

"Never did a similar event excite more joy thro' the United States. The humblest of its citizens had taken a lively interest in the issue of this journey, and looked forward with impatience for the information it would furnish."
 Thomas Jefferson, Aug. 18, 1813

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THE MISSOURI EXPEDITION.

The successful issue of the late expedition up the Missouri and to the Pacific Ocean, is, to every reflecting mind, an abundant source of gratulation. The exploration of an overland route to the West, is indeed a *new thing under the sun*, and one of the remarkable occurrences of the present century. It opens to the view of the mind, a pleasing field of philanthropic speculation. Commerce is immediately interested; and agriculture and the circle of the arts, come next in, for their share of consideration. A vast territory becomes unbosomed to the contemplation of the civilized world, and the mind receives pleasure from the consideration, that in a latitude adapted to the happiest social state, and in a soil and natural situation equal to those of the most favoured seats of humanity, a region is at length explored, destined some few half centuries hence, to be inhabited by millions of mankind, where from the disadvantages of uncivilized life, there now roam but scanty hundreds, all the interesting considerations that flow in upon the mind, in consequence of this newly explored world, cannot be enumerated: but some of them shall be attempted.

The first inquiry that strikes us is, to whom does this new region belong? Not to the Spaniards, though they and the British lie respectively to the North and South of it. The Russians lay some claim to the Pacific coast, as having traded there in company with the Americans and English. The Americans have of all the Europeans probably the best ground to lay their pre-emptive and territorial claims. It is believed that they first visited and gave name to the Columbia river and country, as they certainly are the first who internally explored them. And besides, as Louisa-

na has been hitherto unbounded to the West, it may be doubted whether the whole of this new tract may not be included within its limits, by the same rule by which Spain and Britain lay territorial claim as far as to the Pacific Ocean. Priority of discovery and trade, are sufficient claims to territory, in consideration of the difficulty and dangers attending such enterprises; nor would it be just, that after the discoverer, or the trader had explored new fields of industry, with all the risk and difficulty necessarily attached to the task, others should step in, and snatch the fruits to themselves.

There now appears a probability that some degree of justice will at length be done to the memory of Columbus: a man to whose active enterprise under Providence, we owe in some measure our national if not individual existence; as a large portion of the continent so unjustly named the *American* will in time be called *Columbia*, in honor of the great discoverer.

A river navigable 185 miles from the Ocean, and not inferior in dignity to the Hudson or the Delaware, will give name, in all probability to all the newly discovered tract, embraced by the waters lately descended to the Pacific.

The government of the United States will undoubtedly direct their attention to the whole of the Missouri country, as well for the purpose of commerce, as to secure a beneficial influence over the natives. Trading houses will be established, and where necessary, garrisons be stationed, which will make the navigation of those hitherto unvisited waters, hereafter an ordinary and every-day occurrence. A very valuable fur trade will attract numbers to those regions, and thus gradually a line of settlement will be formed over the continent, in its whole breadth.

The advantages of the fur trade with China, will before many years make the establishment of a factory at the head of the Columbia river a thing necessary and of course. Thus begins the settlement of a region, one day to become an object to the

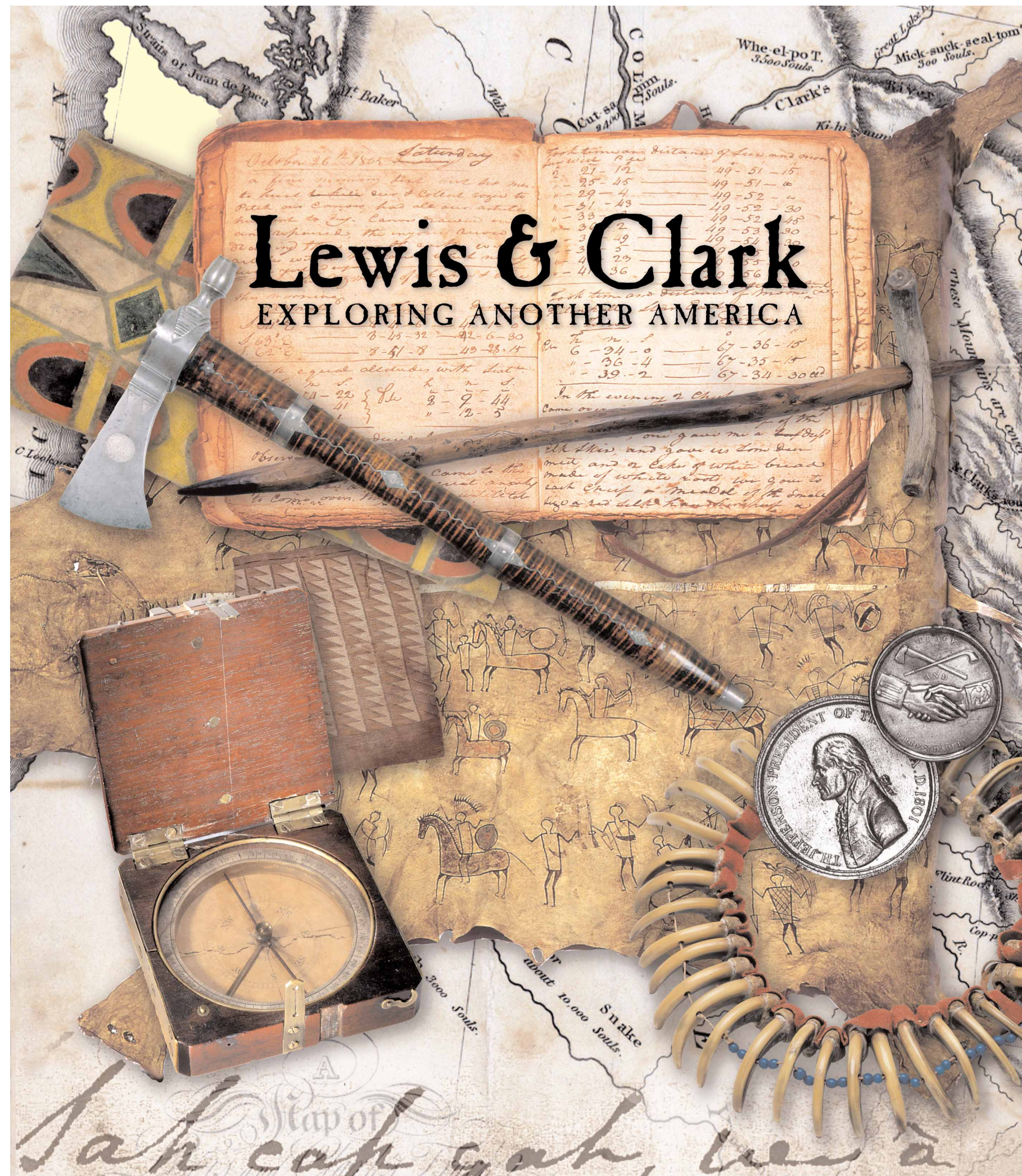
philosophic eye, of the first magnitude.— It may even be questioned if an overland conveyance by the route of the Columbia waters, be not ere long the readier way to supply the Missouri country, and the Western waters, with the teas, and manufactures of China, and the productions of the East India Islands.

But how mournful is the fore-thought, that whilst civilized man is carrying his views of enterprise and laudable industry into execution, he is tempted, and unless he be exceedingly watchful, irresistibly tempted to step aside, and with infinite baseness and cruelty, satiate his avarice by the destruction of the natives of those remote regions, where he might, if prudent, derive a sufficiency of wealth, by a fair and mutual beneficial commerce? The Spaniards have indecibly stigmatized their character by their horrible barbarities towards the poor ignorant and defenceless Mexicans, and the Americans have much to answer for, for similar atrocities. Instead of befriending the weak, and pitying the errors of the ignorant, they have seized upon their hunting grounds, and added hatred and insult, and persecution, and murderous war, to their injustice. Their cruelty hath done this, and their avarice and their lusts have added to the catalogue of wrongs. They have sold an insatiable poison, when they have laid by their sword, and have introduced the most dreadful disease, as if to annihilate a people certainly partaking of the lot of humanity, and capable, if their genius were cultivated, of all the civilization, which by the blessing of Divine Providence, and through the means of the christian religion, we have attained to. It is cause of rejoicing to the Philanthropist, that their cause is of late better understood, and that after the policy and example of the great William Penn, a different system has been begun by the magnanimous Washington, and happily has been continued by the present government.

It is therefore ardently hoped that with respect to the lately discovered and nume-

The news that the expedition had returned quickly spread around the nation. This Philadelphia publication put the story on its front page.

Read the article. The writer looks into the future of the West. What does he see?



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