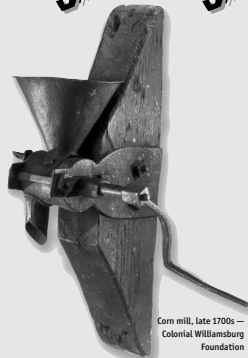


Corn Mill Mystery



Corn mill, late 1700s — Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

At the request of President Jefferson, Lewis took along several iron corn mills to trade with the Indians. The mill made the process of grinding corn much less tedious. Mandan women used mortars and pestles. On October 29, 1804, several members of the expedition wrote that Captain Lewis gave the Mandan chiefs one of the corn mills. Clark wrote that the mill was "very thankfully received." However, almost two years later, a fur trader passing through the Mandan villages wrote in his journal that he "saw the remains of an excellent large corn mill which the foolish fellows had demolished to barb their arrows."

What do you think happened?*

*ANSWER: Lewis and Clark presented the corn mill to the Mandan men. Because the men did not do the tiring labor of grinding corn, they didn't understand its value as a tool. They only saw the value of the materials it was made from, so they cut it up to use for weapons. Most likely, if Lewis and Clark had given the mill to the Mandan women, it would have been even more "thankfully received."

Women

As the days got shorter and the air became colder, the expedition decided to build a winter camp near the Mandan Indians north of present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. The men named it Fort Mandan after their neighbors. It was there they met a young Indian woman, Sacagawea, who joined the expedition.

During the expedition, Lewis and Clark came into contact with many Indian women, yet, their official business was conducted with men. They saw women working hard and noted in the journals that Indian women were treated like slaves. Mandan women did work hard, but they also had control over the fruits of their labors. If a man wanted to eat, he



This may be the only surviving portrait of an Indian woman Lewis and Clark met during the expedition. Historians have identified her as Yellow Corn, wife of Shehek-Shote, a Mandan chief. Her husband traveled to Washington, D.C. after the expedition, and she insisted on going along. This portrait was most likely drawn when she was in Washington.

Yellow Corn, c. 1807 by Charles B.J.F. de St.-Mémin — Collection of Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK

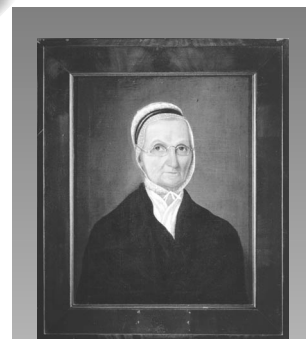
had to rely on women. When a man married, he moved into his wife's family's lodge. The couple's children were considered part of the wife's family. Lewis and Clark had their own expectations of a woman's role in society and failed to see that Indian women had sources of power in their society.

In some ways the Mandan women would have been shocked at the status of the women in Lewis and Clark's world back east. Virginia women could not vote, hold public office, make a contract, or sue in court. When a woman married, her property became her husband's. Her children belonged to their father's family and a divorced or widowed woman risked losing custody of her children.

This woman became important in William Clark's life. He married Julia Hancock, a Virginian, upon his return from the expedition. It is thought that he named the Judith River in Montana for her. Her family nickname was "Judy." She had just turned 16 when she married Clark, who was 22 years older. Unlike Mandan women, she was expected to move into her husband's home. In this case she would be 800 miles away from her family.



Julia Hancock Clark, c. 1810 by John Wesley Jarvis — Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis



Lucy Marks, c. 1830 by John Toole — Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis

This woman was important in Meriwether Lewis' life. She is his mother, Lucy Marks. She lived in Virginia and before he left on the expedition, Lewis wrote to her: "I go with the most perfect preconviction in my own mind of returning safe and hope therefore that you will not suffer yourself to indulge any anxiety for my safety." She was known for her knowledge of herbal medicines and taught her son about plants. And, according to family legend, she was "handy" with a shotgun — against both animals and invading British soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Lewis' father had died when Lewis was 8. Lewis was the oldest son and, by law, the heir to his father's estate. Young Meriwether's uncles on his father's side became his guardians.

Mapping

One of Lewis and Clark's main duties was to take accurate measurements of their location and of distances and directions they traveled. The goal was to create maps that would identify the best travel routes and locations for trade purposes. To Lewis and Clark, making maps was a matter of taking a lot of measurements. Indians drew maps differently. Their

maps showed how people interacted with the land. Distance was often measured by the challenge of getting through the landscape. If a particular stretch of river took a long time to navigate, then this was represented by its size on a map.

To identify their location, Lewis and Clark used sophisticated instruments and mathematical calculations to measure their location relative to the stars. European cartographers (people who draw maps) had invented a system for locating every point on earth by dividing the globe into a grid of imaginary lines. **Do you know what these lines are called?***

*ANSWER: Longitude lines go north and south, latitude lines go east and west.

