I. Native Lands

On June 20, 1803 the President of the United States wrote to Meriwether Lewis, Captain of the 1st Army regiment of the new republic providing him with instructions for the transcontinental journey upon which he was about to depart. Jefferson’s primary intention for the Corps of Northwest Discovery was searching out the “most direct and practicable water communication across the continent.” Yet his curiosity about and studied interest in the native people and their lands in the West was no less significant. In his instructions to Meriwether Lewis, Jefferson urged Lewis to “make yourself acquainted” with the lands and the way of life of the many tribal people that were known to live throughout the West.

During the late eighteenth century and very early nineteenth centuries, Spain and France and lastly the United States had claimed ownership of these lands, yet they knew almost nothing about their vast interior. The true lords of the land had lived and roamed across their spaciousness for millennia, becoming intimately familiar with the plants, the animals, and the features of their world. Even without Jefferson’s instructions, it would have been apparent to the members of the Expedition that they would need to listen to and to learn from the people along the route of their journey. As they recruited soldiers and engaged civilians for the passage, Lewis and Clark valued highly those who could speak Shawnee and Sioux, Mandan and Shoshone. And through the twenty-eight-month trek, the men of the expedition were frequently engaged with these original inhabitants, regularly relied upon their knowledge of the land, and were occasionally astounded by the number of curious Indians who “made themselves acquainted” with the Americans on their way to the Western sea. While much of the material culture of these native people is gone, an extensive record of their way of life exists—in transcribed oral literatures and tribal histories, in the observations of early ethnographers and anthropologists, and in the accounts of nonnative travelers to the West, including the Journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

So too does the land remain. Although many of the landscapes inhabited by these peoples have changed in dramatic and regrettable ways—the rivers damned for irrigation and power, and the earth ravaged for its mineral and forest wealth—much still remains of the land upon which these lives were lived—both native and early American travelers to these native countries.

What follows are images of the native lands of the West seen by Lewis and Clark nearly 200 years before. They are places of crucial significance to both the expedition and the native peoples they encountered.
Above: Blackbird Hill, view upstream of the Missouri from “Blackbird Hill overlook.”

Above: Teton/Bad River, View looking north from the west side of the Missouri and just below the confluence of the Bad (Teton) River. The spot was the site of the first American contact with the Teton Sioux, where, in late September, 1804, the two groups held council, nearly came to violence, yet parted peacefully after a stay of several days. The spot is now popular with local fisherman.
Above: Missouri River from Fort Mandan site. The Corps arrived on October 26, 1804, and left on April 7, 1805. When the Corps left in April, they sent the keelboat back to St. Louis and then on to Thomas Jefferson in Washington, D.C. with a full cargo of traded goods, a copy of the *Journals* up to that time, and numerous plant and animal specimens gathered during the preceding months. When they continued up river in early April, the 33 remaining members went in the two original pirogues and six hand carved dugout canoes they made over the winter months. The snow-covered sandbars in the river channel are examples of the many shifting sandbars that frequently slowed the progress of the Corps’ boats on nearly the entire length of the Missouri.
Previous, and above: exterior and interior of Mandan Lodge. This interior of a traditional Mandan earthlodge is similar to lodges occupied by the Mandan during the visit of the Corps in 1804-05. In the matriarchal Mandan society, women own the lodges, garden plots and tools, and all of the related domestic goods, and it was the women who performed all of the chores associated with building and maintaining the lodges and growing and preparing food. Men owned their clothes, horses, and weapons and were responsible for hunting, horse-raising, policing the villages, and warfare. The Mandan were essentially agriculturalists who were at the center of an extensive trading network that reached far across the Northern Plains to the Rockies. Exterior of traditional Mandan earthlodge, similar to lodges occupied by the Mandan during the visit of the Corps in 1804-05.
Awatixa village site along the Knife River. Knife River near its confluence with the Missouri and near the abandoned Hidatsa village of Awatixa where, most scholars believe, Touissant Charbonneau was living with his wife Sacagawea prior to being hired by the Corps of Discovery in February of 1805. Sacagawea was 16 at the time and was expecting her first child, which she delivered on February 11, 1805. The Awaticxa village site is visible to the right side of the photo reproduced above.

Ross’s Hole in the Bitterroot valley. The Corps passed through here in August of 1805 after crossing the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass, then crossing back over the Divide by going up the north fork of the Salmon river and over Lost Trail Pass. From there, they came down the north side of the Divide, following the Bitterroot river here to Ross’s Hole, near present day Sula, MT. In this valley they first met the Salish (Flathead) people, traditional allies of the Shoshone, and gained horses to continue toward the Columbia. The Corps were received in a “friendly” manner by the Salish.
Above: Weippe Prairie; descending from the ridge to the northwest in late September, 1805, Clark and a forward patrol here met the Nez Perce (Choppunnish) at the end of their long travail along the Lolo Trail in the Bitterroots.

Above: view of the middle fork of the Clearwater (Koos-koos-kee) from the Lolo Trail. The Corps’ path along the Lolo Trail led high above the Lochsa and the Clearwater Rivers and over multiple ranges of the snow-covered Bitterroots for 11 difficult and hungry days. The canyons below were too narrow for land travel and the rapid and rocky Lochsa and Clearwater rivers were unnavigable.
Above: Canoe Camp on the Clearwater, replica of a hand-carved canoe at the site of the Canoe Camp. The Clearwater is in the background.

Above: the return trip on horseback through the Touchet River Valley accompanied by their Walula guides; Lewis wrote of this area that the hills of the creeks are “high [their] bottoms narrow and [they] possess . . . lands of a good quality, a dark, rich loam.”
Above: the confluence of the Snake and the Columbia; on October 16 -18, 1805, the Corps camped on the point of land from which these images were taken (now Sacagawea State Park). Upon arriving at this confluence, the Corps had clarified the precise relationship between the Missouri and the Columbia river systems, a geographical puzzle that had intrigued Europeans since Marquette had sighted the mouth of the Missouri in 1673. Here the expedition was feted by the local Nez Perce. (See entry October 16, 1805)

Above: view west at the Columbia Gorge; here the transition is dramatic between the semi-arid landscape of the Columbia plateau and the lush, green landscape of the coastal range.
Previous: Looking to the north from the Oregon shore, remnants of early morning fog in the distance on the lower, tidal Columbia. On November 2, 1805, while on the lower Columbia, Clark wrote, “the fog So thick this morning we did not think it to Set out untill 10 oClock . . . .” Here the expedition was in the land of the Chinook-speaking peoples.

Above: A view to the north west from Coxcomb Hill above Astoria, OR (founded in 1811, five years after the departure of the Corps, Astoria is the first American settlement in the Northwest). Just beyond the bridge, the mouth of the Columbia opens into the Pacific. The far ridge above the river is Washington state, and the site of “Camp Disappointment” where the Corps camped in early December, 1805. From there, after a vote that included all of the members of the expedition, including Clark’s slave York, and Sacagawea, they proceeded to the site of Fort Clatsop on the south side of the Columbia where they wintered.

Next page: Fort Clatsop B, a reconstruction of Fort Clatsop, where the Corp wintered from December 7, 1805, to March 23, 1806. Here, after constructing the fort, they reworked the Journals, interacted with the local native tribe, the Clatsops, and planned their return journey east. Of the 106 days they spent at the fort, it rained every day but 12. The fort is approximately 50 feet square located in a thick growth of pine trees. Two rows of cabins were separated by an open space between. Upon leaving on March 23, 1806, Clark wrote that “At this place we . . . wintered and remained from the 7th Decr. 1805 to this day and have lived as well as we had a right to expect. . . .”
II. THE CHALLENGE OF THE “STONEY MOUNTAINS”

In the late summer 1805 a group of 30 or so footsore and bedraggled men, along with one Indian woman and her mixed-breed infant son, were growing increasingly weary of towing several heavily-laden, hand-hewn wooden canoes up the shallow, swift, and frigid waters of the Beaverhead River, in what we now call Montana. Over a year earlier, they had turned their boats up the Missouri River at St. Louis, setting off to discover a navigable water passage to the fabled riches of Asia. They planned to follow the eastward flowing waters of the Missouri to their source in the mountains that separate them from the river that empties into the Western Ocean. No one was sure because nobody in their world had been there, but according to the best geographers of the day, the transfer from eastern to western-flowing waters would be a “single Portage” of probably a half-day over a solitary ridge line. The British explorer Mackenzie, as Alan Taylor notes, had discovered just a few years before that the western mountains of the British northwest were “far higher, wider, and more complex than anticipated” (p. 7), but Mackenzie conjectured that the passage through the mountains would “be lower and easier farther south” (p.10) Lewis and Clark expected to find navigable waters on the west side of the Divide that were like the waters they had been pulling up on the east side. They expected to find the symmetry and ease of connection denied to Mackenzie. Perhaps they imagined it would be something like portaging over the Blue Ridge Mountains back home in Virginia. Not easy, but manageable with a little help from the local Indians. After a few days in the Beaverhead River, and growing anxious about their progress, Captain Lewis left the canoes and most of the group behind and hiked ahead with three of companions toward a distant ridge line.

Soon they saw a Shoshone Indian on a horse, the first person they’d seen other than their own group for nearly four months. Lewis attempted to reassure him of their friendly intentions, but the Shoshone high-tailed it up the slope away from them. It wasn’t hard to track him, although, because he headed up a well worn trail between two foothills. Following the easy grade toward the ridge, Lewis and his men became increasingly excited. They were nearly to the top; they had been a long time getting there, and Lewis had thought about it for years; even dreamed about getting there, there at the headwaters of the Missouri River. He couldn’t wait to get to the top of the ridge, to look down at the river in the next valley, the great water highway that would float their canoes to the Pacific coast. It would be all down hill from there. But instead of the easy float down to the Pacific, Lewis saw this at the top of the ridge—no navigable water in sight; but rather snow-covered mountains peaks, ridge after ridge ascending into the vast open sky as far westward as he could see.

Surprised and dismayed to discover that their struggles were nowhere near an end, Lewis and
Clark soon realized that they and the members of the Corps would need to change their plans about an easy float to the Pacific. They needed more than a little help from the locals—they needed their friendly alliance, their knowledge of the mountains and the way through them, and they needed to trade for some of their horses—not to use for a half-day in carrying their canoes over the ridge line as they had planned, but for their very survival as they traversed range after range of rocky, towering mountains, snowy even at the end of summer. During the following February, as they wintered over on the Pacific coast, Captain Clark in hindsight calculated that the estimated “portage” of a few miles and a few hours had actually turned out to be an excruciatingly difficult traverse of unforgettable difficulty. From this spot, they had trekked by horse and foot more than 220 miles over snowy high mountain passes and steep valley trails. It took nearly two months to get to the place where they could launch canoes in westward flowing waters and complete their journey to the sea. Without the dozens of horses that they acquired from the Shoshone and Salish Indians at the Continental Divide, Captains Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery would almost certainly never have made their way to the Pacific. Although neither Lewis nor Clark appears to have fully realized it at the time, their struggle across the Astoney Mountains, this crucial discovery about the nature of the western landscape, marked the final end of a dream that had inspired Europeans for over three hundred years since the voyage of Columbus in 1492. No practical water route crossed North America, no Northwest Passage allowed easy access to the riches of the Far East. As David Hurst Thomas notes, Jefferson “clearly understood the importance of exposing speculation to a barrage of facts.” And the experience of his Expedition for Northwest Discovery had suffered remarkably from the “barrage of facts” in the Rocky Mountains. The American West was a land unlike the eastern U.S., not a place of green forests, nor of deep and slow-flowing rivers that could be navigated by pole, paddle, or sail and were separated by low divides. This symbolic moment, this shift from the previous paradigm of the Eastern landscape, amounted to the earliest recognition by the new Americans of the nature of the immense interior of the North American continent.
Above: Overlooking the Missouri just upstream from Fort Benton. Lewis and a small party of men preceded the main body of the Corps on this stretch of the river, traveling light and fast in hopes of finding the Great Falls of the Missouri, which they did on the third day out (6/13/05) from the mouth of the Marias river. On the horizon are the Rockies.

Previous: The confluence of the Madison and the Jefferson at Three Forks, looking to the southwest with the Tobacco Root Mountains in the background. On July 27, 1805, Lewis wrote that the country here at Three Forks "opens suddonly to extensive and beatifull plains and meadows which appear to be surrounded in every direction with distant and lofty mountains." Sacagawea’s tribe of the Shoshone had been camped on the plain at Three Forks five years earlier when they were attacked by a raiding party of Hidatsa. Eleven years old at the time, she was captured during this raid and later sold or traded by the Hidatsa to her husband Touissant Charbonneau. In the foreground of 1601 is a wild rose bush, with rosehips pendulous.
Previous: The confluence of the Madison and the Jefferson at Three Forks, looking to the southwest with the Tobacco Root Mountains in the background. On July 27, 1805, Lewis wrote that the country here at Three Forks “opens suddenly to extensive and beatifull plains and meadows which appear to be surrounded in every direction with distant and lofty mountains.” Sacagawea’s tribe of the Shoshone had been camped on the plain at Three Forks five years earlier when they were attacked by a raiding party of Hidatsa. Eleven years old at the time, she was captured during this raid and later sold or traded by the Hidatsa to her husband Touissant Charbonneau. In the foreground of 1601 is a wild rose bush, with rosehips pendulous.

Below: View upstream on the Jefferson, about five miles south of Three Forks. Sacagawea was captured near here by the Hidatsa.

Next: Beaverhead Rock from upstream on the Beaverhead River, mainstem of the Jefferson and the Missouri, looking north. (The Jefferson becomes the Beaverhead about ten miles downstream from this point at Twin Bridges, where the Beaverhead, the Big Hole [Wisdom], and the Ruby [Philanthropy] Rivers merge to form the Jefferson.) On August 8, 1805, Lewis wrote that here Sacagawea “recognized the point of a high plain to our right which . . . was not very distant from the summer retreat of her nation. . . . this hill she says her nation calls the beaver=s head from a conceived re[se]mblance of it=s figure to the head of that animal.” She assured them, he continued, that “we shall either find her people on this river or the river immediately west of its source. . . .” From a point about nine miles south of Beaverhead Rock, the expedition had traveled 3,000 miles from the mouth of the Missouri at St. Louis.
Previous: Heading up Horse Trail Creek (Shoshone Cove) toward Lemhi Pass, looking west. Lewis wrote on the evening of August 12, 1805, that “the road took us to the most distant fountain of the waters of the Mighty Missouri in search of which we have spent so many toilsome days and wristless nights. Thus far I had accomplished one of those great objects on which my mind has been unalterably fixed for many years, judge then I felt in allaying my thirst with this pure and ice-cold water which issues from the base of a low mountain . . . .”

Above: Looking west from atop Lemhi Pass. On August 12, 1805, upon first mounting the pass, Lewis wrote of discovering from the top of the dividing ridge “immense ranges of high mountains still to the West of us with their tops partially covered with snow.” The Bitterroot and Lemhi Ranges, over which the Expedition eventually passed, are visible in the background. In photo #1623, the sign notes the line between Montana and Idaho. In 1805, this was the far western border of the newly purchased Louisiana Territory. Over the ridge lay territory claimed by several European nations.

Next: Atop Lemhi Pass, looking south along the Continental Divide.
Below: Atop Lemhi Pass, looking east toward Horse Prairie valley (Shoshone Cove) with the Black Tail mountains in the far distance. Camp Fortunate lies in the valley this side of the Black Tails.

Below: Looking north at Horse Prairie Creek valley (Shoshone Cove) from Bannock Pass. Lewis explored Horse Prairie Creek with George Drouillard, John Shields, and Hugh McNeal, and on August 11, 1805, they saw their first Shoshone in this area several miles west of Camp Fortunate. The rest of the Corps followed several days later. Lemhi Pass is to the left.
This page: Views looking south of the Beaverhead River and valley from the hill named Clark’s Lookout. Clark climbed this hill on August 13, 1805 to observe the route ahead where Lewis had passed two days before. Dillon is to the left amid the trees; the Beaverhead winds across the bottom and then to the left (in 1633). The Ruby Mountains are in the background.
Below: looking west on the Lolo Highway (U.S. Rt 12) just beyond Lolo Pass and the Continental Divide. The Corps passed through this area on the “Nez Perce or Lolo Trail” (the Nez Perce called it the “Khusahna Ishkit” or Buffalo Trail) in early September of 1805. Having now crossed the Divide for the third time, they experienced at this point some of the most difficult conditions of the journey.

Clark wrote, “From this mountain, I could observe high rugged mountains in every direction as far as I could see . . . [and that the trail was] verry bad passing over hills & thro’ Steep hollows, over fallen timber . . . most intolerable . . . on the sides of the Steep Stoney mountains.” On the return trip, as late as June 27, 1806, Clark wrote that “we had an extenive view of these Stupendous Mountains principally Covered with Snow.” And on June 30, 1806, Clark wrote that passing over these mountains they had “experiensed Cold and hunger of which I shall ever remember.”
This page: Views north from the Lolo Highway, just west of the Lolo Pass. Surrounded by the Bitterroot Mountains.
This page: The Lochsa (Koos Koos Kee) River along the Lolo Trial

Above: Looking upstream or east on the lower Lochsa.

Above: Looking west on the Lochsa toward its confluence with the Selway to form the middle fork of the Clearwater.
Below: View of the middle fork of the Clearwater from the Lolo Trail. The Corps path along the Lolo Trail led high above the Lochsa and the Clearwater and over multiple ranges of the snow-covered Bitterroots for 11 difficult and hungry days. The canyons below were too narrow for land travel, and the rapid and rocky Lochsa and Clearwater rivers were unnavigable. This point is near Weippe Prairie, where Clark and a forward patrol met the Nez Perce (Choppunnish) at the end of their long travail along the Lolo Trail in the Bitterroots.
III. The Spacious West

One of the most striking discoveries made not only by the Corps of Discovery, but also by other Euro-American travelers to the Trans-Mississippi interior of North America, was the vastness of the landscape. Although neither Lewis nor Clark appears to have fully understood it at the time, the view standing atop Lemhi Pass on the Continental Divide, and the weeks of unexpected and grueling hardship that followed eventually led the captains to a crucial realization about the nature of the western landscape—its arid spaciousness. This realization led to the final abandoning of a dream that had inspired Europeans since the voyages of Columbus. No convenient and practical water route crossed North America, no Northwest Passage allowed easy access to the riches of the Far East.

While it was the end of one idea about the nature of the North American continent, it was the beginning of another. At least symbolically, this crucial experience presented irrefutable evidence that the West was a land unlike the eastern U.S., not a place of green forests, nor a land capable of supporting settlements in close proximity. This symbolic moment, this shift from the previous paradigm of the Eastern landscape, amounted to the practical recognition of the nature of the immense interior of the North American continent. The West was a nearly limitless landscape of great grassy plains and plateaus, of steep snowy mountains, and of expansive and arid distances.

That this understanding of the western land came to the Anglo-Americans only in the early 19th century doesn’t mean that they had discovered it anew. As Alan Taylor notes, not only had Peter Pond underestimated the distance between the Great Slave Lake and the Pacific coast in the late 18th century, but Alexander Mackenzie also discovered the landscape of the “Canadian” far west to be “far higher, wide, and complex than anticipated” (7). Over two centuries earlier, the Spanish moving north from Mexico encountered the immense landscape of what they called el Norte. They not only wandered on horseback and foot across the vast, dry distances, but they contributed accidentally to the magnificent cultural flowering of the nomadic peoples who had lived upon this land for perhaps a thousand generations. Left behind by Cortes, Coronado, and the other Spanish conquistadors, Spanish horses were appropriated by Native Americans and grazed upon the great interior grasslands. Flourishing in the arid and open western environment, they increased phenomenally during the 16th and 17th centuries. By the time that Lewis and Clark arrived, the nomadic peoples of the West had incorporated these vast herds of horses into their native culture and had become mobile masters of the landscape.

An essential component of the Western landscape, not only for Lewis and Clark, but also for
Spanish Conquistadors, and for native peoples is the interrelated reality of aridity and space.
Although some border areas of the west are relatively moist, its heartland is arid. And while some
urban areas have become densely inhabited in the late twentieth century, the pre-dominant experience
even now is that great western cities are mainly oases, water-starved islands surrounded by expansive
arid distances, a sea of grassland and desert beneath a spacious sky, much unlike the forested and
enclosed landscapes east of the Mississippi. Larry McMurtry, who grew up in north central Texas,
muses upon this difference:

Space, a huge sky, and a sense of distance were the things I took for granted when I was
growing up. . . . It wasn’t until I moved to Virginia, to a pleasant valley near the Blue Ridge,
that I first experienced sky deprivation or forest claustrophobia. In Virginia I felt gloomy
without knowing why—it was only after many drives home to Texas that the reason finally
became clear. I began to notice that once I crossed the Mississippi . . . my spirits would . . . lift.
The sky had quickly opened up, become a western sky, with Western horizons beneath it.
(p.71, Walter Benjamin.)

Open space and the consequent emphasis on mobility serve as archetypes for the specifics of
experience in the West. It is a place of movement and of journeys, and its people were—and still
are—movers by definition. The native people were the first to adapt to this spaciousness, especially
the nomadic, indigenous cultures of the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and the Great Basin, who
followed the great herds of bison and other migratory fauna. The golden age of these native cultures
was a direct result of their adaptation of the horse to the challenge of their spacious landscape. The
late-nineteenth century ethnologist James Mooney wrote that the horse truly revolutionized Indian life:
“With the horse, the [Indian] was transformed into the daring buffalo hunter, able to procure in a single
day enough food to supply his family for a year, leaving him free then to sweep the plains . . . along a
range of a thousand miles” (161). Mobility was also an essential and common attribute of the Euro-
American pioneers for whom the West represents the culmination of the essential American impulse to
seek new lands. These American Westerners were the self-selected European-Americans who
wouldn't stay put—in Europe, in the East, or in Dixie. These migrants became increasingly portable,
and were reduced mythically and sometimes literally to man and horse, the cowboy B a semi-nomadic
figure who often owned nothing but a saddle, moving through an arid country of sparsely-distributed
settlements.

The West for many was and still is a "way" as much as a "place." Gertrude Stein, a famous
expatriate writer of the mid-twentieth century, when asked by a European to describe America in one
sentence, replied: "Conceive of a space that is filled with moving." Other Westerners—and Stein
herself was from Oakland, California—have offered their own memorable Western one-liners: "Instead of place, we have space," and "It's the distances that bind us together."

The Western myth of personal independence, in part falsified and romanticized by popular narratives, nevertheless retains its currency because of the geographic reality of spaciousness. The open landscape continues to suggest unrestricted freedoms, with abundant opportunity for character to be tested in physically competitive ways—whether horse riding, cliff climbing, or wilderness trekking. The notion of untrammeled individualism persists partly as a remnant of the mythic frontier, but not as a remnant only. The myths of the West are dynamic, and their subtly changing allure arises in large part because individuals, attracted from more spatially restricted areas of the country, continue to reinvent the myths in the spaciousness of the West.
Previous: Gateway Arch at the Jefferson National Westward Expansion Memorial in St. Louis; after their return, both Lewis and Clark lived on sites now part of the 90 acre park located on the site of the original St. Louis settlement. St. Louis, at the confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers served as the gateway to much of the West from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century.

Above: The Willa Cather Memorial Prairie is 4 miles south of Red Cloud, Nebraska, the childhood home of Cather. This 610 acre preserve is a rare example of the native tall-grass prairie that for thousands of years had blanketed the Great Plains prior to the arrival of American pioneers, including the Cather family, in the mid to late 19th century. (1487 and 1489 are views to the WSW and WNW (respectively) of the prairie.
Previous: The Missouri River from Blackbird Hill -- view upstream of the Missouri from "Blackbird Hill overlook." Named after the Omaha chief Blackbird, buried nearby; on August 11, 1804, Lewis and Clark and a small party of the Corps climbed a nearby hill and had a sweeping view of the river. The view is from the Nebraska side of the river, with Iowa on the opposite bank.

Above: View upstream on the Missouri River from Fort Mandan site in present day North Dakota. The Corps arrived on October 26, 1804, and left on April 7, 1805. When the Corps left in April, they sent the keelboat back to St. Louis and then on to Thomas Jefferson in Washington, D.C. with a full cargo of traded goods, a copy of the Journals up to that time, and numerous plant and animal specimens gathered during the preceding months. When they continued up river in early April, the 33 remaining members went in the two original pirogues and six hand-carved dugout canoes they made over the winter months. The snow-covered sandbars in the river channel are examples of the many shifting sandbars that frequently slowed the progress of the Corps’ boats on nearly the entire length of the Missouri.

Next page: Looking south toward the Bear Paw Mountains, from Bear Paw Battlefield, Montana (part of the Nez Perce National Historical Park), 17 miles south of Chinook, MT; This area is within the traditional homeland of the Blackfeet, but was site of the last battle of the four-month Nez Perce War of 1877.
Below: Looking south toward the Bear Paws;
Above: This panoramic view from Highway 87 near Big Sandy, Montana, of the Rocky Mountain Front encompasses three major river drainages: the Missouri, the Marias, and the Teton; the three rivers converge with a space of about one mile, upstream of the White Cliffs section of the Missouri. Rocky Mountain Front in the far distance. The Missouri River once flowed north through this valley to Hudson Bay, but was diverted into its present east-flowing channel by a huge ice dam during the last ice age. This area was home to the Blackfeet and their allies at least as the middle of the 19th century. The Corps of Northwest Discovery passed by here in 1805 and 1806, and were followed over the next several decades by the fur traders and trappers, the steamboat trade, the Great Northern Railway, and the homesteaders.
Previous: Along the Missouri, heading for the mountains; overlooking the Missouri just upstream from Fort Benton. Lewis and a small party of men preceded the main body of the Corps on this stretch of the river, traveling light and fast in hopes of finding the Great Falls of the Missouri, which they did on the third day out (6/13/05) from the mouth of the Marias river. On the horizon are the Rockies.

Above: View north of Horse Prairie Creek valley from Bannock Pass, Montana. This area was on the traditional Indian route linking the buffalo country to the east and the fishing areas on the Snake and Salmon Rivers. Meriwether Lewis explored Horse Prairie Creek with George Drouillard, John Shields, and Hugh McNeal, and on August 11, 1805, they saw their first Shoshone in this area several miles west of Camp Fortunate. The rest of the Corps followed through this area several days later. Lemhi Pass is to the extreme left. This area served as an important route for native people, fur trappers, miners, and early railroad lines until the middle of the 20th century.

Next page: Big Hole Valley B now also known as the Land of Ten Thousand Haystacks--looking west (1637) and northwest (1638) at the Beaverhead Mountains. Clark and the majority of the Corps of Northwest discovery traversed the Big Hole valley heading south and east on the return journey in July of 1806. The Captains had named the river running through this valley the Wisdom. Clark wrote on July 6, 1806, that “we ascended a small rise and beheld an open boutiful Leavel Valley or plain of about 20 Miles wide and near 60 long extending N & S in every direction around which I could see high points of Mountains Covered with Snow.”
Below: View north from the Lolo Highway, just west of the Lolo Pass. Surrounded by the Bitterroot Mountains.

Next: View west of the Columbia Gorge.
Previous: View of the Columbia Gorge and, in the distance, Beacon Rock; in the center distance Beacon Rock and the Columbia River Gorge are visible looking eastward from a promontory on the north shore. Bonneville Dam is barely visible as a thin white line across the river to the right of Beacon Rock. In the foreground the increasingly lush green landscape of the coastal range is apparent.

Above: Lower Owens Valley; the clear and sweet water from the Owens Valley system 250 miles north of the arid San Fernando Valley feeds the Los Angeles metropolitan area with water via the Los Angeles Aquaduct. Mary Austin, author of *Land of Little Rain*, wrote in the early twentieth-century, of the beauty of this arid spacious valley.

Above: Upper Owens Valley, California, on the east slope of the Sierra Nevadas. The mountains are part of the John Muir Wilderness.
Looking north toward Mt. Taylor in northern New Mexico, an extinct volcano with a height of 11,301 ft. (called Tse-pina by the Laguna and Dzil Dotlizi or Turquoise Mountain, by the Navajo), one of the highest mountains encountered by the early Spanish explorers, and one of the sacred mountains of the Pueblo and Navajo peoples. Mt Taylor plays an important role in Leslie Silko’s novel, *Ceremony*. 
Below: Road heading north into the arid interior of the Laguna Reservation lands.

Below: Palo Duro Canyon, Texas. The Canyon, which cuts into the high arid plains of northwest Texas, is 120 mile long and 800 feet deep. Named for the hard wood of the Juniper and Mesquite trees common in the area, the Canyon was the site of the final defeat of the Southern Plains tribe—the Comanche and the Kiowa—during the Red River Wars of the 1870's. It was also one of the earliest ranches of the legendary Texas cattleman, Charles Goodnight.
Below: Wichita Mountains, in southwest Oklahoma, looking south toward Lawton.