

Lewis & Clark's Missouri

MEETING EARLY SETTLERS

PART 3 OF A SERIES OF EIGHT NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION FEATURES

THE EASTERN MISSOURI REGION that the expedition traveled through was populated by people living in small settlements mostly along the main rivers. They came from all directions, some from Canada in the north, some from Spanish territory in the south, and some from America in the east. One American was Daniel Boone, who had settled with his family on the Missouri River near present-day Defiance five years before Lewis and Clark came through. Others came from France and French territories. The main settlements were Cape Girardeau, Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis on the Mississippi River and St. Charles on the Missouri River. There also were many men who traveled throughout the territory hunting and trading with the Indians.

On its way up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, the Corps passed several of these settlements. Cape Girardeau was a town of about 1100 people, and Captain Lewis stopped

to visit Canadian-born Louis Lorimier, one of its most prominent citizens. Lorimier was the commandant of Cape Girardeau and made his living by trading with the Shawnee and Delaware Indians. (His trading post, the Red House, is being reconstructed in Cape Girardeau.) Lorimier was half-Shawnee and was married to a Shawnee woman, Charlotte Bougainville. He wore his black hair in a long braid

that he allegedly used as a whip when riding his horse.

Upon reaching St. Louis, the Captains found many people willing to help them. Charles Gratiot, a Swiss-born fur trader, wrote to Clark in camp offering to help in whatever

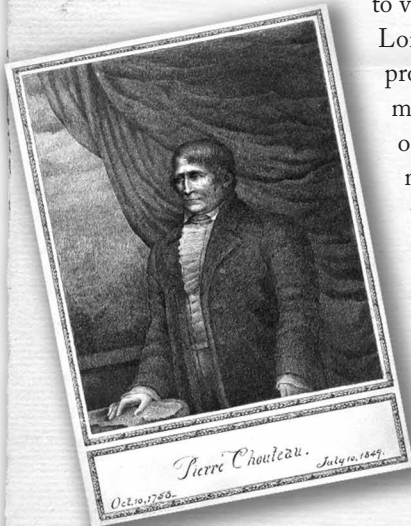
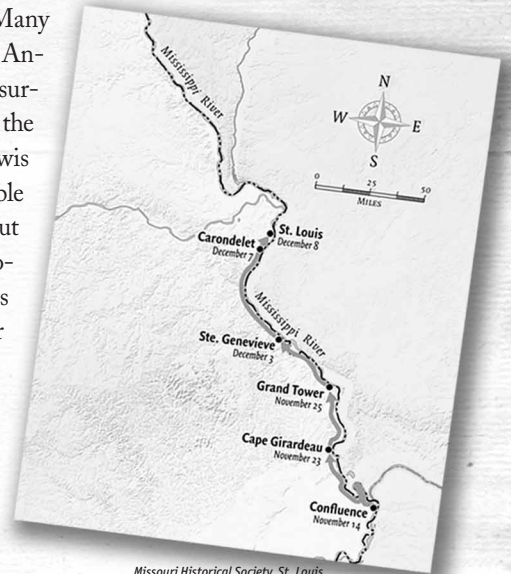
way possible. Many people, such as Antoine Soulard, surveyor general for the region, gave Lewis and Clark valuable information about the land and people the Corps would encounter on the Missouri River. Lewis stayed with Pierre Chouteau much of the time he was in St.

Louis. Pierre and his brother, Auguste, were members of one of St. Louis' founding families. They were fur traders who knew a lot about the Indians in the area, especially the powerful Osage.

During their stay, Lewis and Clark enjoyed the hospitality of many other people. Once after having dinner with Amos Stoddard, they went to a ball that lasted until 9 a.m. Stoddard was a captain in the United States Army who oversaw the transfer of the Louisiana Territory to the United States.

At noon on May 20, 1804, Captain Lewis left St. Louis to join Clark and the crew in the French village of St. Charles. A number of prominent St. Louis citizens accompanied him, including Charles Gratiot, Auguste Chouteau, Amos Stoddard and Antoine Saugrain, one of the city's few physicians.

Clark wrote about St. Charles: "This village contains about 100 houses, the most of them small and indifferent and about 450 inhabitants chiefly French." In St. Charles the expedition recruited Pierre Cruzatte to join the trip. Cruzatte was a trader on the Missouri who was half French and half Omaha Indian. His knowledge of Indian languages would prove valuable on the journey ahead.



Pierre Chouteau Sr.
Lithograph after Clarence Hoblitzelle, 1897,
Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis

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