



Visitor Center.

Five years earlier, a new county including the grave site had been created and named Lewis.

SITE OF GRINDERS STAND

Grass-covered rubble and a metal tablet mark the site of this inn. It was a rude frontier establishment, similar to a dozen others on the Natchez Trace, where travelers found food and shelter.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Meriwether Lewis National Monument is 7 miles east of Hohenwald and 35 miles west of Columbia on State Route 20.

The area is open all year. The Visitor Center building contains the National Park Service office and a small exhibit illustrating the career of Meriwether Lewis and the significance of his accomplishments. A picnic area has fireplaces, benches, and tables.

RELATED AREAS

Other units of the National Park System which help to tell the story of the westward

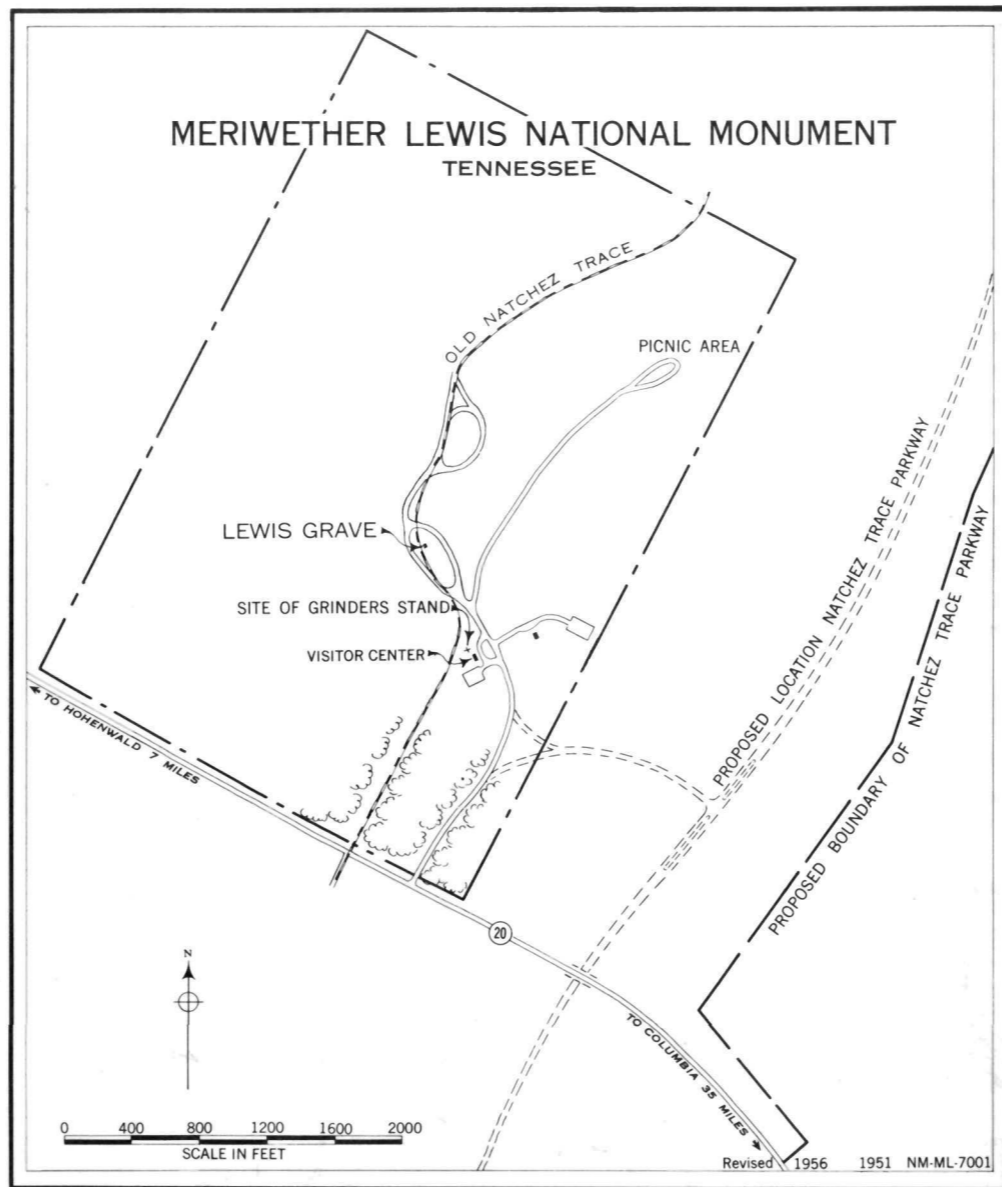
movement of the American people are: Natchez Trace Parkway, Tenn.-Ala.-Miss.; Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Ky.-Va.-Tenn.; Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, Mo.; Homestead and Scotts Bluff National Monuments, Nebr.; and Whitman National Monument, Wash.

ADMINISTRATION

Meriwether Lewis National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent, Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo, Miss., is in charge of the area, and all correspondence should be addressed to him.

MISSION 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



United States Department of the Interior

Fred A. Seaton, Secretary

National Park Service, Conrad L. Wirth, Director



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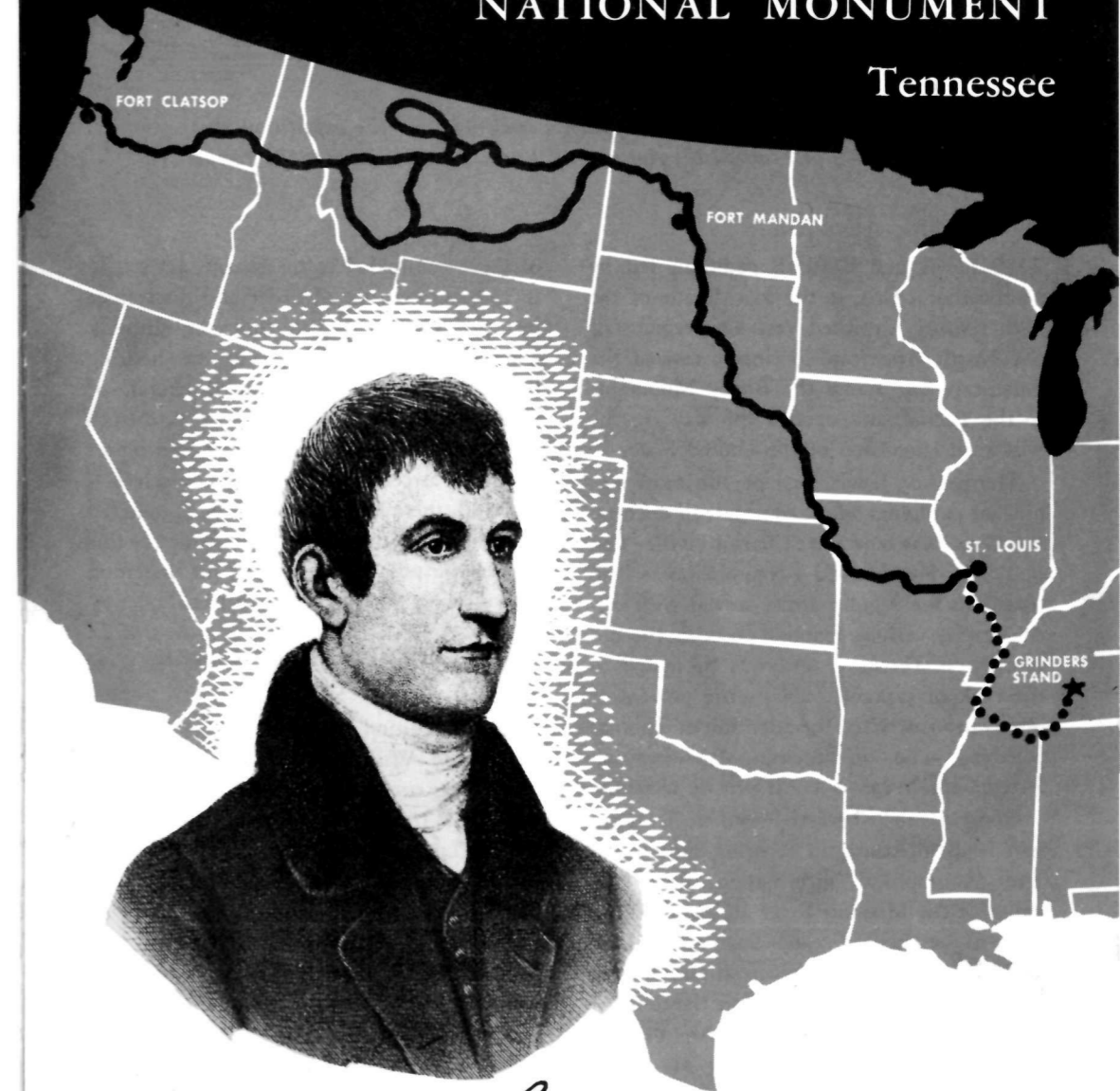
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Meriwether Lewis

NATIONAL MONUMENT

Tennessee



Meriwether Lewis.
Capt. 1st U.S. Regt. Dragoons.

Meriwether Lewis

NATIONAL MONUMENT



Here died and is buried Meriwether Lewis, who led the expedition that in 1804-5 first carried the American flag across the continent to the Pacific

THE Lewis and Clark Expedition, led by Meriwether Lewis, in the first decade of the 19th century, explored vast new regions of the North American continent, carried the American flag across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, and opened the way for the westward expansion of the United States.

Meriwether Lewis, one of the most significant explorers who had a part in opening the West, was born near Charlottesville, Va., in 1774. He obtained a commission as lieutenant in the regular army, served with distinction at various frontier posts in the old Northwest Territory, and was promoted to the rank of captain. His acute powers of observation attracted the attention of Thomas Jefferson, who, on becoming President, selected Captain Lewis as his private secretary.

Long before he became President, Jefferson had been interested in securing more accurate geographical information about the valley of the Missouri River and an overland route to the Pacific Ocean. Soon after taking office he asked for and received authority to send out an expedition to explore the country.

President Jefferson selected Lewis to command the expedition, justifying his choice by saying, "Of courage undaunted; possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction; careful as a father

of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline; intimate with the Indian character, customs, and principles; habituated to the hunting life; . . . honest, disinterested, liberal, of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves—with all these qualifications, as if selected and implanted by nature in one body for this express purpose, I could have no hesitation in confiding the enterprise to him."

THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

The expedition, with Meriwether Lewis as leader and William Clark second in command, was organized in 1803 and spent the winter of 1803-4 on the Mississippi opposite St. Louis. In the meantime, Jefferson's efforts to acquire New Orleans had resulted in the acquisition of the entire province of Louisiana, a vast area out of which all or parts of 13 States were carved.

In March, Lewis was made the agent to receive the transfer of Upper Louisiana. On May 14 he led his band of 32 men up the Missouri River and westward. They spent the winter in a Mandan Sioux village near the site of present-day Bismarck, N. Dak., resuming their journey in the spring of 1805.

Crossing the Rocky Mountains in the late summer, they reached the Pacific near the mouth of the Columbia, where they erected a fort and spent the winter. The return journey was made in a single season, the party reaching St. Louis in September 1806.

The courses of the Missouri, Yellowstone, Snake, and lower Columbia Rivers and many lesser streams were discovered and charted by the expedition; and they brought back a vast amount of information about the climate, topography, plants, animals, and native peoples of the Northwest. The knowledge of the country gained by the expedition materially hastened the occupation of the West. The explorations of Lewis and Clark on the Pacific slope of the Rocky Mountains greatly strengthened the American case in the later diplomatic struggle with England to gain possession of the Oregon country.

DEATH OF LEWIS

Thomas Jefferson, early in 1807, appointed Lewis as governor of the Louisiana (later Missouri) Territory. Arriving at St. Louis

Lines from Lewis' Journal, August 19, 1805.

Monday August 19th 1805
This morning I arose at daylight and sent out three hunters. some of the men who were much in want of leggings and moccasins I suffered to trap some skins. The others I employed in repacking the baggage, making pad saddles &c. we took up the net this morning but caught no fish. one beaver was caught in a trap. The first which perfectly resembles the grass this morning has a singular appearance to me at this season. This evening I made a few of the men construct a dam of willow brush which we headed and caught a large number of fine head and a kind of mullet about 16 lbs. so long which I had not seen before. the scales are small the nose is long and obliquely pointed and carries the under jaw the mouth is not large but opens with force at the sides. the colour of its back and sides is of a blue brown and belly white. it has the fittest bones from which I have supposed it to be of the mullet kind. The tongue and palate are small and it has no teeth. it is by no means as good as the trout. the trout on the same which I first met with at the falls of the

in 1808, Lewis found himself embroiled in political and financial difficulties which brought on a disorder which Jefferson termed "hypochondriac affections."

Hoping to relieve himself of financial obligations incurred in the public service, Lewis left St. Louis for Washington in September 1809. He arrived at Fort Pickering (now Memphis) on September 15, and the commanding officer wrote Jefferson concerning Lewis: "His situation I tho't rendered it necessary that he should be stopped until he

Meriwether Lewis on the Natchez Trace. From a Diorama in the Visitor Center.



would recover, which I done and . . . in about six days he was perfectly restored in every respect and able to travel."

Lewis decided to go overland to Washington and left Fort Pickering September 29, accompanied by the Chickasaw Agent, James Neelly. They proceeded to the Chickasaw Agency, near Houston, Miss., and on October 6, 1809, started via the Natchez Trace to Nashville. During this stage of the journey, Lewis, according to Neelly, showed signs of "mental derangement."

After they crossed the Tennessee River, one packhorse was lost. Neelly remained behind to search for the animal and did not overtake his companion until October 11. Arriving at Grinder's Inn, Neelly found Lewis dead from two gunshot wounds. Neelly had him buried alongside the historic Natchez Trace. A week later he wrote Jefferson, "It is with extreme pain that I have to inform you of the death of his Excellency Meriwether Lewis, Governor of upper Louisiana who died on the morning of the 11th Instant and I am Sorry to Say by Suicide."

THE MONUMENT

Meriwether Lewis National Monument was established on February 6, 1925, and comprises 300 acres of Federal land. Places of historic interest within the monument include a section of the long-abandoned Natchez Trace; the grave of Meriwether Lewis, and the site of Grinders Stand.

THE OLD NATCHEZ TRACE

A gentle swale or, in some places, a bare gully marks the Natchez Trace on which Lewis made his last journey. This wilderness road, evolving from a series of Indian trails, was improved first by the Army in 1801-3 and again by the Postmaster General in 1806 to insure communication between

Natchez, in Mississippi Territory, and Nashville. For two decades it played a vital part in connecting the eastern settlements and the southwestern outposts of the United States. It was important as a post road, a military road, and a route by which Kentucky boatmen returned to their homes.

GRAVE OF MERIWETHER LEWIS

Meriwether Lewis was buried in a simple grave beside the Natchez Trace. Except for a "post fence" built in 1810, the plot was unmarked until 1848, when the State of Tennessee erected over the remains a broken column, symbolic of his untimely death.

Grave of Meriwether Lewis.

