

32 Bonner History Roundtable: Captain Meriwether Lewis on the Blackfoot

Feb. 16, 2020: KettleHouse Taproom in Bonner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axi9iqXiYmY&t=1s>

Dan Hall, Norman Jacobson, and Kim Briggeman

(This program has been edited for clarity.)

(Intro music and credits)

[00:00:59] **Kim Briggeman:** Welcome everybody. I am hoping that we can fit everybody in here. It's great to see this sized crowd. I think we've got our technical difficulties, which we've had many today, pretty much ironed out, so we're going to get goin' here. My name is Kim Briggeman and I'm part of the Bonner Milltown History Center. And you are in the February version of our Roundtables that we've been havin' for maybe 13 years. 13, 14 years. Today's topic is "Captain Lewis on the Blackfoot." And I think we've got some fascinating things ahead of you. Before we start I want to give you a brief outline of what we're doing here.

[00:01:57] At any time that you need to get up and go get a beer, or go to the bathroom, whatever, men's bathroom is around the corner here. And we're going to try our best to keep some access to everything here. Because there will be other patrons coming in and out of the brewery. The women's bathroom is back around the other corner, which is near where we have coffee and cookies hooked up.

And I understand at some point the wood fired pizza truck is going to be in operation. So basically welcome to the KettleHouse Bonner Taproom. We're, giving this a whirl, our normal meeting place is at the Catholic Church in Bonner, down the street. For reasons that we'll all get into, we've decided to try this here. We, our inaugural event last year was in the taproom. The subject was "The Beers, Bootleggers and Breweries of Bonner." So this seemed like a natural location. "Captain Lewis on the Blackfoot," as we'll explain here, is basically right out the back window here, so it seemed like a fitting place to talk about that.

[00:03:30] We're appreciative of the KettleHouse opening up this place. We can, they said, do whatever you need to do to fit everybody in. It's a little over a year old now. I think it started in December of the year before. And it's been just a great addition to the Bonner community. And their latest is that they're gonna be trying to have live music here every Friday. They've already started that. When the weather warms up, they're gonna move it out on the patio and have music on the Blackfoot.

Briefly, because not everybody is aware of what we do, the Bonner Milltown History Center is located in the Post Office right down the street in Bonner. And we've been putting together these programs like I say, for, I don't know, 13, 14 years, every third Sunday of January, February, and March, usually.

[00:04:46] And this year we are going to - because we are of an aging population at the Center, which actually everybody's of an aging population, but we are wanting to expand our hours. Right now the History Center is open on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. As we get closer to summer we're looking at expanding our hours and also looking for volunteers who might be interested in helping us with these programs and manning the History Center. So as summer comes, we'll probably at least be open on Saturdays as well. So anybody that's interested in volunteering, I think there's a sign-up sheet in the back. Or talk to us. We'll have more details at the Roundtable next month. So that's an invitation to volunteer.

[00:05:52] Another thing I wanted to bring up briefly is we are partnering with the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula in their efforts to restore locomotive number seven which sat out here in the Bonner Park. Starred in the movie *Timberjack* in 1954-55. And they've undertaken a huge effort at the Fort Missoula museum to restore it and actually, perhaps to get it running again. And we are trying to help them with that. And doing that, we're planning on a showing of *Timberjack* here in Bonner, probably at the school this spring. We did this five years ago on the 50th anniversary, and had, I don't know, a gym full of people that showed up to watch the old movie.

[00:06:59] And you still can't get that theme song out of your head. We've got that coming up. It probably won't be until May, but keep an eye on that. We'll give you further details of that in the coming months and at next month's Roundtable.

Beyond that, the museum is planning showings of *Timberjack* in town. And I don't know the details of that yet, but these are all fundraisers to get this locomotive back in action. The man that's really spurred this effort for locomotive number seven, Larry Ingold, has accepted, or we're inviting him to do a special one of these Roundtables in the fall. And instead of the winter Roundtable, we'll have a fall Roundtable. And again, details are pending on that.

[00:08:03] One other, two other things, and we'll get going here. In the back, Milt Clark has a newly devised, or developed, or produced map of the all-time railroad map of Montana, 1880 to 2019. He's got it on display back there; if you get a chance take a look at it. He's selling them for only five dollars and they're the best maps that I've seen of the entire railroad network of Montana.

The last pitch here and then I'll shut up and sit down. The team that's - how many here have played baseball on Kelly Pine Field in Bonner? How many have memories of that? It's still in action. This was a ball field that was, the grandstands were built in 1937. It's named after a ball player there Kelly Pine, who was a worker at the mill, but played with only one hand, and he was an outstanding player, and when he was killed in a car wreck in 1935, they built the grandstand and they named it after Kelly Pine.

[00:09:30] We've just uncovered some unknown photos of Kelly Pine in his ball playing days, and they are now at the History Center if anybody wants to drop in. I mention this in part because there is an effort for the team that's playing there now that uses Kelly Pine. - the school, Bonner School is the owner of the field, and they are looking for donations to maintain the field. The school wants them to re-stain the grandstands and they want to work on access issues so they're allowed to host tournaments. It's the Missoula Aces 13U, 14U baseball team. Those guys are getting their Kelly Pine memories like a lot of us have today. Is Willie in the crowd?

[00:10:34] Before I bring on our star, Dan Hall, I wanted to - I talked to Willie Bateman, and he was going to try to make it. Willie just turned 91, I believe. And the weather kind of dictates whether he's going to make it or not. But he has, our theme today is basically Captain Lewis on the Blackfoot. But really, the Road to the Buffalo on the Blackfoot that Captain Lewis saw, or that he followed on July 4th of 1806 - Dan Hall will be getting into more of that, but the question always has been in my mind and a lot of others, I think, where that Road to the Buffalo that Captain Lewis followed went - here, with all these cliff faces.

[00:11:29] And I've tried to Google map it and I can't figure out where it could have gone because it was on the other side of the river. And Willie told me the story that he actually found a trail that went over these cliffs over here when he was in high school in 1948. He had his Lewis and Clark journals in hand, and he got curious about it, and his story was, and I wish he was here to tell it, because he tells it better than I do. There's a, at the far end of West Riverside, just down river here, there's what locals call Cowboy Trail. And Willie, back in 1948, walked a ways up Cowboy Trail, and then he found a road that has probably since been covered over logging operations and fire operations, that went, as I understand it, went up over this cliff, (points to cliff) and came down, he said, right at the end of where the railroad trestle used to cut across the Blackfoot, which is right out our window here.

[00:12:57] And it looks to me like the road that Meriwether Lewis followed through Bonner would have been coming down this draw. And it must, there's a big cliff face across from the Weigh Station fishing access. It must have, there must have been room for the Road to the Buffalo that the native tribes followed for millennia, to squeeze past that cliff face here, but they were up and above here. With that, I'll get somebody up here who knows what he's talking about. Dan Hall has been involved with, I've got to read my notes here, (puts on glasses) he's been involved with historic preservation and the study of Western history and prehistory for almost 25 years.

[00:13:55] He is the author of numerous reports on the history and prehistory of the Rocky Mountain West, the Columbia Plateau, and the Great Plains. He has supervised and conducted cultural resource surveys across an eight state region. Dan is the lead archaeologist, I think co-founder or founder of Western Cultural. And his knowledge of the Lewis and Clark story in western Montana is based, unlike a lot of ours, on science. And I think you'll find his talk fascinating. Dan is, to me, one of the more interesting guys I know. He should do a beer commercial. (laughter)

[00:14:46] He's also a Cubs fan, if you want to give him a hard time about that. With that, I'll get out of here, and Dan, you've got the floor. Oh, I should say that there will be a break time after Dan's presentation, roughly around 3 o'clock. And we will have another presentation after that, a short presentation by Norm Jacobson, who has traced the trail basically from, I'm going to say, East Missoula up to Clearwater Junction with the slide presentations. Dan.

Dan Hall: Thanks, Kim. (Applause)

It's nice to see a big crowd here today. I wasn't quite expecting this. For those of you who don't know me, I spent eight years down in Lolo working on Travelers' Rest. You may have heard me or seen me down there at some point in time. As a result of that, I've had the opportunity to work and study many places along the Trail.

And this opportunity came up in Alice Creek, and, of course, I jumped on it immediately. What we call the Blackfoot River, the Native Americans have a different name for it, and it depends upon what tribe you're

talking to, but this trail, this road that goes along the Blackfoot is quite old. It is quite ancient, and if you want to put it into a context think about the trails that converge on Travelers' Rest.

[00:16:47] There's a trail that goes to the south, the Nimiipuu, that connects to southern Idaho and the basin and range country of Utah. There's the Lolo Trail [that] heads out to the west to the Columbia River and to the coast. There are trails that connect to the north and to Canada. And then we've got this trail that connects out into Great Falls and the plains. So this is a really large swath of the North American continent. And the Native Americans knew this. Their command of the geography of the Pacific Northwest was pretty astounding.

[00:17:26] Our study focused on the Alice Creek area. If you've ever been up there, it's pretty amazing. We start with the prehistory of the area, which is extensive. There are prehistoric sites along the trail that are in excess of four or five thousand years old. There are things at the top of the pass that are associated with the Jesuit experience in Montana, which is really unusual if you think about it.

The Forest Service was in Alice Creek early, and then, of course, there's mining and settlement and everything else that occurred in Lincoln.

If you've not been to the top of the pass before, I would highly recommend that you do go. There's a trailhead here and you can hike up to the top of the pass. And when you're on the top of the pass, you have a really commanding view of the plains. You can see the Sun River. You can see Square Butte. You can see Great Falls. It really truly is an amazing hike. Lewis and Clark Pass up Cadotte Creek. I'll show you a map here in just a minute.

[00:18:55] There are visible trail tread that you can see in Alice Creek, that you can see in Landers Fork. There are rock cairns that are marking the trail. There are trees that have been peeled. The Native Americans were peeling the bark off to get to the sugars that were underneath. And all of these are concentrated in the Alice Creek drainage, which is truly amazing for a Native American trail in western Montana. And when we talk about culturally scarred trees, the Native Americans would take a tool and they would cut right along the base, and then they would pull that bark up, and it leaves a very distinct scar.

[00:19:44] So we began our study looking at what the Forest Service had been doing for years. For decades they have been, and archaeologists have been working up there. In addition to the archaeologists working up there, they had contracted with the Kootenai Tribal Historic Preservation Office. And so they had generated a tremendous amount of data.

They had sites, they had trail tread, they had all this. Our job was to come in and synthesize this. One of the first things that we wanted to look [at], what are the early maps showing us and how does that compare to what's on the ground: the trail tread, the prehistoric sites, the culturally scarred trees.

And what we've got here, this is the map that Clark prepared, obviously after he and Lewis had reunited. And this is just a small piece of the map. And we're coming up the Blackfoot here. There's Cottonwood, Monture Creek, the North Fork and into the Lincoln Valley.

But what we're seeing here is where Landers Fork hits, we're coming off of the river, crossing a small divide, and then into Alice Creek and up to the pass.

[00:20:00] This map may look familiar to some of you. This is a piece of the map that was prepared for Mullan's investigation into Montana, and again, what the cartographer has done is map in the Native American Trail, or the Indian Trail, And these are different names for it. But again, we're leaving Landers Fork, crossing the small divide into the Alice Creek drainage, and then up onto Lewis and Clark Pass.

But what these maps are showing us is, there's a strong correlation between what the early cartographers are showing for the location of the trail and what's on the ground. And that's really important because that helps bolster the argument. And this is one of my favorite places along the trail. The captains were so geographically descriptive in their journals. And every time I drive through the Ovando Valley, it is the Prairie of Knobs.

And so we began our investigation looking in the entire Blackfoot Valley, in the Lincoln area, into Landers Fork, and then on up into Alice Creek. And there, like I say, there is the trail tread, the culturally scarred trees, the prehistoric campsites. It's an amazing concentration of resources.

[00:22:55] And then once you're up on the top of the pass - again, I highly recommend the hike, it is truly an amazing thing to see. My first experience with Lewis and Clark Pass would have been elk hunting in] 1981. I've been a big fan of Lewis and Clark Pass ever since.

And so what I want to do is just talk a little bit about what we see on the ground. And again, so here we have in the Lincoln Valley, we have trail tread. We have rock cairns. We have prehistoric campsites. Up at the top of the

past, you can see travois marks in the soil which is, again, we don't see this concentration of all these resources in a small confined space like this.

[00:23:47] One of the questions that we have as archaeologists is how old? Who built these things? What were they built for? Rock cairns, stone features, all of these things are problematic because we don't know when they were built. We don't know who built them. We have an idea what they were for, obviously trail markers. But other than that archaeologists have been struggling with rock cairns and stone features for generations.

Years ago, geologists began asking the question, can we use plant life to date earthquakes and glaciers? And as it turns out, plant life can date these things. And as it turns out, the lichen is the plant that's of interest because it can be used to date these geological events.

So as archaeologists we steal techniques from anybody and everybody. And so we began to ask the question, can we use lichen dating to date these stone features? And there were archaeologists in California that pioneered this. Archaeologists in Wyoming have used this technique. It had not been tried in Montana before.

[00:23:23] What we did, we started with the Lincoln Cemetery. And we went and found Minnie Neal, and she had died in 1869. And we went to her grave and we were able to find specific genus of lichens. There are roughly 600 species of lichens that are known to man. There are a dozen that we can calibrate growth rate for.

So we know when Minnie passed away. We can go in there and we have to identify genus species of the lichens. But we're able to do that and then we're able to establish a growth rate.

[00:26:04] There are three lichens that we're able to positively identify. I had to bring a botanist with me. It's an incredibly complex process to identify lichens down to genus species. You have to have a microscope, different chemical solutions. There's a whole series of tests that you have to do, but you have to get it down to genus species.

And these are the three that we were able to identify in the cemetery. And then off we went through the Blackfoot to try and identify these stone features.

Now the current thought is, as people pass along on the trail, they'll add a stone, maybe two stones, to mark their passing as they've gone through. And again, it's really hard to say, but there are, off the top of my head I can't recall exactly how many there are here in the upper Blackfoot Valley. We did the lichen study on all of, whatever we could find, and some really interesting dates kicked out. And so now for the first time, we're able to put these stone features into a framework.

[00:27:32] If we think how these cairns are constructed, a stone at a time, all we're doing is just dating the top. The stones that are at the bottom are considerably older. And so when you see that date of 1767, 1743, that's just the lichens that are growing on the top, and that doesn't tell us how old the bottom is, but still, at least for the first time, now we're talking about who built these.

At the top of the pass, there are these stone circles. The tribal elders inform us this is what they call Indian Fort Pass. And the Salish would come and they would stop at the bottom of the pass, and they would hike up to the top, and you can see forever and a day. And if they saw anybody they didn't want to meet, they would come back down and wait. And then the next day they would come back up, get into these stone features, and sit and look and wait. And then as soon as the path was clear, off to the buffalo grounds they would go.

[00:28:47] And so we did a lichen study on the stone forts. And these kicked out 650 some years ago. The botanist that I had with me is telling me there had been a fire up here and it had killed all the plant life. And so he did some tree ring dating, looked at other tree ring studies that the Forest Service had, and there was a fire up there 640, 650 years ago.

I have every reason to believe that these are significantly older than that date that we're seeing. But there's some really eye popping things that are up there.

[00:29:34] And to the Jesuit experience. I had seen this Celtic Cross 20, 25 years ago and I had no idea what I was looking at. Sarah Scott was the Helena National Forest archaeologist who made the connection. And I think she really did some truly outstanding sleuthing there to figure this out.

Father (Nicolas) Point was in Stevensville at the mission and in 1842 he wrote in his journals about what coming west, or excuse me, going east with the Salish to go hunt buffalo. And he wrote in his journals that when he was at the top of the pass, he constructed a cross and celebrated mass. Now we don't know exactly what he built. And so we did the lichen analysis. We found the proper specimens we were looking for. The dates kick out at 1847, plus or minus 10 years. So I think Sarah Scott's interpretation of what has been found up there is probably spot on.

[00:30:54] And again, the Forest Service had been in Alice Creek for quite some time. Obviously on horseback heading in what is now the Bob riding horses on the trails that we see. They obviously constructed some of these stone cairns we're looking at. They blazed the trees. But if you think back to that picture, the blazes were completely different than what the Native Americans were doing.

So again, for the first time, now we're able to put this into context. We're able to separate out that Euro-American experience from the Native American experience. And that really helps tell the story of what we're seeing along the trail.

[00:31:39] All right, so now I want to back up a little bit and talk about why Lewis and his nine men and the 17 ponies came through here in 1806. And the story backs up to Thomas Jefferson and Gallatin and Dearborn and the conversations they had in Jefferson's library. They talked about the geography of the West. They talked about the presence of the British. The British, they had been into the Columbia River. They're building fur trade posts in McKenzie River. The presence of the British in the Pacific Northwest is weighing heavily on Thomas Jefferson.

[00:32:38] So as the Corps of Discovery is coming upstream, they get to the Marias River and they can't figure out which is which. They stop, reconnoiter for a few days. They figure it out, and they continue on to Three Forks, and the Travelers' Rest, and eventually out to the coast. It is that Fort Clatsop winter where the captains start to assimilate all the knowledge that they acquired, what they learned from the Indians, and what they recorded themselves.

And then they produced a map. John Logan Allen is a cartographer and a historian. He's one of my favorites. And he tells us that this map that the captains produced that winter is the single greatest contribution from the expedition, because for the first time, the two coasts of the North American continent are tied together. This had never been done before.

[00:33:38] The captains then, they're faced with the task, getting home. They still have to figure out the most direct and practical route. Those were the instructions from Jefferson. But the other thing is the British. And I was fortunate. In my studies, I was able to spend a lot of time with Stephen Ambrose and he was very generous with his time.

He never laughed at my silly questions. And we talked about this decision to part company at Travelers' Rest. And if you read *Undaunted Courage*, you'll see Ambrose is, he's the biggest rah rah cheerleader for the expedition you'll ever meet. But here he's quite critical. The captains have split their military command and this is something you don't do in the field. And Ambrose kept hammering on this point repeatedly, over and over again. You don't do this. Don't do this.

[00:34:42] But there has to be an overriding reason why they split. So obviously the exploration of the Yellowstone is important but the Marias, we have to return to the Marias and if you think about what they had thought about in that Fort Clatsop winter, the Marias and the Great Falls and the Missouri are essentially the same size river.

That's what they encountered anyway. And so it logically felt that the river basin from the Marias to the headwaters would be the same size as the Marias. The Louisiana Purchase included those tributaries on the north side of the Missouri River. So this is the check on the British that Thomas Jefferson was looking for.

[00:35:35] And so they part at Travelers' Rest. Lewis and his men come through here. Like Kim says right down the hill here, up the Blackfoot, on up where the Continental Divide. They get to the Marias and for two days they're socked in by weather. They can't take any celestial observations. They can't put their location on a map. Eventually they figure out they're nowhere near 50th parallel. And so they're pressed for time. They know that they have a complicated reunion party that's going to occur at various points along the river. And so they leave. But, and Ambrose is real clear on this, Camp Disappointment, and that tells you pretty much everything you need to know about the Marias River.

Unidentified speaker: What's the river in the middle? The one that's coming down from

Dan Hall: The Milk?

Unidentified speaker: No, down below.

Dan Hall: This one here? That's the Musselshell.

[00:35:51] Some of you may have seen this map before. This is another inset of the previous map I showed you up on the pass. From Mullan's Expedition, and this is to orient you, now we're talking about the trail here in Bonner, coming through the canyon. We're here. There's Traveler's Rest, Missoula, the confluence of the Bitterroot and the Clark Fork, the Clark Fork River, the Blackfoot, and the Indian Trail.

Unfortunately at this scale, all we know from this early map is it's on the north side of the river. We don't know - really we can't say anything more than that.

Martin Plamondon is one of my favorite cartographers. You may have seen his work. And what Plamondon did was, there are geographic tidbits that are in the journals where they describe the country that they're passing through and he'll drop them onto the map. So for here, for example, right at the confluence of the Blackfoot and the Clark Fork he talks about a handsome plain that they traveled through.

[00:38:15] The other thing that Plamondon has done that really helps us is these symbols that he's dropped everywhere. And these are the courses and distances that the captains recorded as they're traveling along. And so we know they were here and they recorded to (unclear) a distance and bearing they were here and they recorded one. They tell us the road is on the north side of the river.

Back to Stephen Ambrose. He was quite colorful. His description of the road from here up to Lincoln was it was a well-marked, easily identifiable trail. In fact, it was so well marked that even a white man could find it. And I've looked at the journals and I have no idea where he came up with that, but that's Stephen Ambrose.

[00:39:11] So in closing, when we were working in Lincoln on the trail everyone had told us that we needed to stop and see this gentleman that worked for the Montana Department of Transportation and they said he knows the Lincoln Valley. He knows the roads. He knows the trails. He's been out there. He was born here in Lincoln. And so we knocked on the door and introduced ourselves. Turns out he actually was retiring and the next day he was leaving for Great Falls. He took us out and showed us the trails, showed us trail treads, showed us all these features and he knew it. He'd lived it, he'd found it, he'd walked it. And the purpose of sharing this is to what Kim was saying earlier; there are people here in this community that know it. They've walked it; they know where the trail is. I'm by no means the expert here in Bonner, but there are people here in the community who are, and we need to find them and get their stories. Are there any questions?

[00:40:22] **Ken Peers:** I'm one of those people. I'm Ken Peers. I live at the end of Zaugg Drive and Arne Zaugg owned all the land up against the mountain, all the way pretty much to Mount Jumbo at one time. And he delivered milk to us. So I'm one of the few people that probably still remembers him. But he would talk with my dad for hours, and he would tell about the Indians coming through and they would actually set up their camp right where my house is today. There's a patch of trees there and that's where the Indians liked to camp, I'm sure, after a long trip coming over the mountains.

[00:40:27] And, to get back to what Willie had told us earlier, or he had left with Kim, there's a trail that went up the mountain, which was Cowboy Trail. And it goes back into Cowboy Creek and if you go back almost to the, where it gets the steepest part you can pretty much come flat across the top here and you'll come right down to here. So it's really the most logical place that they could possibly cross that mountain because this was sheer rock here, there's no way they could get around it. So I've walked all of that through my entire life, so it's quite familiar to me where I've lived here so long. So that's kind of my story. (applause).

[00:42:22] **Mike Kustudia:** Do I really need one? (microphone) I've got a big voice. Hi everybody, my name is Mike Kustudia and I'm the manager of Milltown State Park for Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Everything you're looking at across the river here is part of Milltown State Park today. Several years back, I had an AmeriCorps member doing some research on the Buffalo Road and Lewis and everything, and Lewis was quite the botanist as well. And he collected, for at least Euro-Americans, the first specimen of monkey flowers.

If you know monkey flowers, they're a yellow flower that grows in a seep. And there wasn't in the journals, but there was some documentation that it was from somewhere just above the confluence of the Clark Fork, which was the East Fork, I think in those days. But above the Clark Fork and the Blackfoot. And this was in July. And he told me that, and I'm like, "I bet I know where that is." And if you look directly across the river where that draw comes down, there's a seep there that is full of monkey flowers in July. And so I would guess, you can't definitively say that's the spot, but boy, it sure seems like a possibility

[00:43:28] **Kim Briggeman:** Traveling mic. Who wants to comment or question? You got to grill Dan on something here.

Scott Sproull: Is there more to the talk or is this question time?

Kim Briggeman: This is question and answer time. We'll follow this with a brief break and then Norm Jacobson will come on.

Scott Sproull: Dan, I think it would help the group to clarify - you said they're trying to check the British in Canada, and at Camp Disappointment they were disappointed, but you need to go a little further and say why they were disappointed. What was the disappointment?

[00:41:15] **Dan Hall:** The Marias was not the answer. When they encountered the Marias and the Great Falls, or, excuse me, the Missouri, the two streams were identical in size. And this really confused them, threw them for a loop. They spent several days reconnoitering, trying to answer this question. And so as the previous image had shown, when you think about the geographical extent, it took them 53 days to go from the Marias into the Bitterroot River. That's a really large river basin. To them, during the Clatsop winter, it made sense that the river basin from the Marias would be equally as large and would extend north, further north than anybody had previously known. It would go beyond the settled 50th parallel. And so this was going to be the answer to check, to keep the British out. And again, the mouth of the Columbia is known. The British have sailed up it. They're producing charts of the bathymetry of the sound. They're exploring it. Hudson's Bay Company is coming down. They're in the McKenzie River. They've been in Montana. This is something that Thomas Jefferson and Gallatin and Dearborn talked about extensively. How do we keep the British out of the Pacific Northwest?

[00:45:41] **Scott Sproull:** Yeah, and to go one step further, so they're hoping the Marias will go much further into Canada since the Louisiana Purchase includes everything that drains into the Missouri. If the Marias goes a lot further into Canada, they can claim that the southern part of Canada is part of the United States. And Lewis can tell from Camp Disappointment that the Marias goes towards Glacier Park and no further up. And he's extremely disappointed and so the United States northern border is not gonna go to the 50th parallel or the 51st or 2nd, it's gonna stay much further south than they hoped for.

Kim Briggeman: I have a question. One of the quests of Lewis and Clark was the Northwest Passage, and we have a lot of people who have studied this and why wouldn't the Marias end up being considered the Northwest Passage since it's a fairly easy drop down into the Flathead Basin?

[00:46:58] **Dan Hall:** In order to address that question, you have to go back to the concept of the Northwest Passage. And ever since Euro-Americans arrived on the North American continent, they were looking for a way to get across, get around. There was no business here. They wanted to get to the Orient. That's what drove the search for the Northwest Passage. The Mandan Village is known. It's plotted on the maps. Its lat-long is almost similar. It's within a couple of degrees of the mouth of the Columbia. And the prevailing wisdom of some of the leading intellectuals on the eastern seaboard is: you have these two mighty rivers that are essentially the same position and you could just follow them upstream. And then when you get to the headwaters, you're going to have a small height of land that you cross, and then you get into a canoe and you head downstream. And this is going to be the most practical route across the North American continent. But it turns out Montana geography is a little more complex than that.

[00:48:13] **Pat McDonald:** A few years ago we took a canoe trip down the Missouri and we went to where the Marias and the Missouri come together and our guide took us up onto this bluff that sits right there overlooking the confluence of those two rivers. And we like to think that's where Lewis and Clark stood many years before. And he explained it that even though at the time of the year we were there, which was later in the summer, the river flows were down, the volumes were down, and there was a very distinct difference between the volume in the Missouri versus the Marias. But when Lewis and Clark came up there, I believe they were coming, as our guide explained, they were coming through in the spring of the year when the flooding was heavy, and so there was so much flooding and so much water that they couldn't easily discern the sizes of the rivers until they progressed way up them. My two cents worth.

[00:49:31] **Dan Hall:** No, that, that's correct. There had been a freak flood rainstorm in the headwaters of Marias in the Swiftcurrent area. And so that flash flood is what made that huge flow of water coming down the Marias and what confused them. And it was just a, one of those. We've all seen them here in Montana. Bannock got one a couple of years ago. I've been to that place where you're talking about. I'm convinced there's an archeological site there. And if you think about the journals, when they were there, they dug up the cache they had left, but it had gotten wet. And so they took all that stuff and they just put it back in the hole in the ground and left. And so for years, I've been thinking, how cool would that be? I bet you we could find that.

Unidentified speaker: I'll go.

[00:50:28] **Scott Sproull:** I'm going to add an interesting comment about Lewis and Clark Pass. The Mandan Indians and the Hidatsa actually told the expedition of Lewis and Clark that pass existed and it would be the quickest way to get there. through the Rockies and to Travelers' Rest. And in fact when Lewis comes through here it takes him five-six days at the most to get back to Great Falls. It took over 50 days to go from Great Falls to Helena to Three Forks to Dillon into the Bitterroot. So it was a nice shortcut. One of the problems was the Shoshone and the horses were much further to the south, and the expedition needed horses. They had Sacagawea with them, and they thought she could be helpful in getting those horses, and they ended up getting a guide, Toby. So if they had gone over Lewis and Clark Pass from Great Falls, they probably wouldn't have found horses until they got into Idaho with the Nez Perce, and that could have ended the expedition. So it was

good that they didn't go through the pass going west. And it was a major, it was definitely a shortcut that Lewis wanted to check out on the way back.

Dan Hall: There are two points there that you've raised that are really good points. The first one is the horse and how important that was to the expedition and being able to make the terrain and the country that they did.

[00:51:57] And the second point you hit on is one that I've touched on everywhere I go. And that's the Native American knowledge. To them, this is not discovery. They know this. This is their country. They've known it for millennia. As I talked earlier about, when you think about those trails, and what they connect, they know this. To the society and culture that existed on the eastern seaboard, this is discovery. They are the Corps of Discovery. To the people who are here, it's not. The knowledge that the Native Americans have is here. Way, way more extensive than what the leading intellectuals on the Eastern Seaboard had.

[00:52:40] **Sally Thompson:** I have a question about the lichen work. Does the amount of moisture in the air or the aridity influence the dates? And also, what about subsequent fires, not the one from long ago, but the series of fires that would affect them through the years? Does that change the dates at all?

Dan Hall: No. That's a really good question. There are a host of environmental factors that control how, or the growth rate of lichens. And exposure to wind, exposure to sun, snow cover, moisture is one and that's why we gathered the data at the Lincoln Cemetery. If we had come to, say Miles City and collected data, that data would not transpose up to Lincoln Valley. And that's the reason why we had to have it so close to the source. And that is one of the limiting factors of the lichen analysis.

[00:53:41] **Sally Thompson:** The top of the pass is a lot more arid than down in Lincoln.

Dan Hall: It is, but when you're talking about an organism that's growing a millimeter per 20 years, 30 years, the effect that has is not really that large. And that's not true for all species. And this is the problem that you have. Why you have to get genus species in your identification. Why that's so important. Because there are some lichens that moisture does affect growth more than others. But these three that we found, it wasn't a limiting factor.

Unidentified speaker: Did you study any bright orange lichen?

Dan Hall: Yes. And again, I'm not a botanist. I just steal their work. My understanding is that the orange lichen that we see here in western Montana does not have an established growth rate. There are too many environmental factors that influence how fast or how slow it grows. And so we can't use that as a dating tool.

Unidentified speaker: There's a lot more orange lichen in the eastern part of the state than there are in the northern part.

[00:55:04] **Dan Hall:** And again, there's 600 known species in the world, and there's only 10 or 12 that we can use as a tool. We're lucky we have that.

Unidentified speaker: I'd just like to point out that there's another explorer that is a lot of fun to read about in a book called *Sources of the River*. And that's David Thompson who did it up in Canada. And Lewis and Clark, we think, did an amazing job. They did. But it took them three years, four years. And they made one trip and lost one man.

David Thompson went back and forth across this continent, I don't know how many times, but at least four, and never lost a man. Oh, he came close once. Very close. But anyway, it's a fascinating book, *Sources of the River*, and there's several others. I found that just as fascinating as reading about Lewis and Clark. I think they're both just incredible.

[00:56:15] **Dan Hall:** To expand on that a little bit, I'd mentioned John Logan Allen earlier, who's a cartographer turned historian, Or a geographer turned historian, and his book, *Passage Through the Garden* is a fascinating read, and he talks about what you had just spoken of, and the history of really the Euro-American experience on the North American continent is exploration. It's the journey, whether it's the Spanish Conquistadors coming north, whether it's Lewis and Clark, whether it's Thompson, what Logan is talking about in the *Passage through the Garden* is that journey and that journey is the shared American experience. And you're absolutely right. Thompson is an amazing character.

[00:57:01] **Kim Briggeman:** Anybody else? I would like to make the point we can't stress enough that the route that Captain Lewis was following on that one day in 1806, the 4th of July of 1806, was basically a superhighway for thousands and thousands, hundreds and hundreds, at least, years, Sally, you probably know better than I do, of the natives and not just one tribe but many tribes. And it was only one Road to the Buffalo from the west of the mountains to the east.

And so he benefited, basically. He didn't have to find his way. It was a well-marked path. It was the Nez Perce guides that left him down at Grant Creek that day, that morning, were not willing to go up here because they thought that they would be attacked by the Pahkees (enemy). But they knew what was coming to Captain Lewis. And so the fact that there was no incident, at least until they got up to the Two Medicine, was pure luck, I think. Maybe you guys would agree with that. We're going to take a short break, bathroom, beer, whatever, and in about ten minutes, then we'll resume with Norm Jacobson's presentation. So thank you, Dan. (Applause)

[00:58:51] We're still working on the projector. I have supreme confidence that it's going to come through. It's the same one we just used. Near the back of the brewery, we've got the book on.. Powell Swanser, who's a local artist, has written a book about his relative John Coulter who was on the Lewis and Clark expedition, of course. John Coulter. Powell is a relative, a distant relative of Mr. Coulter. And so he has written *John Coulter, Young Patriot*. Probably 2015, 2016 is when it came out. I think somewhere in that area. And they are on sale back there. There's a lot of good historic material in here. I've read most of it, at least part of it. And it might be a worthwhile thing to look up. Again, *John Coulter, Young Patriot*.

[01:00:22] Without stealing some of Norm's thunder. There's not much thunder today. Actually, it's a lot better than I thought it would be outside, too. The route, the early route that Meriwether Lewis and his nine men took after they left what was, what became Hellgate Trading Post out west of town, is where they camped on the night of July 3rd and 4th.

The route they took went through Missoula, basically. There's some disagreement whether it followed Front Street, but it stayed then on the north side of the Blackfoot for the rest of its route, essentially. And where you see up the Blackfoot the old Big Blackfoot Railroad, that's roughly the Road to the Buffalo, all the way up to Ovando, essentially.

[01:01:41] And so some of the geographic points that may come up that maybe not everybody's aware of, we, beyond Cowboy Trail, which is up over here, the first drainage up is Johnson Creek, and then we go on up to Twin Creek, which Lewis, in Lewis's journals, he mentions both creeks that are so close together thereby at Twin Creek. On up, it did not cross over to go through the Potomac Valley. It followed on the north side around into Nine Mile Prairie, across past Ovando. It didn't go as far as Ovando. It did not stop at Trixie's. (laughter) I guess Jim Habeck is gone. And on up then essentially along Highway 200 to Lincoln, although, and Norm'll be able to tell us more of this and a couple other people that I know have studied it.

[01:02:52] And it did leave the valley to get over the mountains and then come down into Lincoln, the Lincoln Valley. And I'm saying that like I know what I'm talkin' about, but that's my understanding and I'm sure there are people here that have a better understanding about it than I do, but just some of the geographic points that may come up.

Norm is a photographer and he has documented a lot of history, not just on the Lewis and Clark Trail, but he's taken me on trips to show where David Thompson, for instance, came in the Mission Valley and dropped into the Missoula Valley for one February day. And there's some discussion among people who are here, in fact, about where David Thompson in 1812 observed the Missoula Valley just six years after Meriwether Lewis had been there.

[01:03:59] **Norman Jacobson:** I need someone that knows something about a computer.

Kim Briggeman: Do we have anybody young enough that knows about computers? (laughter, audience chatter) We have been technologically bedeviled all day. We didn't have power to hook up the sound equipment and the video equipment until too close to show time. Oh, this is a better storyteller than I. Sally Thompson.

Sally Thompson: How many of you have heard of she-she-quois? Okay, so the trail fanatics, raise their hands. When Lewis got past the top of Lewis and Clark Pass then he has these very clear specific directions that he must have gotten from the Nez Perce who were going to come with him telling him how many creeks he was going to cross before he saw she-she-quois. I'm not going to tell you anymore.

Okay, so who's going to guess if you cross seven small creeks on the other side of Lewis and Clark Pass what feature of the landscape is going to catch your eye enough that you're going to go, "there it is." (audience guesses)

[01:05:31] No. Good guesses. No, it's going to be to the north, right along close to the Front, Haystack and the word she-she-quois, does anyone know what it means?

Unidentified speaker: A board or a rattle?

Sally Thompson: It means 'rattle' in old French. And the Blackfeet call it The Rattle Hills and people have always thought that was 'cause of rattlesnakes around that area. But it's because that's where they collected their small stones for the rattles for the Crazy Dog Society. (applause)

Kim Briggeman: East. That (unclear) right out of Augusta, right between the mountains in Augusta. I think it's showtime. (computer is working)

Norman Jacobson is a retired educator and has been for years. Many of you know him as a volunteer and a guide at the Travelers' Rest out at Lolo. Lewis and Clark aficionado like a lot of us. And he's done a lot of documenting on the Lewis and Clark Trail. And do you want to do it from here, Norman?

[01:05:51] **Norman Jacobson:** Okay. I have taken a number of slides, but I've also used some slides from others. And this is one of them. This is one of the first sketches of Travelers' Rest. And, let's see, Travelers' Rest sits right about in that area. This was sketched by Gustav Sohan. (Describes slides)

This is a picture of Travelers' Rest more or less at the moment. This is where we are now. This is all asphalted and the bridge right here goes here. The thing that proved that this was the place that Lewis and Clark stayed was right here because that's where the latrine is located. And a couple of the men had contracted venereal disease, and they were treating it with mercury. And so they found mercury at that latrine right in that area.

(new slide) Okay. They didn't get out started very early. What they did, or what we think they did, is went up over Hayes Creek. And Hayes Creek is right here and it goes out onto the flat. [new slide] Then it came down, and this is the Bitterroot here, the Clark Fork coming in here. And they didn't want to cross the Bitterroot without, they'd have to cross the Clark Fork too. So they went down, they went down past the confluence and crossed right about somewhere in that area there.

[01:09:07] (new slide) And the interesting thing about it, Clark just about drowned in Great Falls, and Sacagawea rescued him while the rest ran for cover, ran for the shore. . So they really didn't like water, neither one. And Lewis didn't know how to swim, I guess. So one of the last, the last group to raft across the river at the Confluence there was Lewis and he went into the river here. And on his map it shows that he came out down here. So he did record the mishap, and I'll talk a little bit more about this.

[01:09:55] (new slide) This is one of the early sketches of Hellgate Canyon. And it probably looked a little bit like this. I think Stanley is the one that drew that one. (new slide) And then, as we come into East Missoula the highway, or the Road to the Buffalo was really, they think, on Speedway because Speedway would come around in here and down, and you don't see Brickyard Hill there. They haven't made the highway. And then the road comes down through here and goes up into Lerch's property. (new slide) And then it comes back up along this ridge right here. There the river was right next to the cliffs, so it wasn't something that they could cross easily.

(new slide) Let's see. Yeah. Okay, then so this is the route. There's the turnoff for Lerch's place right there. And then the trail followed right along the top and went up. This is Czorny's place. And the turnoff for Czorny's is right here, but the trail crosses right in this area right here, about a couple hundred yards from the Czorny's. And then yet follows the creek down and actually goes through probably Kim's playground or his house. So, he grew up there.

[01:11:44] (new slide) And then it goes on out down here. And then they came down. I learned a lot about my speech today listening to all of you because there's some new changes, or I have new ideas. But this, you might recognize that place right there because that's the (River City) Grill that we have. And the Grill was constructed quite early. There isn't much of West Riverside in that area.

(new slide) Then one of the things the trail followed from Marshall Grade down through West Riverside and came up through here and I really had problems trying to figure out how he went along here.

[01:12:44] (new slide) Let's see, I think I can show you in the next slide. Because this is one of the early sketches we have of the canyon, and when you look right here, how are you going to get a trail through there? And I think going up over the ridge is probably a pretty good idea.

(new slide) Then since we're out here at the brewery, I thought I'd throw in a couple photographs. Gary Matson gave me a couple airplane trips and I took a picture of the brewery here (new slide) and the next one is pretty close here.

(new slide) Anyway, then they proceeded up the canyon. Then, as they proceeded up the canyon they went past Blue Falls[Slide]. And then, this for a while was considered maybe the place that they stayed overnight, but it might be across the road. So there is some debate as to where they spent the night. (new slide) But they did spend the night there, the 3rd, and then the next day they started up following the trail.

[01:14:07] And like they said earlier, the trail was so well used that you couldn't miss it. And the Indians said, don't. When they left Lewis there near Gold Creek, or near Grant Creek, they said you'll follow the trail, because it's easy. And what they did here is the trail at the turnoff, (new slide) followed this ridge up through the top, and right now, Anaconda Company has worked it over so bad that the trail, you just can't follow it. (new slide) But, you get up to the top here, and where the power line crosses the ridge right there, the trail came up through here, and then from there it follows along through, and this hasn't been logged over very much.

[01:15:11(new slide)] And what they found, Ron Cox, if some of you may know him from Seeley Lake has looked at this area right here. And this tree, and that is the tree that he figures started growing in the trail when they started using the road near the river. (new slide) And so he bore sampled it, and when he compares the age that he bore sampled it (new slide) and the time that they built the road and the railroad through there, it correlates very closely. So that's a pretty good, I think, confirmation that that was the trail.

[01:16:07] (new slide) Then, if we get up here, this is the Clearwater Junction right here. And then Lewis came up through that area (new slide) and then this is, as you go into the canyon after you leave Clearwater Junction, which is a couple miles. And, what is interesting here, is that they probably crossed right there, or it possibly could be right in here, but, you'll notice how little water that's through there and here, and so this is probably why Lewis was ready to cross. Yes.

Unidentified speaker: Were they on the north side of the river?

Norman Jacobson: They followed the north side, yes. All the way. Because they really didn't like crossing, getting into the water. Yes. And that is pretty much my section. (new slide) I did throw in a little bit on Alice Creek because I do have the one last slide here which Dan showed, and you can see the cross right in here.

[01:17:31] **Kim Briggeman:** I think some of those photos, especially last ones, were taken during the Bicentennial and the reenactors, what are they called?

Norman Jacobson: Oh, this one here was on a special field trip that I was involved with. That was a field trip that I helped conduct earlier.

[01:18:04] **Unidentified speaker:** Is that cross that is in the picture there protected in some way to prevent vandalism?

Norman Jacobson: No, it isn't protected. What's interesting is that it's being covered up by erosion or deposition, all of the sediments are coming down off the hill and covering up the rocks, but it's not protected, or it wasn't.

Bruce Mihelish: Norm, how many times did they cross the river? You're suggesting right there past Clearwater, they crossed the river?

Norman Jacobson: They actually they crossed first just past Clearwater Junction, and then they went up. Probably, maybe a half a mile and crossed back over so that they could go up toward Seaman Creek. Yes. Okay, I guess that's it.

[01:19:03] **Kim Briggeman:** I have one totally non sequitur. Could you go back a couple of slides here to the Sperry grade? Right there. This has nothing to do with Lewis and Clark, but I'm also a *River Runs Through It* fan, which maybe everybody is. We have tracked with John Maclean and some others where the fishing holes were in what is truly a novella. So it's maybe not true, but there was one memorable fishing scene where Old Rawhide and Neil were found on the beach, drunk, with no clothes on, etc., badly sunburned. And the speculation is that it was probably at the campground on Sperry Grade. There's a sandbar, gravel bar there that seems to match up with the descriptions in this work of fiction. So that was the second of three scenes in the *River Runs Through It*, the fishing scenes on the Blackfoot.

[01:20:21] **Unidentified speaker:** So, they crossed the river and went on the south side of the river at that point?

Norman Jacobson: No, they crossed right here in this area right here and they did go on the south side.

Unidentified speaker: And did they follow the south side?

Norman Jacobson: Then, no, they just went up - actually, they went up around the corner and crossed back over.

Unidentified speaker: They didn't want to go up Sperry Grade.

Norman Jacobson: No. That's what I'm talking about. They crossed back over and then they followed up through the Valley of the Humps, or the mounds.

[01:20:03] **Bob Pfister:** We moved to Rainbow Bend 31 years ago. And we always wondered because we've got the book *Missoula The Way It Was*. And it has some excerpts from the Lewis and Clark journals in there. And it said eight miles. They went eight miles from the confluence and Rainbow Bend is eight and a half miles. And they said in there that they spent their most delightful evening because you remember that when they camped out on Mullan Road the mosquitoes were so bad they had to build the smudge fires for smoke. And they said they got up there and they found this place by the river, and it had a nice area for the horses to graze, and we started checking with some of the people dealing with the records and everything else, and they said that eight miles is a plus or minus thing, but Hidden Valley is right across from the K. Ross Toole Fishing Access site now and I can't think of a prettier place for them to camp and they said they had the most delightful night camping there because there were no mosquitoes and our experience living a half mile from there for 30 some years is we count the mosquitos on one hand that we see in the summer. Which is pretty neat. Can you tell us a little bit about how long a hike is it into the Alice Creek? I'm interested in going there.

[01:22:50] **Norman Jacobson:** I don't. It's probably - a person could do it easily within an hour. It's a little over half a mile, I think. It's not a very, and actually, when I went in there the first time, I could see why the Indians chose that ridge, or that route, rather than the way the highway went. Because it's easily followed. Yes. And there's a turnaround to park your car, too.

Kim Briggeman: I think it's probably a seven mile, roughly, drive from Highway 200 up the Alice Creek, the West side of Alice Creek. And since the bicentennial, they developed the trail head up there so there's vault toilets. Is it Forest Service? So it's well marked and there's actually interpretive signs, at least one or two along the road up to the trailhead where the trail came over the top from Landers Fork, et cetera.

Lewis and Clark Pass is, so Highway 200 goes over Rogers Pass. Probably a mile or two north of that is Cadotte Pass or Cadotte Pass. And then another maybe, I don't know, three miles, three or four miles along the Continental Divide Trail is Lewis and Clark Pass. Both of them, both Cadotte and Lewis and Clark are wide open passes that they're great hiking there.

So we have reached our four o'clock limit. I think we turn into pumpkins or go home. But man, what a turnout. I counted 90 people and I'd like to just really thank KettleHouse for opening this place up for us, and hopefully we can start (applause) [01:25:00]

(outro music and credits)