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LEWIS AND CLARK

AT

FORT CLATSOP

1805-06



FORT CLATSOP 1805-06 WINTER QUARTERS OF LEWIS and CLARK EXPEDITION

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Lewis and Clark
at Fort Clatsop

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Introduction

Forerunners of empire, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark hold a unique place in American history and an even more unique place in the history of the Pacific Northwest. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was the first official United States exploring expedition; perhaps the most important.

These were the first American citizens to cross the continent, the first to travel down the Snake and lower Columbia rivers. They were the first Americans to dwell in the only part of the American domain that was never the possession of another power. Spain, Russia, and Great Britain contested for its ownership, but the Oregon Country came direct to the United States from the Indian inhabitants. The expedition of Lewis and Clark contributed to that end, and helped to add to the United States an area about half as large as that of the original Thirteen States, the first American land on Pacific shores.

Many books, large and small, by historians and novelists, have been published on the expedition, including—a century after their trip—the original journals of Captains Lewis and Clark. In those books the expedition is viewed in the course of our national history, which then still centered on the Atlantic seaboard. In them the events at Fort Clatsop receive but brief treatment, although here was their goal, and, although their journey was only half completed, here they were at their farthest point.

This booklet is not about the expedition. It is about Lewis and Clark at Fort Clatsop, and it views the expedition in a setting of 400 years of international exploration and struggle for New World empires.

On The Mouth Of The Columbia

Great joy in camp we are in *view* of the Ocean . . . this great Pacific Ocean which we been so long anxious to See, and the roaring or noise made by the waves breaking on the rocky Shores (as I suppose) may be heard distinctly . . .

So wrote Captain Clark in his journal (and in his unhampered spelling) on November 7, 1805, 18 months after their start and when the group was still 15 miles from the sea on their voyage down the Columbia, but with the broad estuary confronting them.

For several days they were stopped on the Washington side of the river by "high swells," by seas that "roled and tossed," by weather "wet and disagreeable." Both Captains and some of the men explored Cape Disappointment in turn and visited the ocean beaches north of the river's mouth; the others hunted game and tried to make themselves comfortable.

The members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were the first white men to reach the mouth of the Columbia River overland from east of the Continental Divide. But they were not the first to note its presence or to sail its broad and salty estuary. More than 200 years before them, Francis Drake, not yet a Sir, although not reaching the river, had named the coast New Albion; thus, since Albion is the old name for England, there was a New England on the Pacific Coast before there was one on Atlantic shores. Thirty years before the Americans came, Bruno Heceta, a Spanish sea captain, noted the river and named the north cape, San Roque and the south cape, Cabo Frondoso. It was John Meares, the first British navigator to attempt to enter the river, who gave Cape Disappointment its name—he concluded in 1788 that the mighty river of the west did not exist and, in addition to naming the cape to express his feelings, added another name by calling the river's mouth Deception Bay.

Nor were Spain and Great Britain the only powers whose sea captains were exploring the coast for national benefit or to trade for furs for personal profit. Russians, led by the Dane,

Vitus Bering, who reached the North American continent in 1741, were slowly moving down the coast from the Russian American posts in modern Alaska. A British fur trader, Alexander Mackenzie, had made his way across the continent, in what is now Canada, a decade before Lewis and Clark started on their journey; and he, also, was seeking the river of the west.

Robert Gray was the captain of an American fur trading vessel. He had been off the Northwest Coast in 1788 and 1789, and, by sailing back to Boston around Africa, was the first to carry the American flag around the world. In 1792 he was again off the coast, in Yankee manner pushing his ship into bays and rivers that might offer good trading. It was the chance of commerce that led him into the Columbia on May 11, 1792, to make the river's official discovery. That act gave the United States a claim to the Columbia's drainage basin, to the Pacific Northwest. Gray, however, paid but an 8-day visit to the region, a ship-visit, a tourists' visit, whereas Lewis and Clark walked on the land and explored and stayed a while.

That the Americans were on what was to become an American river was largely luck.

Selecting The Site for Winter Quarters

By November 24 Lewis and Clark were ready to "examine The other side (of the Columbia) if good hunting to winter there, as salt is an objit . . ." Two day later they crossed to the south side, the Oregon side, of the river, there to make their winter camp.

Several considerations prompted their move. Sacajawea, the Indian woman who had accompanied them and was thus probably the first woman to make the transcontinental trip, was "in favor of a place where there is plenty of Potas"—or the edible root of the wapato, which was baked like a potato. The Chinook Indians on the north bank had set their prices . . . so high that it would take ten times as much to

purchase their roots & Dried fish as we have in our possession, including our Small remains of Merchandize and Cloths &. This certainly induces every individual of the party to make diligent enquiries of the natives (for) the part of the countrey in which Wild animals are most plenty . . .

Convenience for salt-making, the greater abundance of game, the apparent mildness of the climate, easy approach to any vessel that put into the Columbia

. . . from which we might purchase a fresh Supply of Indian trinkets to purchase provisions on our return home . . . induces us to . . . Cross the river to examine the opposite Side . . .

On November 26 Lewis and Clark crossed the river and began to explore for a site for their winter camp. They noted that the shore was "covered with butifull pebble of various colour . . ."

For some days the men were unwell on their diet of dried fish, and also suffered "from rain and hail with intervals of fair weather . . ." But Captain Clark "observed rose bushes different Species of pine, a Species of ash, alder, a Species of Crab Lorel . . and . . lofty pine many of which are 10 & 12 feet through and mare than 200 feet high . . ." while Captain Lewis noted the characteristics of squirrels, blackberries, cranberries, crab apple, and madrona.

. . . A calm Cloudy morning, a moderate rain the great part of the night, Capt. Lewis Branded a tree with his name Date &. I marked my name the Day & Year on a alder tree, the party all Cut the first letters of their names on different trees in the bottom . . .

On December 5 Captain Lewis, who had been several days seeking a winter site, returned to the temporary camp at Tongue Point with news

. . . he thinks that a Sufficient number of Elk may be procured convenient to a Situation on a Small river which falls into a Small bay a Short distance below . . .

Two days later the party "Set out to the place Capt. Lewis had viewed and thought well Situated for winter quarters . . ."

The bay Captain Clark called

. . . Meriweithers Bay the Christian name of Capt. Lewis who no doubt was the 1st white man who ever surveyed this Bay . . . (It) is about 4 miles across deep and receves 2 rivers the Kil-how-a-nah-kle and the Ne

... and Several Small Creeks . . .

Those names do not remain. Like many another geographic feature of this most "purely" American territory, a British name supplied by a British officer has survived; in this case by Lt. W. R. Broughton of Capt. George Vancouver's staff, who in 1792 had named the main river and bay "Young's" after Sir George Young of the royal navy. The Netul, on which Fort Clatsop was located, has become Lewis and Clark River by common usage of the earliest American settlers.

On To The Seacoast

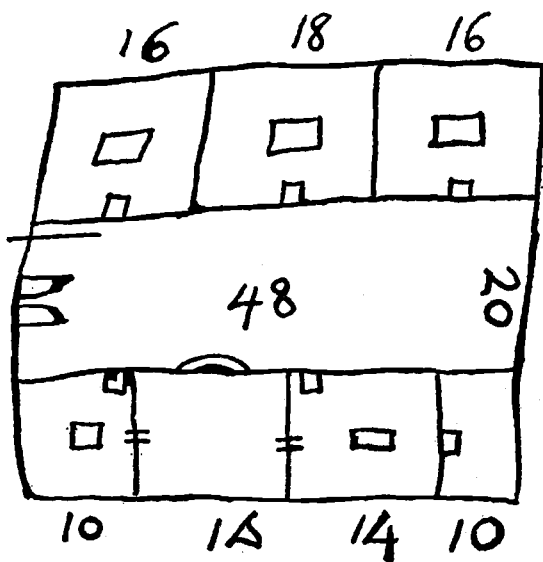
Captain Clark under the heading of Sunday 8th December 1805 at Fort Clatsop wrote,

. . . that having fixed on this Situation as the best Calculated for our Winter quarters I determined to go as direct a Course as I could to the Sea Coast which we could here roar and appeared to be no great distance from us, my principal object to look out a place to make salt . . .

With five men Captain Clark started for the coast, taking a southwesterly direction, following a dividing ridge through lofty pines and over much fallen timber. They waded up to their knees fording creeks and swamps. One stream was sixty yards wide; to cross it they constructed a raft. The major event, on which the day ended, was the "discovery" of a large

. . . gange of Elk in the open lands, and we prosued them through verry bad Slashes (swamps) and small ponds about 3 miles, killed one and camped on a spot Scercely large enough to lie Clear of the Water. . . . We made a camp (tent) of the Elk skin to keep off the rain which continued to fall, the Small Knob on which we camped did not afford a Sufficiency of dry wood for our fire, we collected what dry wood we could and what Sticks we could Cut down with the Tomahawks, which made us a tolerable fire.

Throughout the night it rained and all were wet when



- foot
50 sq

Sketch-plan of Fort Clatsop, as traced by Captain Clark on the elk-skin cover of his field book.

morning came. Sending two men to continue the elk hunt, Captain Clark and the others made for the coast. They had gone but a short distance when they met three Indians "loaded with fresh Salmon which they had Gighed in the creek." By signs the natives indicated that their village was nearby on the coast, and invited the white men to it. The group proceeded, using a small canoe hidden in a creek, which the Indians carried from stream to stream.

Soon they reached the village, which consisted of four lodges. The lodges were a combination basement and walled construction, the walls and roof of split planks being built over a basement dug about 4 feet into the ground. A ladder led down into the house. Fires were burning in the center of the room. Beds were bunks around the walls, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor and covered with mats. Under the bunks, baskets, mats and utensils were stored.

The natives treated the white men with . . . extrodeanary friendship, one man attached himself to me as Soon as I entered the hut. Spread down new mats for me to Set on. gave me fish berries rutes &c on Small neet platters of rushes to eat . . . all the Men of the other houses came and Smoked with me. Those people appeared much Neeter in their diat than Indians are Comonly, and frequently wash their faces and hands . . .

Captain Clark thought the food pleasant. However, in his opinion of the "neetness" of his hosts he was somewhat in error, as his closing entry of December 9 reveals:

. . . when I was Disposed to go to Sleep the man who had been most attentive named Cus-ka-lah produced 2 new mats and Spred them near the fire, and derved his wife to go to his bead which was the Signal for all to retire which they did emediately. I had not been long on my mats before I was attacked most Violently by the flees and they kept up a close Siege dureing the night . . .

The next morning Captain Clark rose very early and explored the seashore, picking up several curious shells and amusing himself for about an hour. On his return

. . . one of the Indians pointed to a flock of Brant Sitting in the creek at Short distance below and requested me to Shute one, I walked down with my small rifle and killed two at about 40 yds distance . . .

The natives were much impressed, and could not understand, as they said, that kind of musket.

It is one of the most interesting, and often puzzling things about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, even to historians, to note how modern the equipment was. Many items in their inventory did not come into general use for another 50 years, such as Captain Clark's rifle, the air-rifle strong enough to kill small game, and friction matches.

After attempting, with limited success, to make some purchases of his hosts, Captain Clark started on the return trip to Fort Clatsop. He was accompanied part way, and ferried across the streams, by Cuskalah. Reaching the winter camp he found Captain Lewis and all the men busy cutting down trees for the camp buildings, utilizing only "the streightest & most butifull-est logs".

Building Fort Clatsop

The next several days were spent in building Fort Clatsop. By December 14 the logs for the cabins had been cut and raised. Men were put to splitting logs for roofing, the explorers being "glad to find the timber splits butifully, and of any width." On the twenty-fourth the whole party were moving into their "huts."

Then came the first celebration of Christmas day by Americans in Oregon, a day Captain Clark described:

. . . at day light this morning we were awoke by the discharge of fire arm of all our party & a Selute, Shouts and a Song which the whole party joined in under our windows, after which they retired to their rooms were cheerful all the morning. after brackfast we divided our Tobacco which amounted to 12 carrots one half of which we gave to the men of the party who used tobacco, to those who doe not use it we made a present of a handkerchief . . . all the party snugly fixed in their huts . . .

We would have Spent this day the nativity of

Christmas

Wednesday 25th December 1805 76

at daylight this morning we were waked by the discharge of the fire arms of all our party on a salute, shouts and a song) which the whole party joined in under our windows, after which they retired to their rooms were cheerful all the morning) after breakfast we divided our tobacco which amounted to 12 canots one half of which we gave to the men of the party who used tobacco, and to those who do not use it we make a present of a handkerchief. The Indians leave us in the evening all the party being glad in their little. I received a present of Capt L of a glass horse hair Braes and socks, a pair Muskiesons of Whitebrow, a small Indian basket of Yuttherub, two Doges which was a sort of the Indian women, a some black root of the Indians before their departure. Drayzer informs me that he saw a Snake pass over the point to day. The day proved heavy wet and disagreeable.

We would have spent the day the better way of being in feasting, had we any thing better to raise our spirits or even gratify our appetites, our dinner consisted of some Old, so much spoiled that we could not eat it there was some of some spoiled fish and
 some other

Christ in feasting, had we any thing either to raise our Spirits or even gratify our appetites, our Diner Consisted of pore Elk, so much spoiled that we eate it thru' near necessity. Some Spoiled pounded fish and a few roots.

Another member of the party noted that they were without salt to season even the tainted meat. The accident of the spoiled meat is explained as "owing to warmth & the repeated rains, which cause the meet to tante before we can get it from the woods."

Now, however, they had a meat house, and hunting parties were continuously in the woods. The meat was smoked, and diet was somewhat improved. The ailing men improved under the better living conditions. Indians were frequent visitors, bringing foodstuffs and peltries, for which the Americans traded without satisfying success—the natives were sharp bargainers and asked double or treble the value of everything they "have to sell, and never take less than the full value of any thing . . ."

Coboway, a Clatsop chief, some of whose descendants are living today, visited the fort. To him the Americans gave one of the medals they brought with them to honor friendly natives and to be patent evidence of their presence here.

Daily Routine At The Fort

The explorers' journals are full of the daily affairs of the fort. The fleas were a constant torment. The weather was so damp that, although there are occasional references to fair or almost rainless days, a frequent entry runs "rained as usual." (It would be interesting to know if the winter of 1805-06 was more wet than usual.) Much attention was given to food, for they were dependent upon what the area and the Indians could supply. Hunting expeditions were always out to try to provide meat for the return trip. Roots, berries, fish, and game were purchased whenever possible from the natives. It wasn't often, however, it could be recorded that they "had a sumptuous

supper of Elk Tongues & marrow bones which was truly gratifying." A whale was cast ashore and Captain Lewis was anxious to go to the coast to get some of its blubber and oil, but the high winds kept him in camp.

One of the most interesting discussions of food is Captain Lewis' comment:

... our party from necessity having been obliged to subsist some length of time on dogs have now become extremely fond of their flesh; it is worthy of remark that while we lived principally on the flesh of this animal we were much more healthy strong and more fleshy than we had been since we left the Buffaloe country, for my own part I have become so perfectly reconciled to the dog that I think it an agreeable food and would prefer it vastly to lean Venison or Elk . . .

Captain Clark's journal on this subject reads the same as Captain Lewis' except for the last sentence; this is Captain Clark's opinion: "... as for my own part I have not become reconciled to the taste of this animal as yet . . ."

On New Year's Day the captains were awakened by a discharge of guns under their windows and Captain Lewis wrote the

... only mark of respect which we had it in our power to pay this celebrated day, our repast this day tho' better than that of Christmas, consisted principally in the anticipation of the 1st day of January, 1807, when in the bosom of our friends . . . we shall . . . enjoy the repast which the hand of civilization has prepared for us. at present we are content with eating our boiled Elk and wappetoe, and solacing our thirst with our only beverage *pure water* . . .

Their fortifications being then completed the two captains issued an order on the more exact and uniform discipline of the garrison.

As to the management of the fort, Captain Lewis wrote in the Orderly Book:

The fort now being completed the Commanding officers think proper to direct: that the guard shall as usual consist of one Sergeant and three privates, and that the same be regularly relieved each morning at sunrise. The post of the new guard shall be in the room of the Sergeants respectively commanding the same. the centinel shall be posted, both day and night, on the parade in front of the commanding officers quarters; tho' should he at any time think proper to remove

himself to any other part of the fort. in order the better to inform himself of the designs or approach of any party of savages. he is not only at liberty. but is hereby required to do so. It shall be the duty of the centinel also to announce the arrival of all parties of Indians to the Sergeant of the Guard. who shall immediately report the same to the Commanding officers.

The Commanding officers require and charge the Garrison to treat the natives in a friendly manner: nor will they be permitted at any time. to abuse. assault or strike them: unless such abuse. assault or stroke be first given by the natives. nevertheless it shall be right for any individual. in a peacable manner. to refuse admittance to. or put out of his room. any native who may become troublesome to him: and should such native refuse to go when requested. or attempt to enter their rooms after being forbidden to do so: it shall be the duty of the Sergeant of the guard on information of the same. to put such native out of the fort and see that he is not again admitted during that day unless specially permitted: and the Sergeant of the guard may for this purpose imploy such coercive measures (not extending to the taking of life) as shall at his discretion be deemed necessary to effect the same.

When any native shall be detected in theft. the Sergt. of the guard shall immediately inform the Commanding officers of the same. to the end that such measures may be pursued with respect to the culprit as they shall think most expedient.

At sunset on each day. the Sergt. attended by the interpreter Charbono and two of his guard. will collect and put out of the fort. all Indians except such as may specially be permitted to remain by the Commanding officers. nor shall they be again admitted untill the main gate be opened the ensuing morning.

At Sunset. or immediately after the Indians have been dismissed. both gates shall be shut. and secured. and the main gate locked and continue so untill sunrise the next morning: the water-gate may be used freely by the Garrison for the purpose of passing and repassing at all times. tho' from sunset. untill sunrise. it shall be the duty of the centinel. to open the gate for. and to shut it after all persons passing and repassing. suffering the same never to remain unfixed long(er) than is absolutely necessary.

It shall be the duty of the Sergt. of the guard to keep the kee of the Meat house. and to cause the guard

to keep regular fires therein when the same may be necessary; and also once at least in 24 hours to visit the canoes and see that they are safely secured; and shall further on each morning after he is relieved, make his report verbally to the Commandg officers.

Each of the old guard will every morning after being relieved furnish two loads of wood for the commanding officers fire.

No man is to be particularly exempt from the duty of bringing meat from the woods, nor none except the Cooks and Interpreters from that of mounting guard.

Each mess being furnished with an ax, they are directed to deposit it in the room of the commanding officers (with) all other public tools of which they are possessed; nor shall the same at any time hereafter be taken from the said deposit without the knowledge and permission of the commanding officers; and any individual so borrowing the tools are strictly required to bring the same back the moment he has ceased to use them, and (in) no case shall they be permitted to keep them out all night.

Any individual selling or disposing of any tool or iron or steel instrument, arms, accoutrements or ammunition, shall be deemed guilty of a breach of this order, and shall be tryed and punished according. the tools loaned to John Shields are exempted from the restrictions of this order.

Meriwether Lewis, Capt. 1st U. S. Regt.
Wm. Clark capt. &c

Salt Making

This morning (December 28) . . . Directed . . . Jos. Fields, Bratton. Gibson to proceed to the Ocean at some convenient place form a Camp and Commense makeing Salt with 5 of the largest Kittles, and Willard and Wiser to assist them in carrying the Kittles to the Sea Coast.

Captain Lewis wrote on January 3, 1806,

. . . Sent Serq. Gass and George Shannon to the Salt-

makers who are somewhere on the coast to the S. W. of us, to enquire after Willard and Wiser who have not yet returned . . .

Two days later Willard and Wiser returned, reporting, according to Captain Lewis' journal, that

. . . they had not been lost as we apprehended. they informed us that it was not until the fifth day after leaving the Fort that they could find a convenient place for making salt; that they had at length established themselves on the coast about 15 Miles S. W. from this, near the lodge of some Killamuck (Tillamook) families . . .

The two men, Captain Lewis continues, reported that

. . . the Indians were very friendly and had given them a considerable quantity of the blubber of a whale which perished on the coast some distance S. E. of them: part of this blubber they brought with them, it was white & not unlike the fat of Poork, tho' the texture was more spongy and somewhat coarser. I had a part of it cooked and found it very palatable and tender, it resembled the beaver or the dog in flavor . . . These lads also informed us that J Fields, Bratton and Gibson (the Saltmakers) had with their assistance erected a comfortable camp, killed an Elk and several deer and secured a good stock of meat; they commenced the making of salt and found that they could obtain from 3 quarts to a gallon a day; they brought with them a specimen of the salt of about a gallon, we found it excellent, fine, strong & white . . .

The salt was "a great treat" to all the party except Captain Clark, who cared but little if he had any with his meat or not. Both captains, agreed, however, that if they could get fat meat they were not very particular about their diet. They had learned to think that

. . . if the chord be sufficiently strong which binds the soul and body together, it does not much matter about the materials which compose it . . .

The "Monstrous Fish"

Captain Clark set out with, apparently, a group of thirteen after breakfast on January 6 to go to the coast and find the whale, hoping to purchase some of its blubber from the natives. Included in the group were Charboneau and Sacajawea, his wife. The reason Sacajawea was taken is stated by Captain Clark:

. . . The last evening Shabono and his Indian woman was very impatient to be permitted to go with me, and was therefore indulged; She observed that She had traveled a long way to See the great waters, and that now that monstrous fish was also to be Seen, She thought it very hard that She could not be permitted to See either (She had not yet been to the Ocian). . .

The group followed Captain Clark's first route to the sea and with similar experiences—except that the night was clear and the "moon shiney." They found the hidden canoe. They roused some elk and shot one, of which they ate, "incredible" as it may seem, all but 8 pounds. The next morning they followed Neacoxie Creek and the beach down the coast. They crossed a stream Captain Clark named Clatsop River after the natives living on it. That name, also has changed, the stream today being known as the Necanicum. Going on about 2 miles they came to the saltmakers. Those men had a neat camp close to fresh as well as salt water, and they had enjoyed kind and attentive care from the natives.

TILLAMOOK HEAD

Captain Clark and his group then made a trip to Tillamook Head as described in his journal:

. . . left Sergt. Gass and one man of my party Werner to make salt & permitted Bratten to accompany me, we proceeded on the round Slipery Stones under a high hill which projected into the ocian about 4 miles further than the direction of the Coast, after walking for 2½ miles on the Stones, my guide made a sudden halt, pointed to the top of the mountain and uttered the word *Pe shack* which means bad. and made signs that we could not proceed any further on the rocks, but must pass over that mountain. I hesitated a moment & view this



Map showing location of Fort Clatsop and the Trail to the Coast.

emence mountain the top of which was obscured in the clouds, and the ascent appeared to be almost perpendicular; as the small Indian path along which they had brought emence loads but a few hours before, led up this mountain and appeared to ascend in a Sideling direction, I thought more than probable that the ascent might be tolerably easy and therefore proceeded on, I soon found that the (path) became much worse as I ascended, and at one place we were obliged to Support and draw ourselves up by the bushes & roots for near 100 feet, and after about 2 hours labor and fatigue we reached the top of this high mountain, from the top of which I looked down with astonishment to behold the height which we had ascended, which appeared to be 10 or 12 hundred feet up a mountain which appeared to be almost perpendicular, here we met 14 Indians men and women loaded with the oil and blubber of the whale. In the face of this tremendous precipice immediately below us. there is a Strata of white earth (which my guide informed me) the neighboring Indians use to paint themselves, and which appears to me to resemble the earth of which the French Porcelain is made; I am confident that this earth contains argile, but whether it also contains silex or magnesia, or either of those earths in a proper proportion I am unable to determine, we left the top of the precipice and proceeded on a bad road and encamped on a small run passing to the left: all much fatigued.

Captain Clark's party were the first white men to stand on Tillamook Head, the mountain that the Tillamook Indians called Nah-se-u'su; and Sacajawea was in all likelihood the first native woman, except those of the local tribes, to climb its steep sides. The explorer's estimate of its height was remarkably accurate; the highest point being 1,136 feet above sea level.

The next morning proved to be clear, and from the next elevation Captain Clark

. . . beheld the grandest and most pleasing prospects which my eyes ever surveyed. in my front a boundless Ocean; to the N. and N. E. the coast as . . . far as my sight could be extended, the Seas raging with emence wave(s) and breaking with great force from the rocks . . . on the other side I have a view of the coast for an emence distance to the S. E. by S. the niches and points of high land which forms this corse for a long ways added to the inoumerable rocks of emence Sise

out at a great distance from the shore and against which the Seas brake with great force gives this coast a most romantic appearance . . .

Continuing the search for the whale, he noted the Tillamook manner of burying the dead in canoes resting on the ground, and commented upon the very heavy forest of the area — forests that originally were among the finest and most dense of the North American continent. When, the same day, the party reached their goal, they found that the Indians had taken every "valuable part" of the whale, leaving only its skeleton on the sand. Probably it was the great gray whale. Captain Clark wrote that its skeleton measured 105 feet in length.

In trying to purchase some of the oil or blubber he found that, although the natives

. . . possessed large quantities of this blubber and oil (they) were so prenrurios that they disposed of it with great reluctance and in small quantities only . . .

He could purchase only a few gallons of the oil, which the Indians rendered by placing hot stones with the blubber in wooden water troughs, and about 300 pounds of the blubber. However, he thanked

. . . providence for directing the whale to us; and think him much more kind to us than he was to jonah, having Sent this Monster to be *Swallowed by us* in Sted of *Swallowing* us as Jonah's did . . .

Late the following evening the group again reached the salt works. They dined on part of an elk and a deer that J. Fields had killed during their absence, and stayed the night to rest from their fatigue.

Leaving the saltmakers early the next morning, January 10, the whale hunters made their way back to Fort Clatsop arriving at 10 o'clock in the evening.

They Lived Off The Land

Until March 23, when the party left Fort Clatsop, most of their attention was given to affairs there, and to making notes that are a major source of our knowledge of the natives and their life—and the life of explorers—a century and a half ago.

FOOD

The securing of food both for daily use and for the trip home was a constant concern. Almost every day's entry contains references to the hunt, stating who were sent out and what their luck, or lack of luck, had been. Often the game was killed so far from the fort that much of the meat was lost to the wild animals of the area, or to the Indians who frequently helped themselves before men could be sent from the fort to bring in the game. One amusing note on this native activity reads, in Captain Lewis' record of February 12:

. . . This morning we were visited by a Clatsop man who brought with him three dogs as a remuneration for the Elk which himself and nation had stolen from us some little time since, however the dogs took the alarm and ran off; we suffered him to remain in the fort all night . . .

Captain Lewis may have regretted that loss of meat, but Captain Clark was probably contented that the dogs did escape becoming a dinner for the men of the expedition.

The men did not fare too well, for a dinner that was living "in high style" consisted of "a marrowbone a piece and a brisket of Elk that had the appearance of some fat on it." However, they seldom went hungry and by February 12 had dried enough meat to last out the month. They also took heart in the information supplied by the Indians that in March they would have a great abundance of small fish "Which from their description must be the herring."

That seems to be the first published reference to the Columbia River smelt, a fish much sought by the natives—and by Oregonians today—because of its delicious flavor. Captains Lewis and Clark thought them superior to any fish they had ever tasted, and found them best when "cooked in Indian stile, which is by roasting a number of them on a wooden spit with-

out any previous preparation whatever." The smelt, also known as the eulachon, is so rich in fat that it was often used as a candle by the natives. Some of the early explorers actually called it the candle fish. Men of the expedition were dispatched up the Columbia to procure smelt for the table, adding a welcome variety to the diet of fresh and dried meat.

In March the wapato root was also more plentiful, and the party lived "sumptuously on our wappetoe and Sturgeon . . . and Anchovy (smelt)." Sometimes a snow goose or brant was killed, both of which were judged better tasting than fowl of the same species east of the Rocky Mountains. Other foods mentioned, either as in use among the natives or tried by the explorers, included thistles, ferns, rushes and berries—"cranberries for the sick," a beneficial remedy. By the middle of March Captain Lewis reported that they were living "in clover." Also, they had salt to flavor their dishes.

Nevertheless, the expedition left Fort Clatsop without sufficient food for the return journey, "depending on Drewyer and the hunters" to keep them supplied on the long route from the mouth of the Columbia River to St. Louis at the junction of the Missouri and the Mississippi.

CLOTHES

Another item briefly and infrequently mentioned was clothing. Although the party was outfitted for the entire trip, most garments had to be replaced and parts of costumes were secured to show the native dress in the heretofore unexplored land. Captain Lewis states that he

. . . Had a large coat completed out of the skins of the Tiger Cat and those also of a small animal about the size of a squirrel not known to me; these skins I procured from the Indians who had previously dressed them and formed them into a robe; it took seven of those robes to complete the coat . . .

For some days at least the men of the garrison were busily engaged in dressing elk skins for clothing and moccasins. Their major hindrance was the lack of elk brains or soap to use in curing the hides. They could not get sufficient ashes to make lye, for "extrawdinary" as it may seem, green and dry wood was consumed without leaving "the residium of a particle of

ashes." Native hats made of cedar bark were purchased from the natives.

Skins were apportioned among the men to make into coverings for the baggage when they set out on the return journey.

HEALTH

Many of the men were sick or suffering from accidents; yet it is one of the notable things about the expedition that only one man died during the entire trip, and he of natural causes and shortly after the journey was begun.

The health of the members of the expedition was a constant worry to the two captains. Sickness and accidents are often mentioned, and the treatment applied—usually the best known book remedies a century and a half ago. Alexander Willard cut his knee "very badly with his tomahawk"; but the cut healed under a treatment not stated. William Bratton complained

. . . of a pain in the lower part of the back when he moves which I suppose proceeds from dability. I gave him barks. (George) Gibson's fever still continues obstinate tho' not very high; I gave him a doze of Dr. Rush's . . .

When George Drouillard, often written Drewyer in the *Journals*, was taken ill Captain Clark "bled him."

At one time or another most of the members of the party were ill, and although all recovered, their inferior diet, as Captain Lewis observed, made their recovery slower than it might have been.

Descriptions For Science

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Throughout January, February, and March the leaders collected and minutely described the flora and fauna of the area. Frequently their descriptions are accompanied by draw-

ings of remarkable accuracy.

The trees are enumerated very much as we know them, including a

. . . pine tree, or fir, which at the height of a man's breast was 42 feet in girth; about three feet higher, or as high as a tall man could reach, it was 40 feet in the girth which was about the circumference for at least 200 feet without a limb . . . it was very lofty from the commencement of the limbs . . . (Its total height) may be safely estimated at 300 feet.

That tree was probably a Douglas fir, named for the British botanist, David Douglas, who arrived in Oregon 20 years after Lewis and Clark.

A majority of Pacific Northwest birds are described, including the varied thrush, "a beautiful little bird"; a coast buzzard that measured more than 9 feet from wing tip to wing tip, which Captain Lewis believed "to be the largest bird of North America"; owls and woodpeckers, jays and doves—the list is surprisingly complete.

Captain Lewis lists the quadruped of this country:

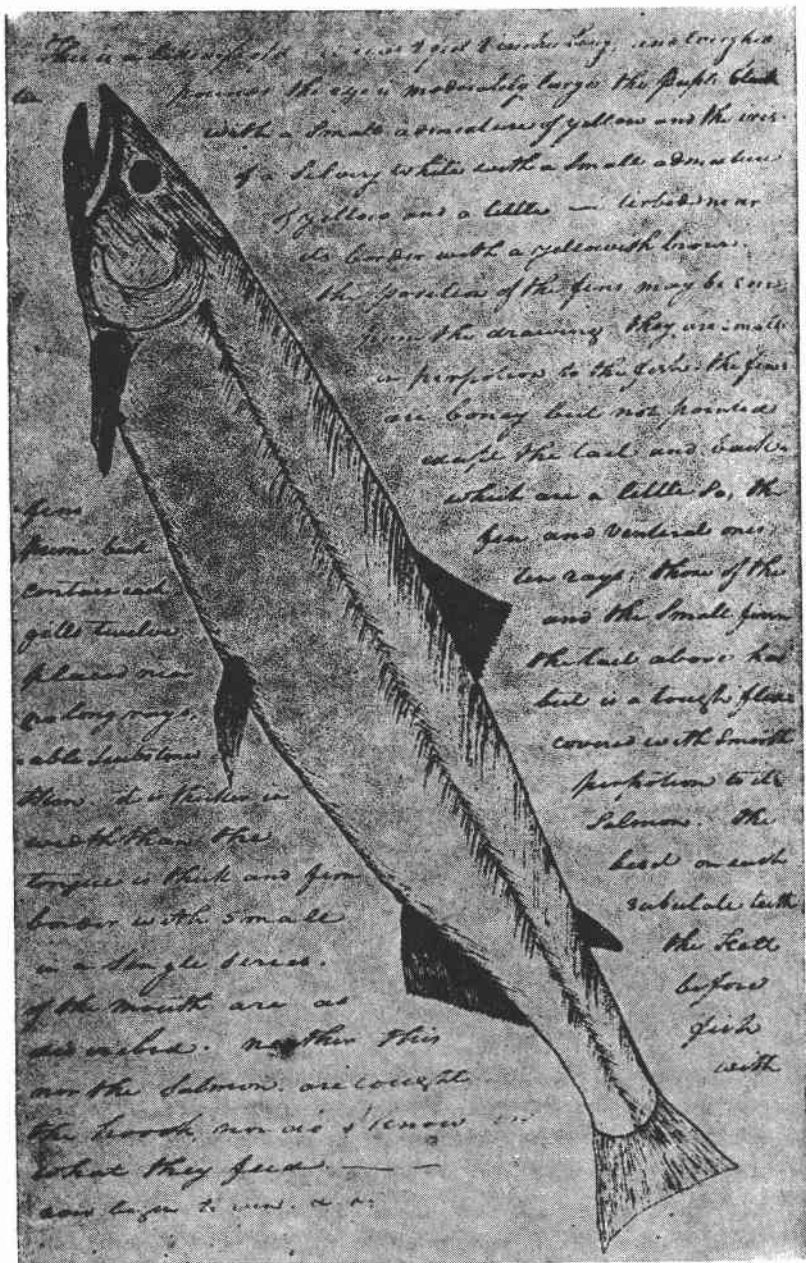
. . . 1st. the *domestic animals*, consisting of the horse and the dog only (the horses being excellent but the dogs even smaller than the common cur); 2ndly the *native wild animals* consisting of among others, bear, deer, elk, wolf, tiger cat, beaver, otter, mink, seal, raccoon, squirrel, mole panther hare and skunk.

Many of those animals are carefully described even as to their sub-family, in their appearance, habits, and habitat.

INDIANS

Second only to the descriptions that Lewis and Clark gave of the plants and animals was their careful attention to the appearance, dress, customs, and ways of life of the natives. Their journals often supply us with our best first-hand information about the Indians.

As might be expected, much attention is paid to the Indians' manner of supporting themselves. Captain Clark noted that although some natives had guns traded by the maritime fur traders they were "usually of an inferior quality" and "invariably in bad condition." The Indians still relied upon the bow



Reproduction of a page from the Journals containing a drawing of a "white salmon trout", with descriptive text.

and arrow. Those are described in detail and judged excellent; they were used against beast and bird. The native methods of fishing are counted: the seine, dip-net, gig, and hook and line were used to catch salmon, char, trout, sturgeon, smelt and other fish. The manner in which the natives dug roots or gathered berries is also discussed, with pictures of implements used.

Native cooking utensils in the neighborhood were:

. . . wooden bowls or troughs. Baskets, Shell and wooden Spoons and wooden Scures or Spits, their wooden Bowles and troughs are of different Sizes and most generally dug out of Solid piecies; . . . (they) are extremely well executed . . . in (them) they boil their flesh or fish by means of hot Stones which they immerce in the water with the articles to be boiled . . . Their baskets are . . . so closely interwoven . . . that they are watertight . . .

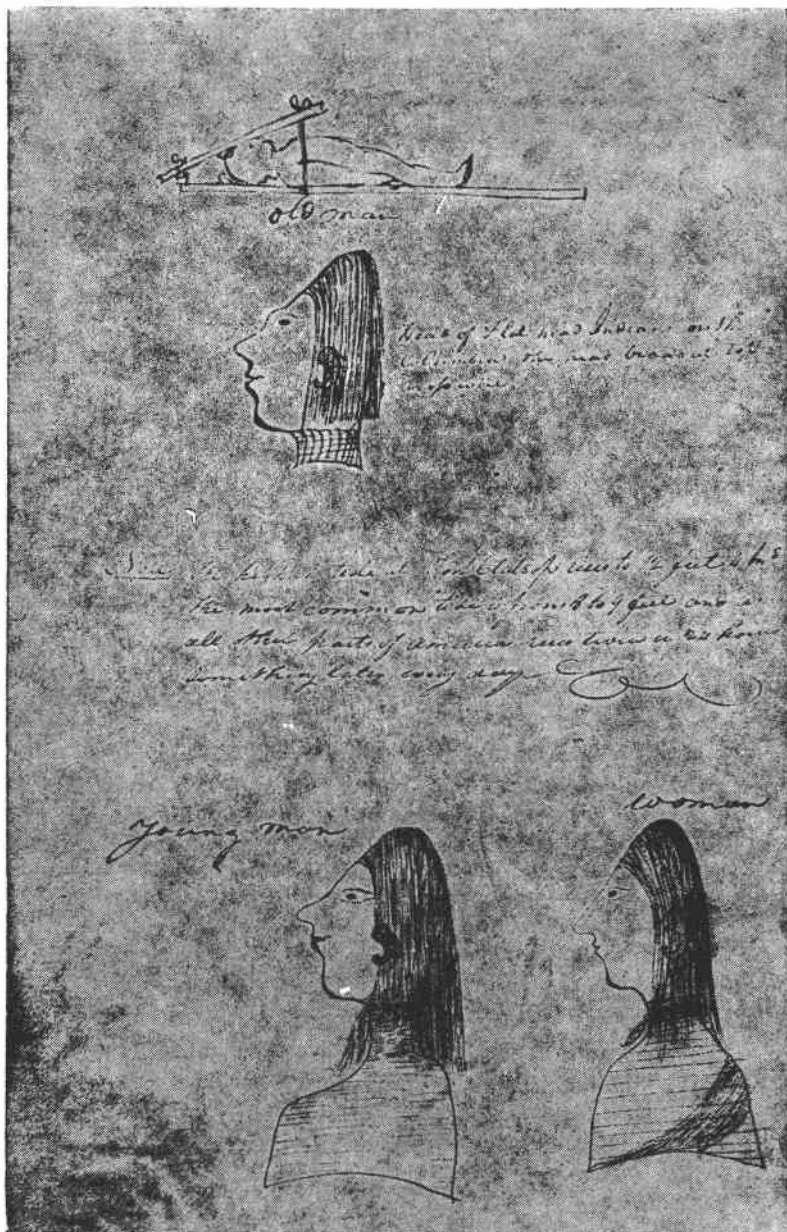
Both captains tell how the natives roasted their meat and fish, and how they dried fish, roots, and berries.

The remarkably good houses of the Clatsop and Chinooks are described—houses that were, so far as native techniques permitted, adjusted to the climate and the Indians' social needs. They included private and "apartment" dwellings, winter and summer homes.

The government of the natives was studied, the explorers concluding that

. . . the creation of a chief depends upon the upright deportment of the individual & his ability and disposition to render service to the community; and his authority or the deference paid him is in exact equilibrio with the popularity or voluntary esteem he has acquired among the individuals of his band or nation. Their laws like those of all uncivilized Indians consist of a set of customs which have grown out of their local situations, not being able to speak their language we have not been able to inform ourselves of the existence of any peculiar customs among them.

In short, little of native life or of anything else escaped the two captains' observation. They made the first records of many an animal and plant, naming—among many plants, the Oregon grape. They first described many animals, fish and birds of the Pacific Northwest. But the names they gave to plants, animals, and geographic features have often been sup-



Heads of Clatsop Indians, by Clark—and a child in process of having its head flattened.

planted by the names given by later and better publicized visitors to Oregon.

Leaving Fort Clatsop

Activities at Fort Clatsop all aimed at preparing for the trip home. Food had to be secured, clothing made or repaired, canoes put in shape for the up-river trip and plans perfected. It is difficult for us to realize the hazards and dangers they would face. They were to make their way through plains and over mountains, and always their very lives depended upon their own ability to cope with the wilds and the uncivilized peoples of the wilds.

Of trade goods, there were little left, Captain Lewis revealing (on March 16) that

. . . two handkerchiefs would now contain all the small articles of merchandize which we possess; the balance of the stock consists of 6 blue robes one scarlet do. one uniform artillerist's coat and hat, five robes made of our large flag, and a few old cloaths trimmed with ribbon. on this stock we have wholly to depend for the purchases of horses and such portion of our subsistence from the Indians as it will be in our powers to obtain, a scant dependence indeed, for a tour of the distance of that before us . . .

A couple of months earlier the date of departure had been set for the early part of April, but by the middle of March, the two captains were ready to start on the homeward trek. Troubles beset them: Drouillard (Drewyer, in the *Journals*) was taken with a violent pain, and several of the men complained of being unwell—a "truly unfortunate" circumstance, as Captain Lewis complained. He listed a dog "purchased for our sick men, (some dried fish) to add to our small stock of provision's (and an otter skin) to cover my papers." The rain hampered work on the first part of the return journey up the Columbia River. In fact, adverse weather delayed the departure from March 18 to March 23. Following the south bank of the Colum-

bia, the Lewis and Clark Expedition made 16 miles before nightfall that day. For two more months they would be in the Pacific Northwest; but they had said good-by to their winter camp at Fort Clatsop.

"The object of this list is, that through the medium of some civilized person who may see the same, it may be made known to the informed world, that the party consisting of the persons whose names are hereunto annexed, and who were sent out by the Government of the U'States in May 1804, to explore the interior of the continent of North America, did penetrate the same by way of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, to the discharge of the latter into the Pacific Ocean, where they arrived on the 14th of November 1805, and from whence they departed the 23rd Day of March 1806 on their return to the United States by the Same rout they had come out."

CAPTAINS

Meriwether Lewis

William Clark

SERGEANTS

John Ordway

Nathaniel Pryor

Patrick Gass

PRIVATEs

William Bratton

John Collins

John Colter

Pierre Cruzatte

Joseph Field

Reuben Field

Robert Frazier

Silas Goodrich

George Gibson

Thomas Howard

Hugh Hall

Joseph Whitehouse

Baptiste LePage

Francis LaBiche

Hugh McNeal

John Potts

John Shields

George Shannon

John Thompson

William Werner

Richard Windsor

Peter Wiser

Alexander Willard

INTERPRETERS

George Drouillard

Toussaint Charbonneau

On their departure from Fort Clatsop, the Commanders posted the above notice and personnel list in the fort, and gave several copies to natives of the area. Eventually, one found its way to Philadelphia, having been carried to China by a trader and mailed from Canton in January, 1807.

Sacajawea, her infant son Baptiste, and Clark's negro servant

York, completed the personnel of the Corps of Discovery. Captain Lewis' Newfoundland dog, Scannon, made the complete trip with the expedition.

What Was Accomplished?

The Lewis and Clark Expedition stayed in Oregon only a few months, but despite the shortness of its stay, the influence and effect of the expedition continue until today, and will continue.

One of the earliest men to feel its influence was Simon Fraser, who, in 1808, discovered the river that bears his name. He was searching for the source of the Columbia River, and was actuated by diplomatic and business reasons. If he could find the source of the river that Gray had discovered, and follow that stream to its mouth, he would be the first white man to do so and would thereby strengthen British claims to its drainage basin. That would counterbalance the work of the expedition. Also, he wanted to advance the British-Canadian fur trade into the region.

John Floyd, a member of Congress from Virginia, whose cousin, Charles Floyd, was the sergeant who died on the expedition, was stimulated to argue in Congress and out of public office, that the United States should occupy the Oregon Country. Although his efforts did not bring immediate results, they were helpful in arousing interest throughout the nation.

Another person who was stimulated by the expedition was Hall J. Kelley. He tried to move the American Government and people to take over this region, and urged that a colony of Americans be settled here. He, too, failed in his immediate efforts, but he helped to prepare the public mind for the later acquisition of Oregon.

John Jacob Astor was encouraged to undertake his program for establishing a post at the mouth of the Columbia. Events at that post helped to confirm American claims to much of

the Pacific Northwest.

Of especial importance was the publication in 1814 of an edition of the *Journal* of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Many of the early settlers in Oregon spoke of having read it, and stated that it was the source of their abiding interest in this region.

The United States Government was encouraged by the expedition's success to send other exploring parties into the unsettled land west of the Mississippi River. Lieutenant (later Commodore) Charles Wilkes was in charge of a Navy exploring expedition that visited the Northwest Coast in 1841. Members of that party traveled over much of Oregon and Washington. John C. Fremont on a trip in 1842, that was aimed "... to aid ... emigration to the lower Columbia," explored and accurately located South Pass. That pass was the gateway of the Oregon Trail, and through it poured thousands of Americans on the road to Oregon. In 1843 Fremont returned, visited Fort Vancouver and explored much of eastern Oregon.

It has been truly maintained that "the Lewis and Clark Expedition was not merely one of a series of events forming the basis of our claim to Oregon, but it was the event that carried the others in its train. From it emerged gradually the conscious desire to claim (this) territory ..."

Fort Clatsop National Memorial

The original fort fell into decay and had almost disappeared when American settlers took up claims on the site about 1850. Farming and other uses destroyed all traces of Fort Clatsop. In 1901 the Oregon Historical Society bought the site to preserve it for future generations. Local historical and civic groups built a simulation of the fort in 1955. Fort Clatsop National Memorial was authorized by Congressional action on May 29, 1958, and the National Park Service acquired the fort and 125 acres of land surrounding it.

