

fast," thus ensuring the safety of the inept boatman and consequently the lives of her unborn child (she was pregnant at the time) and her two young sons (30). Her upbringing on the Illinois frontier also prepared Berenice for wilderness life. Her letters, while few in number, reveal the ways she strove to maintain or strengthen family relationships as well as her fears and anxieties about the hardships frontier families faced on a regular basis.

*Cher Oncle, Cher Papa* will be of particular interest to scholars who study westward expansion, the fur trade, and the Midwest in general. Although occasionally repetitious, the letters and narrative are interesting, and the appendixes, including a lengthy glossary of "people, places, and things," contain a wealth of material. Perhaps the book's most important contribution, though, is that it gives readers a sample of the rich materials available at state and regional historical societies in Illinois and Missouri, and for that it should be commended.

*Seduced by the West: Jefferson's America and the Lure of the Land Beyond the Mississippi*, by Laurie Winn Carlson. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003. xii, 236 pp. Notes, index. \$26.00 cloth.

Reviewer Roger L. Nichols is professor of history at the University of Arizona. He is the author of many books and articles on exploration and American Indians on the frontier.

With the opening of the Lewis and Clark Expedition bicentennial in 2003, local chambers of commerce, historical societies, and publishers have all hurried to offer the public something related to that historic undertaking. This book is one of those ventures. The author presents the explorers' impressive trek as a direct outgrowth of President Thomas Jefferson's desperate efforts to lure Spain into war. Her argument posits the expedition as bait the president held out, hoping that Spanish forces would attack Lewis and Clark and thereby give him an excuse to declare war on Spain. Such a conflict would gain Florida and parts of present Texas and the Southwest for the United States.

Before rejecting this scenario out of hand, one should remember how chaotic the situation was in the trans-Appalachian region after national independence. Pioneer farmers in Kentucky and Tennessee depended on the Mississippi River to get their crops to market, and Spain refused to let them navigate that stream to New Orleans. The new U.S. government lacked the power or the will to secure the use of the river, so hundreds of pioneers at least considered either joining the Spanish or creating a new nation beyond the mountains.

The author weaves an interesting narrative of western events during the first several decades of national independence. That narrative includes all of the important characters and issues. Kentucky leader George Rogers Clark, Louisiana Territorial Governor and Army General James Wilkinson, former Vice President Aaron Burr, and a host of lesser characters all receive attention. Their efforts to gain personal power, position, and wealth make a fascinating, but oft told, story.

In this context, the author examines Jefferson's western interests from the year the nation gained its independence in 1783 until his time in the White House ended about 25 years later. Whenever possible, she relates his every action to this obsession with expanding the national borders, but rarely differentiates between major or minor incidents. While claiming that Jefferson would use a Spanish attack on the Lewis and Clark Expedition as a justification for a war of aggression, she ignores his total lack of response when Spanish troops halted Thomas Freeman's 1806 Red River Expedition near the Texas border. As the author flits from one conspiracy theory to another in her analysis, the narrative includes repeated attacks on Jefferson as self-serving, scheming, and untrustworthy. Jefferson certainly had plenty of faults, but neither her logic nor her evidence supports her conclusions. This book will remind readers of Iowa and midwestern history of how fluid and exciting events of the early national era were in the region. However, they need to be careful about accepting some of the charges leveled here.

*Interpreters with Lewis and Clark: The Story of Sacagawea and Toussaint Charbonneau*, by W. Dale Nelson. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2003. x, 174 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Ryan Roenfeld has worked as a museum guide at the State Historical Society of Iowa's Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs. His primary interests relate to various developments in the Missouri River valley.

W. Dale Nelson never lets his wide-ranging research interfere with the narrative pace of this informative and interesting biography of Toussaint Charbonneau and his Shawnee wife, Sacagawea. Instead of the expected glamorization, the author presents a balanced view that does much to resurrect the role played by Charbonneau, whom William Clark once characterized as a "man of no particular merit." Nelson corrects many misconceptions concerning the role Charbonneau and Sacagawea played as they accompanied Lewis and Clark on their journey from the Mandan villages to the Pacific Ocean and

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