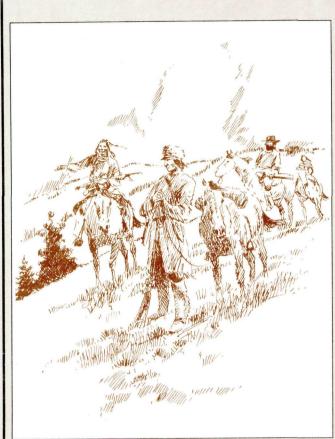
LEWIS AND CLARK IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS



HE LEWIS AND CLARK National Historic Trail commemorates one of our nation's grandest journeys of exploration. It is an epic that captures the imagination as much today as it did nearly 200 years ago. A significant segment of the 8000-mile Trail crosses the rugged, though handsome, northern Rocky Mountains.

United States Department of

tains (Lemhi River.)



(18). She informed the captains that they were not far from the summer

retreat of her people, which, she said, was on a river beyond the moun-

On Aug. 9, Lewis, along with three men, again set out ahead of the

About 9 1/2 miles by water from the Beaver's Head, the main party

reached an island which they named 3000-Mile Island (19) - a refer-

FOURTH RANGE OF MOUNTAINS

Lewis's party, which was following an Indian road, passed through

the fourth range of mountains (20) on Aug. 10, and from the number of

rattlesnakes about the cliffs called it "Rattlesnake Cliffs." The main

party entered this canyon four days later and both Clark and Sacagawea

Lewis continued on the Indian road, and soon came to a fork at the

main party in an attempt to find the Shoshones.

ence to their distance up the Missouri River.

were in danger of being struck by these serpents.

head of the Jefferson River. He left a note

here on a dry willow to inform Clark of his

At about 15 miles from the forks (21), on

Horse Prairie, Lewis finally saw a

Shoshone on horseback—the first Indian

the Expedition had seen in 1400 miles. The

native, wary of the strangers, would not

allow them to approach, and soon disap-

FIFTH RANGE

OF MOUNTAINS

Lewis fixed a small U.S. flag onto a pole

as a symbol of peace, which was carried

along as they followed the horse's tracks.

They camped that night at the head of

Horse Prairie. They were now about to

The following morning they came upon

enter the fifth range of mountains (22).

decision to follow the west fork.

peared into the mountains.

Northern

Continuing on about a mile, Lewis came upon three Shoshone females. One young woman began to run, but an elderly woman and

They then went down Lemhi River four miles to the village (26). The lodges were all made of sticks because the Pahkees (the Indians who inhabited the area around the Great Falls of the Missouri) had raided them that spring. They took or killed 20 Shoshones, took all their skin lodges,

and a great number of horses.

stride the mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri." THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE AND THE SHOSHONE INDIANS

The four men soon crossed the Continental Divide (24) and began their descent on the western side of the Bitterroot Mountains along an Indian road. The next day, Aug. 13, they saw on an eminence, about a mile ahead (25), two women, a man and some dogs. When they came within a half mile of the Indians, Lewis set his accouterments on the ground, unfurled the flag, and advanced alone towards them. But the wary Indians disappeared behind a hill.

recently inhabited willow lodges, and a place where the Indians had

been digging roots. They continued on until they reached what Lewis

described as "the most distant fountain of the waters of the Mighty

Missouri (23) in surch of which we have spent so many toilsome days

and wristless nights. Thus far I had accomplished one of those great ob-

jects on which my mind has been unalterably fixed for many years..."

He then wrote that Private McNeal "exultingly stood with a foot on

each side of the little rivulet and thanked his god that he had lived to be-

In 1800, the Rocky Mountains of northwestern United States was a land known only by the Indian tribes of the region. The portion of the Rockies east of the Continental Divide became U.S. territory in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase. The following year, the famous military expedition of captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out from their winter camp near St. Louis to explore the newly acquired land. By way of the Missouri River they reached the Rocky Mountains in July 1805, and crossed the Continental Divide at present Lemhi Pass in southwestern Montana a month later. Once west of the Divide they were in foreign,

unclaimed land. This brochure tells the story of this epic journey in the Rocky Mountains. It traces the day to day decisions and challenges that confronted the 33-member expedition. The map will help you follow their route in your mind or on our modern highways.

Although some of the Lewis and Clark Trail is on private land, the surrounding National Forests provide the scenic backdrop. In other places, especially at mountain passes, the trail is on National Forest lands. The Forest Service provides interpretive signs and publications help people understand and enjoy our country's proud heritage.



NOTE: The following narrative is keyed to the map on the other side of this brochure. Campsites are identified on the map by dates, and Lewis and Clark points of interest are identified both on the map and in the narrative by corresponding numerals in parentheses, e.g., (8).

ON MAY 14, 1804, forty-five men in a 55-foot keelboat and two pirogues set sail up the Missouri River from its confluence with the Mississippi. These explorers were destined to fulfill a long-held dream of Thomas Jefferson: explore the western half of the continent in search of the fabled northwest passage to the Pacific Ocean. Jefferson also longed to learn about the geography of that unknown land, its plants, animals, and native peoples.

Jefferson chose his private secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, to lead the party. In turn, Lewis chose William Clark of Louisville, Kentucky, one of his former commanding officers, to be his co-commander. Lewis spent several weeks in Philadelphia studying science, medicine, surveying, and in general, preparing for what he thought would be an 18-month trip undertaken by a corps of about a dozen men. As it turned out, there were 33 in the main party, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition - America's epic journey

of discovery - took over 28 months.

THE MANDAN INDIAN **VILLAGES**

The first leg of the journey to the ocean took the explorers to the Mandan and Hidatsa Indian villages in present central North Dakota. Here, over 1600 miles from their point of departure, they made their first winter's headquarters and named it Fort Mandan. The following spring they sent the keelboat and several men back to St. Louis with information and the specimens they had collected to that point.

At Mandan they hired a French fur trader, Toussaint Charbonneau, and his wife, Sacagawea, as interpreters to accompany them to the ocean. Sacagawea was a Shoshone an Indian tribe that lived in the Rocky Mountains at the headwaters of the Missouri. She had been abducted five years earlier by a band of Hidatsas and sold to Charbonneau. She would be useful when the Expedition bargained with her people for the horses that would be

needed for transporting their baggage over the mountains. In all, there were two captains, three sergeants, 23 privates, and five non-military personnel in the party that headed up the Missouri from Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805. The civilians, in addition to Charbonneau and

his wife, were their infant son, Jean Baptiste, Clark's servant, York, and an interpreter/hunter by the name of George Drewyer. The 33- member expedition set out in their two pirogues and the six cottonwood dugouts they had built near their winter encampment.

THE GREAT FALLS

Entering present Montana on April 27, 1805, the corps passed Milk River, the largest northern tributary of the Missouri, on May 8, and came to another large northern tributary on June 2, which was equal in size to the Missouri (1). For some reason the Indians at Mandan had not told them about this river, and because of its size the explorers were not sure which course to follow. After a week of investigating the two rivers, they finally determined that the south course was that of the Missouri. The river flowing from the north was given the name Maria's River in honor of Lewis' cousin, Maria Wood.

At Marias River (as it is known today) they left one of the pirogues, and

village to encourage the Indians to bring horses to Camp Fortunate. In the meantime, Lewis purchased another horse for the hunters. His men also

On Aug. 20, Lewis selected a site three-fourths of a mile below Camp Fortunate to cache more excess baggage. And while they waited the return of the Indians who were to bring horses, they made harnesses and pack saddles for the portage.

On the same day, Clark reached the Shoshone village. He hired a Shoshone named Toby for a guide on his reconnaissance. Clark was informed of a route over the Bitterroots which the Nez Perce used to go to the Missouri (33). On this route game was scarce, and the Nez Perce suffered excessively from hunger. He learned that the mountains there were broken, rocky and so thickly covered with timber that the Indians could scarcely pass. Clark reasoned that should the Salmon prove unnavigable, the party would take the Nez Perce trail, for if those Indians could cross the mountains with their women and chil-

dren, certainly the Expedition could do

purchased a horse.

On Aug. 22, Sacagawea, Charbonneau, Cameahwait, and about 50 men with a number of women and children arrived back at Camp Fortunate with the horses needed to cross the Divide. At this time Lewis purchased five more horses at a cost of about six dollars worth of merchandise for each.

Clark's party reached the North Fork of the Salmon on this same day. They continued down the Salmon along a very steep and rocky mountain. As they went along they looked for trees

suitable for making dugouts in case the river was navigable. They found On Aug. 23, back at Camp Fortunate, Lewis had the canoes taken out of

the river and sunk in a nearby pond so they wouldn't be lost by high water or burned in one of the fires the natives made on the prairies. The Indians had sold Lewis all the horses they could spare until they returned to their

Clark's party continued down the north side of Salmon River with great difficulty, traveling over large, sharp rocks. Still not totally convinced that the river was unnavigable, Clark had some of his

party halt to hunt and fish while three men and Toby continued on with him to further examine the river. Clark finally conceded that the Indian information was accurate: the Salmon was not navigable. He marked his name on a tree at the mouth of Indian Creek (28).

Before Lewis' party left Camp Fortunate, 50 men, women and children came to the camp on their way to hunt buffalo. Lewis managed to purchase three more horses and a mule from these people. Then, as much baggage as possible was packed on the horses for the portage. The Indian women carried the balance.

THREE OPTIONS

cached a good deal of the baggage they could do without until they re-

On June 13, Lewis and a small party, which had gone ahead of the boats, reached the Great Falls of the Missouri (2). Rather than one waterfall, as they had anticipated, there was a series of five cascades around which they would have to portage boats and baggage. Clark arrived with the boats or. June 16 and found the shortest and best portage route was on the south side of the river and nearly 18 miles long.

In order to haul six dugouts and baggage around the falls, they had to

built two wagons. Slabs from a 22" cottonwood tree were cut for wheels. Harnesses were made and strapped to the men who were to pull the wagons. When the wind was favorable, the sails were raised on the dugouts to help the men move the wagons across the rugged prairie. The pirogue was too large to portage. It was dragged ashore and left below the falls. More baggage was cached near the lower portage campsite (3).

The portage required four round trips and two weeks to complete. However, the party remained at the falls for an additional week completing construction on a collapsible iron-frame boat which Lewis designed and had built at Harper's Ferry during the summer of 1803. His initial plan was to navigate the keelboat (which he had also designed) up the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains. The Expedition would then portage over the mountains to navigable waters on the western side, assembled the iron-frame boat, and sail to the ocean. Unfortunately, it was not that simple.

And now they suffered another set-back. They were unable to find the necessary pine pitch, and they did not have the proper needles to sew the hides together. The iron-frame boat had to be abandoned. In its place they built two more cottonwood dugouts (4). The failure of the iron-frame boat made it necessary to cache more bag-

The delay at the Great Falls gave the hunters and fishermen an opportunity to prepare a large quantity of dried fish, meat, and pemmican. They had learned at Fort Mandan that game would be scarce once they reached the mountains – a warning that proved only too accurate.

gage, this time at the upper portage camp (5).

GATES OF THE MOUNTAINS

Upon leaving "canoe camp" just above the Great Falls, on July 15, Lewis and Clark, along with two privates, walked on shore to lighten the burden of the excessively loaded canoes. The next day they found willow shelters and horse tracks which appeared to be about 10 days old. They supposed these to be signs of the Shoshones, whom they were anxious to meet and bargain with for horses. Lewis, two privates, and York went ahead of the party in an unsuccessful attempt to find these Indians.

On July 18, Clark, with a small party, ventured out along an Indian road in search of the natives. The next day they saw where the Indians had peeled bark off pine trees. Sacagawea later informed them that her people

as a guide over the Bitterroots, and introduce them to his people who lived

on the other side at a place where they could build dugouts and sail to the

only was the river forbidding, Lewis also noted that, "our trio of pests still

invade and obstruct us on all occasions, these are the musquetoes eye knats

and prickly pear, equal to any three curses that ever poor Egypt laiboured

On July 24, they passed a remarkable bluff of red colored earth (11).

Sacagawea told them this was the clay the Indians used for paint. For her

On July 25 Lewis's party reached the "Little Gates of the Mountains."

(12), also referred to as the "second range of mountains." The Indians at

obtained sap and the soft part of the wood and bark for food.

Gates of the Rocky Mountains (6).

Meanwhile Lewis and the main party were using tow lines and poles to

ascend the evermore challenging Missouri. On July 19 they reached the

"most remarkable cliffs" they had yet seen. It looked as though the river

had worn a passage just the width of its channel through these 1200-foot-

high cliffs for a distance of three miles. Lewis called this the

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

On July 20, Lewis saw smoke up a creek near Gates of the Mountains

(7), and on the same day Clark saw smoke up Prickly Pear Creek (8). The

officers determined that these fires were set by Indians to alert distant

Clark's party followed the Indian road up Prickly Pear Creek. As they

walked they left items of clothes, paper and linen tape along the trail to

inform the Indians that they were white men and not their enemies.

tribesmen. However, the Indians kept themselves hidden

On July 22, Sacagawea, for the first time

since leaving Fort Mandan, began to recog-

nize the country (9). Lewis wrote: "The In-

dian woman recognizes the country and as-

sures us that this is the river on which her

relations live, and that the three forks (13) are

at no great distance. this piece of information

On this same day Lewis's party reunited

with Clark's (10). In the four days they were

out, Clark's detachment was unable to make

The following morning, Clark, with Char-

bonneau and three privates, again went ahead

in pursuit of the Shoshones. Certain they

were getting close to the Indians, Lewis or-

dered small U.S. flags hoisted on the canoes

so the natives would understand they were

The river became ever more difficult as the

days passed. With growing fatigue, the men

struggled to pull the boats over rapids. Not

under, except the Mahometant Yoke."

people red was emblematic of peace.

Mandan had informed them of this place.

has cheered the sperits of the party..."

contact with any Indians.

not enemy Indians.

TO THE OCEAN

On Sept. 11, the explorers set out again, and two days later reached Lolo Pass (34). On the 14th they began what was to be the most difficult part of their entire journey. Horses fell on the steep trail, one nearly 100 yards down the mountain side. There was no game and they were forced to eat candles, horses, and their insipid "portable soup." There were times when they had no water. At other times there was nothing at all to eat. Poor diet caused the men to weaken and sores developed on their bodies. In spite of these hardships, they eventually reached the Nez Perce on the Clearwater River. They left their horses with these people, made another cache, built five dugouts, and navigated the Clearwater, Snake and Columbia rivers until finally, in November, they reached the Ocean.

They built a winter fort near the coast and christened it "Fort Clatsop" in honor of their neighbors, the Clatsop Indians.

On March 26, 1806, the Expedition began its return up the Columbia on the homeward journey. They collected their horses from the Nez Perce, and on June 30 arrived back at Travellers Rest.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

CLARK EXPLORES YELLOWSTONE At Travellers Rest, on July 3, the party separated. Clark with 50 horses,

20 men, Sacagawea and her baby, headed up the Bitterroot River to the

place they had met the Flatheads the year before. They then crossed the Continental Divide at Gibbon's Pass (35); crossed the head of the Big Hole valley, in a south-easterly direction, passing a place where the Indians had recently been digging roots (36); stopped at a hot springs (37); and then crossed Big Hole Pass (38); and arrived at Camp Fortunate on the supplies which had been cached the year

Yellowstone near present Livingston (40). Unfortunately all of Clark's horses, which were to be used for trade at the Mandan villages, were stolen by Crow Indians who were never seen.

LEWIS EXPLORES THE MARIAS

From Travellers Rest, Lewis and nine men headed down Bitterroot River to the Clark Fork. They crossed that river (41) and headed upstream to Blackfoot River (42), which they ascended, following the route to the

On July 6, they crossed "the prairie of the knobs" (43), Lewis identified the path they were following as a warpath of the Hidatsas. They passed the

THE THREE FORKS

Clark's advance party had reached the Three Forks of the Missouri (13) on July 25. They saw the prairie had recently been burned, and there were horse tracks which appeared to be only a few days old. Clark left a note for Lewis telling him he was going to continue on in search of the Shoshones; if he didn't find them he would

return to the Three Forks. The main party arrived at the Three Forks on July 27, making camp where Clark had left the note. Lewis ascended a prominent rock bluff to view the area which he believed "to be an essential point in the ge-

ography of this western part of the Continent." The officers named the east fork of the Three Forks in honor of Treasury Secretary, Albert Gallatin, the south fork in honor of Secretary of

State James Madison, and the west fork in honor of President Jefferson. THIRD RANGE OF MOUNTAINS

On July 31, the Expedition reached the third range of mountains (14) which forms another close canyon. They were out of fresh meat. No game was killed on this day; indeed, no buffalo had been seen since entering the mountains. Lewis wrote: "When we have plenty of fresh meat I find it impossible to make the men take any care of it or use it with the least frugallity. Tho' I expect that necessity will probably teach them this art."

On Aug. 1, Lewis, and three men, went ahead (15) in search of Indians. Near his camp on the morning of Aug. 3, Clark discovered Indian tracks which he followed to an elevation where the Indians had apparently spied on his camp (16). But Clark found no Indians.

By now, the arduous task of pulling the eight heavily laden dugouts was taking its toll. At one place a tow line broke, at another they were dragging the vessels over rocks. Clark wrote: "The men were so much fatiegued today that they wished much that navigation was at an end that hey might go by land."

Lewis reached Big Hole River (17) on Aug. 4, and after some investigation decided this was not the route the Expedition should follow. He left a note on a green willow for Clark, telling him not o go that way, but to wait there. By the time Clark's party arrived at the Big Hole River, a beaver had gnawed down the green willow upon which Lewis had left the note, and had taken off with it. Consequently, Clark's party began the

difficult task of ascending the swift waters of that treacherous river. One boat turned over and two others filled with water before Lewis' party arrived and told them they would have to return to the Jefferson.

It had been 21 days since they left the Great Falls of the Missouri. The 33 travelers had used up enough provisions to warrant leaving one canoe on shore to be retrieved on the return journey.

THE BEAVER'S HEAD

A few miles below the mouth of Ruby River, Sacagawea recognized a prominent point of land known to her people as the Beaver's Head

remains of many Indian lodges, and crossed the Continental Divide at Lewis and Clark Pass (44), and the next day saw the first buffalo since entering the mountains a year earlier. Two days later they reported seeing 10,000 buffalo in a 2-mile circle. They reached Sun River (45), and followed it to their upper portage camp at the Great Falls.

As with Clark's horses on the Yellowstone, seven of Lewis' horses were stolen by Indians who were never seen. On July 16, Lewis and three men set out overland from the Great

Falls to explore Marias River. They wanted to see if it reached 50 degrees north, thus determining the northern boundary of the Louisiana Territory, and satisfying the conditions of the 1783 U.S. Treaty On July 18, Ordway's party arrived at the Great Falls with the boats

which would be portaged to below the falls.



Also on the 18th, Lewis's party reached the Marias (46). Three days later they reached the headwaters of the Marias (47), and headed up the northern branch (Cut Bank River). They finally came to a place where they could see the river exiting from the mountains. Because the river did not reach 50 degrees north, Lewis named his camp "Camp Disappointment" (48). It was the northern-most camp of the entire Expedition. Lewis was hopeful that the Milk River would reach the 50th Parallel, but he wouldn't have time to check it out.

On their return to the Missouri River, Lewis' party met eight Blackfeet Indians. From them Lewis learned that a large band of their tribe was on its way to the mouth of Marias River. The Indians camped with Lewis's party on Two Medicine River were awakened when the Indians attempted to steal their horses. In the ensuing fight, two of the Indians were killed.

Lewis' party made a hasty retreat to the Missouri River where they had the good fortune of meeting the boats coming down the river from the Great Falls (50). They abandoned the horses, boarded the boats, and sailed down to the mouth of Marias, picked up the items they had cached the year before,

and took off before any Blackfeet arrived.

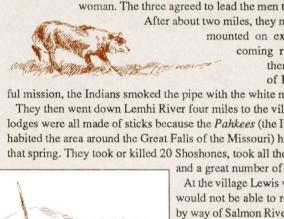
THE RENDEZVOUS

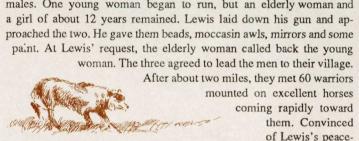
AND THE HOME STRETCH Lewis and Clark met again on the Missouri River, Aug. 12, about

125 miles below the mouth of the Yellowstone. They left the Charbonneau family at the Mandans, and continued on down the Missouri, arriving at St. Louis on Sept. 23. They had traveled over 8000 miles and had successfully accomplished their mission. They found the most practicable route to the ocean; discovered numerous plants and animals for science; made friends with many Indian tribes; and, for the first time, charted a route across the trans-Mississippi West.

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ful mission, the Indians smoked the pipe with the white men.

At the village Lewis was told that he would not be able to reach the ocean by way of Salmon River. Lewis hoped that the description of the river was exaggerated and that the Expedition could, in fact, navigate these waters.

Lewis told the Indians that another chief of the white men (Clark) was waiting at the forks of the Jefferson with baggage. He asked the Indians to come with him and bring 30 horses that would be used to transport the baggage over the Divide to their village. The Expedition would then trade

with them for horses. Many of the Indians still felt that the whites were in league with the Pahkees and were trying to lead them into an ambush. Nevertheless, 28

men and three women agreed to accompany Lewis back to the forks of the Jefferson. Sixteen of the Indians bravely camped with Lewis at the forks even though the promised "chief" and baggage were not to be seen. Clark's party arrived at the forks the next day (Aug. 17). The band of Shoshones with Lewis just happened to be the band to which Sacagawea belonged. It also turned out, to the advantage of the Expedition, that Sacagawea's brother, Cameahwait, was now chief of that band.

SEARCHING FOR NAVIGABLE WATERS AND BARGAINING FOR HORSES

The camp of Aug. 17-23 was named Camp Fortunate (27) in commemoration of the meeting with the Shoshones. Lewis and Clark informed the Indians of their mission, and told them that once they had portaged over the Divide to the Indians' village, they would buy horses from them, if horses were needed to find a navigable river to the ocean. On Aug. 18, Lewis bartered for two horses, which Clark and 11 men

would need on their reconnaissance over the Divide to satisfy in their own Clark sent a private on horseback with a note to Lewis stating three possible minds whether the Salmon was a navigable route to the Columbia. plans for their route to the ocean. The first was to procure one horse for Sacagawea and Charbonneau accompanied Clark's party to the Shoshone each man, hire Toby as a guide, and proceed by land to some navigable

part of the Columbia. The second plan was to divide the men into two parties, make dugouts, and have one party attempt the treacherous Salmon with whatever provisions were on hand, and have the remaining party go by horseback procuring what food they could by use of their guns, and occasionally meeting up with the party on the river. A third possibility would be to divide into two parties, have one go over the mountains to the north while the other returned to the falls of the Missouri to collect provisions, go up Sun River, and over the route used by the Hidatsas to get to the country of the Flatheads (near present Missoula) (32). Both parties would meet there and continue on to the ocean.

On Aug. 26, Clark's messenger arrived at the Shoshone village with the note about the same time Lewis arrived. Clark recommended that the first plan be used, and that a horse be purchased for every member of the Expedition. The chief, however, informed Lewis that the Pahkees had stolen a many of their horses that spring and that they could not spare that many. Lewis sent word for Clark to come to the

village and get the 22 horses he had been able to purchase. Clark managed to purchase another horse for his pistol, 100 balls, powder, and a knife. Another horse was bought The explorers set out with Toby as their

guide, and soon began their ascent of the North Fork. Two days later they found the mountains close to the creek on both sides. They were forced to travel along the steep mountain walls. Several of the horses slipped and injured themselves quite badly.

It was also at this place (29) that they had the misfortune of breaking their last thermometer. It snowed about two inches, then began to rain, and then sleet.

Shortly before reaching Lost Trail Pass, Toby, for some unknown reason, led the party in the wrong direction. They encamped that evening about three miles west of the pass (30), having taken a much more difficult route than necessary.

THE BITTERROOT VALLEY AND THE FLATHEAD INDIANS

ground covered with snow. They went over the crest and down the other side of the mountain range, a distance of about twelve miles, where they met a village of the Flathead nation (31) - 33 lodges, some 440 people, and

Flatheads. On Sept. 6, they set out down the Bitterroot River and reached the wide valley of that river on Sept. 7. They passed down the valley with no peculiar incident until they reached Lolo Creek. They named their camp Toby informed the captains that they were only four days from the

Missouri, if they should continue down the Bitterroot about nine miles to the Clark's Fork; go up that river to the Blackfoot River; and then on to the Great Falls. He also told them that they were now to leave the Bitterroot River and turn west up Lolo Creek on the Nez Perce trail (33).

One of the hunters met three Flatheads up Lolo Creek and brought them

On the morning of Sept. 4, everything was wet and frozen, and the

Lewis and Clark were able to purchase 13 more horses from the

back to Travellers Rest. One of them agreed to accompany the Expedition

July 8. Here they recovered their dugouts and After reaching the Three Forks, Sergeant John Ordway and nine men continued down the Missouri with the dugouts. Clark and the rest of the party headed east along Gallatin River on to explore the Yellowstone River. Clark crossed Clark's Pass (39), and hit the

plains used by the Nez Perce on their buffalo hunts.

