

For release week beginning April 16:

Educator/writer Larry McClure is a member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and director of Tualatin Heritage Center. He is following the historic path of the Corps of Discovery until they leave Oregon this spring.

Week ending April 22: The Dalles and John Day Dam area

Highlights: While Capt. Clark scouts ahead to trade for horses, and other men make packsaddles for their cross-country shortcut to the Bitterroots, Lewis spends time at their “rock fort” campsite describing local plants (like the golden currant and wild hyacinth) and animals (like the western gray squirrel). While visiting villages on the river, Clark enjoys steamed onions but can’t sleep because of mice in his host’s bed mats. Noticing buffalo hides from the Missouri plains, seeing stacks of stored dried salmon from last fall, and experiencing tough bargaining, the captains soon realize they are in a major commodity exchange center of the West. While waiting for the spring salmon run, tribes engage in complex gambling games using bones and sticks. Lewis notes distinct climate and vegetation differences in the Columbia Gorge region, particularly the scarcity of wood for their fires on the east side. The party moves slowly upriver and portages around today’s Celilo Falls using ropes to maneuver their last two canoes. Along the riverbanks, Indians watch all these activities with interest, sometimes helping themselves to Expedition equipment if left exposed. A soldier still suffering from a bad back since leaving Fort Clatsop rides in a canoe and then gets a horse of his own. After several days of trading away clothing and most of their kettles, the Corps ends up with ten horses to carry equipment overland.

Words from the Journals: Clark lists one of his unsuccessful bids for horses: “a blue robe, Callico Shirt, a handkercef, 5 parcels of paint, a knife, jewelry, 4 braces of ribin, a pice of Brass and about 6 braces of yellow beeds plus my large blue blanket, my Coat, Sword & Plume none of which Seem to entice those people...” Upset by what they believe to be inhospitable treatment by local residents, Lewis decides not to leave anything of value behind: “we Cut up two of our Canoes for fire wood verry much to the Sagreen (chagrin) of the natives notwithstanding they would give us nothing for them.”

Today’s connections: Capt. Lewis mentions trading his “irons” for horses in this area. The Lewis branding iron owned by Oregon Historical Society was found along the mid-Columbia River in the 1890s. Tribes still gather at Celilo Falls 200 years later, for the traditional “first salmon” ceremony. This year, however, only one salmon was caught as the 2006 fish counts at the dams are drastically reduced.

Bicentennial events in the Pacific Northwest: The National Park Service traveling Bicentennial exhibit and related displays are open to visitors at Warm Springs, Oregon April 22-25. Presentations will include contemporary Indian culture and how Columbia River tribes viewed the Corps of Discovery. Friends of the Plankhouse at Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge have a full afternoon of family activities Saturday, April 22 followed by a native food tasting and raffle for Chinook Indian art at Ridgefield Community Center. See details at www.plankhouse.org.

Special thanks to Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation members, particularly historian Barb Kubik, for assisting with this series. See www.lewisandclark.org. To follow the story, click “200 Years Ago This

Week” at www.thejourneycontinues.org. Better yet, read the actual journal entries at <http://libtextcenterunl.edu/lewisandclark/index.html> For Bicentennial activities in Oregon, go to www.lcbo.net. Comments should be directed to education@lcbo.net.