

William Clark





Photo added by Ron Moody

## William Clark ★

**BIRTH** 1 Aug 1770  
Caroline County, Virginia, USA

**DEATH** 1 Sep 1838 (aged 68)  
Saint Louis, St. Louis City, Missouri, USA

**BURIAL** Bellefontaine Cemetery  
Saint Louis, St. Louis City, Missouri, USA [Show Map](#)

**PLOT** Block 224, Lot 780

**MEMORIAL ID** 202 · [View Source](#)

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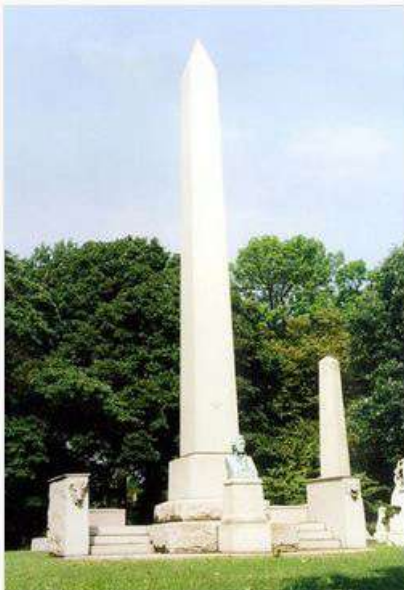
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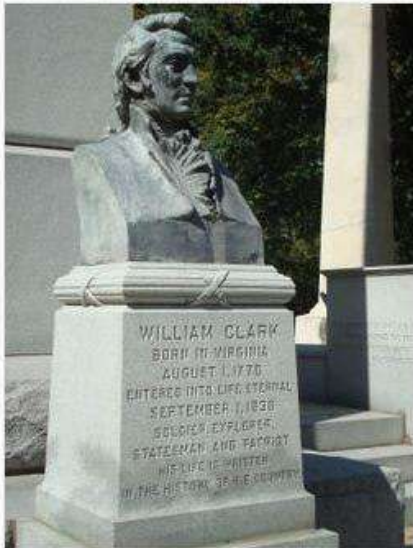
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Explorer. Born in Caroline County Virginia, Clark moved with his family to Louisville, Kentucky in 1785. In 1789, he joined the militia. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the regular army in 1792, and was assigned to Anthony Wayne's regiment, participating in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. One of the men briefly under his command was Meriwether Lewis. Clark left the army in 1796. In 1803, Captain Meriwether Lewis invited Clark to share the leadership of a corps of exploration in an extensive journey into the vast uncharted area newly acquired by the United States with the Louisiana Purchase. Clark acted as mapmaker and artist, portraying in great detail the life they observed. Clark was credited with rescuing the expedition from disaster on more than one occasion. After Clark's successful return from the Pacific coast three years later, President Jefferson awarded him 1,600 acres and made him brigadier general of militia for the Louisiana Territory as well as superintendent of Indian affairs. He held that post the rest of his life. From 1813 he served as governor of the Missouri Territory. Clark died in St. Louis where a 35-foot gray granite obelisk was erected to mark his grave. His descendants raised \$100,000 to rehabilitate the deteriorated obelisk and rededicated it with a ceremony on the bicentennial of the start of Corps of Exploration. The western American plant, *Clarkia onagraceae*, related to the evening primrose, is named after him.

Bio by: lola



Added by cedar9

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## Family Members

### Parents



Jonathan Clark  
1725-1799



Ann Rogers Clark  
1727-1798

### Siblings



Jonathan Clark  
1750-1811



George Rogers Clark  
1752-1818



George Rogers Clark  
1752-1818



Ann Rogers Clark Gwathmey  
1755-1822



John Clark  
1757-1783



Richard Henry Clark  
1760-1784



Edmund Clark  
1762-1815



Lucy Clark Croghan  
1765-1838



Elizabeth Clark Anderson  
1768-1795



Frances Eleanor Clark Fitzhugh  
1773-1825

### Spouses



Julia Hancock Clark  
1791-1820 (m. 1808)



Harriet Kennerly Clark  
1788-1831 (m. 1821)

### Children



Harriett Clark



Meriwether Lewis Clark  
1809-1881



William Preston Clark  
1811-1840



Mary Margaret Clark  
1814-1821



George Rogers Hancock Clark  
1816-1858



John Julius Clark  
1818-1831

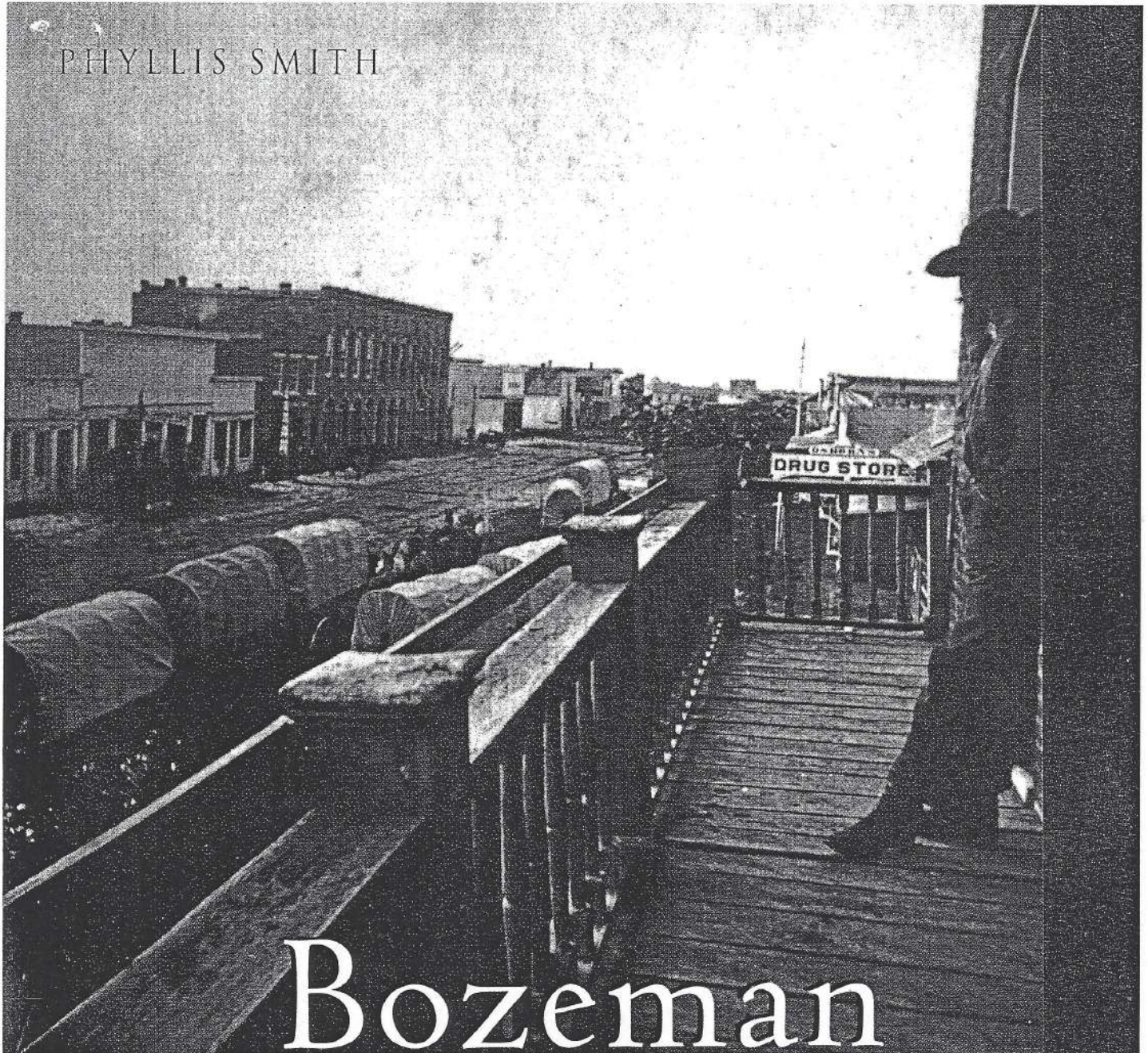


Jefferson Kearny Clark  
1824-1900



Edmund Clark  
1826-1827

PHYLLIS SMITH



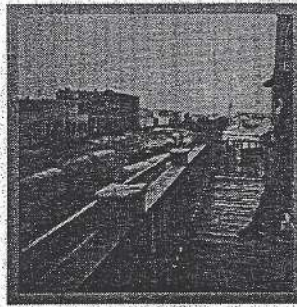
# Bozeman

*and the*

# Gallatin Valley

*a history*

*chapter*



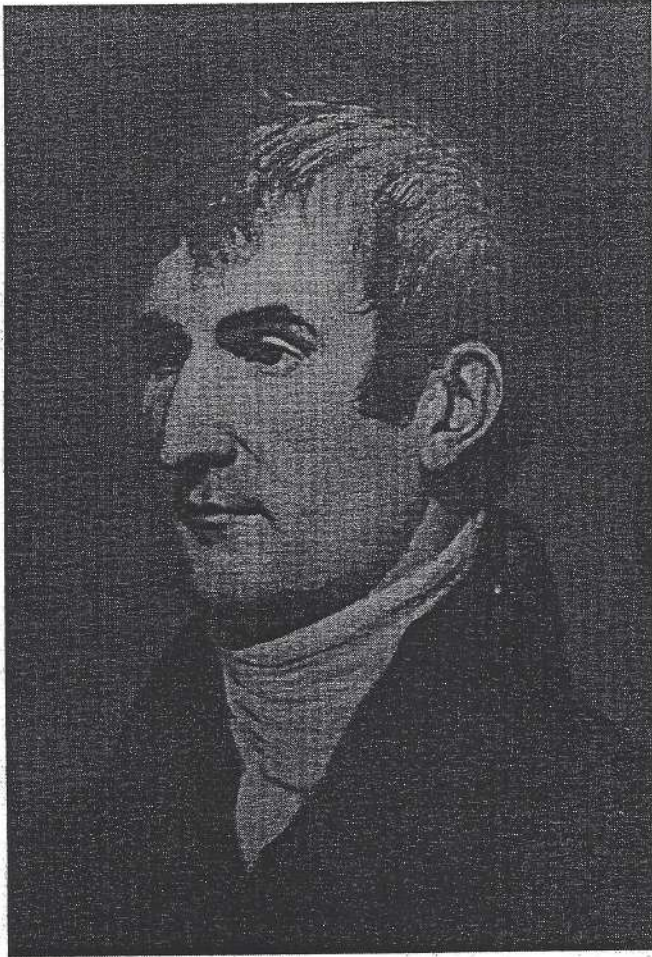
F O U R

*Although some Indian groups* continued to favor the Gallatin Valley as prime ground for hunting and fighting, others claimed the area, along with most lands west of the Mississippi River. Few of these early landlords came to visit the property, however.

In 1682, France assumed ownership of the region up to the Continental Divide (though the French were not certain just where the divide was) and called the land Louisiana in honor of King Louis XIV. Sometime before 1742, a French fur trader with the imposing name of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Verendryé, who operated a post north of Lake Winnipeg, explored the northern Louisiana area, getting as far as what are now the Dakotas. Age and ill health forced him to return home before he had learned much. He sent his sons François and Louis-Joseph back south from Canada in 1742;



Louisiana Purchase, 1803.



*Meriwether Lewis, 1774-1809.*

OIL PORTRAIT (1807) BY CHARLES WILLSON PEALE,  
COURTESY INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL  
HISTORICAL PARK.

they may have wandered through the Black Hills or possibly got a look at what is now eastern Montana. The romantic notion that the Verendryé brothers ascended the Missouri River to its source persists, but there is no evidence they visited the Gallatin Valley.

Twenty years later, in 1763, France ceded Louisiana to Spain, which claimed the land for thirty-seven years as a buffer between British activity in Canada and Spanish settlements in the Southwest. Then, in October 1800, agents for Napoleon took back Louisiana under the terms of the Treaty of San Ildefonso.

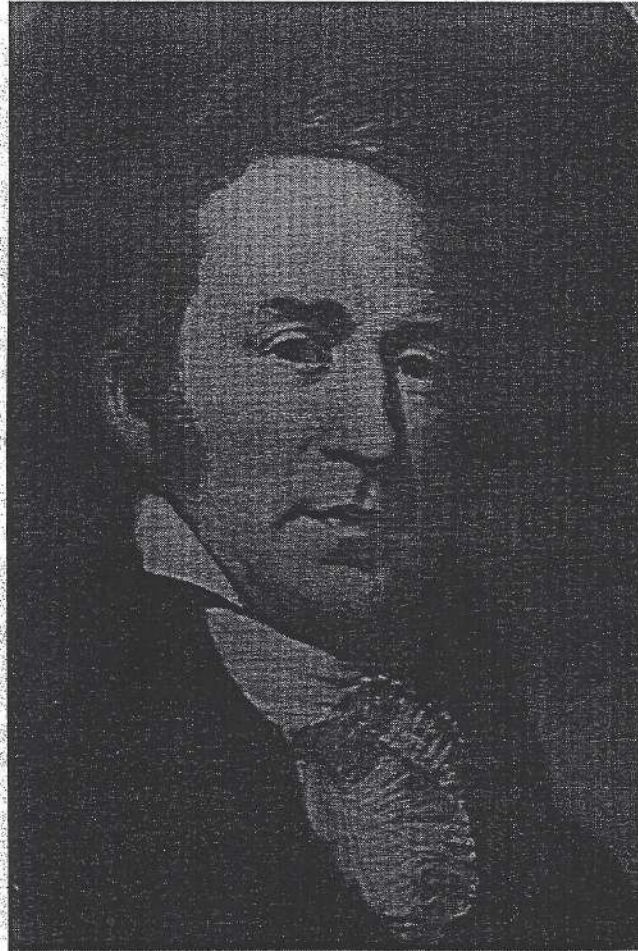
Adventurers may have traveled about the territory during these years. No known diary or record gives evidence of any Frenchman or Spaniard moving about the Gallatin Valley before 1800.

Perhaps a few fur traders from the northeast ventured to the area, but seldom did any of these early wanderers commit their observations to paper or map—perhaps because, as historian Robert Athearn said, they were “an uncommunicative lot and had no precise information about what they had seen.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite French ownership of vast Louisiana, Thomas Jefferson, even before he became president in 1801, quietly began to plan for an American expedition to the Far West. As president, he secured \$2,500 from Congress to finance an overland trip of exploration to the Pacific Ocean, although he did not advertise the appropriation widely. At the same time, Jefferson sent diplomatic feelers to Paris for a possible \$2 million land purchase of the Florida region and the land surrounding New Orleans.

*William Clark, 1770-1838.*

OIL PORTRAIT (1810) BY CHARLES WILLSON PEALE,  
COURTESY INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL  
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Neither Jefferson nor his associates dreamed that Napoleon would be open to American purchase of Louisiana itself for \$15 million. The French leader had suffered sufficient military losses in the New World to determine that he could not explore or exploit Louisiana for French benefit. The real estate deal was struck on April 30, 1803, but it was not until July that President Jefferson learned that "his representatives had bought not only a city, but a whole wilderness empire. . . . In retrospect, it was a transaction of daring proportions and of considerable significance. At the stroke of a pen, about one third of modern America was attached to the young nation . . ."<sup>22</sup> Thus, the United States bought "the world's largest pasture, considerable mineral rights, one major and several minor rivers—all in good working order—and the best-known desert in the

Western Hemisphere."<sup>23</sup>

Jefferson appointed his personal secretary, Virginian Meriwether Lewis, to lead what the president called a Corps of Discovery to explore the newly acquired territory and seek the elusive Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. At Lewis's suggestion, the president then named as co-leader William Clark, another Virginian, whose older brother George Rogers Clark had been a hero in the Revolutionary War. The twenty-nine-year-old Lewis received a captain's rank; thirty-three-year-old Clark became a second lieutenant with a promise that he too would become a captain. A cantankerous U.S. Congress and an equally cantankerous War Department balked at making Clark's higher rank official. Nevertheless, the two men regarded one another as military equals, as did the party of twenty-

six regular army men. Clark's black slave York, two French voyageurs, interpreter George Drouillard (sometimes written Drewyer), and Lewis's dog, a Newfoundland named Seaman, completed the group.<sup>4</sup> Members of the Corps, who had been carefully selected by Lewis, were "good hunters, stout, healthy unmarried men, accustomed to the woods and capable of bearing bodily fatigue in a pretty considerable degree."<sup>5</sup>

The two leaders complemented one another, both in their different personalities and the skills they brought to the enterprise. Lewis was lean; Clark was heavysset. Both were tall men, over six feet, and in good physical condition, although Clark was plagued by occasional digestive complaints. Lewis was better educated; Clark learned from the school of experience. Lewis needed long periods of solitude and was inclined to be introspective. He was somewhat formal, even a bit pompous with the men, although he could be charming enough at the Washington soirées Jefferson asked him to attend. Red-haired Clark was a hearty open fellow, genial with the men.

Lewis was meticulous and precise; Clark was expansive and imaginative (witness his prowess as a master misspeller). Lewis planned the route; Clark drew the maps to show where they had been. Lewis collected plants and animals, made extensive notes on their appearance, and packed them away so that the president could study them later in Washington. Clark collected medicines and doctored the men when needed, although most remained healthy. (The expedition lost only one man, Charles Floyd, who probably died of a ruptured appendix as the group neared the present site of Sioux City, Iowa.) It was appropriate that Clark was in charge of such potions as Dr. Benjamin Rush's Thunderbolt pills because he often doctored himself for one ailment or another. Lewis was temperamental; Clark was sanguine and more comfortable in negotiations with Indian groups. Lewis usually went ahead, investigating the choice of route. Clark often stayed with the boats and saw to their maintenance.

Toward the last of May 1804, after a winter of drill, the assembling of equipment, and the packing of a fifty-foot-long keelboat and two pirogues, the group left Saint Louis to ascend the Missouri, as William Clark reported in his creative spelling,

"under a jentle brease."<sup>6</sup> After hauling the keelboat and pirogues upstream for a grueling distance of sixteen hundred miles, the group arrived in late October at the Mandan villages twenty miles north of present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. There they stopped for the winter.

During their cold weather stay, Lewis and Clark found out what they could about the journey ahead. They learned of a great falls upstream and of the three forks, sources of the Missouri. They also learned of a large tributary that their informants told them was called "the river which scolds all others," and wondered whether this waterway might give passage to the Pacific Ocean.

They discovered that Clark's servant York greatly interested the Indian groups they encountered, since none had seen a man with black skin before. Indian women rubbed his arms and cheeks, tried to peer down his trousers, and pressed him for sexual services to such an extent that he often complained of fatigue.

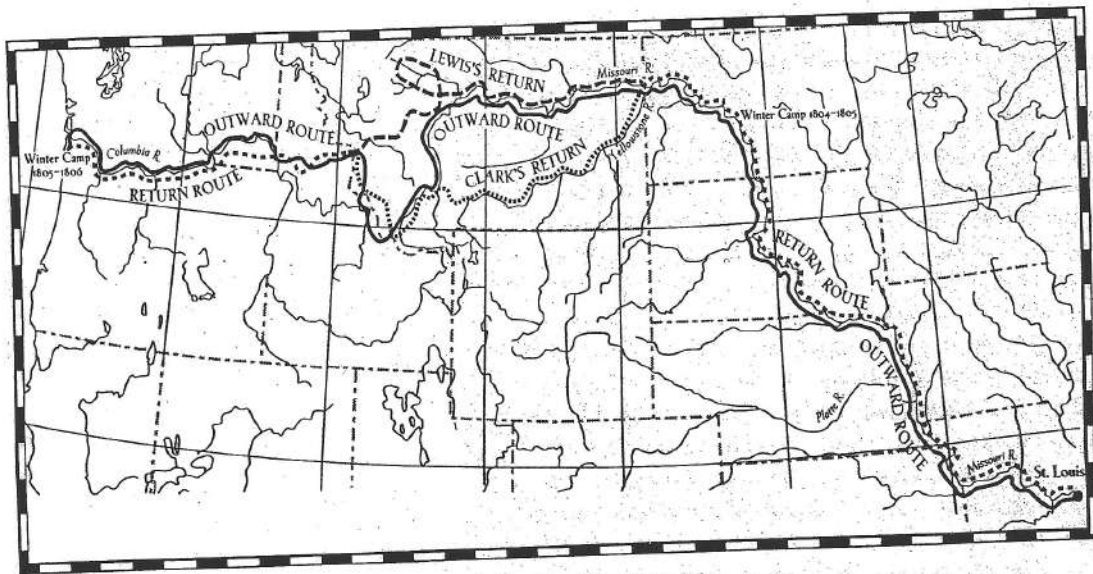
The captains hired a French interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, who brought along his wife Sacagawea, a young woman who had been forcibly taken from her Shoshone band by the Hidatsa (Minataree) some years before. Sacagawea's baby boy, Jean Baptiste, was two months old. Charbonneau turned out to possess less skills than the leaders had hoped, but Sacagawea recognized landmarks and provided information about possible routes when the party reached the Three Forks area. Before they set off again on April 7, 1805, from the Mandan villages, the captains sent the keelboat back to Saint Louis, along with two men expelled for disciplinary reasons.

Now the party traveled in the two pirogues, an additional six canoes, or on foot beside the river. They passed the "river which scolds all others," but not before Lewis determined that the swollen stream, now called the Milk River, was not the miracle passageway to the Pacific, despite contrary advice from the men. The meticulous Lewis studied the creekbeds of both the Milk and the Missouri, observing that the Missouri had more stones that might be seen in a waterway that had its source in the mountains.

By the time the expedition arrived at the Great Falls on July 9, its members had seen their first elk,



## Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley



Route of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

bison, and grizzly bear. They had been bitten by their first western "musquetoes." (The pesky mosquito was spelled nineteen different ways in William Clark's journals.) Lewis, no champion speller himself, reported the "musquetoes extremely troublesome to me today nor is a large knat less troublesome, which dose not sting, but attacks the eye in swarms and compells us to brush them off or have our eyes filled with them."<sup>7</sup> They also had learned the backbreaking job of portaging their goods around rapids and through increasingly swift streams with numerous channels. They were surprised at the height and spread of the mountains, some still covered with late-summer snow.

On July 22, Lewis wrote: "The Indian woman recognizes the country and assures us that this is the river on which her relations live, and that the three forks are at no great distance. this peice of information has cheered the sperits of the party who now begin to console themselves with the anticipation of shortly seeing the head of the missouri yet unknown to the civilzed world."<sup>8</sup> Sacagawea recognized the chalky cliffs where her people gathered white powder to paint their faces and their horses. Lewis and Clark hoped they would soon meet her relatives, or any Shoshone band with sufficient horses to trade for the overland trip to the Snake River and along the Columbia drainage to

the Pacific Ocean. Lewis ordered "canoes to hoist their small flags in order that should the indians see us they might discover that we are not Indians, nor their enemies . . ."<sup>9</sup>

William Clark reached the Three Forks first. He went ahead with Robert Frazier, brothers Joseph and Reuben Fields, and Charbonneau, arriving at the forks of the Missouri on July 25. The men's feet were in terrible shape from stepping on the thorns of prickly pear cactus. Despite their discomfort, Clark reported in his journal that it had been "a fine morning":

we proceeded on a few miles to the three forks of the Missouri those three forks are nearly of a Size, the North fork [Jefferson] appears to have the most water and must be Considered as the one best calculated for us to assend Middle fork [Madison] is quit as large about 90 yds wide. The South fork [Gallatin] is about 70 yds wide & falls in about 400 yards below the middle fork those forks appear to be very rapid & Contain Some timber in their bottoms which is verry extincive.<sup>10</sup>

He took note of burned areas to the north: "the Indians have latterly Set the Praries on fire, the Cause I can't account for." He spied the track of one lone horse, also the sign of many elk, beaver, and otter.<sup>11</sup>

After a breakfast of venison, Clark left a note for Lewis and took his party up what he called the north fork of the Missouri. He left two men whose feet were the most painful (one was Charbonneau) and climbed to the top of a mountain, but found no Indian sign. On the way down, hot and thirsty, he drank from a cold spring and, almost immediately, he reported later, became ill. Even so, the tough captain hiked cross-country from the Jefferson to the Madison. At some point, the hapless Charbonneau fell into some water and Clark was obliged to fish him out.

Lewis and the others arrived at the Three Forks two days later, July 27. Always the naturalist, Lewis noted the intense blue color of the broken limestone cliffs and a number of bighorn sheep. As he reached the mouth of what he called the southeast fork, the Gallatin, he wrote in his journal:

... the country opens suddenly to extensive and beautiful plains and meadows which appear to be surrounded in every direction with distant and lofty mountains; supposing this to be the three forks of the Missouri I halted the party on the Lard. shore for breakfast. and walked up the S.E. fork about a mile and ascended the point of a high limestone cliff from whence I commanded a most perfect view of the neighbouring country. From this point I could see the S.E. fork about 7 miles. it is rapid and about 70 Yards wide. throughout the distance I saw it, it passes through a smooth extensive green meadow of fine grass ...<sup>12</sup>

In order to give the men a rest and to wait for Clark's return to the spot where he had left the note, Lewis halted the party. While the company aired and dried their goods, Lewis made notes of the probable latitude and longitude of the area.

Sure enough, Clark returned, but with a high fever. He took to a brush shelter with chills. Lewis suggested a dosage of Dr. Rush's Thunderbolt pills. Taking advantage of Clark's indisposition, the men made new moccasins, shirts, and leggings from deerskin, and tended to their aching feet.

On Sunday, July 28, Lewis and the ailing Clark made some decisions. Lewis wrote:

Both Capt. C. and myself corresponded in opinion with respect to the impropriety of calling either

of these streams the Missouri and accordingly agreed to name them after the President of the United States and the Secretaries of the Treasury and state having previously named one river in honour of the Secretaries of War and Navy. In pursuance of this resolution we called the S.W. fork, that we meant to ascend, Jefferson's River in honor of that illustrious personage Thomas Jefferson, the author of our enterprise, the Middle fork we called Madison's River in honor of James Madison, and the S.E. Fork we called Gallitin's River in honor of Albert Gallitin. the two first are 90 yards wide and the last is 70 yards, all of them run with great valocity and thow out large bodies of water. Gallitin's River is reather more rapid than either of the others, is not quite as deep but from all appearances may be navigated to a considerable distance. Capt. C. who came down Madison's river yesterday and has also seen Jefferson's some distance thinks Madison's reather the most rapid, but it is not as much so by any means as Gallitin's. the beds of all these streams are formed of smooth pebble and gravel, and their waters perfectly transparent; in short, they are three noble streams. there is timber enough here to support an establishment, provided it be erected with brick or stone either of which would be much cheaper than wood as all the materials for such a work are immediately at the spot.<sup>13</sup>

Lewis also noted in his journal that

Our present Camp is precisely on the spot that the Snake Indians were encamped at the time the Minnetares of the Knife R. first came in sight of them five years since, from hence they retreated about three miles up Jeffersons river and concealed themselves in the woods, the Minnetares pursued, attacked them, killed 4 men 4 women a number of boys, and mad prisoners of all the females and four boys, Sah-cah-gar-we-ah or Indian woman was one of the female prisoners taken at that time; tho' I cannot discover that she shews any immotion of sorrow in recollecting this event, or of joy in being restored to her native country; if she has enough to eat and a few trinkets to wear I believe she would be perfectly content anywhere.<sup>14</sup>

By Monday, July 29, Clark had recovered, and

he and Lewis agreed that the Jefferson River was surely the way to the mountains where the expedition might meet Sacagawea's people, the Shoshone, and secure horses for the overland trip to the Columbia Basin. They traveled up the Jefferson for a week but, by August 8, Lewis determined that to follow the waterway farther would not be productive. He left Clark to nurse his now-ulcerated feet and, taking Drouillard, Shields, and McNeal, climbed the Beaverhead Mountains to cross the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass. Here they saw some Indians, but they slipped away from the explorer and disappeared.

Finally, the four men were able to convince a small band of Indians through sign that they should go with the party to the place where Clark and the rest of the expedition were camped. They would receive gifts, they would see with their own eyes a man with black skin, and they would be reunited with a woman from their band. With utmost caution they came, following their chief Cameahwait. Sacagawea, upon seeing members of the band approach, "began to dance and show every mark of the most extravagant joy, turning . . . and pointing to several Indians . . . sucking her fingers at the same time to indicate they were of her native tribe."<sup>15</sup> When she recognized chief Cameahwait as her brother, she "ran and embraced him, throwing over him her blanket and weeping profusely. The chief was himself moved, though not in the same degree."<sup>16</sup> The man to whom Sacagawea was promised in her infancy was part of the chief's band and, although he claimed she was his wife by right, he did not want her since she had had a child by another.

The expedition traded for Shoshone horses and "proceeded on," as both Lewis and Clark said repeatedly in their journals, to travel over Lolo Pass and then downstream to the Pacific Ocean before winter set in, an arduous and sometimes frightening trek. Thomas Jefferson's Corps of Discovery had completed the first half of one of the most amazing expeditions in the New World, lauded and studied two hundred years later.

The party started back toward the States on March 23, 1806. William Clark was the only captain to return to the Gallatin Valley the following summer. Meriwether Lewis took his group through

the Missoula Valley and east toward the Great Falls of the Missouri, bound for the mouth of the Yellowstone. Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor was charged with bringing horses through the mountains to the Three Forks. Clark, Sergeant John Ordway, and a few other men took a wild canoe ride down the still-swollen Jefferson River, traveling ninety-seven miles the first day, quite a different experience from the arduous pulling of canoes upstream the year before. On Sunday, July 12, all met at the Three Forks, including Pryor and the horses, and the group was again divided.

Ordway and ten of the men were to follow Lewis down the Missouri, a relatively pleasant canoe ride, except for the "musquetoos." Clark was left with York, Sergeant Pryor and eight privates, Charbonneau, Sacagawea, the now-eighteen-month-old Jean Baptiste, forty-nine horses, and one colt.

The group was bound for what many called the Roche Jaune or Yellowstone River. To spare the sore feet of the horses, the party camped the first night, July 12, a mere four miles from the three forks, at a spot near the present town of Logan. The next day, as the relaxed group ambled east across the Gallatin Valley, they saw elk, deer, beaver, antelope, wolves, and otter on the bottomlands. Overhead, they watched wheeling eagles, hawks, crows, and wild geese. After considering a more northerly route leading east, Clark said in his journal that he deferred to the judgment of another: "The indian woman who has been of great Service to me as a pilot through this country recommends a gap in the mountains more south which I shall cross."<sup>17</sup>

Clark's party had some difficulty crossing the Gallatin River in several places as they moved east, due to swift currents and beaver dams. The leader wrote that he saw old sign of buffalo but none of the animals themselves. "The Indian woman informs me that a few years ago Buffalow was very plenty in those plains & vallies quit as high as the head of Jeffersons river, but few of them ever come into those vallys of late years." Further, "the Shoshones . . . are fearfull of passing in-to the plains."<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the Blackfeet had something to do with that.

On the evening of July 14, Clark's group camped on high ground at the mouth of Kelly Canyon at the east end of the Gallatin Valley. After

breakfast on Tuesday, July 15, the party broke camp and followed an old buffalo road, then crossed Jackson Creek and went over what is now Bozeman Pass. They arrived at the Yellowstone River near the site of present-day Livingston in the early afternoon.

They then continued down the Yellowstone to its junction with the Missouri, where they joined the rest of the party in mid-August. Indians along the way celebrated the expedition's leaving the

country by stealing a good number of its horses, much to Sergeant Pryor's embarrassment. All seemed anxious to return to Saint Louis. As they said good-bye to Charbonneau and Sacagawea, Clark vowed to the couple that he would educate their son Jean Baptiste (Clark called him "Pomp") when he was grown. Years later, he remembered his promise. ■