

12-1-2004

Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition

Greg O Brien

University of Southern Mississippi

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Recommended Citation

O Brien, G. (2004). Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition. *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24(4), 686-688.
Available at: http://aquila.usm.edu/fac_pubs/2959

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entrails to other members of “brute creation” (135). Yet, Lewis had a very different attitude when he described the preparation of a *boudin blanc* by Toissant Charbonneau. The Frenchman’s preparations are described in such loving detail that the reader forgets the author is describing a bison’s large intestine (134).

Other authors featured by Hallock include John and William Bartram, Jane Colden, James Fenimore Cooper, Timothy Dwight, John Filson, Anne Grant, Thomas Jefferson, and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. Throughout, Hallock considers the impact of claiming the West on narrative forms of the era, the recognition of the Other within these texts, and the manner by which their creators acknowledged the Native presence even as they sought to supplant all signs of that presence. This well-illustrated monograph is recommended for specialists in American studies, literary and environmental criticism, and backcountry studies.

L. SCOTT PHILYAW, Associate Professor of History at Western Carolina University, is author of *Virginia’s Western Visions: Political and Cultural Expansion on an Early American Frontier* (2004).

Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition. By W. Raymond Wood. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. Pp. xvii, 234. Illustrations, maps. Cloth, \$34.95.)

Amid the ongoing bicentennial celebrations of the justly famous Lewis and Clark expedition, it is wise to remember that other Euro-Americans preceded the Americans into the Missouri River Valley and farther west. Many of those travelers, especially French *coureurs du bois*, will remain forever obscure as they left little or no documentation while exploring, trading with Indians for furs, and living beyond the reach of Euro-American civilization. Other pre-Lewis and Clark explorers mounted organized ventures on behalf of France, Spain, or Britain and produced copious records, some of them familiar to the Americans sent west by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803. The Mackay and Evans expedition was one such official exploration, up the Missouri River on behalf of Spain from 1795 to 1797.

W. Raymond Wood has published work on the Mandan and Hidatsa trading network on the upper Missouri River, and his expertise on the archeological and documentary sources for the region contributes to this

well-researched study. The numerous maps and illustrations add to *Prologue to Lewis and Clark's* value as a reference work on the late eighteenth-century Missouri River Valley.

Wood establishes the background of the Mackay and Evans expedition by discussing earlier explorations of the Missouri River and the river's importance as part of Spain's late eighteenth-century North American empire. Spain's claim to lands west of the Mississippi River, including the Missouri River region, stemmed from secret negotiations with France, which ceded Louisiana to Spain at the end of the Seven Years War in 1762. Spanish title remained in effect until secret negotiations in the Treaty of San Ildelfonso ceded the region back to Napoleon's France in 1800, shortly before Jefferson purchased the area from Napoleon for the United States. It was never entirely clear where the boundary between British and Spanish territory lay; the American Revolution and creation of the United States added to the confusion. Besides Britain and the United States, Spain also worried about Russian contacts with the northwest coast of North America as an intrusion on her territory. The international imperial context, the ever-present desire to find an all-water route to the Pacific Ocean, and the news that British and French fur traders maintained contact with Indian groups far up the Missouri, all pushed Spanish officials to mount more than one expedition up the Missouri River in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The first major Spanish venture up the river, under the direction of the Missouri Company, left St. Louis in June 1794 under the command of Jean Baptiste Truteau. He made it as far as the Arikara Indian villages near the mouth of the Grand River in present-day northern South Dakota before returning to St. Louis in 1796. In 1795 a second expedition, also under the auspices of the Missouri Company, did not make it as far as Truteau had before being plundered by Indians.

Using tightly written narrative and excerpts from the documents produced by the expedition's leaders, Wood describes the Missouri Company's and Spain's third major expedition up the Missouri River. It was led by James Mackay, a Scotsman, fur trader, and naturalized Spanish citizen who had led explorations into the western reaches of Canada in the 1780s, and John Evans, a Welsh nationalist who sought confirmation of his belief that a tribe of Welshmen had settled in North America in the twelfth century and gave rise to a group of descendants who lived as Indians along the upper Missouri River. Besides establishing trade with Indians along the Missouri River, the Mackay and Evans expedition was

to reconnoiter locations for Spanish forts and seek out a route to the Pacific Ocean.

Mackay and Evans traveled as far as the Mandan and Hidatsa villages near the mouth of the Knife River, a major trade center bringing together Plains Indian buffalo hunters and more sedentary agriculturalists. Though Mackay and Evans spent two years living and trading among various Indian peoples and mapping out the region, they never traveled west of the Rocky Mountains, nor did they establish a permanent Spanish presence in the area. Many of their maps and reports are reprinted in the book, and it is easy to see how they would have been useful to Lewis and Clark, who met Mackay in St. Louis before heading up the Missouri River less than a decade later. Mackay enjoyed some notoriety in his lifetime for his careful study of the Missouri River Valley, while Evans died in relative obscurity, disappointed that he had found no evidence to support his Welsh Indian theory. Spain, too, soon lost its claim to the region, and the research of Mackay and Evans—though well known to Lewis and Clark—became lost in obscurity as the Americans gained the adulation of their countrymen for reaching the Pacific Ocean and returning to the East.

Remembering the exploits of other Euro-American explorers helps us place the Lewis and Clark venture in broader context. Each expedition up the Missouri River Valley, Lewis and Clark not excepted, relied on the cumulative information of numerous previous expeditions and reports. Moreover, Indians, as historian James Ronda reminded us two decades ago—and as Wood acknowledges—shaped the courses and outcomes of these explorations in numerous ways. Like so much of American history, our understanding of momentous events that became part of American national memory and lore—the Lewis and Clark expedition being a prime example—is made whole only by including all of the actors who contributed to the story, even when their contribution was inadvertent and unforeseen. For these reasons, and because it is nicely written, *Prologue to Lewis and Clark* is a fine contribution to early American, western American, Spanish American, and American Indian history.

GREG O'BRIEN is an associate professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi. He is author of *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750–1830* (2002) and co-editor with Tamara Harvey of *George Washington's South* (2004).