

Lewis & Clark Journal Entries

September 7th – September 18th, 1804

Note: The following are direct transcriptions of journal entries written by William Clark and Merriweather Lewis. The variations on spelling, punctuation and capitalization reflect the original manuscript.

September 7, 1804

Clark

7th September Friday 1804.

a verry Cold morning. Set out at Day light near the foot of this high Nole we discovered a Village of an annamale the french Call the Prarie Dog which burrow in the grown & with the rattle Snake and Killed one & Caught one Dog alive caught in a whole 2 frogs near the hole Killed a Dark Rattle Snake with a P[rairie] do[g] in him The Village of those little dogs is under the ground a considerable distance we dig under 6 feet thro rich hard clay without getting to their Lodges Some of their wholes we <pu throw> put in 5 barrels of water without driveing them out, we caught one by the water forceing him out ther mouth resemble the rabbit, head longer, legs short, & toe nails long ther tail like a g[round] Squirrel which they Shake and make chattering noise ther eyes like a dog, their colour is Gray and Skin contains Soft fur

Capt Lewis & my Self walked up, to the top which forms a Cone and is about 70 feet higher than the high lands around it, the Bass is about 300 foot in decending this Cupola, discovered a Village of Small animals that burrow in the grown (those animals are Called by the french Pitite Chien) Killed one & Cought one a live by poreing a great quantity of water in his hole we attempted to dig to the beds of one of thos animals, after diging 6 feet, found by running a pole down that we were not half way to his Lodges, we found 2 frogs in the hole, and killed a Dark rattle Snake near with a Ground rat [*X: or prarie dog*] in him, (those rats are numerous) the Village of those animals Covs. about 4 acrs of Ground on a Gradual decent of a hill and Contains great numbers of holes on the top of which those little animals Set erect make a Whistleing noise and whin allarmed Slip into their hole—we por'd into one of the holes 5 barrels of water without filling it, Those Animals are about the Size of a Small Squirel & thicker, the head much resembling a Squirrel in every respect, except the ears which is Shorter, his tail like a ground Squirrel which thy Shake & whistle

when alarmed. the toe nails long, they have fine fur & the longer hair is gray, it is said that a kind of Lizard also a Snake reside with those animals. Camped

September 8, 1804

Lewis and Clark

8th of September 1804

Saturday. Set out early and proceeded on under a Gentle breeze from the S. E. at 3 mes passed the place where Trodow wintered one winter 1796 (below the mouth of a creek on the L. S. at Miles to a point of woods Std. shore. 1 mile above the commencement of this course, the lower point of a willow Island commences, this Island 1 ¼ in length in the center of the river; a Small Sand Island at its upper extremity. high bluff on Lard. beginning at the upper point of the Island—much higher hills than usual appear to the (West) N, distant about [7 or 8?] miles, recently burnt—three small islands commence five miles from the commencement of this course and continue about two miles lying on the Star side of the main chanl. here met with six buffaloe bulls of which we killed two—1½ miles further an Island on the Lard about [blank] m in length—came too at the lower point of this island and encamped, jerked the meet we had taken today consisting of two Buffaloe, one large buck Elk 1 Elk fawn, three fawn deer, three turkies & a Fox Squierel

I went out to day on the S. S with a view to find Some of the little dogs, and Coats [goats], Traveled over a rigid [ridged?] and mountainous Countrey without water & rising to 5 or 600 hundred feet, Islands & Sands intervening prevt. my getting to the boat untill after night, in my absent Capt. Lewis killed a Buffalow, I saw Greid many Buffalow & white wolves. (Sailed all day)

September 9, 1804

Clark

9th Septr.

Set out at Sunrise and proceeded on passed the head of the Island on which we Camped, passed three Sand & willow Islands, the Sand bars So noumerous, it is not worth mentioning them, the river Shoal or Shallow wind S E Came too and Camped on a Sand bar on the L. S. Capt Lewis went out to Kill a buffalow. I walked on Shore all this evening with a view to Kill a Goat or Some Prarie Dogs in the evening after

the boat landed, I Directed my Servent York with me to kill a Buffalow near the boat from a numbr. then Scattered in the plains, I saw at one view near the river at least 500 Buffalow, those animals have been in view all day feeding in the Plains on the L. S. every Copse of timber appear to have Elk or Deer. D[rouillard]. Killed 3 Deer, I Kiled a Buffalow Y. [York] 2, R. Fields one.

Lewis

9th September Sunday 1804

Capt. Clark found on the Lard shore under a high bluff issuing from a blue earth a bittuminus matter resembling molasses in consistence, colour and taste.

September 11, 1804

Clark

Sept. 11th Tuesday 1804

we came too at the mouth of a Creek on the L. S. ^[4] at Dark in a heavy Shower of rain, it Continued to rain the greater part of the night, with a hard wind from the N W Cold—

Sept. 11th *Tuesday* 1804 Set out early a Cloudy morning the river verry wide from one hill to the other, with many Sand bars passed the Isd. on which we lay at a mile passed three Isds. ^[2] one on the L. S. ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from it on the L. S. a village of little Dogs. I Killed four, this village is 800 yards wide & 970 yds. long on a jentle Slope of a hill in a plain, those animals are noumerous) the other two Islands are on the S. S. the river is verry Shallow & wide, the [boat?] got a ground Several times— The man G Shannon, who left us with the horses above the Mahar Village, and beleving us to be a head pushed on as long as he Could, joined us he Shot away what fiew Bullets he had with him, and in a plentifull Countrey like to have Starvd. he was <9> 12 days without provision, Subsisting on Grapes at the Same [time?] the Buffalow, would Come within 30 yards of his Camp, one of his horses gave out & he left him before his last belluts were Consumed—I saw 3 large Spoted foxes ^[3] to day a black tailed Deer, & Killed a Buck elk & 2 Deer, one othr Elk 2 Deer & a Porkipine ^[4] Killed to day at 12 oclock it became Cloudy and rained all the after noon, & night.

a cloudy morning, Set out verry early, the river wide & Shallow the bottom narrow, & the river Crouded with Sand bars, passed the Island on which we lay at one mile—, pased three Islands one on the L. S. and 2 on the S. S. opposit the Island on the L. S.

I Saw a village of Barking Squirrel 970 yds. long, and 800 yds. wide Situated on a gentle Slope of a hill, those animals are numerous, I killed 4 with a view to have their Skins Stuffed.

here the man who left us [*NB: George Shannon*] with the horses 22 [*NB: 16*] days ago [*NB: He started 26 Augt.*] and has been a head ever Since joined, us nearly Starved to Death, he had been 12 days without any thing to eat but Grapes & one Rabbit, which he Killed by shooting a piece of hard Stick in place of a ball—This man Supposing the boat to be a head pushed on as long as he Could, when he became weak and fiably deturmined to lay by and waite for a tradeing boat, which is expected Keeping one horse for the last resorse,—thus a man had like to have Starved to death in a land of Plenty for the want of Bulletes or Something to kill his meat we Camped on the L. S. above the mouth of a run a hard rain all the after noon, & most of the night, with hard wind from the N W. I walked on Shore the fore part of this day over Some broken Country which Continus about 3 miles back & then is leavel & rich all Plains, I saw Several foxes & Killed a Elk & 2 Deer. & Squirels the men with me killed an Elk, 2 Deer & a Pelican

September 12, 1804

Clark

Septr. 12th Wednesday 1804

Some rain all day to day & Cold—I walked on Shore Saw Several foxes Several Villages of Prarie dogs, and a number of Grouse

Set out early a Dark Cloudey morning wind from the N W. cold passed, (a village of Little Squerals or Prarie dogs opsd. Camp on the N. Side.)

a Dark Cloudy Day the wind hard from the N. W. we passed (1) a Island the middle of the river at the head of which we found great dificuelty in passing between the Sand bars the water Swift and Shallow, it took $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day to make one mile, we Camped on the L. S. opsd. a Village of Barking Prarie Squirels

I walked out in the morn:g and Saw Several Villages of those little animals, also a great number of Grouse & 3 foxes, and observed Slate & Coal mixed, Some verry high hills on each Side of the river. rains a little all day.

September 13, 1804

Clark

13th Septr. Thursday 1804 ¹¹

a Dark Drizzley Day, G D Cought 4 Beaver last night the winds from the N W. Cold Set out early and proceeded on verry well passed a number of Sand bars, Capt Lewis killed a Porcupin on a Cotton tree fieeding on the leaves & bowers of the Said tree, the water is verry Shallow [*X: in places*] being Crouded with Sand bars Camped on the ⟨L⟩ S. Side under a Bluff. the Bluffs on the S. S. not So much impregnated with mineral as on the L. S. muskeetors verry troublesom—.

Lewis

September 13th

Killed a *bluewinged teal* [*EC: Querquedula discors*] and a Porcupine [*EC: Erethizon dorsatum*]; found it [the porcupine] in a Cottonwood tree near the river on the Lard. Shore—the leaves of the Cottonwood were much distroyed—as were those of the Cottonwood trees in it's neighbourhood. I therefore supposed that it fed on the folage of trees at this season, the flesh of this anamal is a pleasant and whoalsome food—the quills had not yet obtained their usual length—it has four long toes, before ⟨and⟩ on each foot, and the same number behind with the addition of one short one on each hind foot on the inner side. the toes of the feet are armed with long black nails particularly the fore feet—they weigh from 15 to 20 lbs—they resemble the *slowth* very much in the form of their hands, or fore feet. their teeth and eyes are like the bever—

September 14, 1804

Clark

Septr 14th Friday 1804

Set out early proceeded on passed Several Sand bars water wide & Shallow N. 68° W. 2¾ mes. to a pt. of high Land on the L. S. passed a round Island on the ⟨L⟩ S S.— Caught 3 beaver last night, Some drizzeley rain Cloudy & Disagreeable and Som hard Showers, I walked on Shore with a view to find an old Volcano Said to be in this neighbourhood by Mr. McKey I was Some distance out Could not See any Signs of a Volcanoe, I killed a *Goat*, which is peculier to this Countrey about the hite of a Grown Deer Shorter, its horns Coms out immediately abov its eyes broad 1 Short prong the other arched & Soft the color is a light gray with black behind its ears, white round its neck, no beard, his Sides & belly white, and around its taile which is

Small & white and Down its hams, actively made his brains on the back of its head, his noisterals large, his eyes like a Sheep only 2 hoofs on each foot no a[n]telrs (more like the antelope or gazella of Africa than any other Specis of Goat). Shields Killed a *Hare* weighing 6½ lb: verry pore, the head narrow and its ears 3 Inches wide and 6 long, from the fore to the end of the hind foot; is 2 feet 11 Inch. hite 1 foot 1¾ its tail long & thick white, clearly the mountain Hare of Europe, a rainy evening all wett The Soil of those Plains washes down into the flats, with the Smallest rain & dissolves & mixes with the water. we See back from the river high hills in a leavel plain, evidently the remains of mountains, what mud washed into the river within those few days has made it verry muddy, passed two Small Creeks on the L. S. & Camped below a 3rd on the L. S. rained all evening

Lewis

September 14th 1804

this day Capt. Clark killed a male *wild goat* [EC: *Antelope*] so called— its weight 65 lbs.

	F	I
length from point of nose to point of tail	4	9
hight to the top of the wethers	3	—
do. behind	3	—
girth of the brest	3	1
girth of the neck close to the shoulders	2	2
do. near the head	1	7

Eye deep sea green, large percing and reather prominent, & at or near the root of the horn within one ¼ inches—

Shields killed a *hare of the prarie*, [EC: *Lepus campestris*]

weight six pounds and ¼

	F.	I.
Length from point of hind to extremity fore feet	2	11
hight when standing erect	1	1 ¾
length from nose to tale	2	1
girth of body	1	2 ¾
length of tale	—	6 ½
length of the year [ear]	—	5 ½
width of do. do.	—	3 ⅛
from the extremity of the hip to the toe of the hind foot	1	3 ½

the eye is large and prominent the sight is circular, deep sea green, and occupyes one third of the width of the eye the remaining two thirds is a ring of a bright yellowish silver colour. the years ar placed at the upper part of the head and very near to each

other, the years are very flexible, the animal moves them with great ease and quickness and can contract and fold them on his back or drape them at pleasure—the front outer fold of the year is a reddish brown, the inner folds or those which lie together when the years are thrown back and which occupy two thirds of the width of the year is of a clear white colour except one inch at the tip of the year which is black, the (lower or) hinder fold is of a light grey—the head back shoulders and outer part of the thighs are of a leadcoloured grey the sides as they approach the belly grow lighter becoming gradually more white the belly and breast are white with a shade of lead colour—the fur is long and fine—the tail is white round and bluntly pointed the fur on it is long and extremely fine and soft when it runs it carries its tail straight behind the direction of the body—the body is much smaller and more length than the rabbit in proportion to its height—the teeth are like those of the hare or rabbit as is its upper lip split—its food is grass or herbs—it resorts to the open plains, is extremely fleet and never burrows or takes shelter in the ground when pursued, I measured the leaps of one which I surprised in the plains on the 17th Inst. and found them 21 feet the ground was a little descending they appear to run with more ease and to bound with greater agility than any animal I ever saw. (they are extremely fleet—) this animal is usually single seldom associating in any considerable numbers.

September 16, 1804

Lewis

Sunday September 16th 1804

This morning set out at an early hour, and came too at ½ after 7 A. M. on the Lard. Shore ¼ miles above the mouth of a small creek which we named *Corvus*, in consequence of having killed a beautiful bird of that genus near it we concluded to lie by at this place the balance of this day and the next, in order to dry our baggage which was wet by the heavy showers of rain which had fallen within the last three days, and also to lighten the boat by transferring a part of her lading to the red perogee, which we now determined to take on with us to our winter residence wherever that might be; while some of the men were employed in this necessary labour others were dressing of skins washing and mending their cloaths &c. Capt. Clark and myself killed each a buck immediately on landing near our encampment; the deer were very gentle and in great numbers on this bottom which had more timber on it than any part of the river we had seen for many days past, consisting of Cottonwood Elm, some indifferent ash and a considerable quantity of a small species of white oak which is loaded with acorns of an excellent flavor very little of the bitter roughness of the nuts of most species of oak, the leaf of this oak is small pale

green and deeply indented, [NB: not copied for Dr Barton] it seldom rises higher than thirty feet is much branched, the bark is rough and thick and of a light colour; the cup which contains the acorn is fringed on it's edges and imbraces the nut about one half; the acorns were now falling, and we concluded that the number of deer which we saw here had been induced thither by the acorns of which they are remarkably fond. almost every species of wild game is fond of the acorn, the Buffaloe Elk, deer, bear, turkies, ducks, pigeians and even the wolves feed on them; we sent three hunters out who soon added eight deer and two Buffaloe to our strock of provisions; the Buffaloe were so pour that we took only the tongues skins and marrow bones; the skins were particularly acceptable as we were in want of a covering for the large perogue to secure the baggage; the clouds during this day and night prevented my making any observations. Sergt. Gass and Reubin Fields whom we had sent out yesterday to explore the White river returnd at four oclock this day and reported that they had foll [EC?: owed the] meanders of that stream about 12 miles r[iver]'s general course West, the present or principal channel 150 yards wide; the coulour of the water and rapidity and manner of runing resembled the Missouri presisely; the country broken on the border of the river about a mile, when the level planes commence and extend as far as the eye can reach on either side; as usual no timber appeared except such as from the steep declivities of hills, or their moist situations, were sheltered from the effects of the fire. these extensive planes had been lately birnt and the grass had sprung up and was about three inches high. vast herds of Buffaloe deer Elk and Antilopes were seen feeding in every direction as far as the eye of the observer could reach.

Clark

September 16th Sunday

we proceeded on 1¼ Miles and Camped (for the) on the L. Side in a butifull Plain Surounded with timber in which we Saw Severall Der, we delayed here for the purpose of Drying the articles which were wet & the cloathes to Load the Perogue which we had intended to send back, finding the water too Shoal Deturmind to take on the Perogue also to make Some observations for Longitude &c. the two men G. [Gass] & R. F. [Reubin Field] joined us and informed "that the river as far as they were up had much the Appearance of the river about the mouth, but little timber and that chiefly elm, the up land (near) between this river & the White river is fine, Great numbers of Goat, Deer of three kinds, Buffalow, & wolves, & Barking Squirels, The fallow Deer, ^[6] Cloudy, all day Cleaning out the boat examining & Drying the goods, & loading the Perogue, I killed 2 Deer Capt Lewis one & a Buffalow, one Buffalow & five other Deer Killed. I observed Pine Burs & Burch Sticks ^[7] in the Drift wood up white river which Coms in on the L. S. imedeately in the point is a butifull Situation for a town 3 Gentle rises, & more timber about the mouth of this river than usial

We Set out very early & proceed'd on 1¼ miles (thro) between Sand bars and Came too on the L. S. (1)— deturmined to dry our wet thig and liten the boat which we found (by) could not proceed with the present load [*NB: as fast as we desired, owing to Sand bars*] for this purpose we Concluded to detain the Perogue we had intended to Send back & load her out of the boat & detain the Soldiers untill Spring & Send them from our winter quarters. We put out those articles which was wet, Clean'd the boat & perogus, examined all the Locker Bails &. &c. &.

This Camp is Situated in a butifull Plain Serounded with Timber to the extent of ¾ of a mile in which there is great quantities of fine Plumbs—The two men detachd up the White river joined us here & informed that the [river] as far as they were up had much the appearance of the Missourie Som Islands & Sands little Timber Elm, (much Signs of Beaver, Great many buffalow) & Continud its width, they Saw & well as my Self Pine burs & Sticks of Birch in the Drift wood up this river, They Saw also Number of Goats Such as I Killed, also wolves near the Buffalow falling [fallow] Deer, & the Barking Squirels Villages Capt. Lewis went to hunt & See the Countrey near the Kamp he killed a Buffalow & a Deer

Cloudy all day I partly load the empty Perogue out of the Boat. I killed 2 Deer & the party 4 Deer & a Buffalow (who) the we kill for the Skins to Cover the Perogus, the meet too pore to eat. Capt Lewis went on an Island ⁹¹ above our Camp, this Island is abt. one mile long, with a Great purpotion ceder timber near the middle of it I gave out a flannel Shirt to each man, & powder to those who had expended thers

September 17, 1804

Lewis

Monday September 17th 1804.

one of the hunters killed a bird of the *Corvus genus* [*EC: Pica pica hudsonica*] and order of the pica & about the size of a jack-daw with a remarkable long tale. beautifully variagated. it (has an agreeable note something like goald winged Blackbird) note is not disagreeable though loud— it is twait twait twait, twait; twait, twait twait, twait.

	F	I
from tip to tip of wing	1	10
Do. beak to extremity of tale	1	8 ½
of which the tale occupys	11	
from extremity of middle toe to hip	5 ½	

its head, beak, and neck are large for a bird of its size; the beak is black, and of a convex and cultrated figure, the chops nearly equal, and its base large and beset with hairs—the eyes are black encircled with a (small) narrow ring of yellowish black its head, neck, breast & back within one inch of the tail are of a fine glossy black, as are also the short feathers of the under part of the wing, the thies and those about the root of the tail. the (body) belly is of a beautiful white which passes above and around the but of the wing, where the feathers being long reach to a small white spot on the rump one inch in width—the wings have nineteen feathers, of which the ten first have the longer side of their plumage white in the middle of the feather and occupying unequal lengths of the same from one to three inches, and forming when the wing is spread a kind [of] triangle the upper and lower part of these party coloured feathers on the under side of the wing being of dark colour but not jet or shining black. the under side of the remaining feathers of the wing are darker. the upper side of the wing, as well as the short side of the plumage of the party coloured feathers is of a dark blackish or bluish green sometimes presenting as light orange yellow or bluish (tinge) tint as it (rise) happens to be presented to different exposures of light—the plumage of the tail consists of 12 feathers of equal lengths by pairs, those in the center are the longest, and the others on each side diminishing about an inch each pair—the underside of the feathers is a pale black, the upper side is a dark blueish green which like the (upper and) outer part of the wings is changeable as it reflects different portions of light. towards the the extremity of these feathers they become of an orange green, then shaded pass to a redish indigo blue, and again at the extremity assume the predominant colour of changeable green—the tints of these feathers are very similar and equally as beautiful and rich as the tints of blue and green of the peacock—it is a most beautiful bird.—the legs and toes are black and imbricated. it has four long toes, three in front and one in rear, each terminated with a black sharp talon from $\frac{3}{8}$ ths to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in length.—these birds are seldom found in parties of more than three or four and most usually at this season single as the hawks (ravens) and other birds of prey usually are—(from its appearance I believe to) its usual food is flesh—this bird does not spread its tail when it flies and the motion of its wings when flying is much like that of a Jay-bird—(its note—tah, tah, tah, tah, tah, tah, tah)

*The White turkey of the black hills from information of a french lad who wintered with the Chien Indians [EC: *rara avis in terris!*] About the size of the common wild turkey the plumage perfectly white—this bird is booted as low as the toes—*

September 18, 1804

Clark

18 Sept. Tuesday

I Killed a prarie wolf to day about the Sise of a Gray fox with a bushey tail the head and ears like a Fox wolf, and barks like a Small Dog— The animale which we have taken for the Fox is this wolf, we have seen no Foxes.

Set out early wind from the N W. Modrt. our boat being much litened goes much better than usial

Wind from the N W. we Set out early the boat much lightened, the wind a head proceed on verry Slowly (1) Passed an I a Island about the middle of the river at 1 Mile this Island is about a mile long, and has a great perpotion of red Cedir on it, a Small Creek comes in on the S. S. opposit the head of the Island, proceeded on passed many Sand bars and Camped on the L. S. before night the wind being verry hard & a head all Day. the hunters Killed 10 Deer to day and a Prarie wolf, had it all jurked & Skins Stretchd after Camping

I walked on Shore Saw Goats, Elk, Buffalow, Black tail Deer, & the Common Deer, I Killed a Prarie Wolff, about the Size of a gray fox bushey tail head & ear like a wolf, Some fur Burrows in the ground and barks like a Small Dog.

what has been taken heretofore for the Fox was those wolves, and no Foxes has been Seen; The large wolves are verry numourous, they are of a light Colr. large & has long hair with Corrs [*X: Coarse*] fur.

Some Goats of a Different Kind Wer Seen yesterday Great many Porcupin rabbits & Barking Squirils in this quarter. Plumbs & grapes.