, had perceived and crept on me within 20 steps before I discovered him; in the first moment I drew up my gun to shoot, but at the same instant recolected that she was not loaded and that he was too near for me to hope to perform this opperation before he reached me, as he was then briskly advancing on me; it was an open level plain, not a bush within miles nor a tree within less than three hundred yards of me; the river bank was sloping and not more than three feet above the level of the water; in short there was no place by means of which I could conceal myself from this monster untill I could charge my rifle; in this situation I thought of retreating in a brisk walk as fast as he was advancing untill I could reach a tree about 300 yards below me, but I had no sooner terned myself about but he pitched at me, open mouthed and full speed, I ran about 80 yards and found he gained on me fast, I then run into the water the idea struk me to get into the water to such debth that I could stand and he would be

obliged to swim, and that I could in that situation defend myself with my espontoon; accordingly I ran haistily into the water about waist deep, and faced about and presented the point of my espontoon, at this instant he arrived at the edge of the water within about 20 feet of me; the moment I put myself in this attitude of defence he sudonly wheeled about as if frightened, declined the combat on such unequal grounds, and retreated with quite as great precipitation as he had just before pursued me. as soon as I saw him run of[f] in that manner I returned to the shore and charged my gun, which I had still retained in my hand throughout this curious adventure. I saw him run through the level open plain about three miles, till he disappeared in the woods on medecine river; during the whole of this distance he ran at full speed, sometimes appearing to look behind him as if he expected pursuit.”



I finished my presentation with a map of former, historical, and current ranges of grizzly bears in North America. It may be a bit dated as I've heard a few grizzlies are moving back into the Lower 48 in areas besides parks like Yellowstone.



Day 25. June 11 – Fort Peck to Havre, Montana

(Bert) Shari and I get up very early this morning and are out of camp shortly after 5 AM. We want to get to the next campground early enough to start our laundry before others arrive. We try to stop for breakfast en route, but everything is closed until we reach Malta.

We are driving through endless plains with only a few ranch homes often separated by miles. I've been keeping track of bird and mammal sightings since we started from St. Charles. I know the mammal population is far smaller than Lewis's reports and I suspect the bird population is drastically reduced as well. In the past week or so I've seen three to five pronghorn per day and maybe a mule deer or two each day. By far the most common bird of the prairies is Western Meadowlark which is obvious on fence posts and they sing so loudly that I can hear them in the RV with its windows closed, while traveling 60-65 mph. Surprising to me is that Lewis did not report meadowlarks until much farther west than I've seen them.



A strange sighting very early in the morning.



Endless prairies

Wet pools of rainwater collect ducks, mostly Mallards, and sometimes Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Franklin's Gulls. A real surprise to me is seeing an American Avocet and a Willet at two spots. The Willet is one of the birds Lewis mentions in his journals. On May 9, 1805, Lewis wrote, "I killed four plover this evening of a different species from any I have yet seen ... the notes of this bird are louder and more various than any other of this family."

The few partially wooded spots, usually near water, give me chances to see Red-shafted Flickers, Least Flycatchers and at the edges, Common Grackles. Sometimes when we get a good view of the Missouri River, I find American White Pelicans floating.

We reach today's destination, the town named Havre. Its name is hard to pronounce until you remember the jingle, "I don't want her, you can hav're."

Day 26. June 12 – Marias River and Fort Benton, Montana

(Bert) The horizon is not endless. Beyond the flat prairies we now see a terminus of gently sloping, blue foothills. Lewis and Clark were expecting this sight as they had been following a map drawn from their conversations with the Hidatsa. But then they were hit with a surprise that forced them to make a decision.



First sight of mountains on the horizon near Marias River

I want to stop the RV at the decision point on the Marias River, but cannot find a suitable spot. All we can do is snap a photo of the sign as we pass by. A little beyond is a historical marker at a pullout, so I stop there.



Lewis and Clark were not expecting to find a fork in the Missouri River, as it was not mentioned by the Hidatsa. The two rivers are nearly equal in size. Which river is the true Missouri?

So, on June 4, 1804 Captain Clark follows the south river while Captain Lewis explores the north branch. Although some decisions had been made democratically, this one is decided by the captains who agree the Missouri River continues to the south. The Corps members believe it is the north fork, which Lewis now names Marias River after his cousin Maria Wood back home. The Corps agree to “follow them anywhere.”

We continue on to Fort Benton, a town that certainly deserves the well-worn descriptor “charming.” Poised beside a gentle curve in the Missouri, the village sports a tree-lined promenade trailing the river’s edge. Numerous signs detail the history of town from its days as a trading fort with the Blackfoot, to its short roll in the Indian Wars (1876-77), and its growth to wealth and prosperity as almost the last shipping port along the Missouri.

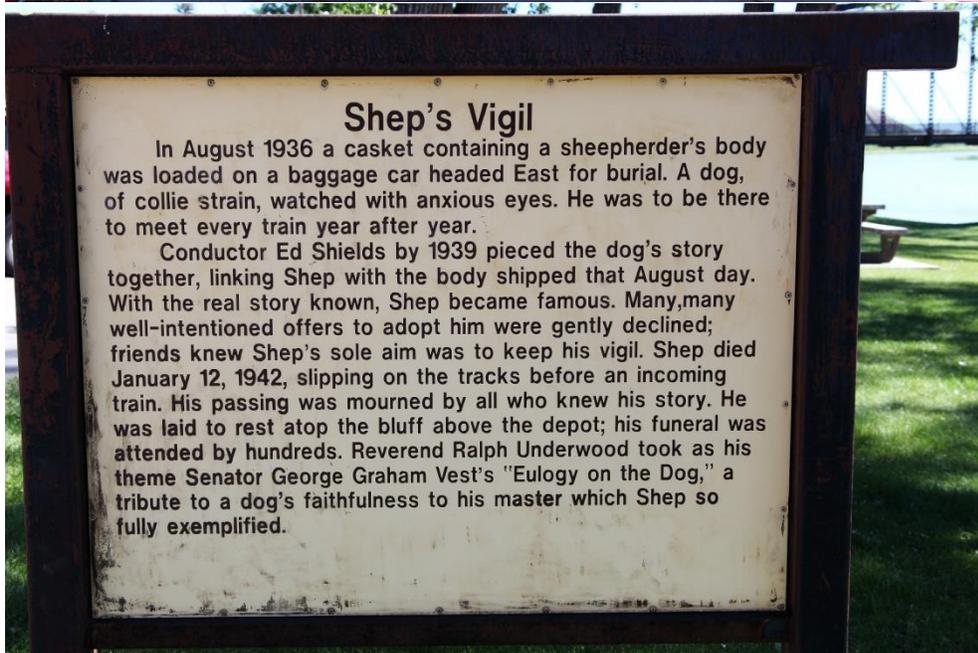


Missouri River at Fort Benton, Montana



Close up of statue of Sakakawea, Pomp, Lewis and Clark – every town needs a stature

Although I learn lots about the history of Fort Benton, the story that most fascinates me is posted beside the sculpture of Shep. Either a coincidence or an attribution, we watched a movie on Netflix last winter with the same story line. You can read the story for yourself from my photo. In the background of Shep is the Missouri River and all of the white fuzz that blurs the green is the snowfall of cottonwood seed pods.



Day 27. June 13 – Great Falls, Montana

(Bert) As Meriwether Lewis is awed by the grandeur of Great Falls, he is also perplexed about the best way to portage. The problem becomes more complicated when he realizes it is not just one falls, but a series of five waterfalls in a river span of twelve miles. When William Clark caught up to Lewis's position, he measured the height of the first falls using a sextant. His measurement of 97 ft. 3/4 in. was remarkably close to the now known height of 96 ft. The Great Falls is now blocked by Ryan Dam, but it is still a dramatic sight for us today, even if we are not seeing it at its high winter flow.



Ryan Dam on Great Falls. Remarkably, we are standing very close to a spot where Lewis may have stood.



A portion of Great Falls

The difficult portage around the falls could have been the breaking point for the expedition. Lewis and Clark directed the Corps up a steep ravine near the breaks and leading to their Upper Portage Camp which Lewis called White Bear Island. We stand at that spot and can see the path they took, but the island was destroyed by the highway, railroad, and changes in the Missouri River and it is now a winter wheat field.



The breaks of the Missouri River with just a tiny spot of the river at the center of the photograph which was taken from Upper River Camp

They had cached much of their goods near the river, including both the red and the white pirogues, Lewis's writing desk, the swivel gun, and many other items they thought they could do without. The rest was pulled, pushed, carried, and dragged up the steep prickly-pear-covered slope on the canoes converted to wheeled carts. Lewis had his men "prepare four sets of truck wheels with couplings, tongues and bodies for transporting our canoes." The wheels were cut from a single cottonwood tree growing along the river. They staged their goods at the river and then made the first 18-mile trip to White Bear Island in one day.



The gravel road traces the path the Corps used to reach Upper Portage Camp



Artist's rendering of the portage to Upper Portage Camp



Captain Clark's map of the Missouri River —the route of the portage is marked in red dots. This journal still can be seen at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

From his discussions with the Indians, Lewis thought they could make the portage in one day. In fact, it took 11 days to complete the portage. Clark wrote on June 23, "... the men has to haul with all their Strength Wate & Art, catching grass & knobes and Stones with their hands to give them more force in drawing on the Canoes & Loads, at every halt, those not employed in reparing the Course, are asleep in a moment ... but no man Complains all go cheerfully on ..."



Statue of Clark, Lewis, Seaman, and York looking toward Great Falls, Montana



Black Eagle Falls, named by Lewis, one of the five waterfalls they portaged

Day 28. June 14 – Great Falls, Montana

(Bert) While on the motor coach, our guide is telling a story, but attention is drawn elsewhere to the drama unfolding on the railroad tracks visible just outside the bus windows. Most of our non-birders probably are not fully aware of what is happening, so I explain. A juvenile Cooper's Hawk is excitedly jumping between the tracks in pursuit of two precocious Killdeer chicks while

the two parents are scolding and putting on their distraction acts. I photograph the hawk through the bus windows before it gives up, perhaps because our idling bus is adding to the commotion. Once outside, I photograph the only two chicks. Possibly the hawk as already dined on the others.



Immature Cooper's Hawk, Great Falls, Montana



Killdeer chick

On yesterday's tour several people asked our guide if he knew where Meriwether Lewis confronted the grizzly and ran into the Missouri River to escape. He did. So here we are at river's edge next to a wireframe grizzly commemorating the spot.



Missouri River where Lewis escaped a grizzly chasing him



Now the bear is chasing Shari

One youth, not yet having proven himself a man, is selected to don the hide of a buffalo calf. So starts a fascinating story told to us by the park ranger at First Peoples Buffalo Jump. We stand in front of a nondescript distant cliff above which is a flat plain, the stage set for the drama to

unfold. The story repeated annually between 900 and 1500 A.D., but not likely later after horses were introduced by the Spanish.

The hide-covered thirteen or fourteen-year-old, called the buffalo runner, mingles with a herd of buffalo, spending hours or maybe a day understanding the movements of the buffalo and determining which old cow is their leader, the one the herd follows. He would crawl toward the old cow, maybe within 30 to 50 ft.



Base of First Peoples Buffalo Jump



Buffalo Decoy, bronze sculpture by Bob Scriver

The buffalo runner has the help of several other youths, these dressed in the furs of wolves. The wolf decoys skulk the edges of the herd, slowly moving them in the direction of the cliff and into the narrow end of a “V” outlined by boundary rock piles. The buffalo runner slowly separates himself from the herd, wandering ever closer to the cliff. Since no cow has claimed the buffalo runner, the lead cow takes responsibility to coax the wayward calf back into the fold. Instead the buffalo runner wanders still closer to the cliff.



Wolf decoy patrols the edge of a V-shaped rock pile



The grassy flat plateau shows no indication that it is at the edge of a cliff

The buffalo runner gauges the distance to the cliff and makes the critical decision. Then he throws off his cloak and dashes full speed to the cliff, directly to a spot where he knows it is a safe place to jump and land just below the ridge and hide behind a boulder. At this signal the wolf-clad youths close in from the sides, directly at the lead cow, frightening her into action. Avoiding the wolf decoys and angry at the Indian youth, the old cow chases the buffalo runner. Seeing the movement, the buffalo herd follows behind their leader. Full speed ahead they charge to the cliff edge, plummeting over the edge before they recognize their mistake. Pushed from behind, the herd follows suit, one by one plunging below, until the whole herd of 100-200 buffalo are over the edge. All along the cliff drop off, the Indian tribe kills surviving buffalo with stone mallets, being careful not to let a single buffalo get away for fear that it will teach other buffalo about the mischievous ways of the Indian.



Buffalo jump sculpture in foreground with landscape painting in background

The women and children gather to butcher the bison, serving up roasted buffalo in celebration, dining on the delicacy of buffalo tongues. The chiefs and fellow braves praise the youth who now becomes an adult brave. The women take all of the rest of the meat for drying, cleaning and scraping the hides, using the brains for curing the hides, using bones for tools, collecting marrow, and eventually finding ways to use all parts of the buffalo.

Day 29. June 15 – Gates of the Mountains, Montana

(Bert) They had been paddling upstream all day surrounded by foothills, headed toward mountains. On Friday, July 19, Meriwether Lewis wrote, “this evening we entered much the most remarkable cliffs that we have yet seen. these cliffs rise from the waters edge on either side perpendicularly to the height of [NB: about] 1200 feet. every object here wears a dark and gloomy aspect. the towering and projecting rocks in many places seem ready to tumble on us. the river appears to have forced its way through this immense body of solid rock for the distance of 5¾ miles and where it makes its exit below has thrown on either side vast columns of rocks mountains high. the river appears to have worn a passage just the width of its channel or 150 yds. it is deep from side to side nor is there in the first 3 miles of this distance a spot except one of a few yards in extent on which a man could rest the sole of his foot. several fine springs burst out at the waters edge from the interstices of the rocks. it happens fortunately that although the current is strong it is not so much so but what it may be overcome with the oars for there is here no possibility of using either the cord or Setting pole. it was late in the evening before I entered this place and was obliged to continue my route until sometime after dark before I found a place sufficiently large to encamp my small party; at length such an one occurred on the left side where we found plenty of lightwood and pitch pine. this rock is a black granite below and appears to be of a much lighter colour above and from the fragments I take it to be flint of a yellowish brown and light cream coloured yellow.— from the singular appearance of this place I called it the gates of the rocky mountains.”

What an appropriate name! “Gates of the Mountains” is still what we call it today as our boat cruises along the Missouri, approaching the vertical rock cliffs. We see the same phenomenon that Lewis saw. At first it appears as a complete rock wall blocking our passage. Then as the boat moves around the slight curve in the river, the rocks appear to move and open in an ever widening gap.



Gates closed



Gates opening



Gates opening



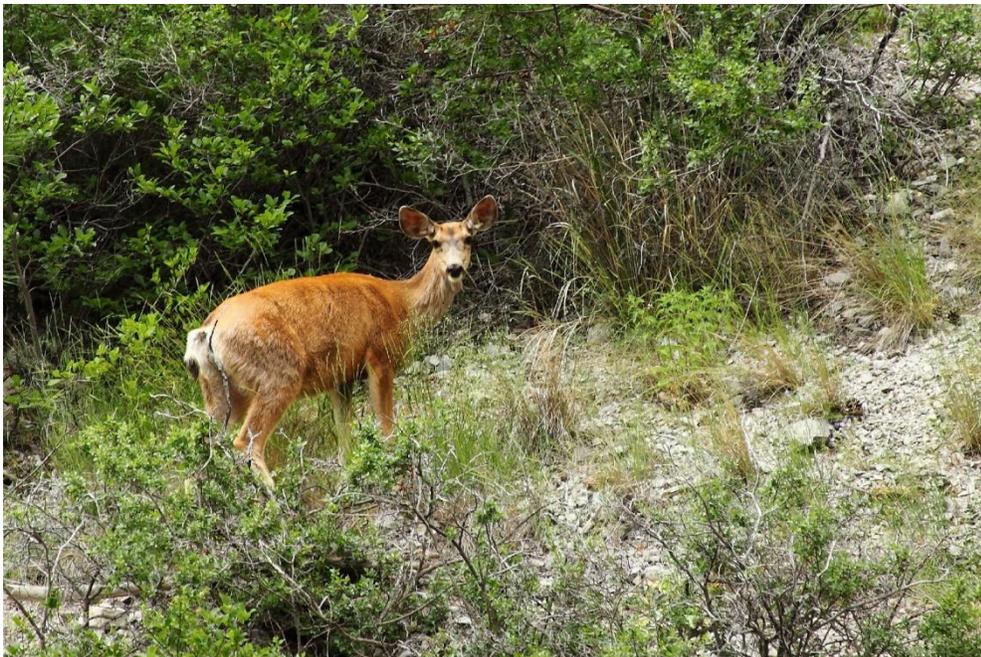
Gates open

By now in our journey we have visited many Lewis and Clark sites that have changed dramatically in the past 212 years, but not today. What we see now is almost identical to what the Corps of Discovery viewed. The water level is a few feet higher, dammed up by the Holter dam, and a few signs tell of backcountry National Forest primitive campsites, but everything else seems untouched by man.



Horizontal sheets of rock forced vertically through time

Wildlife is plentiful and I see mule deer at river's edge, Bighorn sheep very high on the cliffs, American White Pelicans floating on the river, Common Mergansers in flight, Double-crested Cormorants perched on snags, and White-throated Swifts circling far above where Ospreys nest.



Mule deer below the cliffs and at edge of the Missouri River



Cliff Swallow nests actually built in cliffs rather than modern day bridges and overpasses



We are watching a female Bighorn Sheep and her foal at the center of this photo



Same sheep through telephoto lens

Perhaps the strangest, or at least the rarest, thing we see is *Kelseya uniflora*, more commonly known locally as Kelsey's Moss because it resembles moss rather than the flowering plant it is. It is growing on the rocks not far above waterline.



Kelseya uniflora

Day 30. June 16 – Helena, Montana

(Bert) Exhibits at the Montana Historical Society Museum suggest many story subjects for me to write about, but the one I'll tell today is about Clark's Nutcracker, as the museum has a print of John James Audubon's painting.



I have a PowerPoint presentation on the nutcracker as we are nearing the location where William Clark first reported seeing the new species to white man. It was August 22, 1805 when Clark was struggling down the canyon at Salmon River, trying to ascertain whether it could be floated. While studying the countryside he noticed the bird and wrote that day, "I saw to day [a] Bird of the woodpecker kind which fed on Pine burs it's Bill and tale white the wings black every other part of a light brown, and about the Size of a robin."

Clark was the military and map leader, but Lewis was the scientist. Hence, Clark's description is brief and his classification of it as a woodpecker is mistaken. Lewis saw the species farther in their travels and it was on the return trip eastward on May 28, 1806 that he wrote about it in his journals. They were camped at Weippe Prairie after an early attempt to cross the Bitterroot Mountains. Lewis and Clark had not heeded the advice of the Indians who warned of the high snow at that early spring date, so confronted with deep snow, they were now waiting for more to thaw before proceeding.

Lewis described it with his usual thoroughness, immediately correcting Clark's error as to the bird's taxonomy. The journal entry is long and his description is detailed. Here is an abbreviated version: "since my arrival here I have killed several birds of the corvus genus of a kind found only in the rocky mountains and their neighbourhood. [it] has a loud squawling note something like the mewling of a cat. the beak of this bird is 1-1/2 inches long, is proportionably large, black and of the form which characterizes this genus. ... the tail is four and a half inches in length, composed of 12 feathers nearly the same length. the head neck and body of this bird are of a dove colour. ... This bird feeds on the seed of the pine and also on insects. it resides in the rocky mountains at all seasons of the year, and in many parts is the only bird to be found."

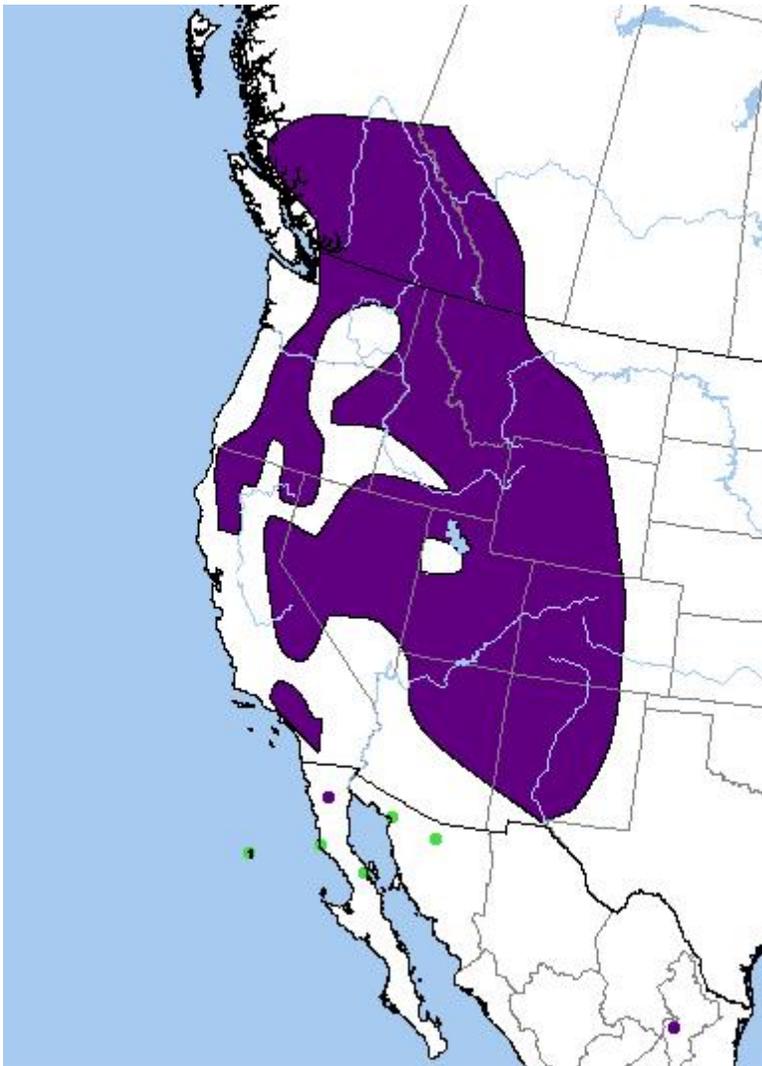


Clark saw his nutcracker near Salmon and Lewis saw his near Camp Chopunnish

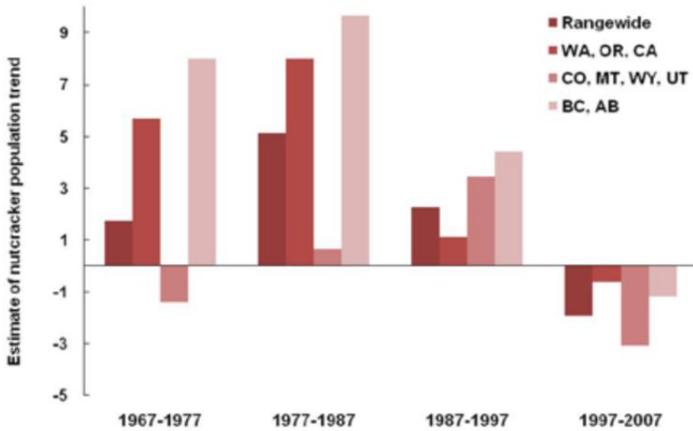


Clark's Nutcracker feeding on seeds of whitebark pine (drawing from Cornell University)

Clark's Nutcracker is found where whitebark pine grows, typically at high elevation, and the bird is the primary seed disperser of the pine. Its range is shown on the map below, but the range is declining because of widespread outbreaks of mountain pine beetle. While the beetle has always attacked the pines, until recently it has not been a problem because forest fires thinned the mature trees and cold weather shortened the season in which the beetles could attack. Climate change has allowed pine beetles to ravage the West and the problem is spreading east across Canada. Forest fires were suppressed for decades, resulting in an abundance of mature pines ripe for beetle attacks. Hotter weather and less rainfall has weakened the defense mechanism of the pines. The warm season has been stretched in time and the cold season often is not sufficient to kill off the beetles. As a result, millions of acres have been destroyed.



Concomitant with the loss of whitebark pine, Clark's Nutcracker has declined since 1997 as shown in the following chart.



My first sighting of Clark’s Nutcracker was August 11, 1980 at Lake Louise, Alberta, but the first time I photographed a nutcracker was August 4, 1997 at the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. It’s not a good photo and was taken in my film camera days with a 300 mm lens not image stabilized. I’d like to get another chance with my modern equipment. I hope to soon.



Day 31. June 17 – Three Forks and Beaverhead Rock, Montana

(Bert) While driving through Broadwater County, I see a sign for York’s Islands pointing to a dirt road to the right. When reading the journals, I did not recall any such place being mentioned. So, when I have Internet access I Google it and find out that after the expedition finished and Clark was tabulating the creeks and rivers, he named an archipelago “York’s 8 islands.”

York was Clark’s slave, an inheritance from his father. Clark’s attitude about slaves was typical of Virginians of the time. York was an unpaid worker expected to do his owner’s bidding. However, during the expedition he enjoyed much more freedom than had he stayed on the tobacco plantations. After the expedition, all of the Corps members received their military pay

which for most of them was \$333.33 for 33+ months of service, plus 300 acres of land. Corporals and sergeants received somewhat more. York received no pay and no land, but he did ask Clark for his freedom. He was denied; although there is one reference that Clark gave him his freedom later. In 2001, President Bill Clinton posthumously granted York the rank of honorary sergeant in the United States Army.



View of snow-capped mountains from York's Islands

Later in the morning we reach the Missouri River headwaters at Three Forks. Lewis named the three tributaries after President Jefferson, Secretary of State Madison, and Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin. Shari stands at the confluence of the Jefferson and the Madison rivers when I take her photo.



Shari at the confluence of the Jefferson and Madison rivers



Swirling waters at confluence of Jefferson River (left) and Madison River (right)

At the next pullout in the state park, I hike a short trail to the top of Fort Rock, named by Lewis. It rises 40 ft. above the floodplain and from this vantage point, Lewis described what he saw, “between the middle and S. E. forks near their junction with the S.W. fork there is a handsome site for a fortification it consists of a limestone rock of an oblong form; it's sides perpendicular and about 25 ft high except at the extremity towards the middle fork where it ascends gradually and like the top is covered with a fine turf or greensward. the top is level and contains about 2 Acres. the rock [r]ises from the level plain as if it had been designed for some such purpose.”

That is what I see too, as I take a series of photos.



From atop Fort Rock, view of Missouri River downstream from confluence of Jefferson and Madison



Gallatin River shortly before it merges with Missouri River

From this historic site, we move on to another. Lewis and Clark desperately needed to make contact with the Shoshone Indians to trade for horses once the river became unnavigable. It is at this juncture that Sakakawea really proves her worth. Previously, her contributions were mostly

gathering native fruits and vegetables. But now, as they were threading their way up the Jefferson River, Sakakawea recognized a rock formation she describes as Beaverhead Rock because it resembles a swimming beaver. She now knows she is near her birthplace and Beaverhead Rock is well known to the Shoshone as well as other Indian tribes.

From more than a mile away, we see the rock from the highway and with a bit of imagination it does resemble a swimming beaver, but loses the resemblance the closer we get. From the opposite direction I can imagine the head and its giant incisors.



Beaverhead Rock viewed from the east



Beaverhead Rock viewed from the west

This evening I give my Clark's Nutcracker presentation. It is followed by a taco party with the main ingredients supplied by Shari and Terry, and the various taco supplements supplied by the group. It is a great success. Some of us stay later to view a portion of the Ken Burns PBS broadcast of the Lewis and Clark expedition recorded on a DVD owned by Richard and Nora.



Taco dinner under a shelter at our campground

Day 32. June 18 – Camp Fortunate and Lemhi Pass, Montana

(Bert) This is the scene in the movie where you whisper, “That would never happen in real life!”

But before we get to that scene, I'll back up the story a bit. The Corps of Discovery had been paddling upstream on the serpentine Jefferson River through a flat plain. Sgt. Patrick Gass complained, “The water is so shallow that we had to drag the canoes, one at a time, almost all the way.”

On August 11 they covered 14 miles by water, but only five miles in a straight line. The next day William Clark wrote, “... men complain verry much of the emence labour they are obliged to undergo and wish very much to leave the river. I passify them.”

Where does the river end? Where are the Shoshone? When can the Corps switch from dugout canoes to horses? As Clark puzzles over the answers, he climbs a rocky outcrop. We do the same this morning, just on the edge of Dillon, Montana. The rocky limestone outcrop is now known as Clark's Lookout and we take turns standing on the exact same spot from which Clark looked out at the seven mountain ranges and the broad valleys in between.



Standing on Clark's Lookout



One of the views of the Beaverhead Valley from Clark's Lookout

The Corps had not seen Indians since they left the Mandans four months earlier. Now Lewis and three men move ahead of the party in search of the Shoshone, passing over the Continental Divide. They find a Shoshone tribe and lead the wary and reluctant band back to where Clark and the men are struggling upriver at the confluence of Red Rock River and Horse Prairie Creek.

When our bus reaches the spot I immediately recognize the campground where we stayed overnight last spring on our way to Northwest Territories. There stands what Lewis described as a “singular mountain in the open plain.” In his time it was an island between rivers; now it is in the midst of Clark Canyon Reservoir.



Lewis’s “singular mountain in the open plain” now surrounded by Clark Canyon Reservoir



Clark Canyon Reservoir

On August 17 the parties meet, Chief Cameahwait leading the Shoshone and Lewis and Clark leading the Corps. Included in the Corps of Discovery is Sakakawea who recognizes an Indian woman. This is the start of the most amazing coincidences. Sakakawea, kidnapped as a Shoshone child, growing up with an enemy Hidatsa tribe, traded to a Frenchman as a wife, accompanying him on the most famous expedition of the century, and now recognizing her homeland, also finds the girl–now woman–who was kidnapped with her five years earlier, but escaped. Then as the parties sit down to parlay, she provides the translation to the Shoshone language and in the midst of the negotiation she recognizes her brother Cameahwait, now a chief. Only in the movies? Or, only in real life! Lewis calls the place Camp Fortunate.

The negotiations are now easy, smoothed by the trust between Sakakawea and Cameahwait. The Corps get their horses. They can ditch the dugout canoes. They can begin the climb over Lemhi Pass and reach the Columbia River.

Based on an assumption without supporting facts, Lewis thought they were only a day's ride from the source of the Columbia and it would all be downstream from there. Not so!

Our school bus struggles up Lemhi Pass, the gravel road so narrow it requires a lead car, and the terrain too rough for the motor coaches we had been hiring earlier in our travels. We reach the top at 7,373 ft. above sea level and peer over the edge, the same view as greeted Lewis and Clark. The view shatters a dream. The Missouri and Columbia rivers are not the Northwest Passage. It will never be the transcontinental route to China. Ours and Lewis's view is of mountain ranges as far as the eye can see.



View from Lemhi Pass

Day 33. June 19 – Bitterroot Mountains, Montana

(Bert) Now with horses supplied by Chief Cameahwait the Corps of Discovery crossed Lemhi Pass and struggled through the Bitterroot Mountains.

One of the squares in Shari's Bingo game, a contest our traveling RV'ers are participating in, is bitterroot, a flower with an edible root that was offered to the Corps as food. Several in our group have been asking various locals for help in locating bitterroot and at Lemhi Pass they finally meet with success. Our guide's daughter shovels out a couple of plants and we can see the root. Even though she warns of its bitter taste, Verner is anxious to sample the root and I am game too. When we do, neither of us taste anything as it is so bland to us.



Bitterroot before blossoms have opened



Bitterroot with roots exposed

The route through the Bitterroot Mountains was long and tedious and the Corps of Discovery and their horses arrive exhausted at what is now Ross's Hole or Sula, Montana.



Bitterroot Mountains at Big Hole National Battlefield



Trapper Peak, 10,157 ft. in elevation

On September 9, the expedition met the Salish Indians. Chief Three Eagles had seen them coming from a distance, two men on horseback and other men leading pack horses. He was surprised that they did not wear blankets. In fact, the Corps members were the first white men

the Salish had ever seen. Three Eagles gave to them robes and blankets and shared their food. Private Joseph Whitehouse wrote, "They have buffalow Robes leather lodges to live in, but have no meat at this time, but gave us abundance of their dried fruit Such as Servis berrys cherries different kinds of roots all of which eat verry well"

Through a transaction that required translation into four languages, Lewis and Clark purchased eleven "ellegant horses," wooden pack saddles, lash chords, and three young colts. They noted that the Salish encampment had 30 lodges, 400 people, and over 500 horses. Lewis called the place Traveler's Rest. They stayed September 4-6, 1805 and returned again July 5, 1806.



Ross's Hole, where the Corps of Discovery met the Salish Indians

CHAPTER 7. IDAHO

Day 34. June 20 – Lolo Trail Montana and Idaho, on to Washington

(Bert) It was the worst of days. It was the best of days.

For us, traveling the Lolo Trail, winding through dense forests on nicely paved roads, following sparkling Lolo Creek, then Lochsa River and Clearwater River, it was a good day, a beautiful spring day. Contrastingly, for the Corps of Discovery the waterway was too swallow for boats and the forests too impregnable to follow the river course, so with horses they rode and walked the old ridge trail that the Indians used, steep ridges covered with the early snow of mid-September 1805. The ridge lies 3500 ft. above the river. The formidable terrain of the Bitterroot Mountains could only be negotiated with the aid of local Indian guides.



Lochsa River along Lolo Trail

William Clark wrote, “Stupendous Mountains principally covered with snow like that on which we stood; we are entirely surrounded by those mountains from which to one unacquainted with them it would have seemed impossible ever to have escaped...”

Meriwether Lewis wrote, September 15, “Several horses slipped and rolled down steep hills which hurt them very much. The one which carried my desk & small trunk turned over & rolled down a mountain for 40 yards & lodged against a tree, broke the desk the horse escaped and appeared but little hurt.”



Lolo Peak, elevation 9096 ft.



Impenetrable forests from the rivers to nearly the ridges

Except for some changes in vegetation, what we see from the bottom up is what Lewis and Clark saw from the top down. However, over 200 years ago the climate was just coming out of the Little Ice Age, so the Corps persevered in much colder weather.

In addition to the rough terrain, the Corps hunters were unable to find game to shoot so they resorted to eating “portable soup,” which they distained. Sgt. John Ordway wrote, “we travelled untill after daark in hopes to find water, but could not find any. we found Some Spots of Snow so we Camped on the top of the Mountain ... we drank a little portable Soup and lay down without any thing else to Satisfy our hunger.”

Though the Corps of Discovery was nearly starving, many in our caravan stop at Syringa Café for lunch, one of the few establishments along the Lolo Trail. The café features fresh huckleberry pie.



For the first time, Lewis reported seeing Mourning Dove, Steller's Jay, Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse, and Broad-tailed Hummingbird. I find the dove, but the hummingbird species is dozens of Rufous Hummingbirds buzzing around feeders at Lochsa Historical Ranger Station, and I miss seeing the grouse which probably would be easier found in fall on foot than at 45 mph in an RV, while watching the road curvature.



Rufous Hummingbirds surround feeders at Lochsa Historical Ranger Station

Finally they found a westward river that could be navigated, but they traveled another 16 mi. before they could find trees suitable for making canoes. On September 24 they descended from

the mountains to a Nez Perce village on Clearwater River. The men starving, the Indians fed them and the men consumed camas and dried salmon, but then were sick for days. Here Lewis called the place Canoe Camp because the Corps stays ten days to build five canoes out of huge pine trees, each canoe 50-55 ft. long and designed to carry 800-1000 lbs. of gear.



Artist's depiction of Nez Perce village where Lewis and Clark set up their Canoe Camp

Today, the place is designated Nez Perce National Historical Park. One branch of the river fork is open water, but the other now leads to a high dam wall.



Modern day dam built across from old Nez Perce village



Across the river from Canoe Camp



Depressions and rises in the ground mark earthen mounds that comprised the Nez Perce village



Dugout canoe at Canoe Camp

The Corps left horses in care of the Nez Perce and cached the saddles and gear. Continuing by dugout canoe, they eventually reached the Snake River, as we do today at the cities of Lewisville and Clarkston.

Day 35. June 21 – Hells Canyon, Washington-Idaho-Oregon

(Bert) Of course, I've heard of the Snake River, but until today I haven't traveled it. Our boat is something special: an airboat. It is propelled by jets below the hull that allow it to ride above rapids and spin 360° on a dime, thereby providing a very smooth ride. And ride we do, 100 mi. round trip.

Lewis and Clark traveled the Snake River in mid-October 1805. Clark named it Lewis's River. For the Corps of Discovery, the river was a challenging series of rapids with "rocks in every direction." Whitehouse described one rough section as "ran as swift as a mill tale," comparing it to the turbulence of the water released by a mill wheel. Clark admitted they should be making more portages but expressed concern, "if the Season was not So far advanced and time precious with us."



Dams have tamed the river and the few rapids we encounter produce whitewater, but only mild stimulation for those in the big yellow rafts we see drifting downstream.



Attractive homes are perched on the steep canyon hillsides and deeper into Hells Canyon the homes are off the grid, i.e., they must provide their own electricity with generators or solar power.



The landscape is drier than we have been seeing before and most everything is shades of brown. Then the homes stop and only a few historic ranch homes can be seen. One is now owned by Nature Conservancy and it is the place we stop for lunch. Afterward we enjoy walking through the cool shade of apple and apricot orchard, sharing it with a browsing mule deer.





Picking apricots at Nature Conservancy

Wildlife is quite noticeable and we see deer and bighorn sheep multiple times.



Bighorn sheep



Another stop is Hells Canyon National Recreation Area where we hike up the steep incline to another orchard blanketed below by lush lawn. At the base of a tree someone in our group spots a rattlesnake and it becomes a magnet for our cameras.



View of Snake River from Hells Canyon National Recreation Area



Rufous Hummingbird at Hells Canyon Recreation Area



Northern Pacific Rattlesnake, subspecies of Western Rattlesnake

CHAPTER 8. OREGON AND WASHINGTON

Day 36. June 22 – Clarkston, Washington

A free day with only errands for us.

Day 37. June 23 – Walla Walla, Washington

(Bert) Mostly I've written about the Lewis and Clark trip west, but today we visited sites on their return trip east. At the fort in Walla Walla a small exhibit presents a difficult conversation between Captain Clark and "Walla Walla Chief Yellept and 2 other Chiefs." The date was April 28, 1806. The difficulty was translation.

In his Sahaptin (Walla Walla) language, Yellept says, "níšamaš cí k' úsi"

A captive woman living in Yellept's village translates to Shoshoni language, "iki ne bungu, ma tsangahwa."

Sakakawea then translates this to the Hidatsa language, "madah argugeenea ma-nee-goodz."

Her husband Toussaint Charbonneau translates it to French, "S'il vous plait, acceptez, mon don de ce cheval."

François Labiche translates it to English, "Please accept my gift of this horse."

In reply, Captain Clark says, "Thank you, I give you my sword."

And, François Labiche passes on the message in French, "Merci, je vous donne mon épée."

Toussaint Charbonneau translates it to Hidatsa, "mahzahgee nawts mada mena-hee-shi maneehoots."

Sakakawea understands this and translates it to the Shoshoni language, "tsa'I, iki nea wihimboodo."

The captive woman repeats the message in the Sahaptin language for Yellept, "qayciyáwyaw, níšamaš inmi xapiłmí."

The transaction was a bit more difficult than the above, and Lewis explained it this way in his notes, "This morning early Yellept brought a very elegant white horse to our camp and presented him to Capt. C. signifying his wish to get a kettle but on being informed that we had already disposed of every kettle we could possibly spare he said he was content with whatever he thought proper to give him. Capt. C. gave him his sword (for which he had expressed a great desire) a hundred balls and powder and some s(m)all articles with which he appeared perfectly satisfied."



Diorama of Yellept and Clark trading

We crossed paths with the Corps of Discovery several other times today. Here is where the Corps took a shortcut on the return trip. The well-worn and still traveled trail is etched in the hillside, a diagonal line cutting uphill from left to right about three-fourths up the hill.



On May 3, John Ordway wrote, “ascended a high hill and procd. on over high plains. crossed 2 creeks, and followed up the third creek.”

The day before, May 2, the Corps passed through the heart of what is now Dayton, Oregon and there now stands the Columbia County Courthouse



Columbia County Courthouse built over place where Lewis and Clark traveled May 2, 1806

Day 38. June 24 – Pendleton, Oregon

(Bert) Other than to mention that in 1805 William Clark was the first white man to enter the Pendleton area, I've found no connection to the expedition. Instead, we visit two other famous local sites. The Pendleton factory and outlet store is the first. Surprisingly, the famous woolen shirts and other clothing are now made in China, Mexico, and other foreign countries. Many of the colorful blankets are still made in the Oregon factory, however. We see how the luxuriously soft wool and bright Native American patterns are woven into long rolls and then cut into blankets.



Pendleton Woolen factory



Stylized blankets for sale

More interesting to me is the Pendleton underground. Although a few locals knew of the underground in recent times, it is only in the 1980s that the below ground rooms and basalt-rock tunnels were reopened. Built pre-1890s they served multiple purposes: Chinese laundries and baths (\$10 for the first in the morning, \$5 by noon, \$1 for last person, all using the same water), opium den, Chinese sleeping quarters on the hard ground floors, Chinese prison, gambling rooms, and, during prohibition, stills and bars (the password to get into the bar was “open” and

the response was “speak easy”). In addition, the underground served as a popular butcher shop and an ice cream parlor.



Pendleton Underground – a new gambler enters the play



Chinese underground laundry



Chinese underground jail



Pendleton Underground



Empire Meat Co. underground store

Above ground, we tour a bordello that stayed open until the 1950s and 60s. This bordello's decor remains as the day it was closed and boarded up.



A room at the Pendleton bordello

Day 39. June 25 – Columbia River, Oregon and Washington

(Bert) Finally, we are following the Columbia River. Mt. Hood looms on the horizon for hours as we drive west. Lewis and Clark first saw the mountain on October 18. They identified it as the one Vancouver found in his 1792 expedition.

Clark wrote on November 3, 1805, “A Mountain which we Suppose to be Mt. Hood is S. 85° E about 47 miles distant from the mouth of quick sand river This mtn. is Covered with Snow and in the range of mountains which we have passed through and is of a Conical form but rugged.”



Columbia River



Mt. Hood

We divert briefly, crossing the bridge into Washington, to visit the Stonehenge memorial to military personnel that lost their lives in WW I. It's a replica of the original and is set on a hillside overlooking the Columbia.



Stonehenge Memorial



Stonehenge Memorial

Back on the Oregon side, we reach Celilo Falls where it cut through the Narrows. At least that is what we would have seen if we came when Lewis and Clark were here. Instead, we see a smooth wide river, the Columbia, dammed up at The Dalles. When the Corps of Discovery portaged the falls, a two-day struggle, the Native Americans were catching fish at the greatest

Indian fishery in the northwest. After filleting the salmon, the Indians dried them in plank-covered sheds. Then they pounded the dried fish, wrapped them in fish skins, packed them in baskets, stacked the baskets and covered them with matting. This 10,000-year-old process allowed the Indians to keep the dried fish for several years.



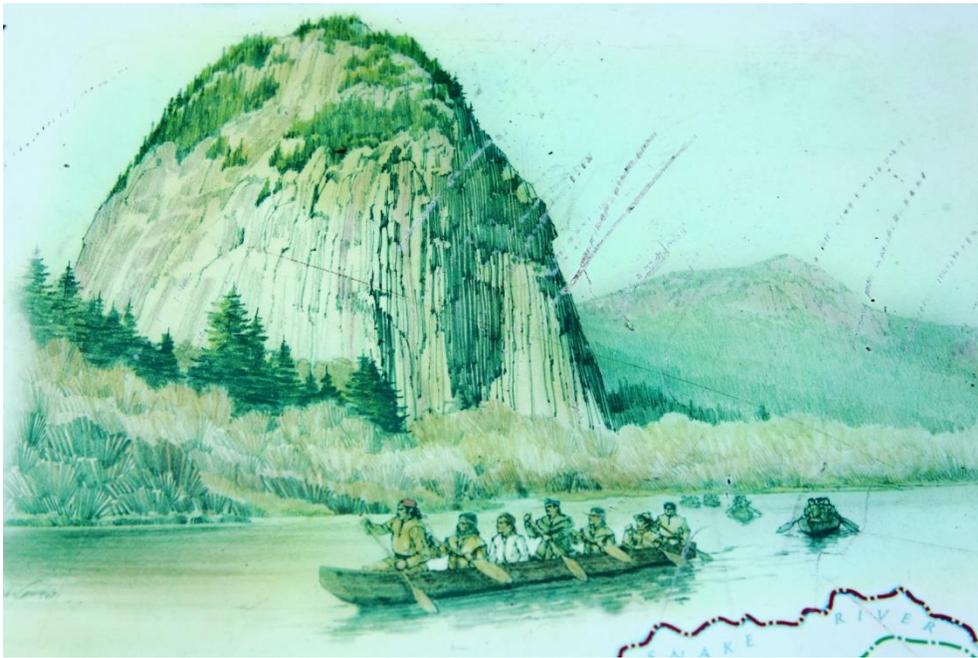
Columbia River now covers Celilo Falls



The Dalles Dam

On October 31, Clark noted, “a remarkable high detached rock” which they later called Beacon Rock. The rock lies on the Washington side of the Columbia and not only was it a landmark for

the expedition, but it became a favorite of future Oregonians watching from across the river. It was purchased in 1915 for \$1 by Henry Biddle, an ancestor of Nicholas Biddle who edited the first edition of the Lewis and Clark journals in 1814. When the United States Army Corps of Engineers wanted to break it up for building a jetty, Oregonians objected and tried to incorporate the rock into Oregon as a state park, forcing Washington State to accept Biddle's offer to make the rock a park, which is what we see now. It was here at Beacon Rock State Park that the Corps of Discovery noticed a tide, indicating that they were nearing the Pacific Ocean.



Sketch of Beacon Rock when the Corps of Discovery passed downstream on the Columbia



Beacon Rock from the highway side

Day 40. June 26 – Columbia River Gorge, Oregon

(Bert) Although I like the freedom of driving my own vehicle, riding in a motor coach definitely has some advantages. Watching Melissa, our coach driver, maneuver on winding narrow mountain roads, make a U-turn in a parking lot, and getting us around a traffic jam, definitely has its benefits.

As we follow the cliffs on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge, our first stop is Chanticleer Point and not far after that is Vista House. Both give us panoramic views of the Columbia River and the cliffs of Washington and Oregon, all from a perch at the top of the gorge. A signpost tells us the gorge was formed from “explosive volcanoes, grinding glaciers, powerful floods, and the uplifting Cascade Mountains.”



View of Columbia River Gorge from Chanticleer Point



Vista House



View from Vista House, facing upriver



View from Vista House, facing downriver

We ride back down to river level and stop at Multnomah Falls. Here is where the motor coach really is useful, as the small parking lot is filled and is blocked at the gate. Melissa passes the lot, makes a U-turn, comes in from the other side, and parks in a bus-only spot. Conveniently, we walk through a short tunnel under the highway and are soon facing the waterfall.



Top part of Multnomah Falls, 542 ft.

On April 9, 1806, Meriwether Lewis was the first person to write of the falls of the Columbia River. He wrote, “We passed several beautiful cascades which fell from a great height over the stupendous rocks ... The most remarkable of these cascades falls about 300 feet perpendicularly over a solid rock ... on the south side.”

From the photo-op deck we hike a 0.2 mi. uphill trail to the Multnomah Falls Bridge. Had I chosen to go to the top of the falls, the hike would have been a more strenuous one mile.



Multnomah Falls bridge over 69-ft. drop



Multnomah Falls through the dense forest sprinkled by its mist

Our motor coach takes us farther upriver to Bonneville Dam and, below it, to Bonneville Fish Hatchery and Sturgeon Center. Lewis and Clark camped here April 9, 1806 and would be amazed at the way the spot looks now.



Bonneville Dam blocking Columbia River

Scientists estimate at the time of Lewis and Clark, 16 million wild salmon swam up the Columbia and Snake rivers each year. In 1906, 103 years after their visit, the salmon fish hatchery was built at Bonneville. Another 103 years later, the fish run is estimated at 1% of the original. A sign post informs me, “Some runs of Chinook, coho, and sockeye are extinct, and of all the species, five runs are endangered and 21 are threatened.” At another sign I read the total annual salmon count through the hatchery’s counters from 2012 to 2015: 31,358, 51,725, 62,315, and 47,429.



Bonneville Fish Hatchery and Sturgeon Center

The highlight of our fish hatchery visit is to see three sturgeons in a holding pond. Each looked to be four to five feet in length, less than half their maximum length. Certainly plentiful at Lewis and Clark's time, thereafter they were fished in great quantities, peaking in 1892 at 5.5 million pounds. By 1898 they were nearly extinct in the Columbia. Conservation laws ensued, including fishing restrictions, and by 1970 sturgeon began to flourish, although there still are health concerns for populations above the dams.



Sturgeon

Day 41. June 27 – Portland, Oregon

(Bert) Today is a free day, but we have a supplement. At 5:30 AM Owen and I drive into Portland, making more than a dozen turns through a jigsaw of city blocks, to reach famous Voodoo Doughnut. A strange location, a shop with strange décor, and workers sporting nose rings, tattoos, and matching attire, I guess it is no surprise to find the strange donuts they sell. At 6 AM we are the only customers, but if we had delayed until 9 AM we could have stood in gated lines like you see in front of airport ticket agents and perhaps waited 30 min. to an hour to be served. Open 24 hours daily, peak time is very late Saturday evenings or in the wee hours of Sunday mornings. We bring back four dozen donuts plus a giant donut decorated with a cowboy. Until 10 AM, caravaners drop by to munch on donuts, sip coffee, and chat.





Voodoo Donuts



Day 42. June 28 – Mount St. Helens, Washington

(Bert) On October 20, 1792, from his British exploration ship at the mouth of the Columbia River, Captain George Vancouver saw a peak and wrote in his log “seemed covered with perpetual snow.” He named the peak Mount St. Helens after his friend Baron St. Helens.

When William Clark mentioned Mount St. Helens in his notes in 1805, he wrote, “most noble looking object of its kind in nature.” North America’s most active volcano, Mount St. Helens has erupted numerous times in the past several thousand years. Since Lewis and Clark’s sighting, it erupted intermittently from 1831 to 1857, producing ash. The most significant was in 1857, but there continued to be minor steam-driven explosions in 1898, 1903, and 1921. Nonetheless, what Lewis and Clark saw was probably very similar to this pre-1980 photo:



Mount St. Helens, pre-1980 eruption

Shari and my first visit to Mount St. Helens was June 18, 1989, nine years after the explosion that blew off the top of the mountain and sent ash-laden dust across the United States. We saw the stripped trees parallel-lined like so many matchsticks across the steep and barren slopes. Then we visited again in 1998 when new growth blossomed from the ashes. Today, except for the crater, it is hard to see evidence of the violent explosion, yet one mountain top still shows some of the matchstick alignment of fallen trees.



May 18, 1980 eruption



Trees felled from the impact of the eruption 36 years ago

We have lunch outdoors at Fire Mountain Grill in view of the mountain. After a delicious buffet-style lunch, Owen and Terry ask if anyone wants to take a helicopter ride to the crater. Peggy jumps at the chance and the three of them head to the helicopter. On takeoff I photograph their flight until they disappear over a ridge about 10 mi. distant. Our guide, Thelma, estimates Mount St. Helens to be about 15-18 mi. from the restaurant. Thelma, by the way, hiked with two

friends to the devastation zone a few days after the 1980 eruption, and while on the bus she related her unusual experience of being in the restricted area and seeing the wreckage firsthand.



Helicopter is near the center of this photo



Close-up of the previous photo, showing the helicopter. I could no longer see it through binoculars when it was about half the distance to the crater.



View of Mount St. Helens from the Visitor's Center deck



Close up of the crater

Day 43. June 29 – Dismal Nitch, Washington

(Bert) It isn't marked on our road log, but Karey knew approximately where it is. We've been driving along the Washington side of the Columbia River and I've been watching for Lewis and Clark signs. The first stop is the "Bed of Stones" campsite, November 6. The Corps of Discovery had covered 29 miles that day and were searching for a campsite when they finally settled on a spot that William Clark described as "encamped under the hill on Stones Scercely land Sufficent between the hills and river Clear of the tide for us to lie. Cloudy & rain all wet and disagreeable."

Not a bed of stones today. Dredging of the Columbia has created a flat shoreline further enhanced to include the highway. From the campsite, I photograph across the river on an overcast morning. It looks dreary and with a bit of imagination I can picture the rain. But this isn't the campsite Karey described.



View from Dismal Nitch across the Columbia River

The next stop is a wayside pullout and it is appropriately marked “Dismal Nitch.” This is the one I want to see. Lewis and Clark knew they were close to the ocean because of the tidal change they saw at Beacon Rock on October 31. Then November 7, the day after “Bed of Rocks,” Clark sights what he thinks is the ocean and writes his most famous line, “Ocian in view! O! the joy.” He was mistaken. It wasn’t the ocean. Nonetheless, he was close and he was optimistic.

Now the next day comes the disappointment. So close and yet so far, the dangerously high waves and the never ending torrential downpour forces the expedition to hole up at what Clark called “this dismal nitich.” Clark wrote, “It would be distressing to a feeling person to See our Situation at this time all wet and cold with our bedding etc. also wet, in a Cove Scercely large nough to Contain us.” They endured November 8-11 before the weather broke.

Now it is a small park, flat, grassy, nicely treed. It has a pleasant view of the Columbia where today I see flocks of cormorants, a harbor seal poking his nose above the water, and a humpback whale frolicking midstream. In the distance is the Astoria Bridge to Oregon.



Dismal Nitch



Dismal Nitch with Astoria Bridge in background



I'm told my sighting of a humpback whale on the Columbia River is rare. Astoria, Oregon is on the opposite shore from Dismal Nitch.

This evening at our campground is a celebration of sorts. Shari presents her movie, a photo review of my and her photos of the trip, set to music and with comical captions. Then we dine on a plethora of hors d'oeuvres prepared by Owen, Terry, and Shari.





Day 44. June 30 – Cape Disappointment, Washington & Fort Clatsop, Oregon

(Bert) We stand on a high cliff, surrounded by pines, gazing out at the Pacific Ocean—water as far as the eye can see. I wonder what thoughts went through the minds of the men of the Corps of Discovery when they reached Cape Disappointment. I doubt it was disappointment, as the cape was named before they arrived.

After their miserable days and nights at Dismal Nitch, the weather finally cleared November 15 and they paddled downriver, just around the bend where the Astoria bridge connects Washington and Oregon, to "a butifull Sand beech." It was their first full view of the Pacific Ocean. Patrick Gass wrote, "We are now at the end of our voyage." Three days later they reached the base of Cape Disappointment, 18 months after they started up the Missouri River at St. Charles. For Meriwether Lewis the trip had been even longer, having left Washington, D.C. two and a half years before. As Stephen Ambrose writes in his book, "One longs for Lewis's emotional reaction to the triumph of crossing the continent." But Lewis had not written in his journal for months, so no one knows his thoughts.



Pacific Ocean from Cape Disappointment



Lighthouse at Cape Disappointment



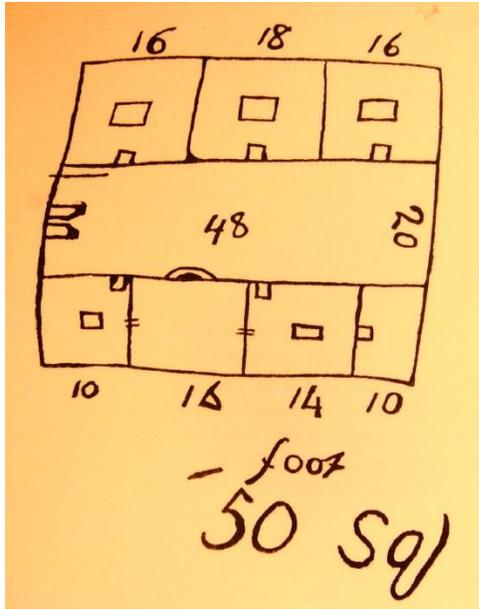
Looking up at Cape Disappointment from Waikiki Beach

"The object of your mission... the Pacific Ocean." -Thomas Jefferson

The Corps of Discovery had accomplished President Jefferson's mission

After exploring to the north—what is now Washington's Long Beach Peninsula—and meeting with troublesome Indians, Lewis and Clark conducted a vote as to where the Corps of Discovery would spend the winter. For the first time in American history, the vote included a black man, slave York, and woman and Indian, Sakakawea. The majority of the 33 votes were for setting up winter camp across the river where it was thought to be safer and the hunters would find plentiful elk.

We visit Fort Clatsop, the original long gone and even a replica burnt to the ground. The one we see was rebuilt recently and included the help of Jeff who is one of our caravaners. He tells us about the construction out of native pines, based on a sketch made by Clark on the elkskin cover of his journal. Except for the choice of wood, the fort resembles the ones we saw at the previous winter camps: Fort Dubois and Fort Mandan. After spending the winter at the fort, Clark wrote on March 23, 1806, that they "have lived as well as we had any right to expect."



Clark's sketch of Fort Clatsop



Fort Clatsop



Ceremony raising the U.S. flag which at the time had 15 stars and 15 stripes



Rooms like this one held about 7-8 enlisted men each



Inspecting Jeff's pine log workmanship

Day 45. July 1 – Astoria and Seaside, Oregon

(Bert) Shari arranged a surprise for us this morning, a private ride on the Astoria Riverfront Trolley. Only five years after the Corps of Discovery returned east, John Jacob Astor opened a trading post here at Fort Astoria. Astoria became the first permanent U.S. settlement west of the Rockies. By the 1880s it became the “Salmon Canning Capital of the World.”



Historic trolley tours Astoria harbor

After a harborside trolley tour of Astoria, we cross the bridge to Warrenton and dine at famous Dooger's Seafood & Grill. Everyone delights in their meal selection, but I'll count my seafood combination of deep fried salmon, fish, oysters, prawns, calamari, served with sweet potato fries as the best. I'd say the same about my large slice of peanut butter pie, but Shari's mud pie looks very tempting as well. What a great farewell dinner!



Next stop is the popular shops and beach at Seaside. It was here that the Corps of Discovery recovered salt from seawater. Salt was essential for preserving food and improving its taste and the expedition had depleted their supply. So, three men boiled about 1400 gallons of seawater to make salt. Meriwether Lewis wrote February 3, "we keep the kettles boiling day and night," and again on February 21, "Sergt. Ordway returned from the salt camp ... our stock of salt is now about 20 Gallons; 12 gallons of which we secured in 2 small iron bound kegs and laid by for our voyage."

Although we enjoy an easy drive to Seaside, William Clark described the trail from Fort Clatsop through the homelands of the Clatsop Indians, "The Sea Coast is about 7 miles distant Nearly West about 5 miles of the distance through thick wood with reveens hills and Swamps the land, rich black moalt [soil] 2 miles in an open waving Sandy prairie, ridge running parrelal to the river, Covered with Green Grass."



Seaside, Oregon



Beach at Seaside, Oregon

No way would Lewis and Clark recognize the beach now. It's a bustling resort town with hundreds of seaside homes for rent and more holiday residents stacked in multi-story hotels. Vendors sell souvenirs; visitors ride the merry-go-round and even five of us crash into each other on the bumper cars.



Seaside, next to the beach



End of the Trail

From where the main street meets the beach, at the statue of Lewis and Clark, Shari and I walk about five blocks south until we see the sign “Salt Works.” Here it is, the exact spot where Joseph Fields, William Bratten, and George Gibson kept the fires burning day and night throughout the winter to boil seawater. The spot was determined in 1900 upon the testimony of Jenny Michel of Seaside. She was born in 1816 and lived in the area. Her father, a Clatsop Indian, remembered seeing the white men boiling water at this spot and he pointed out the place to her when she was a young girl.



The Salt Works at Seaside

Day 46. July 2 – Warrenton, Oregon

(Bert) Lewis and Clark left Fort Clatsop March 23, 1806 for their return to the East. Our caravaners depart today, some heading north, some south, some east. For our hitch-up breakfast Owen has prepared French toast, using French bread, and accompanied by sausages, fresh fruit, and yogurt. We say our good-byes and RV by RV they depart.

Of course, for the Corps of Discovery the story does not end at Fort Clatsop. Their journey east was much faster than going west because they took a different route back and avoided the Bitterroot Mountains. Then they traveled substantial daily distances riding the Missouri River downstream. Six months later they reached St. Louis to the surprise of everyone, as they were thought to have perished during their two year four month hiatus.

The Baltimore Federal Gazette, dateline St. Louis September 23, 1806, wrote, “Messrs. Lewis and Clark ... arrived here about one hour ago ... Three cheers were fired. They really have the appearance of Robinson Crusoes - dressed entirely in buckskins.”

The news reached President Jefferson and on October 20 he wrote to Meriwether Lewis, “I received ... with unspeakable joy your letter ... announcing the return of yourself, Capt. Clark and your party.”



William Clark's journal, with elkskin cover

*‘[We] have lived as well
as we had any right to expect.’*

William Clark, March 23, 1806

Epilogue – Holter Lake, Missouri River, Montana

(Bert) Shari and I are on our trip east to Great Falls, Montana, where we will begin our next adventure at the Calgary Stampede and then through western Canada and Alaska. Today we are camped along the Missouri River at Holter Lake, downstream from the Gates of the Mountains where we were June 15.

If you have enjoyed reading about our travels following the Lewis and Clark Trail and would like to read more about Lewis and Clark, I highly recommend two books:

The Journals of Lewis and Clark, edited by Bernard DeVoto (1953), 504 pp.

Undaunted Courage by Stephen E. Ambrose (1996), 521 pp.

I also liked reading the shorter and heavily illustrated book that accompanied Ken Burns PBS series: *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery* by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns (1994).

Also, I regularly perused the online Internet version of the Nebraska edition of *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, the most complete 5000-page collection of the writings of Lewis, Clark, and other members of the Corps of Discovery, edited by Gary E. Moulton. The ability to

Google particular passages and accompanying annotation makes it a superb reference. It can be found at <http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu>.

