



# Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery

By Dayton Duncan, Ken Burns

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**Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery** By Dayton Duncan, Ken Burns

The companion volume to Ken Burns's PBS documentary film, with more than 150 illustrations, most in full color.

In the spring of 1804, at the behest of President oThomas Jefferson, a party of explorers called the Corps of oDiscovery crossed the Mississippi River and started up the Missouri, heading west into the newly acquired Louisiana Territory.

The expedition, led by two remarkable and utterly different commanders--the brilliant but troubled Meriwether Lewis and his trustworthy, gregarious friend William Clark--was to be the United States' first exploration into unknown spaces. The unlikely crew came from every corner of the young nation: soldiers from New Hampshire and Pennsylvania and Kentucky, French Canadian boatmen, several sons of white fathers and Indian mothers, a slave named York, and eventually a Shoshone Indian woman, Sacagawea, who brought along her infant son.

Together they would cross the continent, searching for the fabled Northwest Passage that had been the great dream of explorers since the time of Columbus. Along the way they would face incredible hardship, disappointment, and danger; record in their journals hundreds of animals and plants previously unknown to science; encounter a dizzying diversity of Indian cultures; and, most of all, share in one of America's most enduring adventures. Their story may have passed into national mythology, but never before has their experience been rendered as vividly, in words and pictures, as in this marvelous homage by Dayton Duncan.

Plentiful excerpts from the journals kept by the two captains and four enlisted men convey the raw emotions, turbulent spirits, and constant surprises of the explorers, who each day confronted the unknown with fresh eyes. An elegant preface by Ken Burns, as well as contributions from Stephen E. Ambrose, William Least Heat-Moon, and Erica Funkhouser, enlarge upon important threads in Duncan's narrative, demonstrating the continued potency of events that took place almost two centuries ago. And a wealth of paintings, photographs,

journal sketches, maps, and film images from the PBS documentary lends this historic, nation-redefining milestone a vibrancy and immediacy to which no American will be immune.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Having chronicled the Civil War and baseball, among other subjects, filmmaker Ken Burns collaborates with historian Dayton Duncan to craft this moving portrait of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-6. The story is one of individual triumph and tragedy, and its cast members--a slave, several women who save the expedition at key moments, and veterans of a bitterly fought revolution--represent the early Republic in microcosm. Packed with well-chosen illustrations, *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery* is a fine synthesis of what we know about Meriwether Lewis and William Clark today, knowledge that remains shrouded in a certain mystery.

#### From Library Journal

Having covered the Civil War and baseball in masterly documentaries, filmmaker Burns has now prepared a documentary on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Duncan (*Out West*, Doubleday, 1996) wrote the script for the film and this companion volume, which tells the story of that epic journey in a straightforward manner. The challenge in both film and book is to tell a familiar tale in a new way. The authors meet that challenge by retracing the expedition's route and incorporating their experiences into the story. Interspersed throughout are quotations from the journals and illustrations in the form of paintings, photographs both historic and current, and facsimiles of the journals. William Least Heat Moon, Stephen Ambrose, and Erica Funkhouser have written brief essays on aspects of the expedition. Sidebars include such topics as new plants and animals encountered, the publication of the journals, and Lewis's Newfoundland dog, Seaman. An excellent introduction to the expedition for public and school libraries.

-?Stephen H. Peters, *Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., Marquette*

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#### From [Booklist](#)

The last word in Lewis and Clark histories, Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage*, was a top-10 best-seller for more than a year. Perhaps that's a sign of the popularity likely to greet this spin-off book of a new Ken Burns film, slated for broadcast next November. Burns generously gives lead credit for the book to Duncan, who matches the profusion of images (about 150) with excerpts from Lewis and Clark's famous journals; Duncan's own text links these two elements. Aside from displaying Clark's creative orthography ("Ocian in view!" to quote the journals' crowning moment), Duncan's method allows readers to experience all the crises and landmarks of the odyssey by letting them imagine they're members of the Corps of Discovery, being tormented by mosquitoes, attacked by grizzlies, befriended by Mandans, astounded by the Great Falls of the Missouri (now dry, silenced by a dam), and starved in the Bitterroots. To enhance the re-creation of that period, the authors conjure up its legendary figures in various ways, such as poet Erica Funkhouser's evocative essay concerning the legendary Sacagawea's inner life. (Ambrose and William Least Heat-Moon contribute essays, too.) Such prose is boosted by the rich visuals Duncan and Burns use: drawings from the journals; paintings by Catlin, Bodmer, Bingham, and Russell; and landscape photos and Indian portraits taken in the late nineteenth century. These illustrations alone (and the film) ensure immediate interest that the text commendably builds upon, so prepare for a torrent of requests. *Gilbert Taylor*

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