

On the Shelf: The Lewis & Clark Trail American Landscapes

As our nation continues to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the historic Lewis & Clark Expedition, Chicago photographer Richard Mack is sharing the unprecedented views of the American West he captured on film during his own journey, retracing the entire 8,000 miles of the trail. Mack captured the beautiful vistas and landscapes as likely seen by Lewis & Clark and offers them in his book, *The Lewis & Clark Trail American Landscapes*.

"As a landscape photographer, I was intrigued with the diversity of the landscape along the trail; from the forests of the Midwest to the great plains and mountains of the west," says Mack. "My goal was to capture the trail during the proper seasons in order to portray what the Corps of Discovery likely saw and experienced, as well as to convey the challenges they faced over 200 years ago. My expedition would take me to the same locations they have traveled to and within a few weeks of when they had passed by."

Using the original journals as his guide, Mack retraced the entire route of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, visiting more than 200 of the same campsites and trail locations, at the same time of year, along the 8,000-mile journey.

The *Lewis & Clark Trail American Landscapes* contains nearly 250 photographs and is an extraordinary collection of images capturing the incredible diversity of the American landscape in different seasons.

"In the end, I photographed at more than 200 locations along the trail, and I hope this makes for an inspiring set of images that connect the seasons and landscape with what the members of the Corps of Discovery might have seen and endured," adds Mack.

The Lewis & Clark Expedition, also known as the Corps of Discovery, is regarded as one of the epic stories in American history. The trail stretched across the American landscape starting in St. Louis and follows the Missouri River through the woodlands of the Midwest, out onto the Great Plains before crossing Montana, entering the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho and gliding down the Clearwater, Snake and Columbia rivers to the Pacific Ocean.

The pioneering exploits of the Corps of Discovery have been chronicled in thousands of pages of narrative by historians as well as in the journals of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. These words have helped capture in riveting and descriptive detail the sense of discovery and, in particular, the wonder of viewing untouched landscapes and various species of animals for the first time. Unfortunately, the only "pictures" were those painted by the words and drawings of Lewis & Clark.

Until now.

For those interested in the Lewis & Clark Expedition specifically and American history in general, this book is an invaluable supplement to the narrative works in their collection. For those who are simply awestruck by the splendor of nature or the power of photography, this once-in-a-lifetime collection of images will be a treasured addition to their library.

"To me, this book portrays the American landscape as the truly beautiful and inspiring place it still is," Mack says. "The true wilderness areas are disappearing at an alarming rate as humankind closes in on its borders. It is a testament to us that we have not consumed all of the natural beauty around us."

A selection of images from *The Lewis & Clark Trail American Landscapes* will be on display at River East Art Center through May 20th and will give visitors not only a taste of this amazing collection of photographs, but also a taste of what the two historic explorers witnessed as they continued west.

For more information, please call (847) 864-4911 or visit quietlightpublishing.com.

About Richard Mack

Richard Mack, a commercial photographer based near Chicago, has shot assignments in all 50 states and in locations around the world. His bold and striking style comes from his longtime passion for landscape photography and includes works in both color and black & white from many National Parks, National Forests, and wildernesses. His work has been exhibited widely in galleries throughout the United States.

Richard lives with his wife, two children and three dogs in Evanston.

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