
The Diplomacy of Lewis and Clark among the Teton Sioux, 1804–1807

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When Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out up the Missouri River from Saint Louis in the summer of 1804 to explore a route to the Pacific Ocean, they carried with them instructions from President Thomas Jefferson to gather information on the native people of the newly acquired Louisiana Territory. Knowledge of the various tribes' locations, populations, languages, alliances, and disposition toward the United States government was essential to building friendly diplomatic relations with the Indians, whose cooperation would help to ensure the safe passage of the expedition and American dominance of the region's economy in the future. Among the most important diplomatic objectives of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were promoting peace among the tribes, protecting trade, and winning the Indians' recognition of the sovereign authority of the United States. Key to the success of this diplomacy along the Upper Missouri River were the several tribes of the Teton, or Lakota, Sioux Indians within present-day South Dakota.¹

1. The Lakotas, or Teton, as they were known at the time of Lewis and Clark, make up one division of the three linguistically related tribes known collectively as the Sioux. In the early 1800s, they comprised four major subdivisions living along or west of the Missouri River: the Oglalas, Miniconjous, Saones, and Brulés. James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 18–19; Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 6; Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 13 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983–2001), 3:418. For Jefferson's interest in the Indian tribes of the western territory, see James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 1–8.

The significance of the Tetons to the policy objectives of the American authorities is evident from a communication President Jefferson addressed to Captain Meriwether Lewis in January 1804. "On that nation," the president wrote, "we wish most particularly to make a friendly impression, because of their immense power and because we learn they are very desirous of being on the most friendly terms with us."² As subsequent events proved, the president's understanding of the importance of the Teton Sioux was correct, while his opinion concerning their conciliatory attitude toward the United States was somewhat wide of the mark. The process of establishing a cordial relationship with the Teton people proved to be long and drawn out, fraught with difficulties and danger, and not realized with any degree of success until nearly three years after Lewis and Clark departed on their journey from Saint Louis.

En route up the Missouri, Lewis and Clark's "Corps of Discovery" first came into contact with a substantial body of Sioux Indians near the mouth of the James River, where expedition members spent parts of several days counciling with bands of the Yankton tribe.³ During these meetings, the two American captains employed the same features of Indian diplomacy that Europeans had long used in dealing with the western tribes and that the explorers themselves would use, with minor variations, throughout their journey to the Pacific. They distributed tobacco, historically the symbol of peaceful negotiations, and the council opened with a lengthy "smoke," the pipe being supplied by the Indian participants. Lewis and Clark then identified influential leaders among the Yanktons and recognized them as chiefs in the eyes of the United States government, selecting one as the head or "first chief" and others following in descending order of authority. Medals were distributed, their size depending upon the status of the recipient, and a select number of American flags was given out along with presents of supplies, including powder and ball, blankets, to-

2. Jefferson to Lewis, 22 Jan. 1804, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, ed. Donald Jackson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 166.

3. The Yanktons, along with the Yanktonais, constitute the Nakota division of the Sioux. Hassrick, *The Sioux*, p. 6.

bacco, and various manufactured goods. Both parties gave speeches that were translated by Pierre Dorion, Sr., a veteran trader who had married into the tribe and whose skills materially aided Lewis and Clark in transmitting their message of American sovereignty.⁴

Through Dorion, Lewis and Clark became acquainted with certain unusual features of Yankton culture, including the presence among the Indian party of four surviving members of an unusual warrior society known as Nanpashene. These warriors had vowed never to retreat and during battle had to be dragged off by their companions to prevent being killed.⁵ The fact that the explorers recorded this information in their journals points out the value of having a competent interpreter to share this type of cultural data. The captains, unfortunately, did not have the same advantage when they met the Teton Sioux a few weeks later.

As part of their diplomatic efforts among the Yanktons, Lewis and Clark attempted to convince the Indians to send some of their chiefs with Dorion, who was returning to Saint Louis following the trading season, and then on to Washington, D.C., to see the "Great Father," President Jefferson. Such trips had long been a feature of Indian-white diplomacy and were intended to impress the Indians with the power and resources of New World authority, whether it be French, English, Spanish, or American. The tactic could backfire, however, if the visiting chief failed to return to his people. Such was the fate of Tioskate, a Minnesota Sioux chief who sickened and died in Montreal in February 1696 while visiting the French governor-general. An Arikara tribal leader whom Lewis and Clark persuaded to visit Washington in 1804–1805 suffered a similar demise, resulting in hostile demonstrations against an American party going up the Missouri River in 1807.⁶

4. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:24–37.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–26. Linguistically, the correct term is Na-pe-sni-ka-ga-pi ("make no flight"). Stephen Return Riggs, *A Dakota-English Dictionary*, ed. James Owen Dorsey (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890), p. 331. For more information on the Nanpashene, see William H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, & c.* (Minneapolis: Ross Haines, 1959), pp. 436–39.

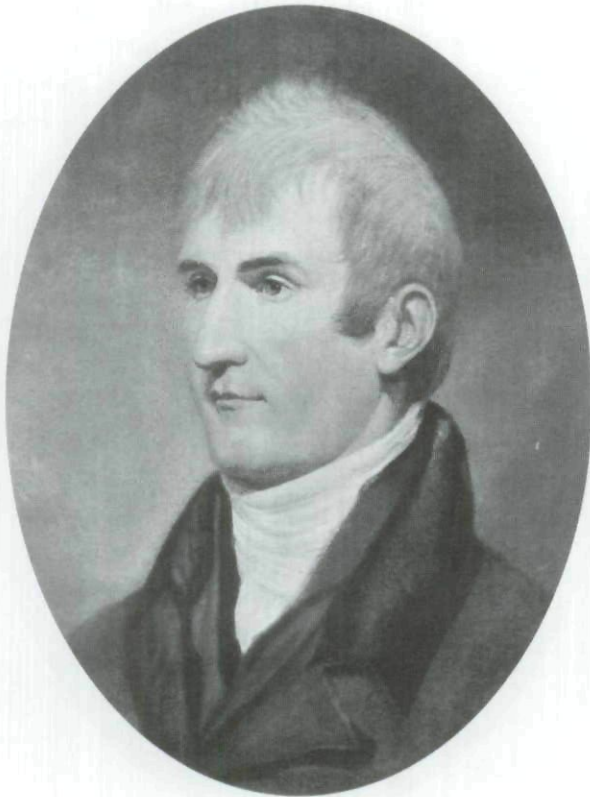
6. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:26–27, 32, 34; Edward Duffield Neill,



William Clark posed for this portrait by the noted American artist and naturalist Charles Willson Peale in 1807–1808.

Following their meeting with the Yanktons, Lewis and Clark continued up the Missouri until 24 September 1804, when they encountered small parties of Tetons near the mouth of the Bad River at the site of the present-day city of Fort Pierre. During the next four days, the expedition remained in this vicinity, becoming involved in a series of

The History of Minnesota: From the Earliest French Explorations to the Present Time (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1858), pp. 148–51, 167; Pierre Chouteau to William Eustis, Secretary of War, 14 Dec. 1809, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Jackson, p. 482.



Peale also produced this likeness of Meriwether Lewis, Clark's co-captain, shortly after the expedition returned from the Pacific coast.

highly charged incidents ranging from near-open warfare to friendly hospitality. The negative turn of events, which was partly the result of the Americans' ignorance of Teton tribal structure and governmental authority, sharply colored the attitudes of Lewis and Clark toward the Indians and dramatically affected the outcome of their initial diplomatic efforts to create a workable relationship.

The village that provided the backdrop for the explorers' meetings with the Tetons was an encampment of at least four, and possibly five,

bands of the Brulé subdivision of the Teton tribe.⁷ These bands were essentially extended family groups known as *tiyospaye*, led by a chief or headman whose personal attributes and number of followers determined his influence in tribal affairs. Upon arriving at the mouth of the Bad River, Lewis and Clark were told that the Brulé camp was located approximately two miles up that stream. By 26 September, when the Corps of Discovery moved its vessels a short distance up the Missouri, the village had also moved. It occupied a site on the west bank and north of the mouth of the Bad River for the duration of the explorers' visit.⁸

Sergeant John Ordway of the Lewis and Clark party initially estimated the Brulé camp circle to contain some one hundred buffalo-hide tipis, "all white," he noted, with a double-sized conical lodge in the center. Sergeant Patrick Gass later conducted an actual count and recorded that the village consisted of eighty tipis. To the east, facing the rising sun, was the entrance to the circle, bordered on each side by the "horns," or places of honor reserved for the most influential *tiyospaye* and their leaders.⁹

According to Teton tradition, the *tiyospaye* Lewis and Clark recorded as E-sah-a-te-ake-tar-par, or Issanti, would have occupied one of these places of honor. In subsequently recognizing its leader, Tar-tong-gar-sar-par, or Black Buffalo, as the Brulé head chief, the captains were conforming to the traditional Teton practice of acknowledging the leader of the largest and oldest *tiyospaye* as the principal leader. The name of this *tiyospaye* lends credence to the theory that the Brulés spearheaded the Tetons' westward movement from their old homeland in Minnesota to the Missouri River region during the late 1700s. "E-sah-a-te-ake-tar-par" may be a combination of the terms "Issanti"

7. At the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the terms "Brulé" and "Teton" were used interchangeably. In modern usage, Brulé (Burnt Thighs) applies only to the tribal subdivision, not the Lakotas as a whole.

8. Hassrick, *The Sioux*, pp. 12–14; Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:108–9, 115; Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1916), p. 140.

9. Quaife, *Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway*, pp. 140–41 (quotation on p. 140); Hassrick, *The Sioux*, p. 13.

(Santee), the common identification given to the Minnesota Sioux, and "*akicaska*," meaning to "bind to," indicating that this *tiyospaye* was known to be "bound to the Santee people."¹⁰

Second in size and influence among the *tiyospaye* in the Brulé village was the band Lewis and Clark recorded as the War-chink-tar-he under the leadership of Man-da-tong-gar, or The Partisan, a rival of Black Buffalo for overall leadership among the Brulés. This *tiyospaye* remained an important element in the tribe throughout the nineteenth century, Thaddeus A. Culbertson calling them "Broiled Meat People" in 1850 and scientist Ferdinand V. Hayden identifying them a decade later as Wa-ci-om-pa, "the Band that Roasts Meat." By the 1880s, the group had split up. A portion remained near the Missouri River as part of the "Lower Brulés," whose historic tribal lands had bordered the Missouri and lower White River and who were attached to the Lower Brule Agency near present-day Chamberlain. The other, larger division, who had once roamed as far south and west as the Platte River Valley and Fort Laramie, resided among the "Upper Brulés" living at the Rosebud Agency.¹¹

The two other Brulé *tiyospaye* Lewis and Clark reported to have been in the Bad River village were the Choke-tar-to-womb, led by a chief named Tar-tong-gar-war-har, variously translated as "Sacred Buffalo" or "Medicine Bull," and the O-zash, or Wazhazha, whose headman was recorded as Mah-zo-mar-nee (Maza-mani), meaning "Iron Walker" or "He Who Marches with the Merchandise."¹² Both groups are

10. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:III, 420; Walker, *Lakota Society*, p. 26; George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 4–5; Eugene Buechel, S. J., *A Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*, ed. Paul Manhart, S.J. (Pine Ridge, S.Dak.: Red Cloud Indian School, 1970), p. 71; Riggs, *Dakota-English Dictionary*, p. 25.

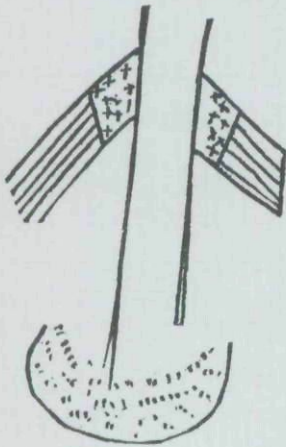
11. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:III, 420; Culbertson, *Journal of an Expedition to the Mauvais Terres and the Upper Missouri in 1850*, ed. John Francis McDermott, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin no. 147 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 135; Hayden, *On the Ethnography and Philology of the Indian Tribes of the Missouri Valley* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Sons, 1862), pp. 375–76; James Owen Dorsey, "Siouan Sociology," in *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), p. 218.

12. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:III, 420. Both translations of Maza-mani probably relate to this chief's involvement in transporting trade goods from the great

mentioned in historical records later in the nineteenth century, the explorer Joseph N. Nicollet writing in the 1830s that Lewis and Clark's Choke-tar-to-womb people, whose name meant "those of the middle village" and probably dated back to their residence in Minnesota, had become known as the Sicangu. In 1880, this *tiyospaye* lived at the Lower Brule Agency under the leadership of Tatanka-wakan, a name formally translated as "Mysterious Buffalo Bull" but more commonly written on treaties and other documents of the period as "Medicine Bull." In light of the longstanding practice of handing down personal identifications within prominent families from generation to generation, this chief was no doubt a descendant of the *tiyospaye* leader Lewis and Clark met at Bad River.¹³ Nicollet also described Wazhazha as be-

Sioux trading fair held annually during this era on the James River to the Sioux camps near the Missouri. Buechel, *Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*, pp. 332, 334.

13. Raymond J. DeMallie, Jr., "Joseph N. Nicollet's Account of the Sioux and Assiniboin in 1839," *South Dakota History* 5 (Fall 1975): 355-56; U.S., Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1876*, p. 356; U.S., Congress, Senate, Message of the President of the United States, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 51, 51st Cong., 1st sess., 1890, p. 280.



This drawing from the winter count of American Horse, an Oglala Teton, depicts an important council between Indians and white men. Although dated 1805-1806, it likely represents the meeting of Lewis and Clark with the Teton at the Bad River. Ethnologist Garrick Mallery noted that the curved line represents the council lodge and the marks depict people.

ing the Teton name for the Osage tribe. A considerable number of Sioux had intermarried with Osage/Ponca families, forming a *tiyospaye* known as the Wazhazha. By the 1880s, most of the Wazhazhas lived on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, although some had become associated with the Oglala and Blackfeet subdivisions of the Lakotas and were living at the Pine Ridge and Standing Rock agencies, respectively.¹⁴

As part of their mission to gather information on the Indian tribes they encountered, Lewis and Clark assembled their first report on the identity, composition, and strength of the Teton Sioux during the winter of 1804–1805 at Fort Mandan. This document, transmitted to President Jefferson under the title “The subdivisions of the Darcotar or Sioux nation, with the names of the principal chiefs of each band and subdivision,” listed a fifth Brulé *tiyospaye*, the Me-ne-sharne (Minisha), or Red Water band. A careful reading of the Lewis and Clark journals discloses that this *tiyospaye* was not present as a body in the Bad River village but reveals that at least some of its people, including the chief Wah-pah-zing-gar (Little Bird or White Blackbird), were in the camp and had contact with the captains. Several references in the journals mention a substantial group of Tetons who were en route to the Bad River village. The Brulé headmen urged Lewis and Clark to delay their departure so that these newcomers, undoubtedly the full Red Water band, could see the exploring party. The captains refused this request but did meet briefly later with this group further up the Missouri. Lewis and Clark identified them as belonging to the Oglalas, and throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century the Red Water *tiyospaye* occasionally appears in historical sources as being associated with the Oglala or other Teton subdivisions. The tendency of some *tiyospaye* to shift affiliations was not unusual, given their common language and culture and the strong tradition of marrying outside of one’s own family group.¹⁵

14. DeMallie, “Joseph N. Nicollet’s Account,” p. 356; Dorsey, *Siouan Sociology*, pp. 218–20.

15. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 1: Clark’s Map of 1805, Clark-Maximilian Sheet 12, 3:128–29, 420; Quailfe, *Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway*, pp. 143–44; Dorsey, *Siouan Sociology*, p. 219; Culbertson, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 142.

One of the more significant features emerging from the data Lewis and Clark recorded is the relatively modest population of the four major Teton groups. Together, the Brulés, Oglalas, Miniconjous, and Saones are said to have comprised a total of 390 lodges, 970 warriors, and a total population of 4,600 people. The latter figure, undoubtedly derived from information provided by knowledgeable traders, was reduced, somewhat arbitrarily it seems, by one-third in the report Lewis and Clark sent to President Jefferson. The captains' estimate of the number of warriors, 2.5 per lodge, appears to have been obtained from the Saint Louis trader, Pierre Tabeau, who cited this rule-of-thumb in his own writings.¹⁶ The proportion of one male warrior to every two women and children in the Teton camps seems rather high, suggesting that at a time when the most desirable items being offered in trade for furs and animal skins were firearms, gunpowder, and lead, the Tetons overstated their number of warriors to ensure receiving sufficiently large quantities of these items.

Further insights into the populations of the individual *tiyospaye* camped at the Brulé village are to be found in the writings of Lewis and Clark and Pierre Tabeau. The trader reported incidents in which The Partisan and Mazamani led parties of warriors numbering fifty and thirty men, respectively.¹⁷ Using the figure of 2.5 warriors per lodge, one can estimate the size of The Partisan's following at twenty lodges and Iron Walker's *tiyospaye* at twelve lodges. Based on Sergeant Gass's count of eighty lodges in the Bad River camp circle, it is possible to deduce that the largest *tiyospaye*, Black Buffalo's, contained some thirty-two lodges and Medicine Bull's, the second smallest, about sixteen tipis.¹⁸

16. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:388, 415–20; Pierre-Antoine Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri*, ed. Annie Heloise Abel (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 105n.23.

17. Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, pp. 112, 121.

18. The wide disparity in *tiyospaye* size also appears in the census data that began to emerge after the formation of the Great Sioux Reservation. At the Cheyenne River Agency, for example, a census in January 1875 enumerated a total of nine hundred fifty-two lodges divided among sixty-four subbands or *tiyospaye*. The largest *tiyospaye*, a Miniconjou group under Lone Horn, contained ninety-two lodges or families, while the smallest had only two. More than 10 percent consisted of six lodges or fewer, with an overall average of just under

Although partly conjecture, these estimates provide a basis otherwise unavailable for understanding the numerical strength and political influence of each *tiyospaye*, or band, in the village. The data Lewis and Clark compiled at Fort Mandan give a total of one hundred twenty lodges for the Brulé Tetons, indicating that some forty were not, initially at least, part of the Bad River village.¹⁹ In addition to the absent Red Water band, others existed but remain unidentified. Tabeau, for example, after discussing the four Brulé *tiyospaye* with whom he had traded, noted that the Brulés also included “other divisions [*tiyospaye*] which are under the leadership of subordinate chiefs.”²⁰

While each Teton *tiyospaye* had its own headman whose authority was supreme within his own immediate following, the influence of these leaders was often restricted when the encampment was a multi-band assembly, as in the case of the Bad River Brulé village. In such instances, a more formal political and administrative authority came into play, extending down from the tribal council and limiting the power of the individual chiefs.²¹ Lewis and Clark appear to have been unaware of this situation, perhaps because of the absence of an interpreter familiar with Lakota language and customs.

Almost without exception, published accounts of Lewis and Clark’s contact with the Brulés convey the impression that the explorers considered the four principal chiefs or *tiyospaye* headmen to be the supreme authority figures in the camp. On the contrary, a radically different system of tribal government came into effect when a tribal gathering such as the one at Bad River included all, or nearly all, of the influential *tiyospaye*. The supreme governing body for such a gath-

fifteen lodges per *tiyospaye*. Henry W. Bingham to E. P. Smith, 31 Jan. 1875, Cheyenne River Agency, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group (RG) 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 128, Document B-216 '75.

19. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:415.

20. Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, p. 104.

21. Several works treat the traditional tribal government of the Teton Sioux, although they do not always agree on specific details. The following discussion of the elements of the Teton governing structure is based on Walker, *Lakota Society*, pp.14-39, 58-62; Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 7-18; and Hassrick, *The Sioux*, pp. 13-31, 152.

ering was the camp council, which included all of the *tiyospaye* headmen, no matter what the size of their following, along with a number of other important tribal personalities—warrior leaders, holy men or shamans, skilled hunters, storytellers, and other men of influence in the village.

With this broad representation, the council established rules for governing the camp, basing them upon traditions and longstanding practices. The actions of the council ranged from arbitrating internal disputes to deciding upon a course of action for the entire village or tribe. One of the council's most important responsibilities was to select from among its ranks individuals known as *wakincuza*, translated as "one who determines or decides."²² These men functioned as camp administrators or executives, serving as the voice of the council and supervising the daily affairs of the village. Among the most important duties of the *wakincuza* was the designation of one of the tribal warrior societies to function as *akicita*, or camp police, to ensure that the decisions of the council and the orders of the *wakincuza* were carried out. Another principal function of the *wakincuza* was to decide the movements of the village, determining how far it should travel and where the next campsite should be located.

Most, but not all, of the historical information available concerning this type of tribal government among the Tetons comes from Oglala sources. They indicate that the camp council regularly appointed four men from among their number to serve as *wakincuza*. In his studies of Brulé tribal government, however, anthropologist Royal B. Hassrick discovered that the Brulé governing councils selected only two *wakincuza* to administer the affairs of the tribe, or in the case of Lewis and Clark's meeting with the Brulés, the village at Bad River. Their authority and responsibilities remained the same but were centered within a smaller and more compact administrative group.²³

Lewis and Clark made no specific reference to the *wakincuza* or their actions during their four days of contact with the Brulé Tetons,

22. Buechel, *Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*, p. 529; Riggs, *Dakota-English Dictionary*, p. 513.

23. Hassrick, *The Sioux*, pp. 26–27.

but evidence from the explorers' journals indicates that these tribal officials were indeed present and functioning and may have been partly responsible for some of the difficulties the expedition encountered. Clark wrote, for example, that the Brulé village was located two miles up the Bad River on 24 September 1804 when the captains and their party reached the mouth of that stream. The journals also note that by the next day the camp had moved to the banks of the Missouri and remained close by the river until the Corps of Discovery left the area on 28 September.²⁴ Under longstanding Lakota practice, such camp movement could only have been authorized and directed by the *wakincuza*.

Clark's journal entry for 25 September also mentions two individuals—not chiefs—who met with the captains and spent the night aboard the keelboat. The two were vaguely identified as "Contesabeman," or, as Nicholas Biddle interpreted Clark's tortured spelling, "Considerable men."²⁵ The journal gives no indication as to why these men were regarded as important or whether the captains even understood or appreciated their status. The two individuals, referred to elsewhere in the journals as "Brave men" and "principal men,"²⁶ were identified as "War zing go" and "Second Bear = Ma to co que pan." At another point in his account of the events of 25 September, Clark wrote, "We feel much at loss for the want of an interpreter the one we have can Speek but little."²⁷ Clark's complaint was valid, for the name War zing go was completely beyond the interpreter's ability to render into English, while the second man's name was badly garbled and almost meaningless for identification purposes.

There is abundant reason to believe that the two "Considerable men" were the Brulé camp *wakincuza*. Lewis and Clark grasped the implication that they were men of some importance but evidently did not comprehend exactly why. Their journals offer no indication that

24. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 1: Clark-Maximilian Sheet 12, 3:108–9.

25. *Ibid.*, 3:113.

26. *Ibid.*, 3:114, 122.

27. *Ibid.*, 3:112.

they were aware of the control the *wakincuza* exercised over the *akicita*, or that they inquired about who had ordered the relocation of the Brulé village to the banks of the Missouri.

The probable identity of the two "Considerable men" reinforces the likelihood that they were the camp *wakincusa*. The name War zing go should be more fully rendered as War-pa-zing-go (or the modern Lakota form *Wa-pagica*), meaning yellow or white-headed blackbird. This individual was a *tiyospaye* headman, leader of the Brulé Red Water band. When Lewis and Clark's effort to bring a Sioux delegation to Saint Louis finally succeeded in 1807, White Blackbird, as he was most commonly known, was one of the leaders of the delegation and a spokesman in the councils with William Clark.²⁸

The name of the second man was not simply "Second Bear," as rendered by Lewis and Clark's poorly qualified interpreter. More properly, he was known as Bear We Are Afraid Of or Afraid of the Bear, a Brulé headman of considerable importance who also traveled with the Lakota delegation that met with William Clark in Saint Louis in 1807.²⁹ Pierre Tabeau, who had spent a number of months with the Brulés in 1803, described Bear We Are Afraid Of as an individual of great determination and influence in the Brulé village then camped near the Loisel trading post on Cedar Island. Bear We Are Afraid Of may have been serving as *wakincuza* in this multiband camp, which included nearly all of the major Brulé *tiyospaye*. Tabeau detailed how this "old soldier" successfully defied the authority of four leading Brulé chiefs (including both Black Buffalo and The Partisan) over whether to allow French trade goods to reach another tribe of Tetons.³⁰ Tabeau concluded his account of the incident by observing that "the chiefs depart[ed] in silence and no one dares to oppose the will of a

28. *Ibid.*, 3:113, 420; Buechel, *Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*, pp. 544, 680; Transcript of 22 May 1807 council, Saint Louis, Mo., enclosed in William Clark to Secretary of War, 1 June 1807, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1801-1870, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, RG 107, National Archives Microfilm Publication 221, Roll 5, Document C-282(c).

29. Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, p. 106n.27; Buechel, *Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*, pp. 314, 334; Transcript of 22 May 1807 council.

30. Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, pp. 106-7.

simple soldier.”³¹ As a *wakincuza*, Bear We Are Afraid Of would have had the authority to control the camp *akicita*, enabling him to defy even the decisions of the village council.

Clearly, the *wakincuza* were men of considerable stature in the Brulé village, particularly through their authority and control over the *akicita*. The failure of Lewis and Clark to recognize this role caused much difficulty for the captains, thwarting their efforts to establish cordial relations with the Teton Sioux on their journey up the Missouri River. Concentrating their attentions on the *tiyospaye* chiefs, providing them with medals and gifts while overlooking the real authority of the *wakincuza*, who received little more than preprinted certificates they could not understand or appreciate, proved to be a serious oversight.³²

It is against this background of Brulé tribal structure, governmental authority, and internal leadership that the events of Lewis and Clark’s four-day stay with the Tetons near the mouth of the Bad River should be viewed and evaluated. The meeting between the American party and the Brulé Tetons was filled with sharp contrasts. On 25 September, an opening council featured the traditional practices of Indian diplomacy. Tobacco was distributed, the pipe was smoked according to custom, and the tribal chiefs were feasted. Flags, medals, and uniforms were distributed and speeches made, although neither side understood much of what was said because no competent interpreter was present. In order to emphasize the military capabilities of the expedition, the American officers paraded their enlisted soldiers and fired off weapons, particularly the small artillery pieces on the keelboat.³³

All this show evidently failed to impress the Teton headmen who, after boarding the vessel and partaking of a half glass of whiskey, be-

31. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

32. Several of these printed certificates, or “commissions,” have survived, including one Captain Lewis completed for the Sioux headman War char pa (known as Stabber, although on this document his name appears as The Sticker). Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:121, 123. When a government expedition under John Charles Fremont reached Fort Laramie in 1843, they met several Brulé chiefs who showed them the carefully preserved certificates Lewis and Clark had given to the Lakota *wakincuza*, White Blackbird and Bear We Are Afraid Of. *The Journals of Theodore Talbot, 1843 and 1849–52*, ed. Charles H. Carey (Portland, Ore.: Metropolitan Press, 1931), p. 34.

33. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:III–14.

came troublesome. The Partisan, chief of the tribe's second-largest *tiyospaye*, feigned drunkenness, jostled Captain Clark, and consented to leave the large boat only under protest. When Clark and the party of headmen reached shore in a pirogue, several of the *akicita* seized the mooring cable, refusing to allow the vessel to return to the keelboat. Clark and the Indians then exchanged insults; Lewis ordered armed American reinforcements ashore; and the Sioux warriors lined the riverbank with strung bows and cocked firearms. Black Buffalo and The Partisan, the two leading chiefs, refused to shake hands with the Americans, and the day ended on a most unfriendly note.³⁴

Days two and three, 26 and 27 September, stood in marked contrast to this inauspicious beginning. The Brulés became friendly and hospitable, giving the Americans free rein to tour the camp circle, visit individual lodges where they were fed, and converse as best they could through sign language. Later in the day, both Lewis and Clark were afforded the traditional high honor of being carried on richly decorated buffalo robes by a half-dozen tribal soldiers to the large council tent in the center of the camp circle.³⁵ Throughout both days, the Tetons continued to heap hospitality and diplomatic honors upon the American leaders at the council lodge. The assembled men smoked the peace pipe, partook of a dog feast, made speeches (still unintelligible, for the most part), and enjoyed entertainment provided by tribal singers and groups of men and women dancers until well into the night.³⁶

Then, dramatically, on the morning of 28 September, the atmosphere turned hostile once again. When it became clear that the American party intended to depart and continue up the Missouri, the Sioux attempted physically to delay their sailing. The *akicita* again seized the keelboat anchor cable and demanded a large gift of tobacco. The Partisan also brusquely demanded both tobacco and an American flag. Lewis and Clark at first refused to endure any more bullying, but fi-

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., 3:115-23. The French explorer Nicolas Perrot was the first to record this sign of respect in the late 1680s, when he was carried to a meeting with the Minnesota Sioux on a robe of prime beaver pelts. Emma Helen Blair, *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, 2 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark, 1912), 2:31.

36. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:115-23.



George Catlin, who traveled up the Missouri in 1832 to record American Indian life, painted *Dance of the Chiefs* while visiting a Teton village at the mouth of the Bad River. The scene is reminiscent of the one Lewis and Clark described at the Bad River village in 1804.

nally Lewis threw a carrot of tobacco at the head chief, Black Buffalo, who gave it to the tribal soldiers and jerked the mooring line from their hands.³⁷ Except for isolated and brief contacts while proceeding upriver, a hostile encounter during the following winter, and an un-

37. *Ibid.*, 3:123–25. Black Buffalo's actions stand in contrast to the usual inability of a chief to show this type of authority in a multiband village controlled by the *wakincusa*. Tabeau noted that the Teton chiefs usually displayed little, if any, influence in such a setting, having

friendly meeting while returning to Saint Louis in August 1806, this episode ended the direct association between the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Teton Sioux.

A number of historians have offered sharply differing assessments of the effectiveness of Lewis and Clark's diplomatic approach to the Tetons in light of these incidents. On one hand, Bernard DeVoto in his classic 1952 study *The Course of Empire* contends that Lewis and Clark's military-backed diplomacy had been a great success in the encounter with the Tetons at Bad River, writing, "the American no-appeasement policy had taken the starch out of the Sioux."³⁸ In his abridgement of the captains' journals published a year later, DeVoto editorialized in even stronger terms about the outcome of the meeting: "Indian bluster immediately collapsed and from then on the terrible Tetons were mere beggars again. . . . In fact, the career of the Sioux as river pirates ended here."³⁹ At the other end of the spectrum, James P. Ronda, in his valuable study *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, treats the four-day encounter with the Brulé Tetons as all but a total failure. "American diplomacy . . . had been handed a stinging rebuff," he writes. "At best Lewis and Clark could say their efforts were inconclusive; at worst they may have exacerbated Sioux-American relations."⁴⁰

In considering these contrasting positions, one might also profitably review what Doane Robinson, the former state historian for South Dakota who began studying the Sioux in the late 1800s, has written on this matter. Robinson supplemented the factual record from the Lewis and Clark journals with his personal knowledge of the Lakotas. He saw some of the Brulé actions, which academic observers have thought to be tactics of offense, as social practices of long standing. In particular, Robinson viewed the Indians' attempt to impede

only "the rank of companions when the tribe was united" (Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, p. 104). James R. Walker's informants did state, however, that if a chief was influential enough and supported by friends (his *tiyospaye*), he could give orders to the *akicita* and they would obey him. Walker, *Lakota Society*, pp. 25-26.

38. DeVoto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), p. 447.

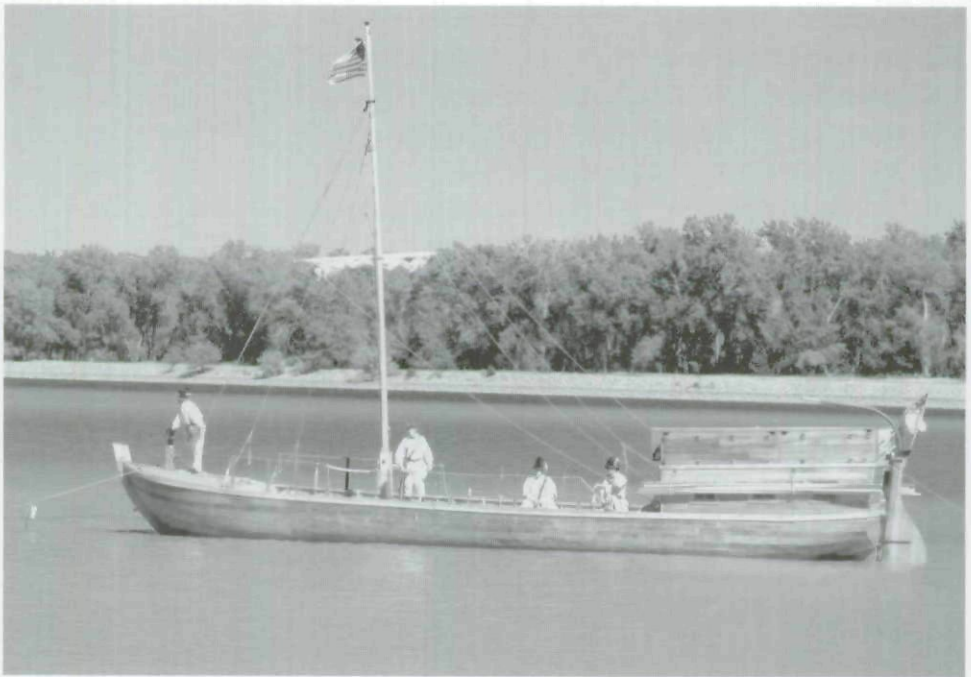
39. DeVoto, ed., *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 34.

40. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, p. 41.

the departure of the American boats as a bluff, writing, "When the bluff was called they yielded as graciously as possible."⁴¹

In order to understand the successes and failures of Lewis and Clark's diplomatic initiatives, one must appreciate the traditional authority structure within the Brulé village, particularly the role of the *wakincusa* and their control over the warrior society serving as camp *akicita*. With the exception of the actions of The Partisan, most of the difficulties the American explorers encountered on the first and last days of their meetings with the Tetons came at the hands of the *akicita*. The chiefs may have been obstinate or obstructive at times, but it

41. Doane Robinson, "Lewis and Clark in South Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 9 (1918): 567.



In September 2004, reenactors brought a replica of the expedition keelboat to the site where Lewis and Clark met with the Tetons two hundred years earlier.

was the warriors who, on both days, physically seized the mooring lines of the American vessels to prevent their movement. Because the camp *akicita* were under the direction of the *wakincuza*, these actions could only have taken place with their approval and under their authority—not that of the tribal chiefs. It is, of course, pure hindsight at this point, but one may well speculate that the attitude of those in power might have softened somewhat had the Americans been aware of the village hierarchy and used their trade goods and trinkets to pay some of the older Brulé women to prepare a dog feast in honor of the *akicita* and *wakincuza* during days two and three.

Another factor to consider in evaluating the diplomatic efforts of Lewis and Clark at Bad River is the absence of an adequate translator, the importance of whom becomes quite apparent when one contrasts the descriptions of the meetings between Lewis and Clark and the Tetons with the captains' earlier councils with the Yankton Sioux. At the Yankton councils, Pierre Dorion was present to interpret the remarks of both sides. As a result, both sides were able to make themselves understood, and a reasonably detailed record exists of the speeches of the Yankton chiefs, along with interesting details about the warriors who were present during those sessions.

In contrast, there is no record of the remarks made by either the Brulé Teton spokesmen or by Lewis and Clark at the Bad River meetings, except what was vaguely conveyed by the universal Plains Indian sign language and the feeble efforts of one of the American party, Pierre Cruzatte. A man of French-Omaha Indian parentage, Cruzatte was fluent in the Omaha language, which had some limited similarities to Lakota. How familiar he was with English is open to question. The written record makes it clear that basic communication was restricted, to say nothing of more sophisticated commentary that might have made Lewis and Clark aware of the need to pay special attention to the Brulé camp administrators and tribal police as well as to the chiefs.⁴² Given the importance of the Tetons on the Upper Missouri River, the failure of Lewis and Clark to recruit an individual capable of conversing in the Lakota language to accompany them through Teton

42. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:114n.1.

country must be considered a serious shortcoming in their predeparture preparations.

Zebulon Pike had similar difficulties with a poor interpreter during a council with the Minnesota Sioux while voyaging up the Mississippi but noted the existence of other Sioux speakers who were knowledgeable and trustworthy. Lewis and Clark could have recruited a translator whose command of the dialect of the Minnesota Sioux would have permitted them to understand and translate the Lakota dialect used on the Upper Missouri. Some of the best of these translators, however, had close British connections, an anathema to the strongly anglophobic Meriwether Lewis.⁴³ Nevertheless, in light of the detailed preparations the captains made prior to departing from Saint Louis, their reasons for failing to obtain a competent interpreter or at least attempting to retain the services of Pierre Dorion instead of sending him down the Missouri with a delegation of Yankton chiefs remain a mystery.

Although the shortcomings of the expedition members exacerbated tensions with the Tetons, the underlying cause of their hostility toward Lewis and Clark stemmed from a fear of losing their dominance of the Indian trade in this section of the Upper Missouri. The Tetons possessed a long record of interfering with the activities of French traders from Saint Louis.⁴⁴ It appears that they regarded the Lewis and Clark party as traders, as well, and were apprehensive that the Americans represented a new and powerful economic force in the region. Thanks to the captains' hospitality, the Brulé leaders had been aboard the large keelboat and seen at least portions of its huge supply of what the Indians believed to be trade goods. Add to this perception the fact that the expedition personnel comprised a sizeable, well-armed group of vigorously led young Americans—in sharp contrast to the usual

43. Donald Jackson, ed., *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 1:118, 239–40; DeVoto, ed., *Course of Empire*, p. 460, *Journals of Lewis and Clark*, pp. 25, 68.

44. See, for example, Abraham P. Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785–1804*, 2 vols. (St. Louis, Mo.: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1952) 1:82, 233, 267–75, 2:382, 494–95, 540; Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, pp. 112–13, 119.

smaller parties of hard-working but easily intimidated Frenchmen—and it is little wonder the Indians were suspicious.⁴⁵ Given the lack of a competent translator, it is doubtful whether they fully comprehended the concepts of exploration and discovery, particularly this venture that had as its purpose a two-year journey over the distant “Shining Mountains” (the Rockies) to the great sea to the west. What the Tetons certainly did understand, however, was that Régis Loisel and his Saint Louis associates had not returned that summer to the trading establishment on Cedar Island.⁴⁶ As Tabeau’s journal makes clear, the aggressive Brulés had exercised considerable control over the scope and pricing of trade in the region. The Indians were also keenly aware that Tabeau, who had manned the Cedar Island post the previous year, was then situated with a modest supply of trade goods in the village of their hated enemies, the Arikara, a short distance up the Missouri.⁴⁷ The Brulés may well have suspected that the Arikara village was the immediate destination of the departing Lewis and Clark party and envisioned an end to their ability to influence, if not control, trade with neighboring Upper Missouri tribes.

From the Brulé village at Bad River, the Corps of Discovery proceeded up the Missouri to Fort Mandan, where they spent the winter. In the spring of 1805, they departed on their remarkably successful

45. Details on the size of early trading parties in Sioux country are meager but do indicate that the Lewis and Clark command was vastly superior in size and armament. Jacques D’Eglise went upriver in 1792 with only two companions and two years later made the journey with but four men. Jean Baptiste Trudeau had only eight employees in 1794–1795, and it appears that the Loisel-Trudeau party in 1803 was only slightly larger. Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, 1:234, 262, 268, 275.

46. In 1802, Loisel built what appears to have been a substantial trading post on Cedar Island, near the boundary between present-day Lyman and Stanley counties, where he and Tabeau traded with the Brulés during the winter of 1803–1804. Loisel went downriver in early spring, meeting Lewis and Clark on the Missouri in May 1804, and reached Saint Louis shortly thereafter. Tabeau, meanwhile, moved his trading activities upriver to the Arikara village. Lewis and Clark saw him there in early October, at the same time his employer, Loisel, died in New Orleans. Tabeau, *Tabeau’s Narrative*, pp. 27–31. Lewis and Clark passed Cedar Island on 22 September 1804 and found Loisel’s post deserted. Sergeant Ordway recorded a fairly detailed description of the fort in Quaife, *Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway*, p. 135.

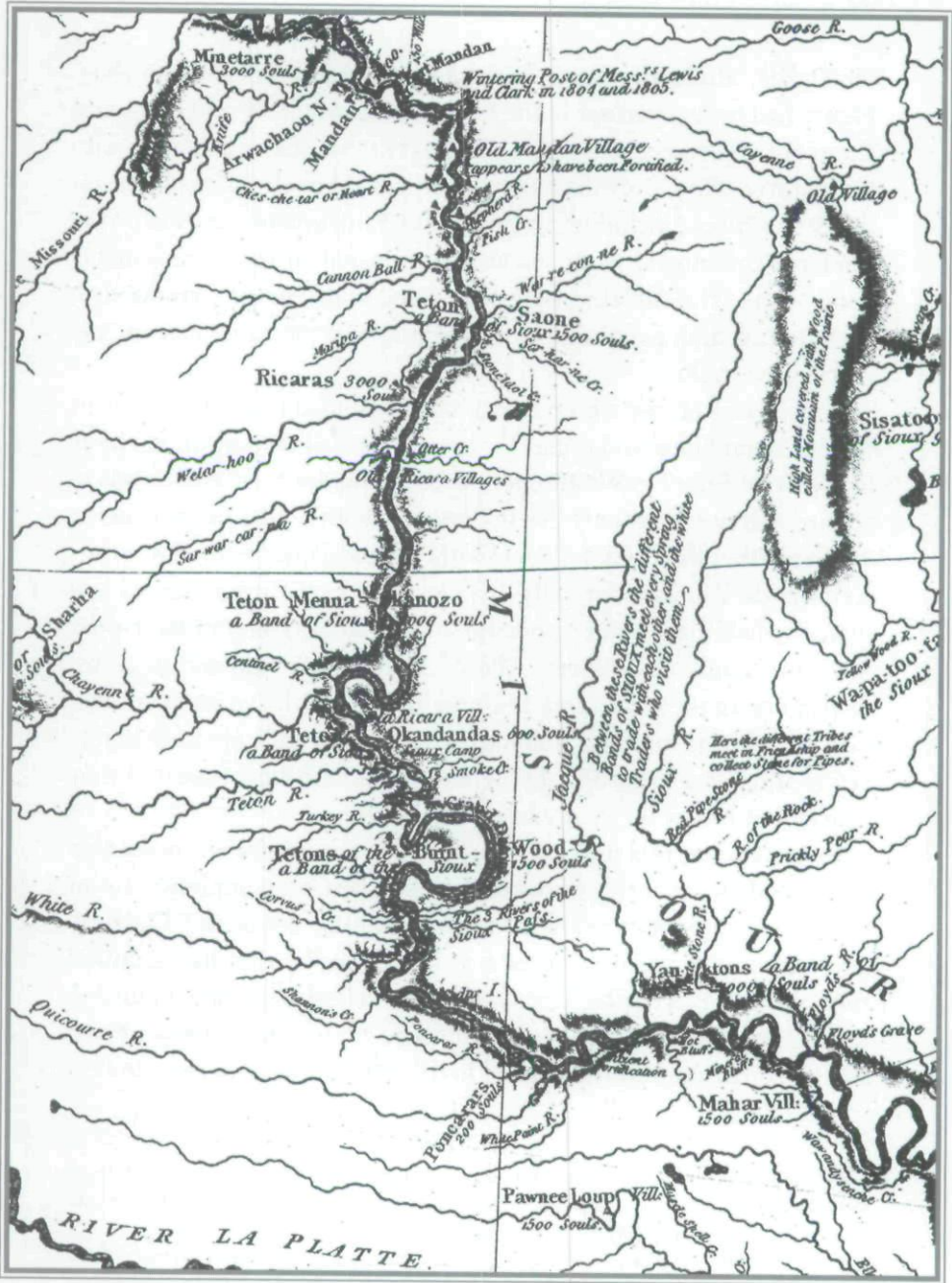
47. Tabeau, *Tabeau’s Narrative*, pp. 123–58, contains much information on life and trade in the Arikara village.

journey to the Pacific coast, the trials and hardships of which left Lewis and Clark little time to contemplate diplomatic relations with the Teton Sioux. As the explorers recrossed the Rockies into the Yellowstone River Basin in the early summer of 1806, however, that subject once again focused their attention.

The captains conceived of an imaginative plan having three specific objectives for favorably impressing the Tetons. The first was to persuade a delegation of influential chiefs to meet with President Jefferson. A journey to the nation's capital would enable tribal leaders to become acquainted firsthand with the size, population, and resources of the United States, an experience calculated to temper whatever hostile intentions they still harbored toward the children of their new Great Father. Secondly, Lewis and Clark proposed to establish a trading post on the Upper Missouri River. This facility would supply the Tetons' material needs in the way of weapons, blankets, powder and ball, and other trade goods. It would also secure a monopoly on the Indians' harvest of skins and furs for the American market. Thirdly, the trading post would house a government agent, appointed specifically to manage affairs for the Tetons, who would concentrate his attention on weakening the influence of the British traders from Minnesota and western Canada with whom the Missouri River Sioux carried on a regular trade. Lewis and Clark intended to locate their new trading center and agent's headquarters at the mouth of the Cheyenne River some distance away from the immediate vicinity of the Brulé hunting grounds, thus lessening the likelihood of the Brulés continuing their harassment of the Saint Louis traders.⁴⁸

Essential to this undertaking was Hugh Heney, a veteran Canadian Indian trader who had previously traded with some success among

48. *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Jackson, pp. 309-13; Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 8:3, 74, 77, 156, 211, 218-19, 284. A summary of the captains' plan may be found in Harry H. Anderson, "Lewis & Clark, Heney, and the Pony Herd," *Wiyohi* 13 (July 1959): 1-6. The location proposed for the post was in the same area as the Cheyenne River Agency established for a large portion of the Tetons under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. For background on the Cheyenne River Agency, see Harry H. Anderson, "A History of the Cheyenne River Indian Agency and Its Military Post, Fort Bennett, 1868-1891," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 28 (1956): 390-551.



The locations of the various Indian tribes Lewis and Clark encountered on the northern plains can be seen in this detail from a map drawn by William Clark.

the Oglala, Miniconjou, and Saone Teton tribes. From 1800 to 1803, Heney had been a partner in the Saint Louis firm of Loisel-Heney and Company. He visited Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan during the winter of 1804–1805, providing them with considerable information on the Sioux tribes, including the powerful Yanktons of the North (the modern Yanktonais), with whom he appeared to be on reasonably good terms. The captains were impressed with Heney's knowledge, background, and, particularly, his offer to assist the Americans in any manner he could.⁴⁹

Thus, it was Heney whom the captains intended to appoint as agent for the Teton Sioux and escort for the anticipated delegation of chiefs to the Great Father in Washington, D.C. For his services, Heney was to receive a salary of seventy-five dollars per month, plus other benefits worth another thirty-six dollars monthly, for an equivalent of over thirteen hundred dollars annually. In contrast, Pierre Dorion earned less than one-half that amount when he worked as subagent for the Upper Missouri Sioux, while Pierre Chouteau the elder, who served as Indian agent for the entire area of Upper Louisiana, did so for an annual salary of fifteen hundred dollars. These figures indicate how highly Lewis and Clark regarded the Teton project and how essential they considered Heney for its implementation.⁵⁰

To implement this undertaking (for the expedition then possessed no immediate financial resources and was almost completely out of trade goods after two years in the wilderness), Lewis and Clark intended to utilize a herd of some fifty Indian ponies they had acquired from the Nez Perce tribe. Good, sound horseflesh was then a valuable trading commodity on the northern plains. Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor and two other men were assigned to drive the horse herd from the ex-

49. For background on Heney and his partnership with Regis Loisel, see Tabeau, *Tabeau's Narrative*, pp. 24–26, 231–34; Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 3:257–59; and Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, 1:112, 114, 2:632, 636–38, 641.

50. *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Jackson, p. 311; Shirley Christian, *Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty That Ruled America's Frontier* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), p. 116; Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. 14, *The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri, 1806–1814* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 125, 154.

pedition's location on the upper reaches of the Yellowstone River to the Mandan village where the Corps of Discovery had spent the winter of 1804–1805. There, Sergeant Pryor was to determine the whereabouts of Hugh Heney and deliver to him Captain Clark's letter of instructions along with a portion of the pony herd for his initial compensation. The balance of the animals were to be taken to British traders on the Assiniboine River and exchanged for trade goods for Heney to use as presents in order to persuade the Teton chiefs to make the trip to Washington. Although it appeared to be logical, the plan was destined to fail. Crow Indian horse thieves made off with half of the herd even before Pryor's party set out for the Mandan village. Two nights after Pryor crossed the Yellowstone, the Crows struck again, running off the balance of the ponies and dooming the captains' efforts to secure the services of Heney and establish a permanent trading center at the mouth of the Cheyenne River.⁵¹

In spite of this failure, Lewis and Clark did not give up on their objective to create some sort of diplomatic connection with the Tetons. Their renewed efforts, however, took on a harsher cast as they continued downriver to Saint Louis. The immediate cause for the change was the expedition's encounter below the present-day city of Chamberlain with a party of Brulés led by the *tiyospaye* chief Medicine Bull. Some writers misread the expedition journals and erroneously state that the head chief Black Buffalo met the explorers' party. He did not. Once again, the absence of a qualified Sioux translator at the 30 August 1806 meeting thwarted meaningful communication. Threats in sign language and indications of violence soon came from both sides. Recalling the experience with the Indians on Bad River two years earlier, an anxious and angry Captain Clark informed the Brulé headman through signs that "no more traders would be Suffered [allowed] to come to them."⁵² As representatives of the government that now con-

51. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 8:74, 77, 156, 211, 284.

52. *Ibid.*, 8:329–31 (quotation on p. 330). James P. Ronda, in *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, maintains that Black Buffalo and Clark engaged in a "nasty verbal exchange" (p. 250). Moulton, however, clearly confirms that the Lakota chief who spoke with Lewis and Clark was Medicine Bull (Buffalo Medicine), not Black Buffalo. *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 8:332n.5.

trolled the region, the captains had, in effect, proclaimed an economic embargo on any further Saint Louis-based trade with the Tetons during the coming winter season.

Further down the Missouri, the expedition met the boats of a half dozen or more Saint Louis merchants bound for the winter trade on the upper river. Some were en route to the Yankton Sioux camps bordering the James River; others were headed for the Ponca and Omaha villages located nearby on the south side of the Missouri; and the more daring may have been bound for the Teton country further upriver.⁵³ Upon meeting a large vessel carrying traders for the Chouteau family of Saint Louis to the Yankton villages, Clark told them to treat any Tetons they might encounter with as “much Contempt as possible,” in effect, denying them any opportunity to trade in the Yankton camps.⁵⁴

The lone recorded exception to this policy of economic coercion toward the Tetons came on 12 September 1806, when further down the Missouri Lewis and Clark encountered another party bound for Sioux country that included their former interpreter Pierre Dorion. Now employed as a subagent for the United States government, Dorion was accompanying messengers to the Arikara village near the mouth of the Grand River. The purpose of this mission was to pay an indemnity to the Arikara tribe for one of its chiefs who, encouraged by Lewis and Clark, had journeyed to Washington, D.C., where he took sick and died. Dorion’s responsibilities were twofold: to use his personal influence and a liberal supply of trade goods to get the messengers safely past the Teton camps along the Missouri and to try to persuade some of the principal Brulé chiefs to travel to Saint Louis for a council with American authorities. As a result of this chance meeting with Dorion, Lewis and Clark amended his written instructions to double the size of the proposed delegation and to include, if possible, representatives of Teton tribes in addition to the Brulés.⁵⁵

53. Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 8:346, 351, 355, 357.

54. *Ibid.*, 8:351.

55. *Ibid.*, 8:357–58.

It was this revised mission of Pierre Dorion, capitalizing on his influence with the Indians, his ability to use their language, and his liberal distribution of trade goods, that finally produced a positive result for Lewis and Clark's diplomatic efforts toward the Teton Sioux. In the spring of 1807, a sizeable delegation (twenty-four people in all) of specially recruited Teton and Yankton chiefs and tribal representatives, shepherded by Dorion and including a number of wives and children, reached Saint Louis for a lengthy and important meeting with William Clark. Meriwether Lewis, having been appointed governor of Louisiana Territory, was absent in Washington, D.C., for conferences with President Jefferson. Clark met with the Sioux delegation in his capacity as superintendent of Indian affairs for the vast Louisiana Territory.⁵⁶

This council with the Indian delegation, which took place on 22 May 1807, was highly significant in the history of both the Teton Sioux and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. While the event represented the successful culmination of Lewis and Clark's attempts to enter into a positive diplomatic relationship with the troublesome Tetons, it also proved the effectiveness of the economic pressure the United States was able to exert upon the Indian trade in order to gain policy objectives. Nothing is more indicative of the impact of Lewis and Clark's trade embargo than the reference one Sioux speaker made to the Indians' use of "pieces of tin" as cutting tools in place of the steel knives that hitherto had been a staple of the Indian trade. The statements of all of the Indian leaders recorded in the meeting minutes reflect a willingness to reconcile with the United States in order to resume trade relations. For his part, William Clark reemphasized the sove-

56. The transcript of Clark's council with the Sioux delegation was transmitted in an enclosure in William Clark to Secretary of War, 1 June 1807. This communication is printed without the transcript in Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, 14:126-27, and *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Jackson, p. 414. The transcript may be found on microfilm in Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1801-1870, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, RG 107, National Archives Microfilm Publication 221, Roll 5, Document C-282(c). It is also reproduced in this issue as part of "Dakota Resources: Transcript of William Clark's Council with the Sioux, 22 May 1807, Saint Louis, Missouri," in which the author provides additional analysis of the meeting.

reign authority of the United States and the importance of the Indians' cooperation in the Missouri River trade.⁵⁷

At the conclusion of the formal council, William Clark gave the Sioux some time to consider his offer to send the delegation on to meet the president in Washington, D.C. After deliberating for three days, the chiefs and headmen declined the invitation, but Clark reported that they were "highly pleased with the presents & treatment" they had received while in Saint Louis.⁵⁸ The party of fifteen chiefs and warriors, three women, and six children then departed for their homes in late May 1807 with a military escort commanded by Lieutenant Joseph Kimball of the United States Army. Kimball's troops were part of a larger force of French traders and military personnel under the leadership of Ensign Nathaniel Pryor (the former sergeant with the Corps of Discovery) that was being sent up the Missouri to return the Mandan chief, Big White, to his people.⁵⁹

The group reached a village of some two thousand Tetons near the mouth of the White River on 19 August. The large size of this encampment, over three hundred lodges, indicates that it probably included not only the Brulé tribe but also Oglala and Saone *tiyospaye* awaiting the return of their delegation members from the meeting with Clark. The White River encounter was extremely cordial, Lieutenant Kimball reported, with the Indians expressing "a friendly disposition to the citizens of the United States." The command remained in the village for four days, "continually feasting with them on the flesh of Dogs." The Tetons also "supplied us bountifully with meat for our return," Kimball noted.⁶⁰

57. Transcript of 22 May 1807 council.

58. Clark to Secretary of War, 1 June 1807, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:126. Clark reported that he intended to distribute to the Lakota delegation presents, including "Medals and Flags (those sacred emblems of attachment) valued at twelve hundred to fifteen hundred dollars, to assure the Sioux of the Paternal affections of the President" (Clark to Secretary of War, 18 May 1807, *ibid.*, p. 124).

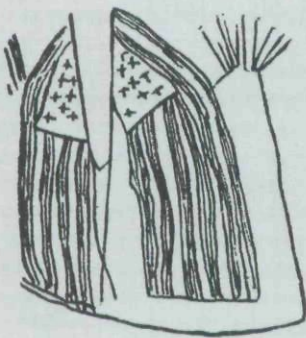
59. Clark to Secretary of War, 18 May, 1 June 1807.

60. Lieutenant Kimball to Clark, November 1, 1807, enclosed with Clark to Secretary of War, 3 Dec. 1807. Clark's communication is printed in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:153-54, but Kimball's report is found in Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series 1801-1871, RG 221, National Archives Microfilm Publication 221, Roll 5, Document C-384-3.

Ensign Pryor's command was less fortunate. On reaching the Arikara village, they encountered sullen hostility, a result, Pryor speculated, of the death of the Arikara chief during his journey to Washington, D.C., several years earlier. The American party was fired upon and retreated downriver after suffering a number of killed and wounded. Aiding the Arikaras in this attack was a force of what William Clark referred to as "Sioux of the North," probably the latter-day Yanktonais, who were then under the influence of British traders.⁶¹

Two years went by before an expedition of sufficient strength to return the Mandan chief to his tribe ascended the Missouri. This time there was no trouble from either the Arikara or the Sioux. The expedition leader, Pierre Chouteau the elder, a fur trader and Indian agent, reported that the Tetons exhibited warm friendship toward the Americans. "The Chiefs of this tribe said they remembered me, that I had treated them with Great hospitality at Saint Louis [in 1807] and on that account the party should not be molested," he reported to the secretary of war. At Chouteau's request, six Teton chiefs accompanied the

61. Pryor to Clark, 16 Oct. 1807, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, pp. 432-37; Clark to Secretary of War, 1 June 1807.



According to Garrick Mallery, the winter count of Cloud Shield depicted 1807-1808 as a time when "many people camped together and had many flags flying," a possible reference to the return of the Sioux delegation from Saint Louis with flags William Clark had given them.

party and took part in councils with the Arikaras, successfully supporting the American negotiators by urging the Arikaras to allow their passage to the Mandan villages.⁶²

From the reports of Lieutenant Kimball and Pierre Chouteau, it is evident that the diplomatic initiatives begun by Lewis and Clark among the Brulés had proved successful. The friendliness the Tetons now displayed toward the United States government stood in sharp contrast to the hostile attitude directed against the Lewis and Clark party in September 1804. Further evidence of this change emerged during the War of 1812, when, aided by another Saint Louis trader, Manuel Lisa, the Missouri River Sioux supported the Americans in opposition to the pro-British behavior of their cousins, the Santee Sioux of Minnesota.⁶³ Contrary to the assertions of some scholars who judge the success of Lewis and Clark's diplomacy on the basis of immediate results alone, the captains' efforts bore fruit in a process that evolved over several years and expanded beyond the usual pipe smoking and presents to allow time for the Teton political system and fur-trade economics to interact.

62. Pierre Chouteau to William Eustis, Secretary of War, 15 Dec. 1808, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, pp. 479–84 (quotation on p. 481).

63. Manuel Lisa to William Clark, 1 July, 1817, in Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 2 vols. (Stanford: California Academic Reports, 1954), 2:899–902.

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