

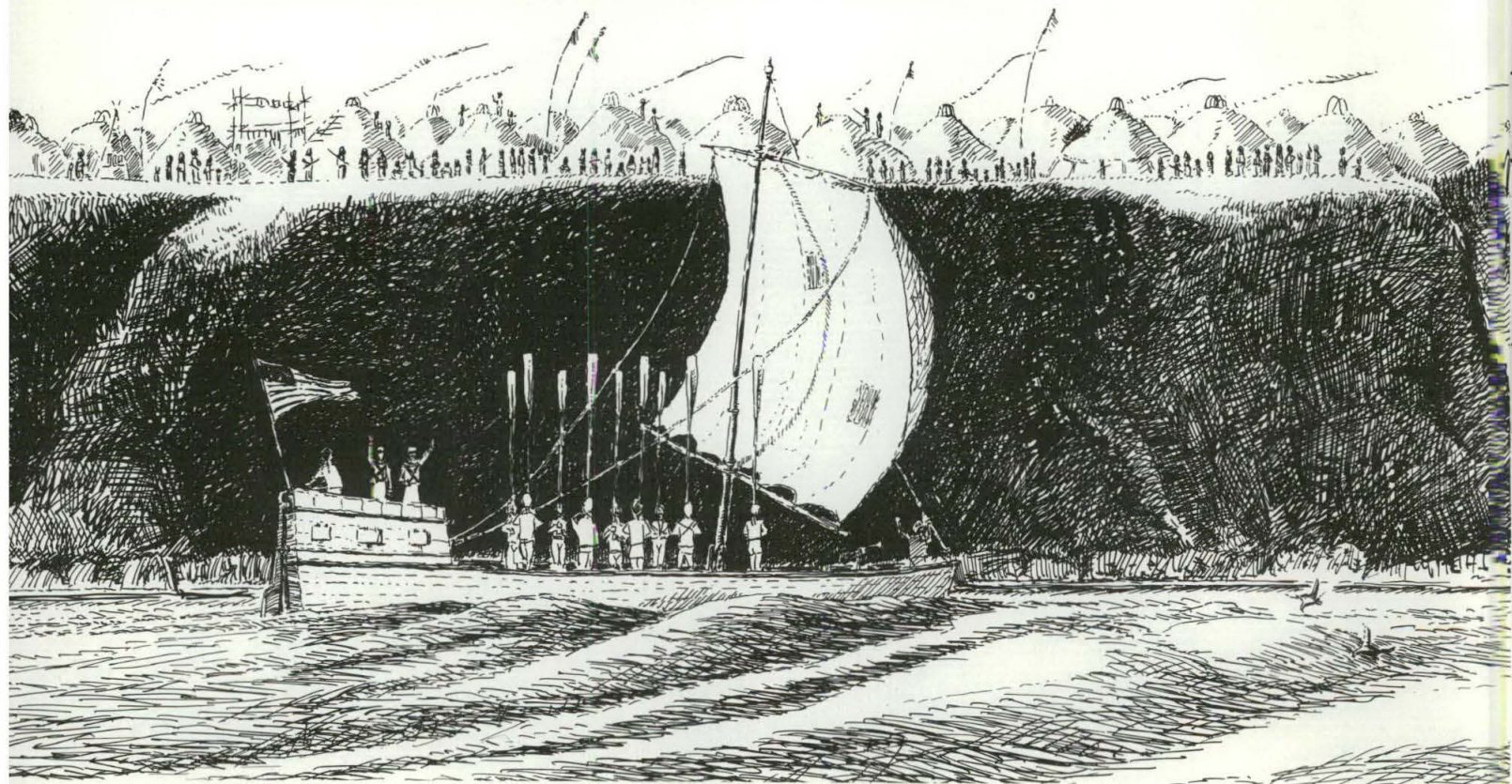
Lewis and Clark on the Upper Missouri

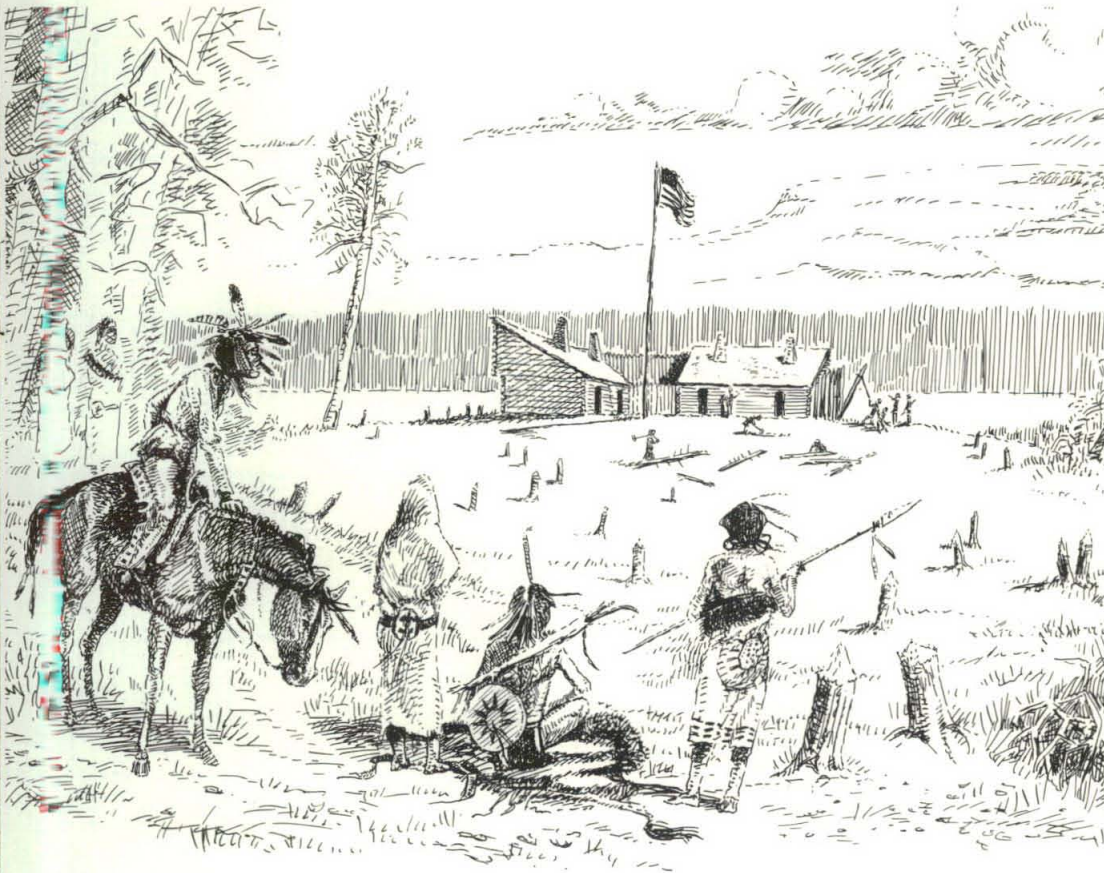
Drawings and Text by Vernon Erickson

The Expedition of Lewis and Clark began when a small flotilla of boats transporting men and supplies was launched from Wood River, Illinois, in 1804.

The Expedition arrived in the vicinity of the Mandan earthlodge villages within present-day North Dakota on October 14, 1804. The Expedition members were objects of intense interest to the Mandans who usually thronged to the river bank in large numbers to view the explorers' arrival.

The occupants of the villages were, in turn, objects of curiosity to Lewis and Clark.





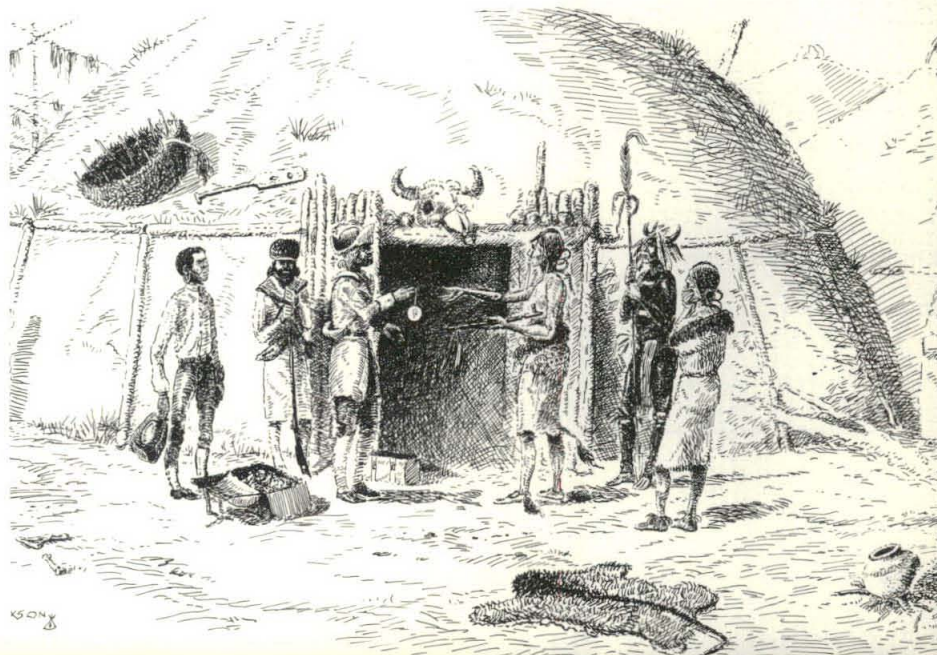
The party began construction of Fort Mandan on the west bank of the Missouri River on November 2, 1804. The construction activity was viewed daily by Indians residing in the vicinity.

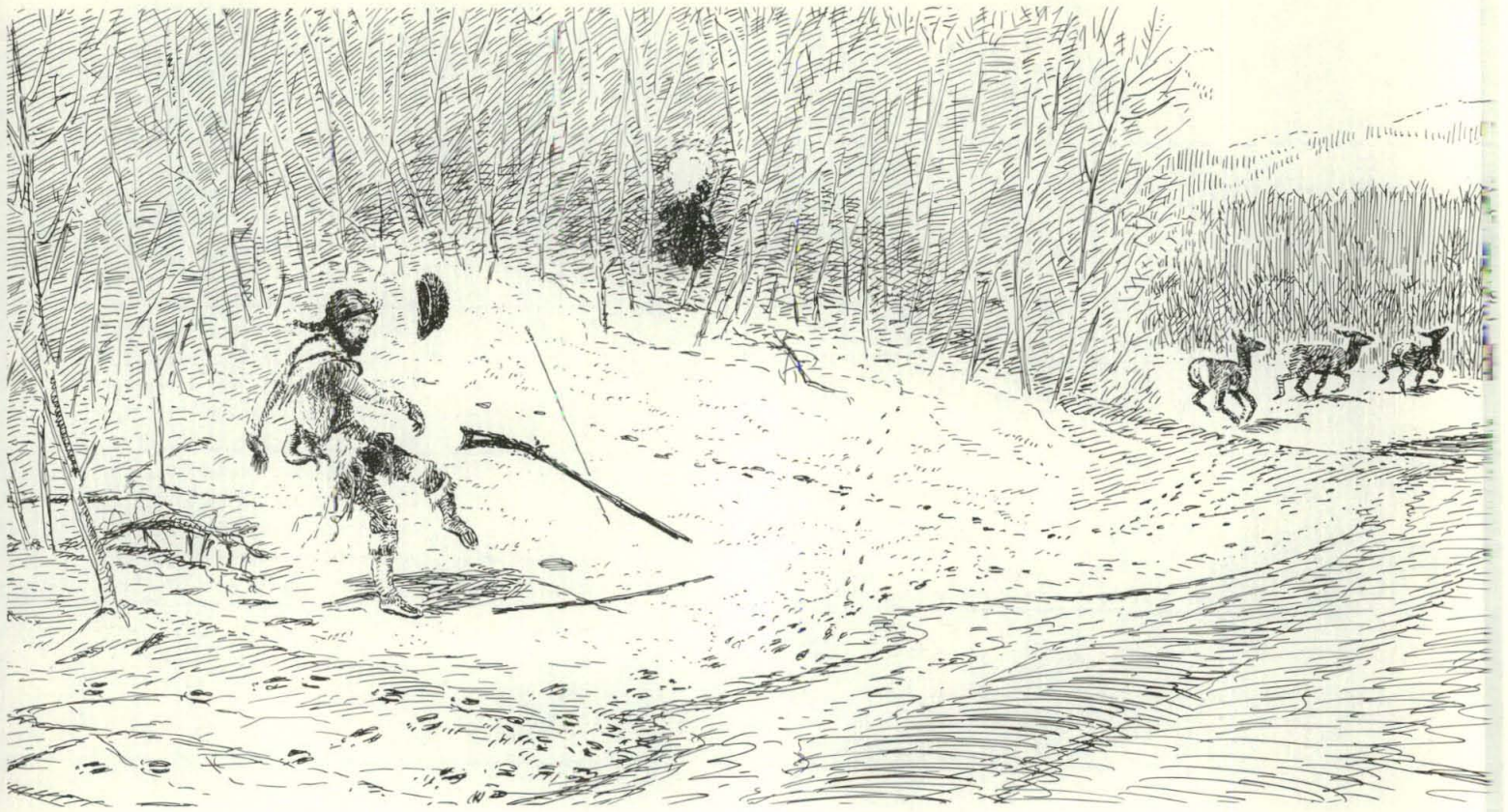
Fort Mandan was the Expedition's 1804-05 winter headquarters. It was while at Fort Mandan that Lewis and Clark acquired the services of Toussaint Charbonneau and his Shoshone Indian wife, Sakakawea. Sakakawea would later prove helpful in obtaining horses from the Shoshones with which the Expedition crossed the Rocky Mountains.

Original drawings in the collection of Dr. Kenneth O. Leonard, Garrison, North Dakota.

A number of principal Indian leaders encountered along the exploration route were presented peace medals by Lewis and Clark. The presentation of a medal was the highest honor bestowed upon the chiefs by the Expedition's leaders.

Several of the medals were presented at Fort Mandan.





On August 11, 1806, while the Expedition was on its return journey, Lewis was shot while hunting elk. The incident occurred in an area that would later become west-central North Dakota.

Lewis was preparing to fire upon a small herd of elk in the midst of a dense willow thicket when a shot fired by Peter Cruzatte, an Expedition member, struck him in the left thigh. Fortunately, the near tragic incident resulted only in a flesh wound.

On August 17, 1806, the Expedition leaders paid Toursaint Charbonneau for his services and prepared to leave the Mandans for the final time.

Lewis and Clark offered to take the nineteen-month-old son of Charbonneau and Sakakawea to the United States and educate him in the manner of the times. The couple declined the offer since the child was too young and had not been weaned, but did consent to bring him to St. Louis the following year.

