

## **For release week beginning March 26:**

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 1:** Longview area to Washougal/Sandy River region.

**Highlights:** As they make their way up the Columbia, visitors in canoes from several riverbank villages greet the Corps of Discovery daily to trade. On shore, hunters watch a condor drag a large deer about 30 yards, skin it and break the back bone. Remembering the Cathlapotle village they passed on the downriver trip in November (present-day Ridgefield, Washington Wildlife Refuge), the captains now pull in for a closer look at the 14 plankhouses and residents. They present a medal to the “first chief,” which he immediately turns over to his wife. They also buy 12 dogs to add to their food supply. Learning the spring salmon run is stalled and remembering that game on the Columbia Plateau is scarce, they camp at today’s Washougal and begin to lay in provisions. Believing the Quicksand (Sandy) River might drain California, they send two men to explore the stream. After venturing up six miles, the men confirm what local informants had told them: this stream is fed by the Mt. Hood region and is not the mythical river that drains California as they thought.

**Words from the Journals:** At one point the captains see familiar chives that “form a perfect turf and are quite as agreeably flavoured” as the ones back home. At Cathlapotle, “the frogs are croaking in the swamps and marshes; their notes do not differ from those of the Atlantic states.” They describe how women collect wapato by “getting into water up to their necks”, loosening the small tubers with their toes, and “throwing them into small canoes.” In the Portland/Vancouver area, the captains accurately predict why settlers will soon come: “this valley would maintain 40 or 50 thousands souls if properly cultivated and is indeed the only desirable situation for a settlement which I have seen on the west side of the Rocky mountains.” Lewis provides a familiar word picture of Mt. St. Helens before the 1980 eruption: “the most noble looking object of its kind in nature..its figure is a regular cone.”

**Today’s connections:** One of the Expedition’s layovers for hunting and canoe repair is on Deer Island in Columbia County, one of the few geographic features named by the captains still on maps today. At today’s Sauvie Island, abundant stands of wapato still grow in waterways as a reminder of why the captains originally named this island for that valuable staple 200 years ago.

**Bicentennial events in the Pacific Northwest:** Learn about the Corps of Discovery in the Portland/Vancouver area at several locations this weekend: the Cathlapotle replica plankhouse at Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge ([www.plankhouse.org](http://www.plankhouse.org)), a day-long exhibition at Troutdale Historical Society April 1; and a re-enactment of the Corps’ tour of the Willamette River at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, April 2 at Cathedral Park at St. Johns Bridge. The National Park Service traveling exhibit at Grand Ronde closes April 2 and then opens again April 22 at Warm Springs.

Special thanks to Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation members, particularly historian Barb Kubick, for assisting with this series. See [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org). To follow the story, click “200 Years Ago This

Week” at [www.thejourneycontinues.org](http://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](http://www.lcbo.net). Comments should be directed to [education@lcbo.net](mailto:education@lcbo.net).