

DUES DUE

If your Idaho Chapter dues are due, you will find a return envelope addressed to our treasurer, Ruthann Caylor. Please support the Chapter and return your dues. The dues are low and only cover the bare minimum expenses of the newsletter. Your mailing label will give the current status of your dues. (PS. The envelopes are "recycled" but they do save the chapter this expense.)

FEBRUARY: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February was black history month and in Idaho it was noted that the first highlight in black history for this state came in 1805 when York, William Clark's slave, was among the first non-Indians to travel through what is now Idaho. (*Idaho Statesman*, February 4, 1996)

LC SPORTS NEWS

Lewis-Clark State College played Lewis and Clark College last November. The Warriors of Lewiston, Idaho defeated the Pioneers of Portland, Oregon 87-84 in Lewiston in the championship game of the Snake River Shootout. Ironically, the two were to meet in Portland for the Lewis and Clark Tournament title in December but the game was postponed when two major electrical transformers went down.

CAROL MacGREGOR TO SPEAK

Chapter member Carol MacGregor will give a lunch hour presentation on Corps of Discovery on April 2. This event is part of the Friends of the Idaho Historical Museum monthly program. Plan to attend this event

at the Museum if you are in the Boise area on April 2.

UNDAUNTED COURAGE RECEIVING ATTENTION

Stephen Ambrose's just-released book on Meriwether Lewis, entitled Undaunted Courage, has been receiving a lot of attention in the national media. It was reviewed in *Parade Magazine* (see enclosed) earlier this month. Listeners of National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" heard two segments of an interview with Mr. Ambrose. On public television's "Charlie Rose Show", the host interviewed the author for a half hour on February 23. Idaho Chapter members will enjoy Ambrose's forward to the book explaining his family's attachment to Lewis and Clark beginning with a family camp out on Lemhi Pass for the nation's bicentennial in 1976.

Mr. Ambrose was the featured speaker at last year's Foundation banquet in Charlottesville.

1996 DATES

April 2 - Carol MacGregor presentation, Boise

June 1 - Idaho Trails Day - Clearwater National Forest

Aug. 4-7 - National Meeting, Sioux City, Iowa

TBA (Sept.) - Salmon area meeting and field trip

Ambrose also had an article in the Autumn/Winter edition of *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*. It is entitled "Lewis and Clark Breach the Bitterroots" and it taken from his new book. It is of interest to Idaho Chapter members as it goes into detail about the meeting of the Shoshones and crossing Lemhi Pass. Here are a couple of excerpts from that article:

At Lemhi Pass: "How, then, to cross those mountains? Cameahwait said he had never done it, but there was an old man in his band 'who could probably give me some information of the country to the N.W.' He added that 'he had understood from the persed nosed Indians who inhabit this river below the rocky mountains that it ran a great way toward the setting sun and finally lost itself in a great lake of water which was illy taisted.'"

"That sentence linked the continent. For the first time, a white man had a map, however imperfect and imprecise, to connect the great rivers of the western empire. Also for the first time, a white man heard of the Nez Perces, the major tribe living west of the mountains."

On Lost Trail Pass: "They were entering mountains far more difficult to pass than any American had ever attempted. The confusion of creeks and ravines cutting through the steep mountainsides has made the route the expedition used one of the most disputed of the entire journey. One expert, Harry Majors, call the route 'the single most obscure and enigmatic of the entire Lewis and Clark expedition.' On September 4 the party fell down a very steep descent to a north-flowing river that Lewis named 'Clark's River' (present day Bitterroot River)."

On the Lolo Trail: "The expedition had made 160 miles since it left Traveler's Rest eleven days ago. It was one of the great

forced marches in American history."

"Lewis tried to describe his emotions: 'the pleasure I now felt in having triumphed over the rocky Mountains and decending once more to a level and fertile country where there was every rational hope of finding a comfortable subsistence for myself and party can be more readily conceived than expressed, nor was the flattering prospect of the final success of the expedition less pleasing.'"

"Outstanding leadership made possible the triumph over the Rocky Mountains. Lewis and Clark had welded the Corps of Discovery into a tough, superbly disciplined family. They had built an unquestioning trust in themselves, and knew the strengths and skills of each of their men intimately. They had taken a calculated risk in trusting Old Toby, but their judgment that he knew what he was talking about (even though the talking was in sign language) proved to be justified."

On women and the Expedition: "First Sacagawea, now Watkuweis [Nez Perce woman]. The expedition owed more to Indian women than either captain ever acknowledged. And the United States owed more to the Nez Perce for their restraint than it ever acknowledged."

T-SHIRTS STILL AVAILABLE

The Chapter still has a good supply of Lewis and Clark t-shirts available. They are available in sizes M-XXL and in four great colors: purple, teal, jade, or fuschia. Contact Steve Lee at PO Box 96, Boise, ID 83701 if you would like to order one. \$10.00 is the cost that includes mailing. (XXL shirts are \$1 extra). Thanks for supporting the Chapter by your purchaset. One dollar goes to both the Chapter and the Luna House Museum in Lewiston whose Lewis and Clark Trail marker from the 1930s was used in the shirt design.

Sacajawea's heroic aura still shines

"She was our only dependence for a negotiation with the Shoshone Indians on whom we depended for horses to assist us in our portage from the Missouri to the Columbia River."

— Meriwether Lewis about Sacajawea

Nearly two centuries have lapsed since the Lemhi Shoshone's most famous tribal member, Sacajawea, etched her place in America's history by helping the Lewis and Clark expedition.

But time hasn't dimmed her heroic aura.

Her popularity has remained because she's so politically correct, says Wyoming author Ken Thomasma. He researched her life while writing a series of stories about Indian children.

Sacajawea's life represents motherhood, exploration and cooperation, said Thomasma last



KEN THOMASMA

week. He was in town to read from his book, "Naya Nuki" and to meet with Lemhi leaders about building the Sacajawea National Historic Museum near Tendoy.

As a young girl, Sacajawea and her friend Naya Nuki were captured and enslaved in southwestern Montana by Hidatsa warriors. They were taken to North Dakota, where Sacajawea was sold to a trapper, Toussaint Charbonneau. Naya Nuki eventually escaped and returned to the Lemhi Valley. The friends were reunited when the expedition reached the valley.

Much misinformation has been printed about Sacajawea, Thomasma said. For example, she served more as an interpreter than a guide.

Still, she was indispensable. In August 1805, she helped obtain horses and a Shoshone man to guide the expedition over the Bitterroot Range to the Clearwater River in northern Idaho.

"Lewis and Clark marveled at her ability to find food everywhere," Thomasma said. "Sacajawea knew every berry, every root and every stem of every plant that were good to eat."

Some people have criticized Sacajawea for selling out her people, Thomasma said. That's unfair because the expedition was peaceful and gave gifts to her tribe and other Indians, he said.

Historians disagree about where Sacajawea is buried and when she died. The confusion arises because Charbonneau had two wives.

Thomasma believes she died fairly young from tuberculosis or small pox and is buried in South Dakota. Others believe she lived to be in her 80s and is buried at Fort Washakie, Wyo.

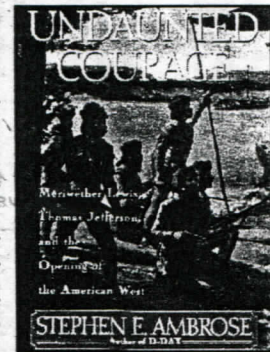
BY HERBERT KUPFERBERG

What's Up This Week® BOOKS

They Went West

Stephen E. Ambrose, known for his writings about World War II, has turned back to an earlier heroic age in **Undaunted Courage**, which has the whopping subtitle "Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West" (Simon & Schuster, \$27.50). The book, of course, is the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition or, as President Jefferson called it, "Corps of Discovery." Starting from St. Louis in 1804, Lewis and Clark followed the Missouri River to its source, crossed the Rocky Mountains and descended the Columbia River to the Pacific, then returned safely.

Ambrose has cast his nearly 500-page book, which is illustrated with period pictures and excellent maps, in the form of a biography of Lewis, who began his career as Jefferson's private secretary and committed suicide in mysterious circumstances at the age of 35. In fact, Lewis so dominates these pages that we get only shadowy images of William Clark, the invaluable co-captain who led an important side excursion of his own along the Yellowstone River, and of Sacajawea, the Indian interpreter and guide who, with her baby on her back, helped them cross the Rockies.



In the end, it's the adventurous expedition itself, rather than the personalities connected with it, that makes this an exciting and stimulating book. With no "mission control" to monitor and safeguard their movements, Lewis and Clark and their 30 or so companions followed a literally trackless path through unknown territory inhabited by strange tribes. Even much of the natural life they encountered was previously unrecorded—they discovered 178 new plants and 122 animal species. And in so doing, they helped build a nation. Theirs is a remarkable and even inspiring story that can't be retold too often.

The Vision of a Young America

UNDAUNTED COURAGE

Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West

By Stephen A. Ambrose

Simon & Schuster. 511 pp. \$27.50

Reviewed by Blaine Harden

Feeling unmoved? Sensing perhaps that you live in uninteresting times? Weary of politicians who define vision as kicking AIDS victims out of the military? If so, historian Stephen Ambrose has a tonic for you.

"Undaunted Courage" is about a time when America was young, the federal government was bold and the president knew what he was doing. President Thomas Jefferson executed the Louisiana Purchase for a song, doubled the territory of the country overnight and in 1803 dispatched a handsome 30-year-old Virginian to do nothing less than fill in the blanks of our collective future.

Meriwether Lewis, a tobacco grower with an indifferent education, could not remember how to spell his widowed mother's married name. But he could command men, sweet-talk Indians and put a bullet on the mark at a distance of 220 yards. Most important for history, he could, after 12 hours in a canoe, sit down by the campfire and write closely observed and movingly poetic notes about a world that white men had never seen. He explored rivers, mapped mountains and sewed up the West between

the Mississippi and the Pacific—and, on his way back home to a hero's welcome in Washington, managed to get himself shot in the butt by one of his own men.

Ambrose, whose 17 previous books include one on D-Day and a highly regarded trilogy on Richard Nixon, showcases himself in this book as an exceptionally shrewd storyteller. In his introduction, Ambrose explains that he and his family have been obsessed with the Lewis and Clark Expedition for 20 years. They have repeatedly followed the explorers' footsteps across the Great Plains and through the Rockies. That obsession has paid off handsomely. For by digging beneath schoolbook sermons about the expedition, Ambrose has uncovered an extraordinary American character.

■
AMBROSE'S LEWIS IS A TENDER AND tormented soul. Like the West that he conquered, his natural blessings seemed without limit. He was exceptionally good-looking, a kind and loyal friend, an instinctive naturalist and a gifted writer (whose stream-of-consciousness style Ambrose compares to those of Faulkner and Joyce). On meeting the Shoshone, Lewis wrote, "We wer [sic] all carresed [sic] and besmeared with their grease and paint till I was heartily tired of the national hug."

But he drank too much and he peaked too early.

He was paralyzed after the expedition by what was probably the most significant case of writer's block in this nation's history. The entire world was waiting to read his journals. They would have been a cinch to edit. Yet, for

reasons known only to himself, the explorer never turned his journals into a book.

Lewis found it impossible to hold on to greatness. After his grateful friend the president named him governor of the Territory of Louisiana, he did not report to work in St. Louis for nearly two years. He was gambling in Philadelphia, Ambrose explains, enjoying "too many balls with too many toasts." When

Lewis found it impossible to hold on to greatness.

he did take the governor's job, he attempted—and failed—to use his influence to make himself rich. Ambrose believes Lewis was probably a manic-depressive.

In 1809, just three years after his glorious return from the West, his performance as governor came under attack in Washington. While traveling east to explain himself, Lewis surrendered to depression. He was just 35 years old and famous beyond his imagining, and he shot himself in the head. When he did not die, he shot himself in the chest. When he did not die, he cut himself from head to foot with a razor. "I am no coward," he said as he bled to death, "but I am so strong, [it is] so hard to die."

■
WITH THIS SPECTACULAR YOUNG MAN, then, as the sympathetic heart of his book, Ambrose goes to work as a historian. It's a job he performs with impressive economy and insight. He tells us how Jefferson, "the greatest champion of human rights in American histo-

ry," blended paternalism and genocide in his dealings with the Indians. As their "new Father," Ambrose explains, Jefferson had a nonnegotiable Indian policy—"get out of the way or get killed."

Ambrose neatly captures the primitiveness of Jefferson's era, a time when no means of transport moved faster than a galloping horse, when the learned president himself believed the Mandan Indians to be a lost tribe of Welshmen, when the cure for the flu was frequent bleeding and massive doses of laxatives.

If this book has a weakness, it's the relative paucity of detail about the Columbia, the great western river that Jefferson had hoped would be the Northwest Passage across the continent. Lewis and Clark disappointed their president by finding that the Columbia did not link up with the Missouri. In seeming sympathy with that disappointment, Ambrose gives short shrift to a river that Lewis and Clark called "inconceivable" and "incredible" and "horrid." But that, perhaps, is a parochial quibble from a reviewer who was born near the Columbia.

This is a fine and important book, intelligently conceived and splendidly written. It explains how the continental nation was made, flushes out human beings who did the making and reminds us of the magnificent things that government can do when it does have a vision. ■

Blaine Harden, a reporter for The Washington Post, is the author of "A River Lost: The Life and Death of the Columbia," to be published this spring.

Recorder - Herald, Salmon, Idaho

Rigby recognized by Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

J. Wilmer Rigby, a retired Salmon pharmacist and Lewis and Clark historian, was presented with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation's "Award of Meritorious Achievement" on Friday. The presentation was made on behalf of the Foundation by Idaho Chapter President Steve Lee of Boise. The award is in the form of an etched metal and walnut plaque.

This national award recognizes Mr. Rigby for his outstanding contributions in bringing to this nation a greater awareness and appreciation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

He has long been interested in Lewis and Clark who came through the Salmon area in August of 1805 and has studied the explorer's journals extensively and personally has walked and photographed the trail in Lemhi County. He has assisted local land managers in the siting of the actual route and helped with the preparation of an interpretive brochure on the Lewis and Clark Trail for the Lemhi area.

Other accomplishments include leading field trips for Idaho Chapter

meetings and, during the national Foundation meeting in Lewiston and Missoula, he led trips to Lemhi Pass and that portion of the trail along the Salmon River. He has also generously given his time in sharing his knowledge of Lewis, Clark and the Expedition to many students in the area.

Mr. Rigby joins an elite group of people receiving this award — the first awards were given in 1972 — and is only the third Idahoan so honored. Other Idahoans receiving the award are Marcus Ware of Lewiston and the late Ralph Space of Orofino.

The Foundation was founded in 1969 to stimulate public interest in matters relating to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the contributions to American history made by those members, and events of a time and place concerning following the Expedition which are of historical importance to our nation.

The Foundation recognizes the value of tourist-oriented programs, and supports activities which enhance the enjoyment and understanding of the Lewis and Clark story.