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Book Review: *Lewis and Clark: Weather and Climate Data from the Expedition Journals* Edited by Vernon Preston

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Lewis and Clark: Weather and Climate Data from the Expedition Journals. Edited by Vernon Preston. Boston: American Meteorological Society, 2007. xvii + 523 pp. Maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography. $90.00 cloth.

> *One of the most butifull Plains I ever saw. . . .*
> —William Clark, July 4, 1804, near present-day Atchison, Kansas

The observations of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the men of their company continue to fascinate readers two centuries after the first historic quest to explore the American West. This book edited by Vernon Preston expertly compiles all of the weather-, water-, and climate-related records into a single volume that will prove to be indispensable for those scholars seeking to understand the meteorologic and hydrologic records of that epic voyage. Preston is a highly experienced field meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Idaho, and his expertise is evident in the book's exceedingly thorough and systematic approach.

The five-page foreword by atmospheric scientist Terry Nathan along with two introductory chapters of 26 pages by Preston provide an engaging if brief description of the instruments used and the weather and hydrology encountered during the various phases of the journey. Perceptions on the remarkable drying of the landscape as the men progressed across the "butifull Plains" to the "deserts of America" in eastern Montana (deemed incapable of ever being settled due to their aridity by Clark and Sergeant Ordway) will be of particular interest to Great Plains scholars. The bulk of the book (448 pp.) is devoted to the available observations for each day from August 1803 through September 1806, together with brief notes (largely on location) by the editor. Daily writings from the journals not just of Lewis and Clark but also their men are presented, along with the data from the Weather Diary table kept by the captains. This information has been presented in other published work, but its compilation here effectively brings forward the tabular data along with the multiple personal observations and viewpoints expressed on the daily weather, water, and climate of an unknown land.

This reviewer did have one difficulty with the presentation style: the daily data are shown as facsimiles of relevant lines from a printed page (not the handwritten table) and are charred around the edges in an attempt to evoke the original. This artificial visual device detracts from an otherwise very faithful account. On the other hand, the group of excellent trail p hotographs near the end of the book is an attractive and useful visual aide, and several short appendices cover a selection of well-known but relevant letters as well as the expedition provision list.

This thorough book is a unique addition to the scholarly literature on the Lewis and Clark expedition. **Susan Solomon**, *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Boulder, Colorado.*

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