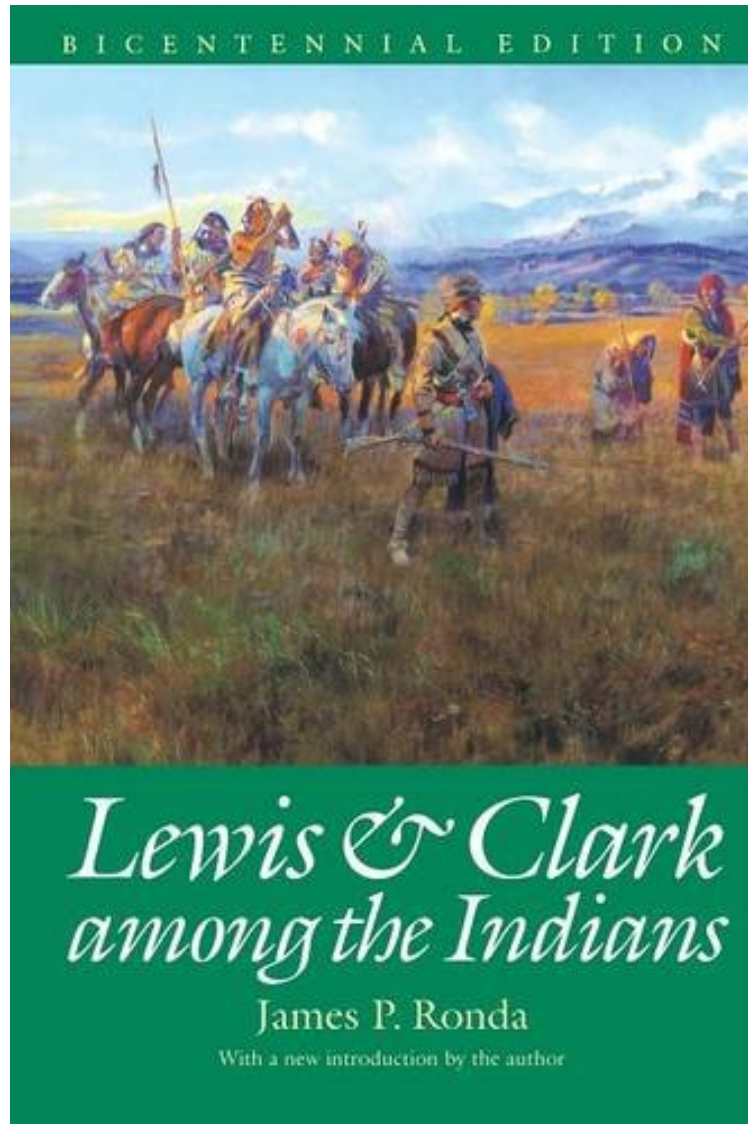


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Lewis and Clark among the Indians (Bicentennial Edition) (Lewis Clark Expedition)

James P. Ronda

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James P. Ronda : Lewis and Clark among the Indians (Bicentennial Edition) (Lewis Clark Expedition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lewis and Clark among the Indians (Bicentennial Edition) (Lewis Clark Expedition):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essential Reading for early American Republic scholarshipBy sgt_maddogThis was an excellent, well organized book that opened up a lot of new vistas historically without being

overly revisionist. The author does a good job of narrating Lewis and Clark within their own cultural context while at the same time showing the misconceptions they entertained about Native customs, trade, and intertribal relations in general. I especially liked the discussion on Native trade networks and raiding patterns. I am looking for a book that further explores these factors. I read this book after first reading Devoto's edition of the Lewis and Clark Journals, as well as Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage* which helped me understand the outlines of the expedition better. This in turn better informs the discussion in this book which though it flows chronologically does not really detail the expedition's progress. The only complaints I have is that the narrative runs out of steam on the return journey and has very little discussion about legacy (though there are several hints that the author researched this aspect in earlier portions of the text). It was almost as if the author was rushing to the end. Still, this is the best book, besides the journals themselves, I have yet encountered on the Corps of Discovery's encounter with Native America. Essential reading to understanding both the American West and the Early American Republic in my view. I would certainly include this book on any syllabus on early America.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Well Written and Exciting Look at the Explorers' Interactions with All the Tribes Along the Way
By Daniel Hurley
As the title indicates, Ronda's book concentrates primarily on Lewis and Clark's interactions with Indians along their journey to the Pacific. Aside from the exploration, Jefferson's other mission, as described by Ronda, was to make peace with the Indians, establishing not only a relationship with the U.S. but to also broker peace among the tribes. As the author points out, the latter was very naive as the two explorers' did not comprehend the complex relationships among the various tribes. For example, the tribes closest to traders had a distinct advantage over the interior tribes due to their access to guns, ammunition and other material sought by the interior tribes such as the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes living well up the Missouri. Tribes such as the powerful Teton Sioux were protective of their roles as dominant traders while their enemies the Mandans and Hidatsas traded with many plains tribes due to their ability to grow vegetables and corn that the plains Indians lacked. Although trying to bridge gaps between rivals such as the Mandan and the Arikaras seemed plausible to the explorers, Ronda points out well that presents and well meaning speeches by Lewis and Clark could not realistically alter relationships until the whites provided a dominant presence among the tribes. A good portion of the book concentrates on the Mandan and Hidatsa since the explorers spent their first winter on the upper Mississippi enduring a very supportive relationship. Strong bonds were made with the Mandan but Ronda well documents the intricate relationships that the explorer's had with the various tribes including sexual contact that Ronda describes had a mystical tribal benefit aside from some cases of trade. It is quite impressive that the explorers were well treated among the less fortunate Indians such as the Flatheads, Shoshone and Nez Perce who assisted L C over the most crucial part of the trip supplying needed horses, food and guides. After reading of L C's fortunes with the mountain and plains Indians, Ronda described a different contrast with the Indians closer to the Pacific who had either direct or indirect contact with traders. The Chinooks prove to be savvy traders as well as other tribes along the Columbia River. This change and more aggressive stance toward pilfering, which Ronda describes as possible cultural misunderstandings, try the corps almost to violence altering the more congenial relationship that the expedition featured for the most of their contacts with the natives. Ronda goes beyond describing the contacts between the corps and the Indians; he also explains the cultures of each tribe and clarifies issues that were not clear to the explorers. This is most notable when Lewis and his three man platoon make contact with the aggressive Blackfeet that ends in the only bloodshed between Indians and the corps. Ronda indicates that Lewis may have unintentionally raised tensions by explaining that the U.S. would be aiding the Blackfeet's traditional enemies and in turn under cut there trade dominance. Interesting that later, the Blackfeet become the most feared tribe of future Mountain men. Excellent book that fits well after a general read of the journey since the book covers activities of only key corps members concentrating primarily on Indian relations.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. My favorite!
By Customer
This is my favorite book on Lewis and Clark. The author clearly uses primary sources to help the reader learn about the complexities of contact between the expedition and the natives. You will not find exaggeration of Sacagawea's contributions, but you will learn about how important she was to the success of the journey. The cultures of the natives and the explorers will help the reader grasp the complexities and realities that made some of the expeditions goals so difficult. Dr. James P. Rhonda has put years of tireless research into this quite readable work. If you truly desire a deeper understanding of the Lewis and Clark expedition, I give this book my highest recommendation!

"Particularly valuable for Ronda's inclusion of pertinent background information about the various tribes and for his ethnological analysis. An appendix also places the Sacagawea myth in its proper perspective. Gracefully written, the book bridges the gap between academic and general audiences."-Choice
James P. Ronda holds the H. G. Barnard Chair in Western History at the University of Tulsa. He is also the author of *Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark and Astoria and Empire*, available in a Bison Books edition.

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