

Iron Wills and Men of Leather
The story of the Lewis & Clark Expedition
By DAVID C. HINZE

Under a Gentle Breeze

During the journey through the present day states of Kansas and western Missouri the river changed course and flowed north.

Many of the mornings Clark's journal recorded the boats sailed upstream, "On a gentle breeze." This was a good period for the Corps.

The captains were anxious to meet with Indians, who were away from the river on summer buffalo hunts.

Clark and the sergeants noted the changing landscapes and new animals they encountered on shore.

Several times the men witnessed beautiful gray wolves standing on shore and eyeing the strangers as they passed.

To help fill the need for food someone in the expedition began to fish the river and caught channel catfish, a slender, silver-blue-gray color, about three to nine feet in length, and averaging about fifty pounds per fish.

The animal everyone noted in their journal entries was the beaver. They discovered the small, brown, animal in the tributaries of the Missouri on July 3, 1804, near present day Atchison, Kansas.

President Jefferson had given the explorers strict orders to determine if beaver were abundant along the rivers. If so, might the United States begin to take some of Great Britain's fur trade away from them?

Today beavers are seen infrequently along the tributaries of the Missouri and because they build dams are considered a nuisance to commerce.

Although some of the crew became fond of fried beaver tail for supper the beaver was significant because of the current fashion trend of wearing beaver skin hats.

This portion of the Missouri River was part of the western flyway for migratory birds.

Clark's diary and others made frequent notations of the quantity of waterfowl they sighted as they poled up river or walked inland to hunt.

On July 4, 1804 the Captains celebrated their first Independence Day with military honors.

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