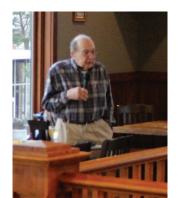
How inclement weather shaped the Corps of Discovery in Seaside

By KATHERINE LACAZE For Seaside Signal

Considering how many times Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and other members of the Corps of Discovery referenced disagreeable weather in their journals, historians could easily assume they experienced a particularly rough winter in terms of rain and cold spells.

To test the that assumption, George Miller, a long-Pacific Northwest meteorologist, decided to do some research. He shared his findings, which also are part of his 2004 book "Lewis and Clark's Northwest Journey: Disagreeable, 'Weather during a History and Hops presentation, sponsored by the Seaside Museum and Historical Society, at the Seaside Brewery on March

Especially for first-time visitors, Miller said, the explorers from the expedi-



Katherine Lacaze George Miller discusses the impact of rain and cold spells on the Corps of Discovery.

tion deserve "a whole lot of credit for how well they observed the weather.'

Thanks to the Corps of Discovery members' journals, Miller was able to take their ample references to weather and equate them to weather patterns known to exist in the Pacific Northwest today. Using that information, he created a more accurate picture of what sort of weather the group of explorers experienced during their stay at Fort Clatsop.

For instance, he identified references to as many as three Arctic outbreaks, with severe cold spells; freezing rain the night of Feb. 2, 1806, that lasted into the following morning; and snow depths varying from 4 to 9 inches.

Staying on the Coast

Around November 1805. the group needed to decide where to spend the winter, and their options included The Dalles, moving east of the Cascade Range, and staying at the coast. By choosing the latter, Miller said, "they made the right decision." As Clark rightly observed, the climate at the coast was milder than that in the mountains. Additionally, they acquired a better understanding of what to expect on the coast.

While the climate they found on the coast was similar in some respects to what they were used to on the East Coast, there were several distinctions, as well including the constant rain that caused their clothes to

"I counted up how many times they had made the notation 'weather disagreeable,' and it was a lot," Miller.

The journal references made Miller wonder how wet it actually was at Fort Clatsop during the winter of 1805-06, and he began to seek an answer to that question.

Rainy days, past and present

As the company did not have a rain gauge, Miller could not determine how much rain they experienced. However, he was able to calculate how often it rained during the months of their stay and compare it to reported numbers at the Astoria Regional Airport during a more recent year.

In their journals, the expedition reported precipitation on 24 days in November, 31 days in December, 25 days in January, 22 days in February, and 26 days in March, or 128 days overall throughout the winter of 1805-06. Those numbers include four days of snow.

During the winter of 2003-04, rain was reported at the airport on 26 days in November, 29 days in December, 28 days in January, 23 days in February, and 21 days in March, or 127 total — one less than during the Corps of Discovery's residency.

During the five-month period of November to March, the average precipitation at the Astoria airport is about 46 to 56 inches, Miller said. In 2003-04, with 127 days of rain, the average rainfall from November to March was about 44.96 inches. Miller believes it could have been similar for the Corps of Discovery based on how many days they experienced rain.

"I really don't consider that a terrible winter in Astoria," he concluded, adding while the weather was probably average for the area, the explorers were likely unprepared and unused to frequently experiencing rain seven or more days in a row.

Miller did discover, however, there was an unusual cold spell during their stay. Additionally, a series of Pacific storms left a far above average snowpack in the Cascades and Rocky Mountains, as the explorers were unable to cross the Rockies "to go back home until July," he said.

History and Hops is a series of monthly discussions hosted by the Seaside Museum on the last Thursday of each month from September to May at the Seaside Brewery. The discussions begin at 6 p.m.

On April 25, Fort Clatsop Ranger Sally Freeman will present on several lesser-known women who played an important role in the Corps of Discovery's expedition.

Community Calendar

Friday, April 12

Senior Lunch Program 11:45 a.m., Bob Chisholm Com-

munity Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside, 503-738-7393, www. sunsetempire.com. \$3 suggested donation, for those 60 and over; \$6.75 for those under 60.

Karaoke

8 p.m., American Legion, 1315 Broadway, Seaside, 503-738-5111.

Saturday, April 13

Dance Fitness

8:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside; www.sunsetempire. com, or call 503-738-3311.

Seafood 101

1 p.m., Cooking class with Jennifer Burns Bright; Community Room, Seaside Library. Signup required; 503-738-6742 or www.seasidelibrary.org

Sunday, April 14

Write On, Seaside!

5 p.m., fundraiser for county libraries with author meet-andgreet; Seaside Civic and Convention Center, 415 First Ave., Seaside.

Monday, April 15 Coffee, Crafts and

Conversation

10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside; visit www.sunsetempire.com, or call 503-738-3311.

Tuesday, April 16

Quickbooks

8:30-10:30 a.m., Quickbooks Level 2, Clatsop Community College, 1455 N. Roosevelt, Seaside; sbdc@clatsopcc.edu or call 503-338-2402.

TOPS Meeting

9:15 a.m., Take Pounds Off SensiblyNorth Coast Family Fellowship, 2245 N Wahanna Rd, Seaside; 503-738-7453.

Taco Tuesday

6:30 p.m., American Legion, 1315 Broadway, Seaside, 503-

Wednesday, April 17

Good Morning Seaside

8 a.m., Weekly coffee and networking; Seaside Chamber of Commerce; contact for details, www.seasidechamber.com.

Preschool storytime

10 a.m., Seaside Library, 1131 Broadway; 503-738-6742.

Knotweed be Gone

10 a.m. to 1 p.m., clear knotweed in the Necanicum Forest, Seaside, presented by North Coast Land Conservancy.

Seaside Duplicate Bridge 1-4:30 p.m, Bob Chisholm Se-

nior Center, 1225 Ave A, Seaside. Come with a partner or call ahead for one; 503-738-7817. Lessons also available.

Listening to the Land Thursday, April 18

SDDA Breakfast

8:30 a.m., Pig'N Pancake, 323 Broadway, Seaside, 503-717-1914, www.seasidedowntown. com. Weekly speakers, discussions and a no-host breakfast.

Seaside Rotary Club

Noon, meets Thursdays, Ange-

lina's Pizzeria, 1815 S Roosevelt Drive, Seaside. Lunch \$15 for nonmembers.

Lunch in the Loft

Noon, featuring author Debra Gwartney, author of the memoir "I Am a Stranger Here Myself"; Beach Books, 616 Broadway, RSVP to 503-738-3500.

Friday, April 19

Senior Lunch Program 11:45 a.m., Bob Chisholm Com-

munity Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside, 503-738-7393, www. sunsetempire.com. \$3 suggested donation, for those 60 and over; \$6.75 for those under 60.

Doubles Tournament

Beaches and Breakers Pickleball Classic Tournament; wwwuspa.org to register. 8 p.m., American Legion, 1315 Broadway, Seaside, 503-738-5111.

Saturday, April 20 **Gearhart cleanup day**

8-11 a.m., drop boxes at Gearhart City Hall, 698 Pacific Way; 503-738-5501.

Seaside Duplicate Bridge 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Mary Blake

Playhouse, across from 1225 Ave A. Seaside. Come with a partner or call ahead for one; 503-791-9745.

Egg Hunt

"Bunbury"

10 a.m., egg hunt and aquatic treasure dive; visit with Easter bunny; at Broadway Park, Sea-

7:30 p.m., Coaster Theatre; 108 N. Hemlock St.; 503-436-1242.

Easter Egg Hunt 10 a.m., Egg hunt for kids up to

age 12; Broadway Field, 1400 Broadway, Seaside.

Monday, April 22 Coffee, Crafts and Conversation

10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside; visit www.sunsetempire.com, or call 503-738-3311.

Tuesday, April 23

TOPS Meeting 9:15 a.m., Take Pounds Off Senlowship, 2245 N Wahanna Rd, Seaside; 503-738-7453.

siblyNorth Coast Family Fel-

Wednesday, April 24

Good Morning Seaside 8 a.m., Weekly coffee and net-

working; Seaside Chamber of Commerce; contact for dewww.seasidechamber.

Preschool storytime 10 a.m., Seaside Library, 1131

Broadway; 503-738-6742.

Seaside Duplicate Bridge 1-4:30 p.m, Bob Chisholm Se-

nior Center, 1225 Ave A, Seaside. Come with a partner or call ahead for one; 503-738-7817. Lessons also available.

Thursday, April 25

SDDA Breakfast

8:30 a.m., Pig'N Pancake, 323 Broadway, Seaside, 503-717www.seasidedown-1914, town.com. Weekly speakers, discussions and a no-host breakfast.

To place a dassified ad call 503-325-3211, log onto www.seasidesignal.com or stop in at 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside

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www.SeasideSignal.com

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