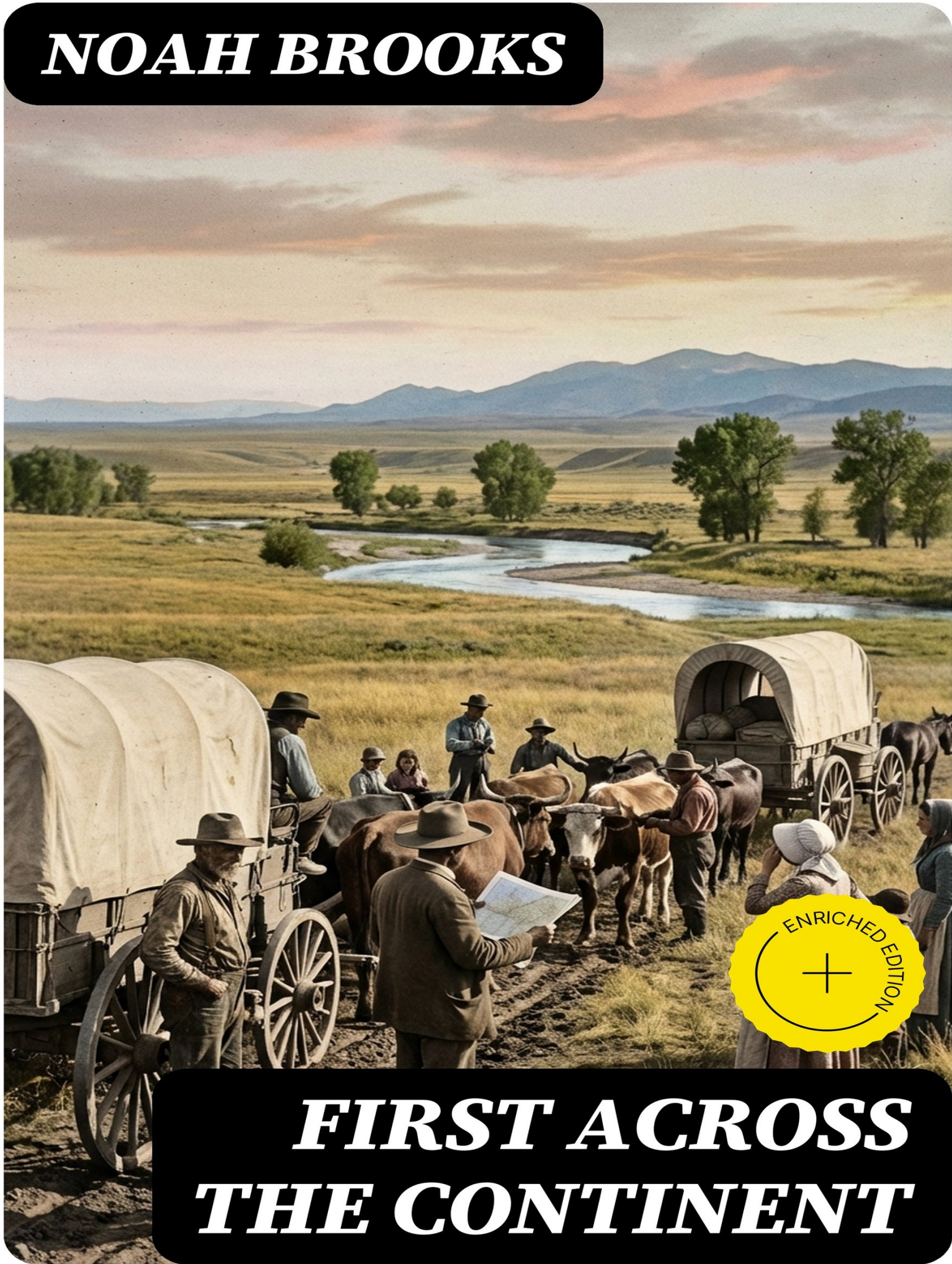


NOAH BROOKS



ENRICHED EDITION
+

***FIRST ACROSS
THE CONTINENT***

Noah Brooks

First Across the Continent

Enriched edition. The Story of the Exploring Expedition of Lewis and Clark in 1804-5-6

*In this **enriched edition**, we have carefully created added value for your reading experience.*

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Derek Hale

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Introduction

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Progress is often measured in miles, but it is paid for in risk, labor, and contested meaning.

First Across the Continent, by Noah Brooks, belongs to the tradition of nineteenth-century American narrative nonfiction, written in an accessible, reportorial mode for a broad readership. Its subject is the crossing of the North American continent by rail, a journey that turns an immense geographical expanse into a continuous route and invites readers to consider what it meant to link distant regions by a single line of travel. Read today, the book sits at the intersection of travel writing, journalism, and popular history, reflecting the era's appetite for accounts of modern movement and national connection.

Brooks frames the transcontinental passage as both an event and an experience: a coordinated feat of transportation and a sequence of vivid impressions gathered from the moving vantage of the train. The premise is straightforward and spoiler-safe in its appeal, following the notion of going from one end of the continent to the other by the new rail connection, while attending to what the traveler sees, hears, and infers along the way. The reading experience is brisk and observant, with a practical attention to how travel works alongside a storyteller's interest in the human scenes that appear at stops, crossings, and stretches of open country.

The voice carries a confident public tone typical of a journalist addressing curious non-specialists, aiming to make a large national development intelligible through concrete description. Brooks writes with an eye for the telling detail and a preference for forward motion, so the narrative tends to move in episodes rather than linger in introspection. The style favors clarity over ornament, shaping the journey into a legible sequence that conveys momentum and novelty. Even when the account widens to consider broader implications, it returns to the immediacy of travel, keeping readers oriented in the physical world of distance, weather, terrain, and the practical realities of being carried across them.

At its core, the book explores the transformation of space by technology and the changing relationship between individuals and the continent they inhabit. The railroad emerges not only as a means of transportation but as a social instrument that compresses time, rearranges expectations, and invites new kinds of ambition. Alongside wonder at speed and access, Brooks's narrative prompts reflection on the costs and pressures that accompany large infrastructure: the discipline required to build and operate it, the economic forces it amplifies, and the uneven ways its benefits and burdens are distributed. These themes surface through the very act of traveling, where convenience and vulnerability coexist.

First Across the Continent also matters as a study in perception, showing how a journey can become an argument about national coherence. The continuous route encourages a sense of connectedness, yet the landscapes

and communities encountered resist simple unification, reminding readers that a line on a map does not erase difference. Brooks's attention to what can be seen from the rail corridor underscores how transportation shapes understanding: what is made visible, what is passed by, and what is reduced to background. The book's power lies in this tension between a grand consolidating project and the irreducible variety of places and lives it touches.

For contemporary readers, Brooks's account remains relevant because the questions it raises about infrastructure, mobility, and narrative are still unsettled. Modern societies continue to debate how projects that promise speed and integration can also intensify inequality, concentrate power, or reconfigure local worlds. The book offers a historical vantage on these debates without requiring specialized knowledge, inviting reflection on how enthusiasm for innovation is constructed and communicated. As an early, widely legible portrait of continent-spanning travel, *First Across the Continent* helps readers examine how technological achievement becomes cultural meaning, and how movement can both connect and complicate a shared future.

Synopsis

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Noah Brooks's *First Across the Continent* is a non-fiction narrative of a transcontinental journey undertaken by a youthful traveler moving from the American East to the Pacific Coast. Written in an observational, reportorial manner, the book frames the trip as both a geographic passage and a test of stamina, judgment, and adaptability. Brooks builds his account step by step, emphasizing how travel itself structures the story: departures, transfers, delays, and the shifting character of the country encountered along the route. The central premise is simple—reach the far side of the continent—but the means of doing so shape the book's tension and purpose.

paragraphs

Early chapters establish the traveler's preparations and the practical realities of long-distance movement in an era when routes, schedules, and communications could be uncertain. Brooks focuses on what can be seen, measured, and experienced: the feel of changing climates, the varying conditions of roads or conveyances, and the way fellow passengers and local residents affect morale and decision-making. The narrative proceeds through a sequence of stops and encounters that introduce a widening social panorama. Rather than treating the journey as a single dramatic dash, Brooks presents it as a series of manageable stages, each with its own constraints and opportunities.

paragraphs

As the route pushes inland, Brooks's attention increasingly turns to landscape and scale, contrasting settled regions with more sparsely populated stretches. The book's momentum comes from the continual need to secure reliable transport, interpret local information, and adjust to terrain and weather. Brooks uses these challenges to illustrate how geography governs human plans, and how infrastructure—where it exists—reduces risk while also imposing its own limits. The traveler's observations of towns, river crossings, and expanding horizons serve as a running commentary on a nation in motion, where distance remains a formidable barrier even as links between regions multiply.

paragraphs

Moving deeper into the interior, the narrative emphasizes the human networks that make travel possible: drivers, station-keepers, guides, and other passengers who share knowledge and resources. Brooks conveys the mix of cooperation and self-reliance that arises when services are intermittent and conditions change quickly. Encounters on the road highlight differing regional outlooks and the practical negotiations required to keep moving—over timing, supplies, and safety. Throughout, Brooks balances the excitement of forward progress with reminders of vulnerability, keeping the story grounded in the daily logistics of passage across wide, varied country without turning it into a mere catalogue of scenery or miles covered.

Historical Context

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Noah Brooks's *First Across the Continent* is rooted in the early 1860s, when the United States was convulsed by the Civil War while also expanding federal power in the West. The narrative centers on an overland journey from the Missouri River region toward California across the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, and Great Basin, territories recently reorganized through measures such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) and the creation of Colorado Territory (1861). Travel relied on stage lines, emigrant roads, and military posts. Communication and transport were strategic concerns for the Lincoln administration and for western settlers and merchants.

The work draws directly on the establishment of the Pony Express, a private mail service launched in 1860 by the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company (Russell, Majors & Waddell). Designed to speed mail between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, it used a relay system of riders and stations over roughly 1,800–2,000 miles. Its most famous run was brief, operating from April 1860 until October 1861. Despite its short life and financial instability, it became an emblem of rapid communication and frontier endurance during a period when the nation's political cohesion was under strain.

By 1861, the federal government's priority was binding the Pacific Coast more tightly to the Union. California had entered the Union in 1850 after the Gold Rush, and its ports,

mineral wealth, and strategic position mattered during the war. The secession crisis raised anxieties about overland mail routes, loyalties in western territories, and the protection of supply lines. Washington promoted secure communications, including contracts for overland mail and the strengthening of military oversight in key corridors. Brooks's depiction of speed, risk, and logistical improvisation reflects how communication infrastructure was viewed as a component of national survival.

Overland travel in this era depended on a patchwork of enterprises and public authority. Stagecoach firms such as the Butterfield Overland Mail had operated a southern route from 1858 but ceased in 1861 when routes shifted and war conditions changed. The central route used by riders and stages required stations, forage, replacement horses, and personnel often drawn from diverse backgrounds. Federal forts and detachments guarded routes unevenly, and travelers relied on locally gathered intelligence about water sources, weather, and road conditions. The narrative's attention to stations and relay timing mirrors these institutional realities of transport on the mid-century frontier.

The setting also reflects ongoing conflicts between the United States and Indigenous nations across the Plains and Intermountain West. U.S. expansion after the Mexican-American War and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo intensified migration along trails that crossed Native homelands. Tensions over game, grazing, and treaty obligations produced intermittent warfare and raids that affected mail routes and military deployments. Fort Laramie

and other posts became focal points for negotiations and conflict management. Brooks's account, consistent with many contemporaneous sources, is informed by these frontier conditions, though modern scholarship emphasizes the costs imposed on Indigenous communities.

Technological change quickly overtook the Pony Express. In 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph line was completed, linking eastern and western networks and rendering horseback express mail largely obsolete. The same year, Congress authorized the first transcontinental railroad with the Pacific Railroad Act (1862), later amended, which provided federal support for Union Pacific and Central Pacific construction. These projects signaled a transition from episodic, privately organized frontier transport to federally subsidized, capital-intensive infrastructure. Brooks wrote in a moment when the Pony Express was already becoming legend, shaped by the contrast between heroic speed and rapid technological replacement.

Brooks himself was a prominent journalist and author closely connected to national politics. Born in 1830, he worked for newspapers including the Sacramento Daily Union and later became known for his reporting and books; he was also an associate of Abraham Lincoln during the presidency. His writing reflects the conventions of nineteenth-century travel and frontier literature, emphasizing observation, character sketches, and the drama of distance. As a Northerner writing after the Civil War era, he often framed western connectivity as a national achievement. His perspective aligns with the period's faith

in progress through communication, settlement, and state-building.

First Across the Continent reflects an era when Americans increasingly interpreted continental space through the lens of networks—mail, telegraphy, roads, and later rail. By focusing on the discipline of relays, the hazards of terrain, and the urgency of information, the work captures a historical pivot between horse-powered communication and industrial systems. It also reveals contemporary assumptions about expansion and federal authority, including the tendency to present frontier development as inevitable and beneficial. In doing so, Brooks documents the institutions and constraints of his time while participating in the broader nineteenth-century project of turning frontier experience into national narrative.

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Chapter I – A Great Transaction in Land

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The people of the young Republic of the United States were greatly astonished, in the summer of 1803, to learn that Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul of France, had sold to us the vast tract of land known as the country of Louisiana. The details of this purchase were arranged in Paris (on the part of the United States) by Robert R. Livingston and James Monroe. The French government was represented by Barbe-Marbois^[1], Minister of the Public Treasury.

The price to be paid for this vast domain was fifteen million dollars^[1q]. The area of the country ceded was reckoned to be more than one million square miles, greater than the total area of the United States, as the Republic then existed. Roughly described, the territory comprised all that part of the continent west of the Mississippi River, bounded on the north by the British possessions and on the west and south by dominions of Spain. This included the region in which now lie the States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, parts of Colorado, Minnesota, the States of Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, a part of Idaho, all of Montana and Territory of Oklahoma. At that time, the entire population of the region, exclusive of the Indian tribes that roamed over its trackless spaces, was barely ninety thousand persons, of whom forty thousand were negro slaves. The civilized inhabitants were principally

French, or descendants of French, with a few Spanish, Germans, English, and Americans.

The purchase of this tremendous slice of territory could not be complete without an approval of the bargain by the United States Senate. Great opposition to this was immediately excited by people in various parts of the Union, especially in New England, where there was a very bitter feeling against the prime mover in this business,—Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States. The scheme was ridiculed by persons who insisted that the region was not only wild and unexplored, but uninhabitable and worthless. They derided “The Jefferson Purchase,” as they called it, as a useless piece of extravagance and folly; and, in addition to its being a foolish bargain, it was urged that President Jefferson had no right, under the constitution of the United States, to add any territory to the area of the Republic.

Nevertheless, a majority of the people were in favor of the purchase, and the bargain was duly approved by the United States Senate; that body, July 31, 1803, just three months after the execution of the treaty of cession, formally ratified the important agreement between the two governments. The dominion of the United States was now extended across the entire continent of North America, reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Territory of Oregon was already ours.

This momentous transfer took place one hundred years ago, when almost nothing was known of the region so summarily handed from the government of France to the government of the American Republic. Few white men had

ever traversed those trackless plains, or scaled the frowning ranges of mountains that barred the way across the continent. There were living in the fastnesses of the mysterious interior of the Louisiana Purchase many tribes of Indians who had never looked in the face of the white man.

Nor was the Pacific shore of the country any better known to civilized man than was the region lying between that coast and the Big Muddy, or Missouri River. Spanish voyagers, in 1602, had sailed as far north as the harbors of San Diego and Monterey, in what is now California; and other explorers, of the same nationality, in 1775, extended their discoveries as far north as the fifty-eighth degree of latitude. Famous Captain Cook, the great navigator of the Pacific seas, in 1778, reached and entered Nootka Sound, and, leaving numerous harbors and bays unexplored, he pressed on and visited the shores of Alaska, then called Unalaska, and traced the coast as far north as Icy Cape. Cold weather drove him westward across the Pacific, and he spent the next winter at Owyhee, where, in February of the following year, he was killed by the natives.

All these explorers were looking for chances for fur-trading, which was at that time the chief industry of the Pacific coast. Curiously enough, they all passed by the mouth of the Columbia without observing that there was the entrance to one of the finest rivers on the American continent.

Indeed, Captain Vancouver, a British explorer, who has left his name on the most important island of the North Pacific coast, baffled by the deceptive appearances of the two capes that guard the way to a noble stream (Cape

Disappointment and Cape Deception), passed them without a thought. But Captain Gray, sailing the good ship "Columbia," of Boston, who coasted those shores for more than two years, fully convinced that a strong current which he observed off those capes came from a river, made a determined effort; and on the 11th of May, 1792, he discovered and entered the great river that now bears the name of his ship. At last the key that was to open the mountain fastnesses of the heart of the continent had been found[29]. The names of the capes christened by Vancouver and re-christened by Captain Gray have disappeared from our maps, but in the words of one of the numerous editors(1) of the narrative of the exploring expedition of Lewis and Clark: "The name of the good ship 'Columbia,' it is not hard to believe, will flow with the waters of the bold river as long as grass grows or water runs in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains."

(1) Dr. Archibald McVickar.

It appears that the attention of President Jefferson had been early attracted to the vast, unexplored domain which his wise foresight was finally to add to the territory of the United States. While he was living in Paris, as the representative of the United States, in 1785-89, he made the acquaintance of John Ledyard, of Connecticut, the well-known explorer, who had then in mind a scheme for the establishment of a fur-trading post on the western coast of America. Mr. Jefferson proposed to Ledyard that the most feasible route to the coveted fur-bearing lands would be through the Russian possessions and downward somewhere near to the latitude of the then unknown sources of the Missouri River, entering the United States by that route. This

scheme fell through on account of the obstacles thrown in Ledyard's way by the Russian Government. A few years later, in 1792, Jefferson, whose mind was apparently fixed on carrying out his project, proposed to the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia that a subscription should be opened for the purpose of raising money "to engage some competent person to explore that region in the opposite direction (from the Pacific coast),—that is, by ascending the Missouri, crossing the Stony (Rocky) Mountains, and descending the nearest river to the Pacific." This was the hint from which originated the famous expedition of Lewis and Clark.

But the story-teller should not forget to mention that hardy and adventurous explorer, Jonathan Carver. This man, the son of a British officer, set out from Boston, in 1766, to explore the wilderness north of Albany and lying along the southern shore of the Great Lakes. He was absent two years and seven months, and in that time he collected a vast amount of useful and strange information, besides learning the language of the Indians among whom he lived. He conceived the bold plan of travelling up a branch of the Missouri (or "Messorie"), till, having discovered the source of the traditional "Oregon, or River of the West," on the western side of the lands that divide the continent, "he would have sailed down that river to the place where it is said to empty itself, near the Straits of Anian[5]."

By the Straits of Anian, we are to suppose, were meant some part of Behring's Straits, separating Asia from the American continent. Carver's fertile imagination, stimulated by what he knew of the remote Northwest, pictured that

wild region where, according to a modern poet, “rolls the Oregon and hears no sound save his own dashing.” But Carver died without the sight; in his later years, he said of those who should follow his lead: “While their spirits are elated by their success, perhaps they may bestow some commendations and blessings on the person who first pointed out to them the way.”

Chapter II — Beginning a Long Journey

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In 1803, availing himself of a plausible pretext to send out an exploring expedition, President Jefferson asked Congress to appropriate a small sum of money (\$2,500) for the execution of his purpose. At that time the cession of the Louisiana Territory had not been completed; but matters were in train to that end, and before the expedition was fairly started on its long journey across the continent, the Territory was formally ceded to the United States.

Meriwether Lewis, a captain in the army, was selected by Jefferson to lead the expedition. Captain Lewis was a native of Virginia, and at that time was only twenty-nine years old. He had been Jefferson's private secretary for two years and was, of course, familiar with the President's plans and expectations as these regarded the wonder-land which Lewis was to enter. It is pleasant to quote here Mr. Jefferson's words concerning Captain Lewis. In a memoir of that distinguished young officer, written after his death, Jefferson said: "Of courage undaunted; possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction; careful as a father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline; intimate with the Indian character, customs and principles; habituated to the hunting life; guarded, by exact observation of the vegetables and animals of his own country, against losing time in the description of objects already possessed; honest,

disinterested, liberal, of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves—with all these qualifications, as if selected and implanted by nature in one body for this express purpose, I could have no hesitation in confiding the enterprise to him.”

Before we have finished the story of Meriwether Lewis and his companions, we shall see that this high praise of the youthful commander was well deserved.

For a coadjutor and comrade Captain Lewis chose William Clark,⁽¹⁾ also a native of Virginia, and then about thirty-three years old. Clark, like Lewis, held a commission in the military service of the United States, and his appointment as one of the leaders of the expedition with which his name and that of Lewis will ever be associated, made the two men equal in rank. Exactly how there could be two captains commanding the same expedition, both of the same military and actual rank, without jar or quarrel, we cannot understand; but it is certain that the two young men got on together harmoniously, and no hint or suspicion of any serious disagreement between the two captains during their long and arduous service has come down to us from those distant days.

(1) It is a little singular that Captain Clark's name has been so persistently misspelled by historians and biographers. Even in most of the published versions of the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the name of one of the captains is spelled Clarke. Clark's own signature, of which many are in existence, is without the final and superfluous vowel; and the family name, for generations past, does not show it.

As finally organized, the expedition was made up of the two captains (Lewis and Clark) and twenty-six men. These were nine young men from Kentucky, who were used to life on the frontier among Indians; fourteen soldiers of the United States Army, selected from many who eagerly volunteered their services; two French voyageurs, or watermen, one of whom was an interpreter of Indian language, and the other a hunter; and one black man, a servant of Captain Clark. All these, except the negro servant, were regularly enlisted as privates in the military service of the United States during the expedition; and three of them were by the captains appointed sergeants. In addition to this force, nine voyageurs and a corporal and six private soldiers were detailed to act as guides and assistants until the explorers should reach the country of the Mandan Indians, a region lying around the spot where is now situated the flourishing city of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota. It was expected that if hostile Indians should attack the explorers anywhere within the limits of the little-known parts through which they were to make their way, such attacks were more likely to be made below the Mandan country than elsewhere.

The duties of the explorers were numerous and important. They were to explore as thoroughly as possible the country through which they were to pass; making such observations of latitude and longitude as would be needed when maps of the region should be prepared by the War Department; observing the trade, commerce, tribal relations, manners and customs, language, traditions, and monuments, habits and industrial pursuits, diseases and

laws of the Indian nations with whom they might come in contact; note the floral, mineral, and animal characteristics of the country, and, above all, to report whatever might be of interest to citizens who might thereafter be desirous of opening trade relations with those wild tribes of which almost nothing was then distinctly known.

The list of articles with which the explorers were provided, to aid them in establishing peaceful relations with the Indians, might amuse traders of the present day. But in those primitive times, and among peoples entirely ignorant of the white man's riches and resources, coats richly laced with gilt braid, red trousers, medals, flags, knives, colored handkerchiefs, paints, small looking-glasses, beads and tomahawks were believed to be so attractive to the simple-minded red man that he would gladly do much and give much of his own to win such prizes. Of these fine things there were fourteen large bales and one box. The stores of the expedition were clothing, working tools, fire-arms, food supplies, powder, ball, lead for bullets, and flints for the guns then in use, the old-fashioned flint-lock rifle and musket being still in vogue in our country; for all of this was at the beginning of the present century.

As the party was to begin their long journey by ascending the Missouri River, their means of travel were provided in three boats. The largest, a keel-boat, fifty-five feet long and drawing three feet of water, carried a big square sail and twenty-two seats for oarsmen. On board this craft was a small swivel gun. The other two boats were of that variety of open craft known as pirogue[4], a craft shaped like a flat-iron, square-sterned, flat-bottomed, roomy, of light draft,

and usually provided with four oars and a square sail which could be used when the wind was aft, and which also served as a tent, or night shelter, on shore. Two horses, for hunting or other occasional service, were led along the banks of the river.

As we have seen, President Jefferson, whose master mind organized and devised this expedition, had dwelt longingly on the prospect of crossing the continent from the headwaters of the Missouri to the headwaters of the then newly-discovered Columbia. The route thus explored was more difficult than that which was later travelled by the first emigrants across the continent to California. That route lies up the Platte River, through what is known as the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, by Great Salt Lake and down the valley of the Humboldt into California, crossing the Sierra Nevada at any one of several points leading into the valley of the Sacramento. The route, which was opened by the gold-seekers, was followed by the first railroads built across the continent. The route that lay so firmly in Jefferson's mind, and which was followed up with incredible hardships by the Lewis and Clark expedition, has since been traversed by two railroads, built after the first transcontinental rails were laid. If Jefferson had desired to find the shortest and most feasible route across the continent, he would have pointed to the South Pass and Utah basin trails. But these would have led the explorers into California, then and long afterwards a Spanish possession. The entire line finally traced over the Great Divide lay within the territory of the United States.

But it must be remembered that while the expedition was being organized, the vast Territory of Louisiana was as yet a French possession. Before the party were brought together and their supplies collected, the territory passed under the jurisdiction of the United States. Nevertheless, that jurisdiction was not immediately acknowledged by the officials who, up to that time, had been the representatives of the French and Spanish governments. Part of the territory was transferred from Spain to France and then from France to the United States. It was intended that the exploring party should pass the winter of 1803-4 in St. Louis, then a mere village which had been commonly known as Pain Court[3]. But the Spanish governor of the province had not been officially told that the country had been transferred to the United States, and, after the Spanish manner, he forbade the passage of the Americans through his jurisdiction. In those days communication between frontier posts and points lying far to the eastward of the Mississippi was very difficult; it required six weeks to carry the mails between New York, Philadelphia, and Washington to St. Louis; and this was the reason why a treaty, ratified in July, was not officially heard of in St. Louis as late as December of that year. The explorers, shut out of Spanish territory, recrossed the Mississippi and wintered at the mouth of Wood River, just above St. Louis, on the eastern side of the great river, in United States territory. As a matter of record, it may be said here that the actual transfer of the lower part of the territory—commonly known as Orleans—took place at New Orleans, December 20, 1803, and the transfer of the upper part was effected at St. Louis, March 10, 1804, before

meaning 'pierced noses'; the chapter notes that, as known to the explorers, they did not actually pierce their noses.

30 A local edible root gathered and processed by Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest; the term in this 19th-century narrative likely refers to a starchy bulb or root (such as camas or a similar plant) used as a staple, though the precise botanical identity is not certain from the text alone.

31 A popular 18th–19th-century purgative named for Dr. Benjamin Rush, a prominent American physician; these were commonly used as a medicine by Euro-American travelers and often intended to induce evacuation of the bowels.

32 An early form of the river name used in the expedition's journal for the stream now better known as the Clearwater River in north-central Idaho, a tributary of the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

33 An ethnonym used in the Lewis and Clark journal for a local Indigenous nation described as the 'Pierced-nose' people living along the Clearwater and Snake rivers; the name reflects the expedition's contemporary usage for a Columbia Plateau group rather than a modern tribal designation.

34 The name the expedition's journal applied to a western branch of the Columbia River; this stream is now known as the Yakima River in present-day Washington State.

35 A native name recorded in the journal for the river the text identifies in parentheses as the Snake River, a major tributary of the Columbia River that the expedition encountered.

36 The name given by the expedition to a tributary of the Columbia River that is today called the Sandy River in northwestern Oregon, which joins the Columbia east of Portland.

37 An older name used in the journal for the river now generally called the Willamette, a major tributary that joins the Columbia near present-day Portland, Oregon.

38 An edible tuber (commonly called wapato or wapatoo) gathered by Indigenous peoples of the Columbia basin and used as a staple food, similar in use to a potato.

39 A name used in early expedition accounts for a Native American group on the lower Columbia River (often grouped with Chinookan peoples); the term refers to a local nation or band encountered by the explorers.

40 The volcanic peak now known as Mount St. Helens in southwestern Washington; it is a prominent snow-capped stratovolcano on the Cascade Range (modern elevation about 8,300–8,400 feet).

41 A Chinookan-speaking Indigenous people who lived near the mouth of the Columbia River; the name survives in regional place-names such as Clatsop County, Oregon.

42 The winter encampment of the Lewis and Clark Expedition near the lower Columbia River where the party stayed from late 1805 until they departed on March 23, 1806.

43 A broad island between the Willamette and an arm of the Columbia that the explorers named for the abundant wappatoo root (*Sagittaria*) gathered there, which was a staple food and trade item for local tribes.

44 An Indigenous name given in the journal for a local island, translated in the text as 'Deer Island'; the parenthetical form records an alternate spelling used by the expedition.

45 A very large New World vulture native to western North America; by the 20th century it became extremely rare and has been the subject of captive-breeding and reintroduction efforts.

46 An older spelling of 'pirogues'—shallow, flat-bottomed boats or dugout canoes used on rivers and marshes, commonly employed by voyageurs and Indigenous peoples for transport and trade.

47 A French word meaning 'flagstones' that was applied by French-speaking voyageurs to the steep, flat-topped rock narrows and rapids on the Columbia River now called The Dalles.

48 A personal name recorded in the Lewis and Clark journals for a Nez Perce leader who guided or visited the expedition; further biographical details outside the expedition records are limited in contemporary sources.

49 A 19th-century medicinal tincture of opium in alcohol used for pain, coughs, and other ailments, commonly administered in small doses measured in 'drops'.

50 A historical topical ointment composed of pitch, wax, resin, and oil (as described in the text), used in the 18th-19th centuries as a general external remedy.

51 Place-name for meadows where quamash (camass) bulbs grew; 'quamash' (camass) is an edible native root bulb long harvested and eaten by Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest.

52 The winter encampment and fortified post Lewis and Clark built near present-day Washburn, North Dakota, where they spent the winter of 1804–05 and traded and lived with Mandan and Hidatsa peoples.

53 Also called the Continental Divide, the Great Divide is the principal North American watershed separating rivers that drain to the Pacific from those draining to the Atlantic or Arctic, roughly following the Rocky Mountains.

54 A light axe used by many Indigenous peoples of North America as a tool, weapon, and trade item; in the journal it refers both to a specific lost/stolen object and to such tradeable iron goods common in the fur-trade era.

55 Name used in the journal for a stream in the explorers' route; the same watercourse is more commonly known today as the Big Hole River in southwestern Montana.

56 A name given by the explorers to an island they noted as being three thousand miles from the mouth of the Missouri River; the journal suggests the feature has probably since been worn away by the river's currents.

57 A French nickname meaning "One-eye" used in the journal for a prominent Minnetaree chief (here identified as Le Borgne) who met and negotiated with Lewis and Clark.

58 A named chief of the Mandan people in the journal who agreed to travel with the expedition; his departure from the village is described as an emotional public farewell.

59 Refers to a member of the expedition (John Colter) who obtained permission to leave the party to join trappers, becoming one of the early frontier trappers or 'mountain men' in the trans-Missouri West.