Breeds And Half-Breeds

GORDON SPECK

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GEORGE DROUILLARD

?–1810

GEORGE DROUILLARD, or Drewyer as they incorrectly called him, was the first of the famous interpreters to join Lewis and Clark on their trans-America journey.

He was a Pawnee-French half-breed—straight, powerful, and taciturn. Brown eyes dominated a face more Indian than French, and from his Pawnee mother and volatile father came an explosive temper which got him into one or two serious affairs.

Hampered by his propensity for escaping journalistic attention, Drouillard remains elusive and colorless. He did not particularly like to fight; he had no more than an average interest in frontier sin; he never made a fool of himself or sought publicity. So much of his work was done alone that he was and is more a name than a personality.[1]

Yet his service to Lewis and Clark was of prime importance, and Manuel Lisa would have been hard pressed to initiate his Missouri fur empire without the sagacity of George Drouillard.

From whom, why, and where did the half-breed receive the education which was far above his birth and station in life?

Where did "all my brothers and sisters" live, and what did they do?

Who was the "artist" who covered his blond body with barbaric tattooing from the waist down?[2]

Did George Drouillard ever take a wife, French or native?

They remain questions.

Of his life before 1803 we know only that his father, from British Detroit, had married Angélique Descamps, had sired several children, and was interpreter for the Royal Army when it was defeated by

George Rogers Clark during the American Revolution;[3] and that it was the senior Clark who recommended young Drouillard to Meriwether Lewis. Drouillard joined Lewis on December 16, 1803, at Fort Massac, eight miles below Paducah, Kentucky, on the Illinois side of the river.

Later Lewis sent a note to Clark saying that Drouillard had arrived from Tennessee with eight men, that he was not much impressed with their quality, but that no commitments had been made beyond offering Drouillard $25 per month as guide and interpreter.[4] There was "not a hunter among them," said Lewis—one of the prize misstatements of American history, for George Drouillard could shoot on equal terms with old D. Boone, and Lewis would soon be relying on the half-breed to feed the entire expedition.

With the above note between commanders, Drouillard, as was his wont, slipped out of notice, to be mentioned but seldom until the expedition was ready to leave for the Pacific; then he was suddenly remembered when he delivered $99 but lost a letter addressed to Lewis, which a "Country man" eventually found and handed over.

Finally the expedition was on its way, but the first leg of the journey, as far as the Mandans, was purely routine. A military chain of command was set up; they visited Daniel Boone at his homestead on the Missouri; they looked at Indian petroglyphs and "found a Den of Rattle Snakes"; and they met "old M^{r} Durioun [whom] . . . we questioned until it was too late to Go further. . . ."[5] In the morning Pierre Dorion, Sr., for it was he, reversed his track and turned upstream with them, thus giving the Americans the second of their famous interpreter-guides.

Presumably, Dorion and Drouillard were acquainted. The fraternity of interpreter-guides was never large, and it is unlikely that men of the rank of the senior Dorion and Drouillard would be total strangers. And since all interpreters were notorious storytellers, their tales enlivened the dull but grueling labor of cordelling. Even the generally taciturn Drouillard said one day with a straight face, and Lewis and Clark recorded it as fact, that "ab^{t} 5 Miles below here . . . Passed a Small Lake in which there were many Deer feeding. he heard in this Pond a Snake makeing goubleing noises like a turkey. he fired his gun & the noise was increased, he heard the indians mention this Species of Snake, one Frenchman gives a Similar account."[6]

On another occasion Drouillard hung a deer and a bear on a limb overhanging the river so they could more easily be taken aboard the boats. ". . . during the time I lay on the sand waiting for the boat, a large Snake Swam to the bank immediately under the Deer. . . . I threw chunks and drove this snake off Several times. I found that he was determined on getting to the meet, I was compell^{d} to kill him, the part of the Deer which attracted this Snake I think was the Milk from the bag of the Doe."[7]

But there were more serious diversions, too. As noted above, discipline was causing trouble, and on August 7, 1804, the commanders "dispatched George Drewyer, R. Fields, W^{m} Bratten & W^{m} Labiecho back after the Deserter reed with order if he did not give up Peaceibly to put him to Death &c. . . ."[8]

Orders which should be remembered.

In addition, La Liberty (doubtless a nickname), one of the nonmilitary personnel and probably Drouillard's companion, when he had tried to find the "otteaus and Panies" (Otos and Pawnees) a few days before, was also missing in the vicinity of Council Bluffs.[9] Ten days later, Labiche, to give him his correct name, reported that Reed was being brought in alive and that La Liberty had been captured but had escaped.* Here is a faint hint of collusion. George Drouillard was a hard man, and we shall see that at another time he was far from lenient when sent after a deserter. That on this occasion one runaway should be brought in and another, but recently Drouillard's companion, allowed to escape raises a question.

Anyway, Reed readily admitted his guilt, asked for mercy, and was sentenced to run the gantlet four times in the presence of the Indians, and henceforth to be considered as not belonging to the expedition although allowed to accompany it. This sentence released Lewis and Clark from all legal responsibility for Reed's well-being and at the same time averted the stigma of abandoning a lone man.

Other difficulties arose. The interpreters insisted on the right to trade and trap on their own account and be excused from guard duty and other camp chores. It was not surprising that the demands caused ill-will; or that there was "Gealousy between M^{r} Gi[b]son one of our int^{r} and George Drewyer last evening, &c."; or that Drouillard and John Colter got into a row when Lewis bought a colt for supper and turned it over to them to care for until butchering time; or that Drouillard was accused of "several similar fracases."[10]

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* La Liberty was not again seen by Lewis and Clark, although a man by the same name was with Wilson Price Hunt on the Astorian expedition of 1811.

But it is more difficult to understand why Drouillard was held responsible for situations beyond his control and outside his duties. He had been hired as an interpreter-guide, and yet he did most of the effective hunting, and he and George Shannon sometimes went after lost horses which should never have been allowed to stray in the first place. On one such occasion Shannon got lost, and the commanders had to upset work schedules and hunt him, with subsequent bad humor all round.

All in all, however, George Drouillard was seldom mentioned. He became ill, was given sage tea, and was bled; he killed a bear and saved Charbonneau's life; he supplied skins for the iron frame of Lewis' impractical riverboat; he drank his share of the last whiskey; he hunted Shannon again; he chased an Indian who had stolen his gun, recovered it, and in turn robbed the Indian to teach him a lesson; and he used his superb knowledge of sign language and Indian psychology to pave the way for Sacajawea's famous meeting with her brother.

He gave quiet advice on the location for the winter camp at Clatsop; he awed the Indians with a brilliant display of marksmanship; he killed the bulk of the 131 elk and twenty deer which fed the expedition during the winter on the Pacific.

Then, when it was time to start home, devoid of food and trade goods but with the chiefs happy and the Indian girls well paid for favors granted, it was George Drouillard who collected enough Indian food, where and how only he knew, to serve until he could kill more substantial fare. "I scarcely know how we Should Subsist, I believe but badly if it was not for the exertions of this excellent hunter," said Clark.[11]

It was Drouillard who negotiated with Chief Twisted Hair for the return of the horses left with his Indians on the outward journey. It was Drouillard who taught Lewis how to geld the half-wild stallions so they could be used to carry. It was Drouillard who looked at the sky and the trees and the crusted snow and said it was much too early to get through the mountains on the return journey—albeit the commanders ignored his advice and were then forced to retrace their steps, as he knew they would. And it was he who secured the local guides necessary to make the dangerous crossing when the sun was high and the drifts partially gone.

On July 18, 1806, it was Drouillard who was ordered to chart Maria's River, and it was the information supplied by this well-educated half-breed on which Clark relied when he drew his celebrated map of the West in August of 1808.[12]

And when the expedition disbanded in St. Louis, it was George Drouillard to whom Manuel Lisa turned for help in organizing the first great American trading venture on the upper Missouri.

United States of North America with the British and Spanish territories, 1809. *Courtesy Library of Congress.*

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GEORGE DROUILLARD AND MANUEL LISA

1807–1810

ST. LOUIS was the crossroads for the greatest frontier in history. Her front lawns entertained the silver buckles of Colonial society; her back porches gave egress into a wilderness. Up and down her dusty streets tramped every sort of man and woman. Perfumed and lace-cuffed noblemen rubbed elbows with flea-infested Osage chiefs; international scientists drank raw alcohol with illiterate interpreter-guides; polished belles competed with black-haired squaws who more than held their own in a contest where fire and lack of inhibition were the twins of preferment. It was a raw, sprawling agglomeration of sin and frontier preachers, squalor and booming fur trade. A quarter of a million dollars changed hands annually. A handful of blue beads bought a $6 beaver pelt. A cup of diluted whiskey purchased a buffalo hide.

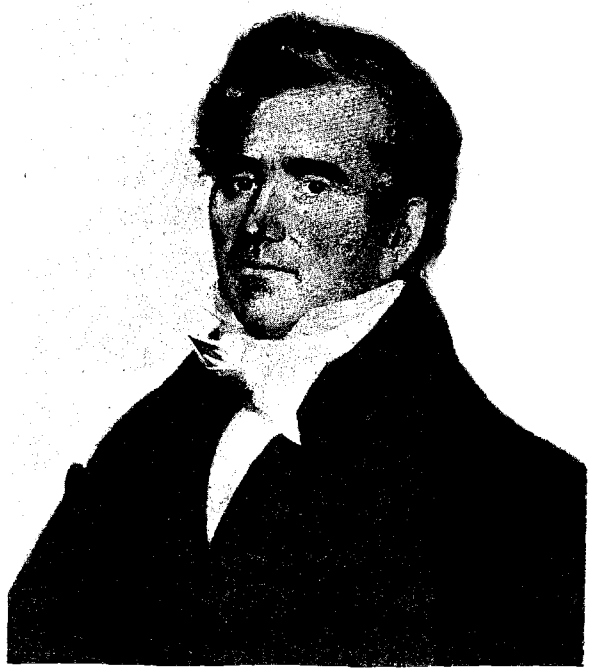
Manuel Lisa understood this city of extremes and made it his own. He never achieved popularity with its elite, but he did achieve envy.

Manuel was the son of Christopher Lisa, Spanish government servant, and was born in New Orleans, the City of Sin, on September 8, 1772. He left there perhaps as early as 1790 and drifted to St. Louis, where with the help of his father he soon obtained an exclusive trade with the Osages.

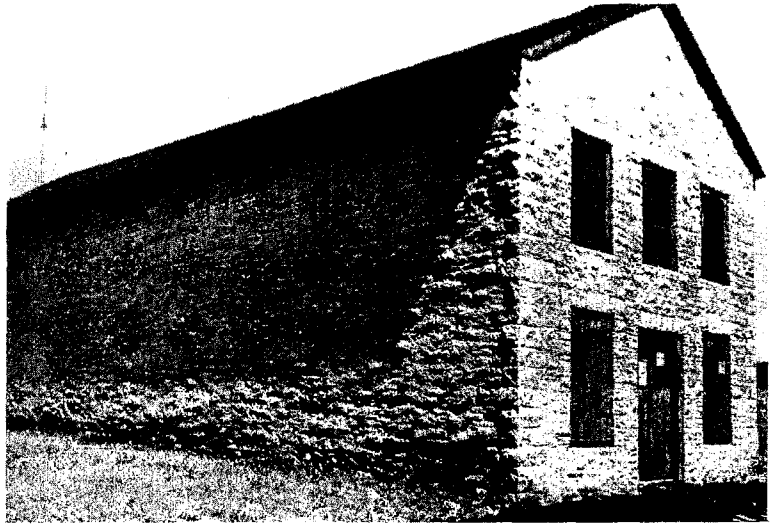
But that range was far too restricted for his genius, and he was casting about for a wider sphere when Lewis and Clark returned from the Pacific.

William Morrison and Pierre Menard, both of Kaskaskia, were doubtless flattered when Lisa invited them to join him in mounting a

St. Louis, 1835. Oil on canvas by Leon Pomarede. *City Art Museum of St. Louis, Arthur Ziern Jr. Collection.*



Manuel Lisa. *The State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.*



Two-story stone warehouse of Manuel Lisa, built 1818. *Walker-Missouri Tourism.*

venture to the Blackfeet and Crows, 2,000 miles north and west of St. Louis. But Drouillard, who was still loafing about the city, was not overly impressed by the same offer; he expected to be associated with the most important projects.

George Drouillard was no modest underling.

Lisa proposed to head his own expedition in the field. Drouillard was to be his chief support and to represent Morrison and Menard. In addition to a trading post, they intended to set up their own traplines. With that in mind, Lisa recruited forty-two employees, including the former Lewis and Clark men John Potts and Peter Wiser, and departed St. Louis on April 19, 1807, with $16,000 in goods aboard.

At the mouth of the Osage River Ed Rose, the mulatto interpreter, joined the party, but one of the *engagés,* Antoine Bissonette, deserted. It was no spur-of-the-moment action. He had signed with Lisa to serve three years; but even before they reached the mouth of the Osage on May 14, and only 120 miles up the Missouri, Bissonette had been systematically stealing supplies to make a getaway. When the expedition tied up at the Osage landing, Bissonette took his clothes and the pilfered articles and secreted them ashore. He then returned to routine duties. While the commanders were occupied with the details of trade, he stole into the brush bordering the river, picked up his cache, and slipped away.

The events immediately following were described by one A. Dubreuil in a sworn statement before Justice of the Peace Thomas Riddick in St. Louis on August 5, 1808. Said Dubreuil:

The day that we were to leave the river of the Osages to continue our trip, Mr. Manuel Lisa ordered the crew to cast off, and soon as the crew had swung away the crew yelled that one man was missing from aboard. Mr. Manuel Lisa asked who that man was, he was told that [it] was Bazine. Mr. Manuel disembarked to go for Bazine and said to Mr. George Drouillard, George, go look for Bazine and bring him back dead or alive. Mr. Drouillard took his carbine and left accompanied by Benito. Shortly after they had left I heard a . . . shot. And about half an hour after Mr. Drouillard returned and said that he came to get someone to bring the wounded man to camp. He then took some men and went to get him and bring him back. Mr. Manuel Lisa had left on his part saying that he was going to . . . where he thought that he would find him, he had taken a canoe and two men and on leaving he said if I find him at sight of [him] I fire upward [as a signal]. He returned two or three hours after to the area and as soon as he embarked, George Drouillard announced to him that he had wounded the man. He said good he is a rascal who got what he deserved. He was near Bazine and spoke to him in an angry voice reproaching for the situation in which he had been put and that it was his own fault. The man remained until the next day when he sent him with someone from St. Charles whose name I do not recall.[1]

Dubreuil's statement, although somewhat confused, makes it clear that Drouillard was issued dead-or-alive orders; that Lisa himself went after the deserter with the same intentions; and that, despite his anger, Lisa attempted to save Bissonette's life by returning him for medical care. Neither Drouillard nor Lisa considered it any of their responsibility when Bissonette died en route to aid—he should not have deserted.

Being a man of temper, Lisa was not always consistent in the treatment of his employees. When Jean Baptiste Bouche returned to camp after four days' hunting without permission, Lisa let him off with a tongue-lashing. Bouche, instead of recognizing his good fortune, determined to get even. During the night (it is not clear whether it was the same night or later), George Drouillard heard a suspicious noise, and creeping stealthily to the keelboat he caught Bouche in the act of setting it adrift. Drouillard seized the craft and presumably reported the incident to Lisa, who again failed to give Bouche a major punishment. A few nights later Bouche tried again, and again Drouillard caught him.

Why Lisa ordered Bissonette shot but used none of the severe punishments against Bouche which the frontier would have considered proper is a riddle, one which must have made Drouillard wonder with what manner of man he was associated.

In the meantime, the expedition proceeded upriver. At the mouth of the Platte, they recruited John Colter, who had been released from the eastbound Lewis and Clark command. He had been trapping on his own and was but now paddling down to St. Louis with reports of fabulous beaver valleys tucked away in the mountains west of the Mandans.

He was easily persuaded to join Lisa and Drouillard.

There was no trouble until they reached the Arikaras,[2] who were just then having a pleasant little war with their neighbors, the Mandans. Two hundred Arikaras fired shots across Lisa's bow to emphasize their objection to any trade with the Mandans. Lisa cautiously nosed the keelboat ashore and was relieved to see Arikara squaws arrive with bags of corn as tokens of trade. These were no sooner dropped on the ground, however, than they were knifed open by several warriors as a sign of war. Lisa immediately trained the boat guns on the Indians but did not fire. At this turn of affairs, the chiefs rushed to Drouillard and said the sack-cutting was the act of "bad men" who had had no sanction from the chiefs. Lisa and Drouillard pretended to believe the excuse, but they realized that profitable trade was unlikely under the circumstances, and they turned the keelboat into the current and departed for the Mandans—considering themselves lucky to escape with no damage beyond a few minor thefts.

But the Mandans, too, were in a nasty anti-white-man mood. Since Lisa never used force if subterfuge or persuasion would serve the same end, he now fell back on Indian psychology. Extreme bravery invariably won their respect. Leaving Drouillard to get the keelboat past the Mandan warriors as best he could, Lisa hitched up his leggings, muttered an imprecation on all savages, and walked boldly and alone the full length of the Mandan towns.

Not a shot was fired.

Despite the fact that Drouillard had been very popular with the Mandans during the Lewis and Clark days, Lisa's bluff took raw courage on the part of both men, for Drouillard must force his reluctant boatmen to pole their clumsy craft close to shore in order to

use the current eddies, thus exposing them to a dangerous fire from the warriors on the riverbanks.

This first American trading venture to the upper Missouri had one near miss after another. Lisa and Drouillard had barely outbluffed the Mandans when they saw on the high ground bordering their route an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Assiniboines whooping it up for trouble.

It was no time to dally, and Lisa and Drouillard started firing over the heads and beyond the range of the natives. The Indians, not knowing they were being tricked, quickly asked for a parley, and Drouillard conducted the usual double-talk ceremonies which both sides knew were but face-saving formalities.

Thus, without actual violence but with constant warlike demonstrations, Lisa and Drouillard arrived at the mouth of the Big Horn on November 21, 1807, and erected Fort Raymond, a small stockaded post on the right bank. It was the first post and the first white man's building in Montana.[3]

Drouillard and Lisa had intended to establish trade with the Blackfeet, but to do this they should have remained on the Missouri instead of ascending the Yellowstone to the Big Horn. Now they were in the very heart of the territory of the Crows—deadly enemies of the Blackfeet—and by the rules of Indian thinking had just made themselves enemies of the Blackfeet. Only an enemy would trade with a Crow!

If either Lisa or Drouillard was perturbed by their predicament, they did not show it, for Lisa immediately sent John Colter alone and with only a thirty-pound pack on a cruise to solicit the Crows.

It was on this journey that Colter discovered the wonders of Yellowstone Park.

The activities of Lisa and Drouillard while Colter was gone are heavily tinged with conjecture. Some authorities credit Drouillard with retracing Colter's route: up the Big Horn to Pryor's Fork, to the Shoshone, to the Absaroka Range, into Yellowstone, up the Yellowstone to the lake, south to Jackson Lake, to the Green and Big Sandy rivers, across South Pass, and back to the mouth of the Big Horn.[4] In the spring of 1808 he is said to have left Fort Raymond again and ascended the Little Big Horn, visited the upper Tongue River, and turned north to the Rosebud and back west to his post with the report that the tribes were receptive and beaver plentiful.[5] There is no proof.

Other scholars believe that both Lisa and Drouillard remained

close to the Fort until the following August, when they embarked for St. Louis with a satisfactory catch.[6]

All are agreed, however, that American trade was established with the Crows, that Colter had seen live steam spouting from frozen riverbanks and bubbling mud surrounded by mountain meadows, that beaver were plentiful; and that the Blackfeet were implacable foes.

Perhaps Lisa did not know why this last was true, but George Drouillard did. He was half Indian. On the night of July 27, 1806, Meriwether Lewis had caught a Blackfoot brave crawling on his belly into camp intent on stealing American guns. Lewis had aroused the camp, and Reuben Fields had stabbed the Indian to death. Since that moment, Drouillard knew, the Blackfeet regarded all white men as enemies and himself and Lewis as devils.

Such considerations, however, did not dampen the happiness with which Lisa and Drouillard poled swiftly down toward civilization, past the Mandans, the Arikaras, the Osages, Daniel Boone's homestead, and St. Charles, to home.

St. Louis—a hot bath (which meant a good deal to even these hardened men), good food, better liquor, and the heady perfume of a clean woman.

With these visions George Drouillard stepped from the keelboat to the dock, was met by Constable Alexander Belliseuine,* and was arrested for the murder of Antoine Bissonette![7]

Even today there is no satisfactory explanation for Drouillard's arrest. In 1808 there was precious little law anywhere on the frontier, and less on the New Orleans–St. Louis–Mandan sector. Shootings were so common in New Orleans they were not even topics of conversation, and shooting a deserter on the Missouri was in the same category as hanging a horse thief. Perhaps someone thought a murder trial would reflect adversely on the unpopular Lisa. Perhaps someone just had a sudden surge of righteousness.

The case brought out the legal elite. Drouillard was tried by Attorney General John Scott before Judge J. B. Lucas; Associate Judge René Auguste Chouteau, a very prominent St. Louis businessman and fur dealer; and a jury of Drouillard's peers—all men who knew the rules of frontier life.

Drouillard was defended by Edward Hempstead, William C. Carr,

* His signature is partially illegible.

and Rufus Easton, who argued for three hours that Bissonette's desertion was premeditated, and if allowed to go unpunished would tempt others to do the same and thus endanger all expeditions; that Bissonette agreed he had been well treated by Lisa; that he readily admitted his guilt; that Drouillard was a hero of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was used to military orders, and would obey a commander without question; and that the Bible said if a thief were killed while being apprehended, his blood should not be avenged.

The jury took fifteen minutes.

Not guilty.

Nevertheless, the trial raises unpleasant conjectures. Testimony showed that Drouillard's bullet entered Bissonette's back near the shoulder, with the obvious inference that he had been given little chance to surrender; and the large number and importance of both prosecution and defense forces hints that more than a routine frontier killing was at stake.

In any event, the trial was a financial blow to Drouillard, who had to pay for his own defense. In fact, the following spring, he was reduced to signing on March 25, 1809, a six-month note made out to Joseph Kimball for the paltry sum of $19.

Two months later he wrote his sister as follows:

St. Louis, May 23, 1809

MY DEAR MARIE LOUISE:

You have without doubt learned of the misfortune which happened to me last spring on my way to the Upper Missouri. I admit that this misfortune was very fatal to us but at the same time, I would have you observe without trying to excuse myself, that this has not been done through malice, hatred or any evil intent. Thoughtlessness on my part and lack of reflection in this unhappy moment is the only cause of it, and moreover encouraged and urged by my partner, Manuel Lisa, who we ought to consider in this affair as guilty as myself for without him the thing would never have taken place. The recollection of this unhappy affair throws me very often in the most profound reflections, and certainly I think it has caused a great deal of grief to my family for which I am very sorry and very much mortified. That I have not lost the affection of my old friends proves that they did not believe me capable of an action so terrible through malice and bad intent.

I would have had the pleasure of seeing you all last winter if it had not

been for the lack of money to cover the expenses of such a voyage. The expenses which I had through my lawsuit for the affair above mentioned have absorbed all my savings that I had made in the upper Missouri; this obliges me now to return to this part of the country with the brother of Governor Lewis who continues to employ me as before for the United States—(I mean the last one).*

I do not think I can return from the Upper Missouri before three years and just as soon as I return I shall be delighted to see you all. If some of my family will be kind enough to write to me they will address their letters to Monsieur Pascal Cerré at St. Louis. He and his wife although not known to my family in Detroit join with me and beg you to accept their civilities. They are the best friends I possess in this country. My respects to our Mother who I embrace well, also all my brothers and sisters who I would very much like to see.

Your very affectionate brother,
GEORGE DROUILLARD

P.S. Remember please to Madam Maisonville and her family. Madam Jacque Parrent, Detroit, Sandwich.[8]

Perhaps the letter reflected public opinion in St. Louis, too, for when a new and stronger company, the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company (the "St. Louis" was soon dropped) was organized to continue the Crow-Blackfoot venture, George Drouillard was again chief interpreter.

Manuel Lisa was not liked by his fellow entrepreneurs, but he was much too powerful to be ignored, and the new Missouri Fur Company automatically included Lisa, Morrison, and Menard from the previous organization. All the really important fur men of St. Louis belonged: Benjamin Wilkinson, Jean Pierre Chouteau (half-brother of René Auguste), his son Auguste Pierre Chouteau, Reuben Lewis (brother of Governor Meriwether Lewis), William Clark, Sylvester Labadie, Dennis Fitz Hugh, and Major Andrew Henry.

Clark was to act as agent in St. Louis; Governor Lewis was to negotiate a contract between the federal government and his brother's new fur company calling for the payment of $7,000 to return Chief Big White and his interpreter, René Jusseaume, to their Mandan

* That is, Meriwether Lewis, now governor of the Louisiana Territory, still employs him.

homes after a visit to Washington;* and Jean Pierre Chouteau was to command a force of 125 militiamen to protect the total staff of more than 200 voyageurs, clerks, and trappers.

Further to ensure commercial success, Governor Lewis promised to withhold trade licenses from anyone else until the new combination was firmly established.

Excepting Morrison, Clark, and Wilkinson, all the partners were signed with the field expedition when it left St. Louis on June 15, 1809.[9]

Just beyond the mouth of the Knife River, Lisa built Fort Mandan, after which he and certain others returned to St. Louis, where they arrived just before Thanksgiving.

Another segment went to the mouth of the Big Horn, arriving there about the end of October.

In March of the following year, 1810, Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry, with Colter as guide and Drouillard as interpreter, left Fort Mandan with a party and headed for the Three Forks of the Missouri to force the Blackfeet to trade whether they wanted to or not. Despite storms, snow blindness,[10] irregular food supplies, and unfamiliar terrain, the detachment erected a stockade on the Three Forks early in April.

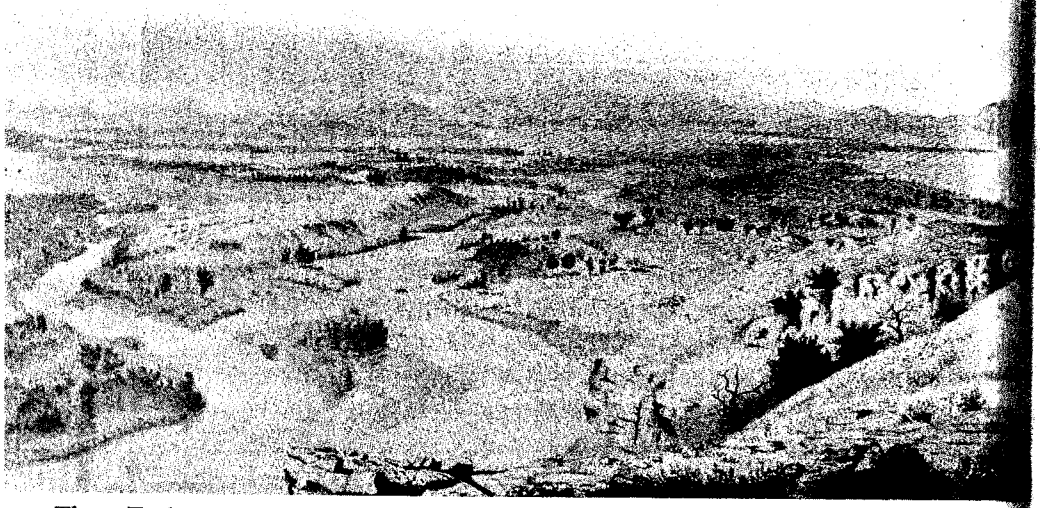
Two days later the Blackfeet struck. Five men were killed, several horses stolen, and many traps and pelts lost. The Indians kept up a steady pressure. Menard forbade lone trappers or even small parties to move outside the immediate area of the post, with the result that no commercial quantities of beaver could be taken.

Nor would the Blackfeet come in to talk.

Finally someone (Menard is often credited with the idea) conceived a crafty ruse: the neighboring Snake tribe would be tricked into warring on the Blackfeet; the Snakes would capture a Blackfoot brave and deliver him to Menard; Menard would load the captive down with presents and turn him loose; the warrior would be grateful and convert his brothers to peace and trade—with Menard.

A scheme so devious was much too complicated to succeed, and it never got beyond talk. Meanwhile, the Blackfeet were striking hard and often. The post was substantially under siege. Despite that, Drouillard, laughing at Menard's caution, made two successful trips

* See pages 155–160.



Three Forks of the Missouri. Pencil sketch by A. E. Mathews. *Montana Historical Society, Helena.*

into beaver valleys. "I am too much of an Indian," he said, "to be caught by Indians."[11]

But one bright May day, the corpses of two Shawnee companions and the savagely mutilated and decapitated body of George Drouillard were found behind his dead horse not far from the stockade. A warm spring wind blowing away from the Fort had prevented Menard from hearing the guns, and this fact had turned the fortunes of Drouillard.

Legend says that the Blackfeet mutilated Drouillard's body because they were infuriated with his marksmanship, while at the same time they were so awed by his courage they sought to partake of it by eating choice bits of him, some raw, some boiled.[12]

The Missouri Fur Company never fully recovered. Menard returned to St. Louis in July of 1810, and Andrew Henry evacuated the stockade and moved to a promising site near the modern St. Anthony, Idaho. But this venture also failed, and Henry returned to the Arikaras where, either by design or by happenstance, Manuel Lisa met him.

Other members of the Menard party drifted away—some to find their niche in the fur trade, others to leave no record.

And George Drouillard barely escaped that anonymity, for he was essentially a colorless and tragic figure. More sagacious than a dozen Sacajaweas, more trustworthy than a tribe of Jusseaumes, he lacked the changing lights and shadows which might have made him more than a name.

He was a major factor in the greatest American expedition, but through no fault of his and no design of hers, an illiterate Indian girl stole the spotlight in one dramatic moment; he was associated with every important entrepreneur of his day, but is virtually unmentioned in their memoirs or the thousands of pages written about their affairs; highly literate himself, he left no journal of his own, and no Boswell wrote his story; he tramped and paddled over an empire, but no chart details his wanderings. Even death denied him the balm of heroism, for his killing served no worthy purpose.

Yet despite all this, George Drouillard was one of the mightiest of the breeds and half-breeds who sculptured America.

Chapter 12. George Drouillard

1. For a recent characterization, see M. O. Skarsten, *George Drouillard, Hunter and Interpreter for Lewis and Clark and Fur Trader, 1807–1810,* Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1964, pp. 17 ff.

2. Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West,* 3 vols., New York, Francis P. Harper, 1902, I, 146.

3. Della Gould Emmons, *Sacajawea of the Shoshones,* Portland, Ore., Binfords & Mort, 1943, p. 164. Mrs. Emmons is a highly respected curator of the Washington State Historical Society and a recognized historian who has used the novel as the vehicle for her research on the Bird Woman.

4. Lewis to Clark, December 17, 1803; Clark Papers, Vooris Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. See also Skarsten, *op. cit.,* Chap. 2.

5. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804–1806,* ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 8 vols., New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1904–1905, I, 46.

6. *Ibid.,* I, 48.

7. *Ibid.,* I, 56–57.

8. *Ibid.,* I, 100 ff.

9. Olin D. Wheeler, *The Trail of Lewis and Clark,* 2 vols., New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926, I, 157.

10. Burton Harris, *John Colter,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952, pp. 28–29.

11. Lewis and Clark, *op. cit.,* III, 339.

12. Harris, *op. cit.,* p. 80.

Chapter 13. George Drouillard and Manuel Lisa

1. Notarized statement of Ante. Dubreuil before Thomas Riddick,

Justice of the Peace, St. Louis, August 5, 1808; Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

2. M. O. Skarsten, *George Drouillard, Hunter and Interpreter for Lewis and Clark and Fur Trader, 1807–1810,* Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1964, pp. 252 ff.

3. Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West,* 3 vols., New York, Francis P. Harper, 1902, I, 119.

4. Burton Harris, *John Colter,* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952, pp. 88 ff.; see also W. J. Ghent, *The Early Far West,* New York, Tudor Publishing Co., 1936, pp. 118–119.

5. Harris, *op. cit.,* p. 89; Skarsten, *op. cit.,* pp. 260–270, 339.

6. Chittenden, *op. cit.,* I, 119 ff.

7. Skarsten, *op. cit.,* Chap. 24.

8. Olin D. Wheeler, *The Trail of Lewis and Clark,* 2 vols., New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926, I, 110–111.

9. Ghent, *op. cit.,* p. 120.

10. For a vivid description of this ailment, see Skarsten, *op. cit.,* pp. 287–289.

11. Harris, *op. cit.,* p. 149.

12. Chittenden, *op. cit.,* I, 146.