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**Review of *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition* By Larry E. Morris**

Roger Nichols  
*University of Arizona*

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*The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition.* By Larry E. Morris. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. xviii + 284 pp. Illustrations, map, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00.

This book is yet another result of the Lewis and Clark mania that has swept across much of the West and through the scholarly publishing community with interests in that region. It approaches the topic from an unexplored angle by looking at what members of the expedition did after their 1806 return to St. Louis. To do so, Larry Morris tries to focus on what he describes as “fascinating events” rather than merely giving the reader a string of mini-biographies. This approach allows him to range widely in time and place as he follows events in people’s lives. At the same time it prevents him from offering any thesis or central theme that might hold the disparate stories together beyond the repeated overlapping of the veterans’ experiences.

By examining the lives of thirty-three people, many of whom were quite ordinary, Morris faces several challenges. One of them is balance. Some of the participants, Lewis and Clark or Sacagawea, for example, have received plenty of attention in numerous books and articles, as has York, William Clark’s slave. Others disappeared almost as soon as they completed their epic journey, and sources for them are thin or even non-existent. Related to this issue is Morris’s definition of what constituted a “fascinating” event in the lives of his subjects. Such experiences as murder, suicide, escape from or death at the hands of Indians all qualify. Certainly those involved in the Missouri River trade or trapping in the Northern Rockies faced repeated danger there.

Another problem is how much attention to give events and issues previously examined by earlier scholars. Morris’s longest chapter, for example, narrates events surrounding the October 1809 death of Meriwether Lewis which have already received ample scrutiny. A further instance occurs in the discussion of

Sacagawea's death, which includes conflicting theories about this event, though settling on the generally accepted 1812 date as the correct one. At times stories not clearly related to the lives of expedition members, such as the abandonment of Hugh Glass by his companions after his mauling by a grizzly, receive attention too.

Morris has done prodigious research tracking down little-known facts about often obscure individuals. He presents the results in sixteen brief narrative chapters and an appendix giving basic life data for each of the thirty-four participants. Usually the events occur in the Mississippi and Missouri River Valleys or the Rocky Mountains as part of the exploration of the Plains. The author set out to give readers exciting stories about people who participated in this process. Although the narrative is uneven, at times it accomplishes that goal.

ROGER L. NICHOLS  
Department of History  
University of Arizona