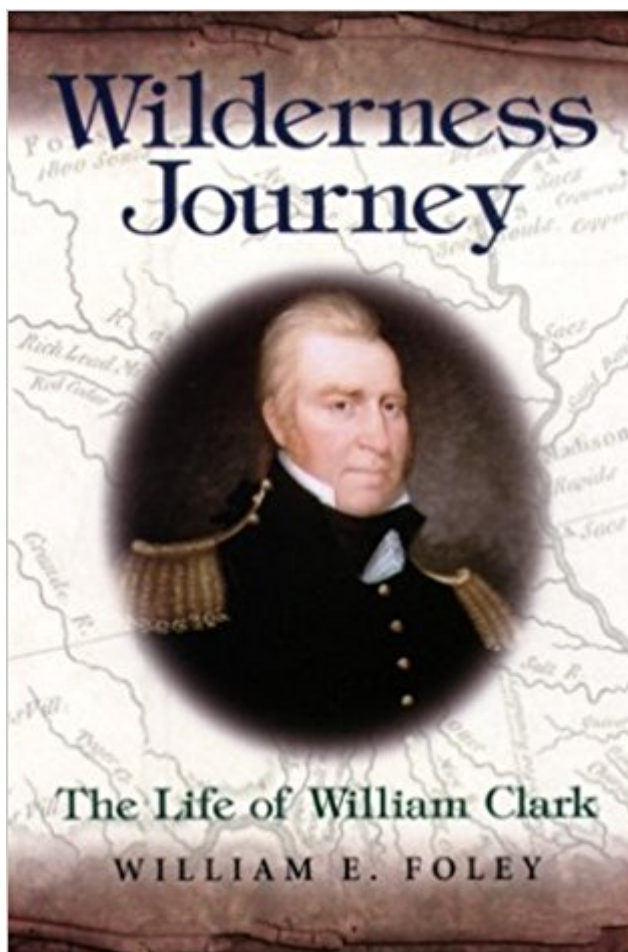


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# Wilderness Journey: The Life Of William Clark



## Synopsis

Strange as it may seem today, William Clark—best known as the American explorer who joined Meriwether Lewis in leading an overland expedition to the Pacific—has many more claims to fame than his legendary Voyage of Discovery, dramatic and daring though that venture may have been. Although studies have been published on virtually every aspect of the Lewis and Clark journey, *Wilderness Journey* is the first comprehensive account of Clark's lengthy and multifaceted life. Following Lewis and Clark's great odyssey, Clark's service as a soldier, Indian diplomat, and government official placed him at center stage in the national quest to possess and occupy North America's vast western hinterland and prefigured U.S. policies in the region. In his personal life, Clark had to overcome challenges no less daunting than those he faced in the public arena. Foley pays careful attention to the family and business dimensions of Clark's private world, adding richness to this well-rounded and revealing portrait of the man and his courageous life. Coinciding with the bicentennial in 2004 of the departure of Lewis and Clark's famed Corps of Discovery, *Wilderness Journey* fills a major gap in scholarship. Intended for the general reader, as well as for specialists in the field, this fascinating book provides a well-balanced and thorough account of one of America's most significant frontiersmen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Long lacking a modern biography, Clark is suddenly benefiting from the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. Along with Landon Y. Jones (*William Clark and the Shaping of the West* [BKL Ap 1

04]), Foley rectifies the oversight and reflects on Clark's papers, which are ordinarily mined for more general frontier histories. Foley renders a complete, tangible picture, from the domestic details of Clark's household to the wider historical stage of American expansion and settlement. Dealing with Native Americans in war (he fought at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1795) and in peace (he negotiated dozens of treaties), Clark was the central American official at St. Louis brokering the relentless pressure on the tribes of the trans-Mississippi territories. Foley appraises Clark as ably diplomatic and comparatively humane in the context of the times but is not so flexible when considering Clark's slaveholding and particularly his treatment of York, whom he famously took on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Meticulous and encyclopedic, Foley's biography will be a must purchase for Lewis and Clark collections. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"No one is better able to treat in a comprehensive way William Clark's public life than William Foley. Foley knows, and has skillfully used, the massive store of archival materials. He has written a balanced, solidly researched biography of a major American figure. The great strength of this biography is Foley's unparalleled command of the sources and his broad understanding of the West in the early Republic. William Clark shaped the early West and was shaped by it." — James P. Ronda

"Bill Foley has written a compelling biography of William Clark. It is significant because it provides a fresh look at the life of an important public servant who is primarily known as the partner of Meriwether Lewis and co-leader of the Corps of Discovery. Foley expertly traces Clark's early life, and he separates his leadership and achievements from Lewis's with clarity and insight, thereby enabling the reader to better understand his role in the expedition across the continent. Foley's study of William Clark should serve as the standard biography of the man for at least a generation." — R. Douglas Hurt

"Bill Foley's book on William Clark deserves a place alongside Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage* on every scholar's bookshelf. It comprises a thorough and lively tour through the life of one of the most complex and vivid personalities ever produced in the United States." — Bob Moore

Meticulous and encyclopedic, Foley's biography will be a must purchase for Lewis and Clark collections. — Booklist

An excellent biography that has illuminated many aspects of the Louisiana territory after the Corps of Discovery expedition, when Clark became its first governor. The actions of President Jefferson and William Clark moving the Indians off their traditional homelands/hunting grounds were surprising and scarcely laudable. Clark's first wife, Judith Hancock Clark, was a cousin of mine, as

were their children. I have sent copies of this book to other members of our Hancock family in Virginia.

As a reader of "Undaunted Courage", the Steven Ambrose historical biography of Meriwether Lewis and his patron, Thomas Jefferson, I felt like I received only part of the picture of the expedition that opened the Louisiana Purchase to U.S. interests. This book completes the picture. Clark was the steady, get-the-job-done, go-to guy, who complemented the mercurial Lewis. Where Lewis made only occasional journal entries, Clark is the principal source of our non-botanical/zoological information because he reliably performed the journaling function. The only criticism I would have of the book is the repeated drubbing of Clark as a slave holder and his perceived mistreatment of York. It seems that Foley feels he has to apologize for Clark, who lived in a different age with a very different view of slavery. Once would have been enough.

It's about time someone wrote a modern full biography of William Clark (1770-1838). The second-in-command of the legendary Lewis and Clark Expedition deserves a much fuller discussion than heretofore available. Born in Virginia in 1770, Clark was closely tied to frontier military and Indian affairs throughout his life. He served with Gen. Anthony Wayne at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and between 1803 and 1806 he and Meriwether Lewis led the military expedition to explore the Louisiana Purchase to the Pacific Ocean. In 1813 Clark became Missouri Territorial governor, working during the War of 1812 to secure the frontier from British-incited Indian attacks. When Missouri was admitted to the Union in 1822, Clark was appointed by Congress superintendent of Indian affairs, serving until his death in 1838. He was fair, humane, and honest in his dealing with the western tribes. This book is an exceptionally well researched and written life of Clark, whose career, at least in its later stages, outstripped that of Meriwether Lewis. It is must reading for anyone interested in the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the settlement of the trans-Mississippi West. It replaces as the central work on the subject the biography written by Jerome O. Steffen, "William Clark: Jeffersonian Man on the Frontier" (University of Oklahoma Press, 1977).

A very fair presentation of the less dramatic but likely stabilizing factor in the Lewis and Clark expedition. He served as the counterpoint to the more dramatic Lewis and served a similar function in his own family. Foley presents Clark, warts and all, in the context of the time in which he lived. An excellent read.

William Clark is best known as the American explorer who joined Meriwether Lewis in heading an overland expedition to the Pacific: but as William Foley demonstrates in *Wilderness Journey: The Life Of William Clark*, how William Clark has many more claims to fame than his explorations with Meriwether Lewis. Studies have appeared on the two, but this is the first comprehensive biography of Clark's entire life, revealing his service as a soldier, Indian diplomat, and his involvement in US politics and policy-making in the West. College-level audiences will find *Wilderness Journey* a fascinating biography of a multi-faceted man.

The author skillfully blends history and biography to provide an absorbing look at American frontier during the early to mid 19th century, as well as a fresh narrative of the Lewis and Clark explorations. Foley renders Clark in a sympathetic light, even when accounting for his often harsh treatment of African-Americans and Native Americans. A well-researched and well-written book.

I, of course, have already studied the epic journey -it seems to be historically well researched and complete -and deals with the issue of Lewis' illness with tact and compassion. I bought this for my grandchildren - who are of the Clark family -the book is of excellent print and binding quality -It is rich in well presented, informative illustrations -

Great Book!! I had the chance to meet the author and this only confirmed my belief in this book. If you are a Lewis and Clark fan, this is a MUST read. SB

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