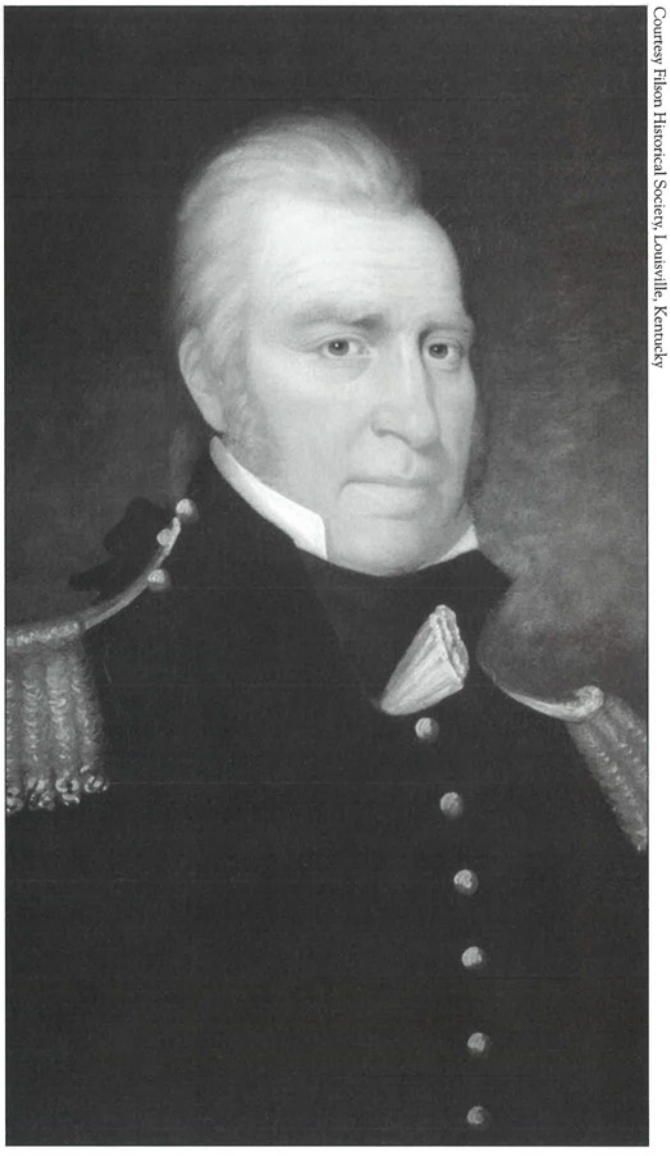
THIS ARTICLE IS EXCERPTED FROM LANDON Y. JONES'S NEW BIOGRAPHY, *WILLIAM CLARK AND THE SHAPING OF THE WEST* (HILL AND WANG, 2004), WITH PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS

LEWIS AND CLARK AFTER *THE EXPEDITION*

BY LANDON Y. JONES

ACQUIRING FINANCIAL security had been a priority for the Clarks ever since the debts of brother George Rogers Clark almost sank the entire family. "I assure you that the married State makes me look about my Self and excites a disposition to accoumilate a little for a future day," William told his brother Jonathan. As early as 1794 he had described to his brother Edmund his dream of building a mercantile business on the Mississippi River. Now, in St. Louis as the government official in charge of the Indian trade, Clark saw his opportunity.



Courtesy Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky

This portrait of William Clark was painted by Joseph Bush, c. 1817, eight years after the death of Meriwether Lewis.

He envisioned a far-flung trading enterprise that would buy merchandise cheaply in Baltimore or Washington and ship it down the Ohio on flatboats. The goods would be stocked in Louisville, from where they could be sent on to the main retail store in St. Louis. Government barges could be used, upon availability. Clark pointed out that the plan required two stores, so he could restock faster than his competitors—otherwise, he noted, "My principal plan will be k[n]ocked in the head."

Clark hoped to go into business with his brother Edmund and his nephew John Hite Clark, Jonathan's eldest son, who were operating a store in Louisville. "It is now the time to Speek candidly to each other," he wrote to John, "let us Say what we Can do, what we wish to be done & what we will do, for my part I have Said what I Could do, will to be Connected with you[r] uncle Edmond & yourself equally in a S[t]ore at Louisville and this place." Promoted to a position of influence and newly married, Clark felt the joint pressures of need and opportunity. "I must be doing Something, and I know of nothing which appears So certain as mercantile business, and no time is to be lost."

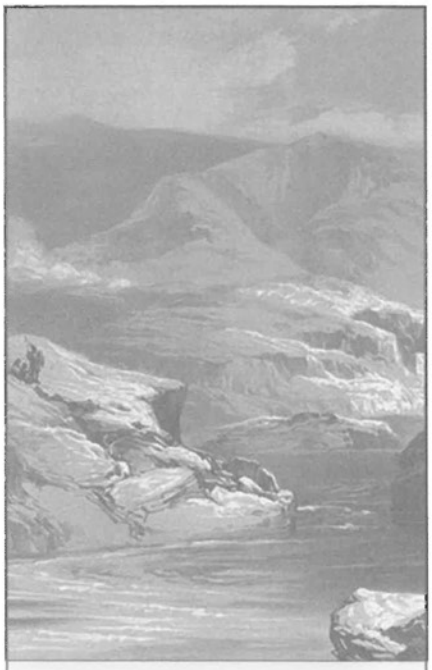
While waiting to start his trade business Clark was struggling to manage his investment in human property. His relationship with York was becoming fractious. His lifelong companion was chafing over being separated from his wife. In the fall Clark gave York permission to accompany the beautiful and accomplished (but still unwed) Ann Anderson on her return to Louisville. York remained a few weeks afterwards to visit his wife, but Clark refused to let him stay longer and hire himself out. "He is Serviceable to me at this place, and I am determined not to Sell him, to gratify him," he told Jonathan. "If any attempt is made by York to run off…I wish him Sent to New Orleans and Sold, or hired out to Some Severe master…."

A month later, Clark had grown so exasperated with York that it took Lewis's intervention to prevent him from selling York down the river. "Govr. Lewis has insisted on my only hireing him out in Kentucky which perhaps will be best…. I do not wish him again in this Country until he applies himself to Come and give over that wife of his."

Clark remained "vexed and perplexed" by the unwillingness of both Indians and enslaved blacks to conform to his way of life. He complained that his slaves "wish to go on [in] the old way, Steel a little take a little, lie a little, Scolw a little pout a little, deceive a little, quarrel a little and attempt to Smile, but it will not all answer." He wondered to Jonathan about selling "all the Old Stock except Ben." Irritated by the "capers" of one of his father's former slaves, Easter, Clark gave her what he termed "a verry genteel whipping"—and then worried that he would have to pay her midwife's fee when she gave birth to a baby four days later. He gave up completely on Scippio and Juba, placing this advertisement in the *Missouri Gazette* on February 22, 1809: "I wish to SELL two likely NEGRO MEN, for Cash. WILLIAM CLARK."

THE MISSISSIPPI FROZE over completely in the winter of 1808-09. Children skated and sleighed, and townspeople drove wagons and horses across the ice to the Illinois bank. A full two months went by without any mail or newspapers from the East; William laid in cords of firewood and killed "19 fat Hogs" for his provisions. He and Julia had moved out of the quarters Lewis had rented for them—which was converted into Webster's Eagle Tavern—and purchased a one-acre lot near the center of town with an apple grove and a stone wall facing the river. "It answers my purpose," said Clark, "as Commerce is my Object."

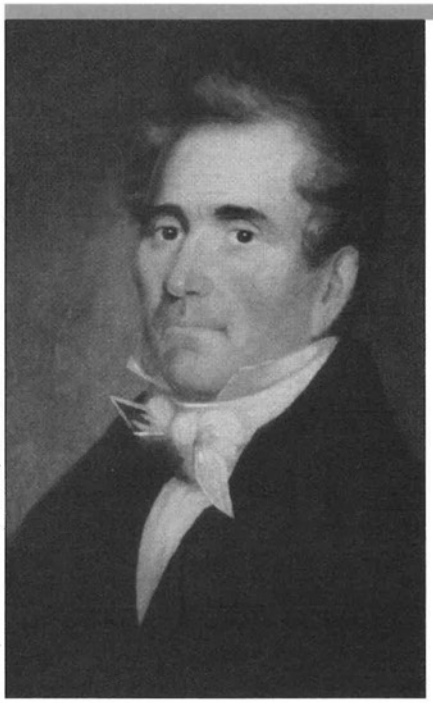
Nine months pregnant and homesick, his wife Julia "takes a little cry and amuses herself again with her domestic concerns," William reported. Then, on January 10, 1809, she gave birth to their first child, a boy. The delighted father pronounced him to be "a stout portly fellow"—but after 11 days still had not decided on his name. The new



REX ZIAK PRESENTS "JEFFERSON IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT"

Thursday, October 21, 7 pm, at the Washington State History Museum

We are pleased to welcome Rex Ziak, author of ***In Full View: A True and Accurate Account of Lewis and Clark's Arrival at the Pacific Ocean, and Their Search for a Winter Camp along the Lower Columbia River.*** An award-winning free-lance cinematographer/photographer by trade, Ziak is also one of Washington's foremost authorities on Lewis and Clark, and his book has radically changed the way the Lewis and Clark story in Washington is understood. You won't want to miss this fascinating speaker and storyteller when he shares his insights about the man who sent Lewis and Clark on their history-making mission.



Courtesy Missouis Historical Society, St. Louis

Manuel Lisa was a St. Louis entrepreneur and business partner of William Clark in the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company.

parents may have been given pause by the long Clark tradition of naming firstborn sons either "John" or "Jonathan." When the baby was christened by Catholic Bishop Benedict Flaget he was given neither of those names. The boy would instead be Meriwether Lewis Clark, in honor of his godfather, formally fusing the two names that had already become inseparable. He would be called simply "Lewis."

IN THE EARLY MONTHS of 1809 Clark turned again to his most pressing public obligation, to send the Mandan chief Shehek-shote back to his tribe. Sheheke's safe return was both a national obligation and a practical necessity to prevent the Upper Missouri tribes from aligning with the British. Moreover, Clark and Lewis saw a way to organize the trip that would combine government policy with their own increasing interest in the private fur trade.

St. Louis businessman Manuel Lisa had returned from his 1807-08 expedition with a rich supply of peltries and promises of far greater profits to be reaped in the fur trade near the Rocky Mountains. In March, Lisa joined with Clark and a consortium of leading citizens to form a commercial fur-trading venture called the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. The other partners included Pierre Chouteau and his son Auguste Pierre, the Kaskaskia merchants Pierre Menard and William Morrison, Andrew Henry, Sylvestre Labbadie, Wilkinson's nephew Benjamin Wilkinson, and Lewis's brother Reuben, whom Clark had appointed a subagent to Indians on the Missouri River. Clark's dual role as both Indian agent and Indian trader was not unusual—the British operated similarly—but it began to generate criticism from other entrepreneurs.

Governor Lewis then contracted the federal government to pay $7,000 to the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company to guarantee the successful return of Sheheke to his home. With most of the company's start-up costs covered, Lisa planned a two-pronged expedition. An armed force of 125 men, including 40 militia, would escort the chief. A parallel commercial group of 150 fur traders and *engagés* would build trading posts and forts on the Upper Missouri. Clark would act as the company's St. Louis agent. He made plans to build a commercial warehouse on his property and use it to supply both government factories and private traders. He would also receive the furs shipped down the river in packs, airing and beating them to remove moths and worms, and sending them on to New Orleans and markets in the East. "I have not the Smalest doubt of Suckcess," said Clark, who bought one share in the new company and tried to sell others to his brothers.

The construction of Fort Osage had cleared the Missouri River for American traders, but Indian resistance remained intense on the Upper Mississippi. British merchants from the Michilimackinac Company still controlled trade with the tribes and used their influence against the Americans. The United States agent at Prairie du Chien, John Campbell, who had rented his St. Louis house to William and Julia, was killed in a duel with the British trader Redford Crawford. The *Missouri Gazette* reported afterwards that Crawford had "grossly insulted" Campbell as a means of instigating the duel in order to kill him.

In the spring rumors swept down the river that the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa were renewing their efforts to organize the northern tribes in opposition to the Americans. A worried Clark wrote to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, "The Indian prophets have been industriously employed...attempting to seduce the Kickapoos, Saukeys, and other bands of Indians residing on the Mississippi and Illinois river, to war against the frontiers of this country."

Clark began preparing for the worst. The new Fort Bellevue (later Fort Madison), built on the Mississippi near today's Iowa-Missouri border, proved to be so poorly defended that Clark guessed the Indians "could with great ease jump over" its pickets. In April the government trader stationed there wrote nervously that the entire nation of Sauks was camped directly across the river from him. Clark and Indiana governor William Henry Harrison both braced for a Sauk attack they predicted would soon result from "the British interference with our Indian affairs in this country." Apparently, they could not imagine that the Indian nations would want to organize a resistance on their own, without help and instigation from Europeans.

Clark and Lewis responded to growing public alarm by calling up the local militias. The decision was not welcomed by local citizens who wanted the regular army to come to their defense. Even before then, Lewis had made himself unpopular among the newly arrived Americans by attempting to evict those whites who had settled illegally on Indian lands. Further, some inhabitants began to question the propriety of the two highest-ranking officials in the territory assigning public funds to a company they owned. Rudolphe Tillier, the former factor at Fort Bellefontaine, asked Madison, "Is it proper for the public service that the U.S. officers as a Governor or a Super

Intendant of Indian Affairs & U.S. Factor should take any share in Mercantile and private concerns[?]."

LEWIS'S BIGGEST PROBLEM was his relationship with his second-in-command, Territorial Secretary Frederick Bates. Appointed by Jefferson, Bates had served competently as acting governor for a year while awaiting Lewis's arrival in St. Louis. He drafted a set of laws for Louisiana Territory, which became the first American book published west of the Mississippi, and busily set about sorting through the thicket of overlapping Spanish land claims.

But the men were almost too much alike. They were both stiff, slightly humorless, punctilious bachelor Virginians. Both were nonplussed by the lively French Creole society of St. Louis. "Our Balls are gay, spirited and social," Bates wrote to his brother, "The French Ladies dance with inimitable grace but rather too much in the style of actresses... to me they would be more interesting with a greater show of modesty and correctness of manners."

Their relations soured on their first working day together—Lewis ordered Bates to hand him a full report in writing on Indian affairs—and soon grew worse. Bates wanted to promote hunting, trading, and settling by whites in Indian country; Lewis wanted to restrict hunting, trading, and settling until the Indians were brought to heel.

"We differ in everything; but we will be honest and frank in our intercourse," Bates wrote his brother Richard. "I lament the unpopularity of the Governor; but he has brought it on himself by harsh and mistaken measures. He is inflexible in error...."

Soon the two men were no longer speaking, except on matters of public business. A particularly embarrassing scene resulted when they encountered one another at a ball in St. Louis. Bates described it to his brother:

[Lewis] drew his chair close to mine.... There was a pause in the conversation—I availed myself of it—arose and walked to the other side of the room. The dances were now commencing. He also rose—evidently in passion—retired into an adjoining room and sent a servant for General Clark, who refused to ask me out as he foresaw that a Battle must have been the consequence....

Despite all his formidable gifts of compromise, Clark was unable to broker an accommodation between the two men. Lewis began steering more and more official business away from Bates to Clark, while Bates continued to criticize Lewis's policies and appointments. "His habits are altogether military," said Bates, "He never can I think succeed in any other profession."

Lewis was beginning to show signs of strain. In the late spring, as Chouteau and Lisa prepared to return Sheheke to his native people, Lewis gave them a letter of instruction that was startlingly vindictive. All the tribes should be treated in a friendly manner, Lewis said, except for the Arikaras. They should be "severely Punished," even if it were necessary "to exterpate that abandoned Nation." Lewis told Chouteau to force the Arikaras to turn over the warriors who had killed the men of Pryor's party. If the tribe did not produce those particular individuals, it should be made to deliver an "equivalent number." Then, Lewis said, those hostages should be "shot in the presence of the nation."

The parties under Chouteau and Lisa left in separate groups in May and June. Though depleted by numerous desertions, they joined at Fort Osage to make a combined force of 150 soldiers, traders, Indians, Creole boatmen, and free blacks. One keelboat of Americans was commanded by Reuben Lewis, Meriwether's brother. It was the largest expedition to ascend the Missouri to that date.

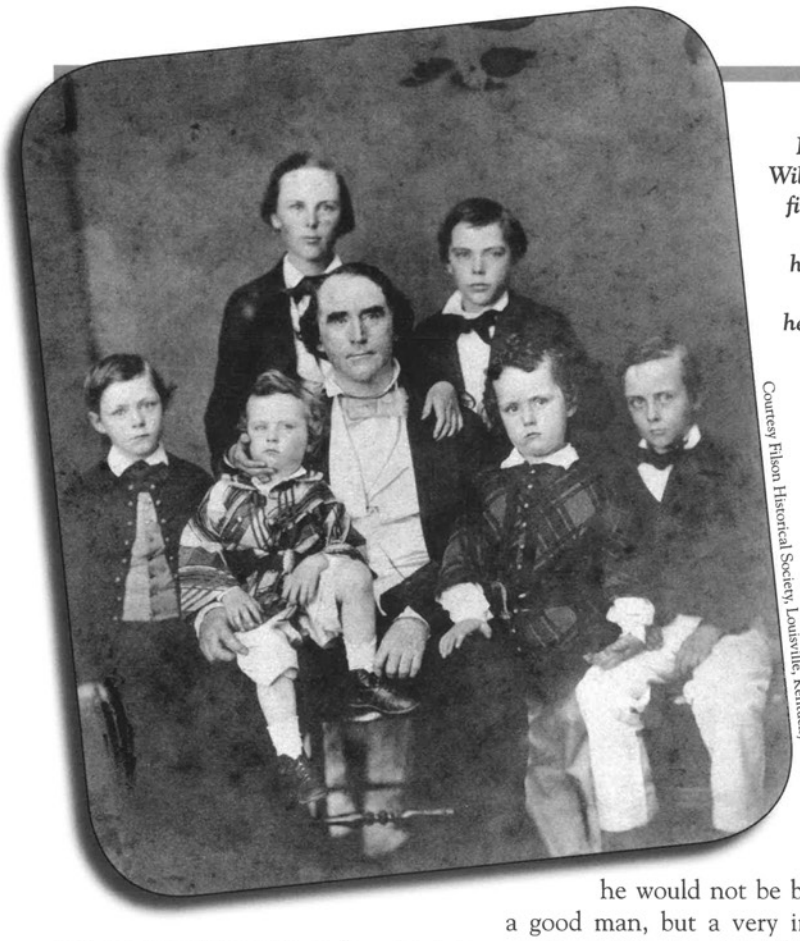
Lewis's relationships with his superiors in Washington City were deteriorating. Jefferson had already written Lewis several mildly chastising letters about his delay in preparing his journals for publication. But Jefferson was now out of office and Frederick Bates now had the ear of the new administration of President James Madison.

Courtesy St. Louis County Parks, Thornhill, Faust Park

Frederick Bates was appointed by President Jefferson to be acting governor of Louisiana Territory until Meriwether Lewis arrived to take over the post.

In August 1809 Lewis received a letter from Madison's new secretary of war, William Eustis, that devastated him. Eustis began by complaining that the government had not been consulted in advance about Chouteau's mission. Specifically, he objected that the contract with the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company combined "commercial as well as military objects," that "the object & destination of this Force is unknown," and that it was commanded by an official who had been originally appointed to a different position (Pierre Chouteau was agent to the Osage Indians).

Then came the crushing blow. Eustis stated that the government would not honor additional payments Lewis had made to Chouteau and the others for expenses beyond the $7,000 already contracted. News of the rejection of Lewis's bills had the immediate effect of precipitating a run by the governor's creditors on all of his debts, which were considerable because he



Meriwether Lewis Clark, William Clark's firstborn, was named after his godfather. "Lewis," as he was called, is pictured here with his own sons, the oldest of whom was given the same name.

Courtesy Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky

had borrowed heavily to buy land in the region. Unable to raise the cash to pay his creditors, Lewis was pushed into near insolvency.

On August 18, 1809—his 35th birthday—the deeply distressed Lewis replied to Eustis that he would travel to Washington to clear his name. "Be assured Sir, that my Country can never make 'A Burr' out of me," he said, reflecting his and the nation's continued preoccupation with the western conspiracy. "She may reduce me to Poverty; but she can never sever my Attachment from her."

Before he departed, Lewis gave Clark and two other friends the power of attorney to settle his loans by selling off his property holdings. In effect, Lewis was resorting to the measures Jefferson hoped would be forced on the Indians: he was lopping off his land in order to pay off his debts to the government. By this time rumors had reached St. Louis that Lewis would not be reappointed as governor, and many people thought he would not be back. "He is a good man, but a very improvident one," said his friend William Carr. "I apprehend he will not return."

It had been a difficult time for many of the men of the Corps of Discovery. Even Clark was chastised by Eustis, who vacated a half-dozen appointments in the Indian office, including one given to the expedition's blacksmith, Alexander Willard. The reliable George Drouillard had been jailed after Lisa's expedition and charged with murder for shooting a deserter who had later died. (Drouillard was found not guilty after jury deliberation of 15 minutes.) Some of the men of the expedition immediately cashed in the land grants they received as rewards from the government. Lawyer William C. Carr purchased one grant of 320 acres "lately issued by the Secretary of War to the followers of Lewis & Clark." He paid for the land not with cash, however. The price was one slave.

After Eustis told Clark that "it does not appear to be necessary that the expense attending our Relations with the Indians in the Territory of Louisiana should be four times as much as the whole expense of supporting its civil government," Clark decided he too needed to pay a visit to Washington. He would travel a different route than Lewis in order to take his wife and infant son to visit her family in Virginia.

Clark would be haunted by his final meetings with Lewis. He told Jonathan that on August 25 his friend had expressed his distress "in Such terms as to Cause a Cempothy which is not yet off." Yet, Clark assured his brother, "I do not beleve there was ever an honester man in Louisiana nor one who had pureor motives than Govr. Lewis." Ever hopeful, he predicted, "I think all will be right and he will return with flying Colours to this Country."

Lewis left St. Louis on September 4, four days after the recalcitrant Osage band on the Arkansas River finally signed the 1808 treaty. Clark observed with satisfaction that it would "extinguish the Indian title to more than 200 miles square of the finest country in Louisiana."

Meanwhile, Clark was making arrangements for his own trip. He finished relocating his family to his new house and dispatched a government boat to New Orleans loaded with packs of shaved deerskins and hatters' furs from the factories at Fort Osage and Fort Madison.

A warm letter arrived from Jefferson, who wrote from Monticello to thank Clark for his donation of mastodon bones which "have given to my collection of Indian curiosities an importance much beyond what I had ever counted on." Jefferson added a note of congratulations to Clark on his growing family:

> *While some may think it will render you less active in the service of the world, those who take a sincere interest in your personal happiness, and who know that by a law of our nature we cannot be happy without the endearing connections of a family, will rejoice for your sake as I do. The world has, of right no further claims on yourself & Govr. Lewis, but such as you may voluntarily render according to your convenience or as they may make it your interest.*

The contrast with Madison and Eustis's attitude could not have been sharper.

On September 21 a festive crowd had gathered in St. Louis to witness the public hanging of a convicted murderer. A week later, Clark began his overland trip east, riding alongside a carriage with Julia and their eight-month-old son. They were accompanied by a slave couple, Scott and Chloe, and their daughter Rachel. Although York had returned to St. Louis, he no longer traveled with his owner. In May, Clark reported that York was "insolent and Sulky. I gave him a Severe trouncing the other day." Later, he sent York to the "Caleboos" for an unnamed offense. After again threatening to sell or hire out York, Clark complained, "I cant Sell negrows here for money."

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS on territorial roads were rough and egalitarian. Most homeowners on the principal routes boarded travelers to supplement their income. A high official might share a room with the innkeeper and his wife. Outside of Kaskaskia, the scene of George Rogers Clark's first triumph in 1778, William and Julia found no food at all at one boardinghouse. So the man who had once hunted grizzlies killed two chickens.

"Mrs. Clark & Cloe Cooked a good Brackfast, and we proceeded on," Clark wrote in his pocket journal. They sometimes stayed with friends. Clark was popular in Illinois territory, and in April the citizens of St. Clair County, Illinois, had petitioned the president to name him their governor.

They crossed the Ohio at Shawneetown and visited Jonathan Clark's daughter Nelly and her husband Benjamin Temple in Russellville, in today's Logan County, Kentucky. During the visit, Julia took down Nelly's recipe for "green Sweet Meats:"

"Let your [cu]cumbers or muskmelons (or such fruit as you wish) lay in salt water until they turn yallow. Then boil them in spring water until they Cook plump. If they will not green as deep as you want them throw a small bit of alum in while boiling. Have your cirrup ready to lay them in before they get cold or else they will all draw up. The ginger must be soaked well before it is put in."

After encountering "many familys all going to Louisiana," the party arrived at Jonathan's house at the Falls of the Ohio at sunset on October 12. It was a bittersweet reunion. The previous March George Rogers had stumbled and fallen senseless near a burning fireplace at his cabin at Point of Rocks. No one really knew whether he had been blind drunk or had suffered a stroke. But his badly burned right leg had become gangrenous. On March 25 George Rogers had been carried to Dr. Richard Ferguson in Louisville, who amputated his leg above the knee. Believing that martial music might distract him during the operation, members of his regiment gathered outside and played Yankee Doodle while the old soldier purportedly "kept time by humming the tune."

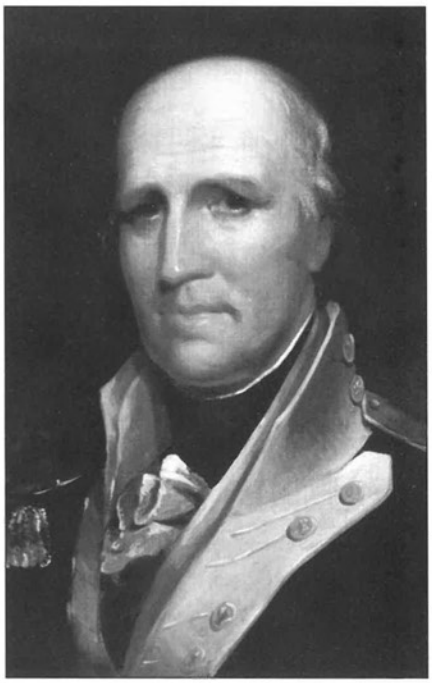
William and Julia spent two weeks visiting Jonathan and his family at Trough Spring and the Croghans at Locust Grove (where George Rogers had moved). They may have also visited John J. Audubon, then living in Louisville with his family. By October 26, though, the couple had repaired their often-broken carriage and continued their journey. They were traveling on a road familiar to Clark from the days of his militia campaigns. They went first to Colonel Richard Anderson's house, Soldier's Retreat, in Middletown, and then headed for Frankfort.

During a stopover at Shelbyville, William picked up a copy of a Frankfort newspaper, the *Argus of Western America*. His breath stopped. Meriwether Lewis was dead. The newspaper said he had cut his throat with a knife. Clark somehow pressed on to John Shannon's tavern, near Peytona in today's Shelby County. There, in a pub room crowded with drunks, he wrote an anguished letter to Jonathan: "I fear 0! I fear the waight of his mind has over come him, what will become of ~~my~~ his

Courtesy American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia

It was politically and diplomatically expedient to return Chief Shehekshote safely to his people at the Mandan Villages on the Upper Missouri. When the federal government refused to reimburse expenses advanced by Governor Lewis to that end, Lewis was faced with financial ruin.

George Rogers Clark, William Clark's older brother and a Revolutionary War hero, possessed some troubling personality traits in common with Meriwether Lewis.



Courtesy Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky

paprs?" Clark was at the beginning of his life without Meriwether Lewis.

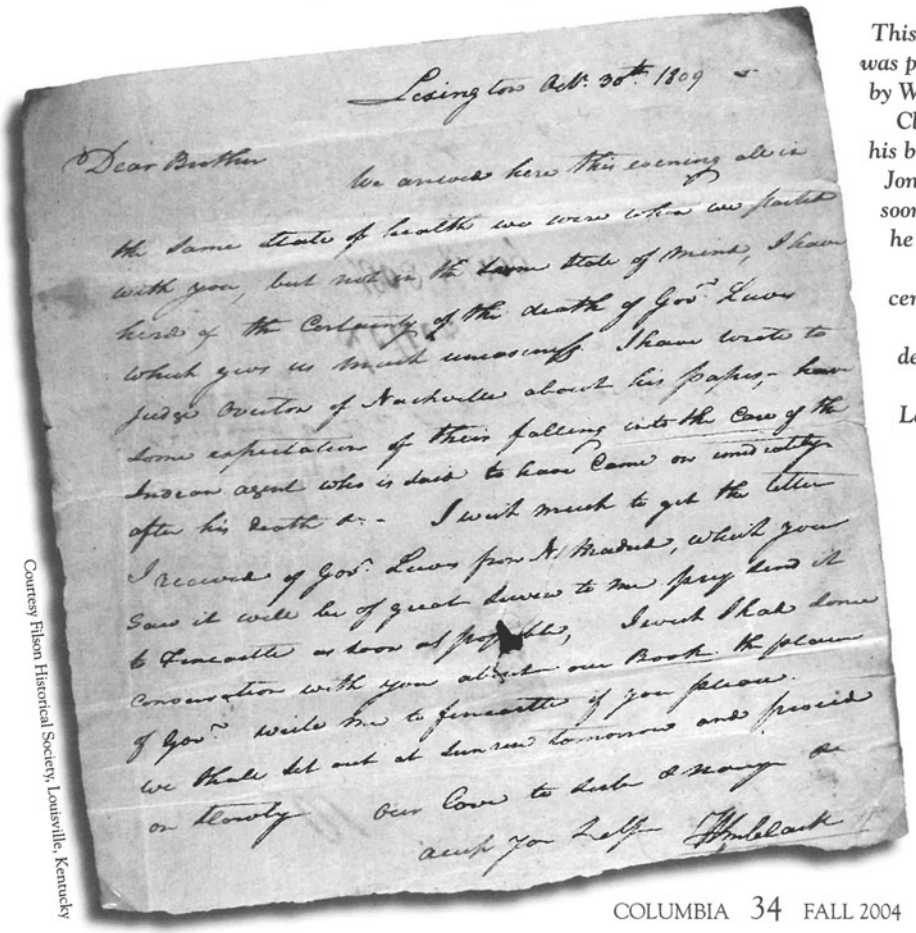
After leaving St. Louis in early September 1809, Meriwether Lewis had made his way slowly down the Mississippi to the fourth Chickasaw Bluff and Fort Pickering, the post he had once commanded. He was in terrible condition, drinking heavily and taking pills laced with laudanum, an opiate. He had scrawled a will into his notebook, leaving his land holdings (his only assets) to his mother Lucy Marks.

When his boat arrived at the fort on September 15 the crewmen informed the commanding officer, Captain Gilbert Russell, that Lewis had tried twice to kill himself. Russell ordered Lewis detained until his health improved.

The next day Lewis wrote a semicoherent letter to President James Madison, explaining his intention to travel overland to Washington on the Natchez Trace, by way of Nashville, rather than risk being stopped by British warships on a sea voyage from New Orleans. His once-precise handwriting was large and loopy, riddled with strikeouts and misspellings. James Neelly, the agent to the Chickasaw nation, found Lewis to be "in Very bad health."

After two weeks of rest, Lewis seemed to have recovered. On September 29 he left Fort Pickering accompanied by his personal servant, John Pernier, who had previously worked for Jefferson, as well as Neelly and his servant. A few days later, though, Neelly observed that Lewis again "appeared at times deranged in mind." He was talking deliriously about his protested drafts and, as Clark learned later, had gotten the idea that "he herd me Comeing on, and said he was certain [I would] over take him, that I had herd of his Situation and would Come to his releaf."

What Lewis could not have known was that, during the week he was at Fort Pickering, Pierre Chouteau had finally delivered Sheheke safely to his people at the Mandan Villages on the Upper Missouri. Ironically, the mission that had precipitated Lewis's difficulties had been at last completed.



Courtesy Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky

This letter was penned by William Clark to his brother Jonathan soon after he "herd of the certainty of the death of Govr. Lewis."

ON THE EVENING of October 10 Lewis arrived at Grinder's "Stand" (the local term for an inn), about 70 miles short of Nashville. Sometime after midnight he fired two bullets with his pistols. One grazed his skull and the other penetrated his chest. "I have done the business," he told Mrs. Grinder. He died shortly after dawn on the 11th.

It was suicide. That was the unequivocal testimony from the scene by Neelly, Pernier, and Mrs. Grinder. Clark immediately came to the same conclusion—"I fear the waight of his mind has over come him"—as did Jefferson. Historians and writers have since sought to assign Lewis's actions to the depressive effects of diseases ranging from alcoholism or malaria to syphilis acquired from the Lemhi Shoshone. Others attribute Lewis's suicide to lifelong bipolar illness.

What is remarkable, regardless, is how much Lewis accomplished in the face of his problems. For the final six years of his life, Lewis found in William Clark the necessary mediator between his brilliant but remote personality and a world he could measure but not grasp. Clark had already performed a similar service for another dysfunctional national hero, his older brother George Rogers.

Lewis's isolation became more pronounced during the expedition's return, with the result that Clark assumed more and more of the daily leadership. Perhaps when Lewis first arranged for them to all reside under the same roof in St. Louis he had hoped things might continue as they had before. But when Clark committed himself to a new partner, his wife Julia Hancock, Lewis had been left to his own devices, without his stabilizing center.

Landon Y. Jones was managing editor of People Magazine *for eight years and wrote for and edited* People *and other* Time/Life *publications for 37 years. He is a board member of the National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Council and author of* The Essential Lewis & Clark.

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COLUMBIA

THE MAGAZINE OF NORTHWEST HISTORY ▪ FALL 2004

***FRONT COVER:** Although this is a highly romanticized view of the Corps of Discovery, one element rings true. The fact that several corps members have their black powder rifles at the ready, powder horns strapped around the waist, gives some intimation of these weapons' importance to the party's survival. This classic 1950s depiction of the Lewis and Clark expedition, with Sacagawea pointing the way, was painted by Rudolph Zallinger (1919-1995). Zallinger is best known for the Pulitzer Prize-winning dinosaur mural he painted in the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale during the 1940s. See related article beginning on page 18. (State Capital Museum Collection, Washington State Historical Society)*