



# "Ocean in View! O! the Joy"

By Holly H. Crawley

*The confluence of the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean.*

In June 1803, President Thomas Jefferson gave Meriwether Lewis the following directive: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, and such principal stream of it, as, by its course and communication with the water of the Pacific Ocean may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce." On June 9, 2024, 221 years after Jefferson's proclamation, on a hot Sunday afternoon, 53 VMCCA members, friends, and travelers came together in Richland, Washington, to drive the seventh lineal, 'last leg' VMCCA Tour following Lewis and Clark to the Pacific.

Carl Edem, this segment's tour director and host, welcomed us. We did what we did well—we enjoyed a banquet on the banks of the Columbia River. Historian Robert Heacock narrated a delightful slide show of the many historical sites we would visit as we drove down the Columbia River to the Pacific. We were to follow the route the Corps of Volunteers for Northwestern Discovery (the name given to the expedition by President Thomas Jefferson) took to the successful conclusion of their mission to reach the Pacific Ocean.

During the week, tour cars sporting green handkerchiefs were

easy to spot. This indicated that they had been driven from home to the tour and not trailered.

We began our tour by visiting Sacajawea State Park, where the group enjoyed the museum at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers, listened to a state park ranger, and walked in the footsteps of the Corps of Discovery. Some explored Pendleton Woolen Mills on the drive out to Tama'stslikt Cultural Center of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes, who have called the region home for 10,000 years.

Maryhill Museum of Art and Sam Hill's Stonehenge Memorial to Klickitat County World War I veterans were Tuesday stops. After eating box lunches in the park at Maryhill, we enjoyed an eclectic collection of art ranging from prehistoric Native American collections to Queen Marie of Romania objects d'art, European and American artwork, and even collections of chess sets! We continued driving along the north side of the historic Columbia Gorge to Goldendale to see the 1923 Baldwin steam locomotive and take a self-guided walking tour of petroglyphs which were removed from the river's edge before being inundated by the water of what became the John Day Reservoir.







*Above: Lewis and Clark Tour Director Carl and his wife Kris Edem.*

*Left: The Lewis and Clark Historical Marker at Sacajawea State Park.*

*Below: Debbie and Greg Child's 1959 Ford.*







*Above: Lewis and Clark tourists listen to a presentation by one of the Sacajawea State Park rangers.  
Below: Roy Strom's convertible 1963 Ford Thunderbird.*







*Above: Sally Murray waits patiently for her husband Bob in their 1970 Barracuda.  
Below: Dennis and Mary Hood's 1947 Cadillac 60 Special.*







*The Lightship Columbia exhibit at the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum at Astoria, Oregon.*

Our next stop was the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum. There, we saw the Lewis and Clark exhibit, Columbia River Indian artifacts, the world's largest Rosary collection, and a full-size replica of a fish wheel used by the canneries along the Columbia.

We stopped at Bonneville Lock and Dam to tour the powerhouse and view the fish ladders. The current locks were built in 1993. Bonneville Lock and Dam is one of three hydroelectric power plants operated by the Portland District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the Columbia River. From inside the fish viewing building we could see lamprey, shad, and an occasional sockeye salmon making their way back upstream.

We crossed the Columbia River to the south side to visit the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Museum in The Dalles, Oregon, and see their excellent and informative Lewis and Clark displays before tying up for the day in The Dalles. Those who had energy left after dinner walked the streets of downtown The Dalles to view the many murals, which use downtown buildings as the canvas to tell the story of the area's rich history.

We were all refreshed and ready to go driving the next beautiful morning in Oregon! We motored downriver and spent the morning touring the amazing Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum in Hood River. Oh My! The number of planes and cars, many privately owned and operating and wonderfully displayed, was awe-inspiring.

*Front row left to right—Jacque Wennes and Yvonne Krogstad.  
Back row left to right—Bob Murray, Sally Murray, Bob Brown, Robin McGrath, and Mike McGrath.*







*A mural in The Dalles, Oregon.*

To cap off a busy day, we drove up a dizzying mile-long switch-back trail to Beacon Rock, which Clark wrote about in his journal on October 31, 1805. He called it "Beaten" Rock. From the top, you can see the gorge, carved by ice-age floods, which now divides Washington and Oregon.

The London-based Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Vancouver in 1825 to serve as the headquarters of the Company's interior fur trade. Vintage car enthusiasts walked the grounds of the reconstructed fort, toured General George C. Marshall's house, which has been restored to reflect the original 1886 construction, and learned about the United States Army Spruce Production Division Mill, which was a vital part of the 1918 WWI war effort providing wood for the approximately 4,000 aircraft made in the United States. We enjoyed box lunches on the grounds and left knowing much more about this area's importance to our nation's history.

After visiting the Cowlitz County Historical Museum, we continued west to Astoria, Oregon, where Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1805-1806. Our accommodations were far superior to theirs. As our hotel was on the Columbia and we could watch large barges make their way up the river. Our beds were comfortable, and we were dry, unlike Lewis and Clark's.

*Right: Bob Crawley stands in front of the towering stockade at Fort Vancouver.*







*Above: Audrey Krieger and her husband, Royce's 1934 Ford Coupe.*

*Below left to right: At the Pearson Air Museum at Fort Vancouver. The Columbia River cuts a winding path 1,243 miles long beginning in British Columbia and flowing to the Pacific.*





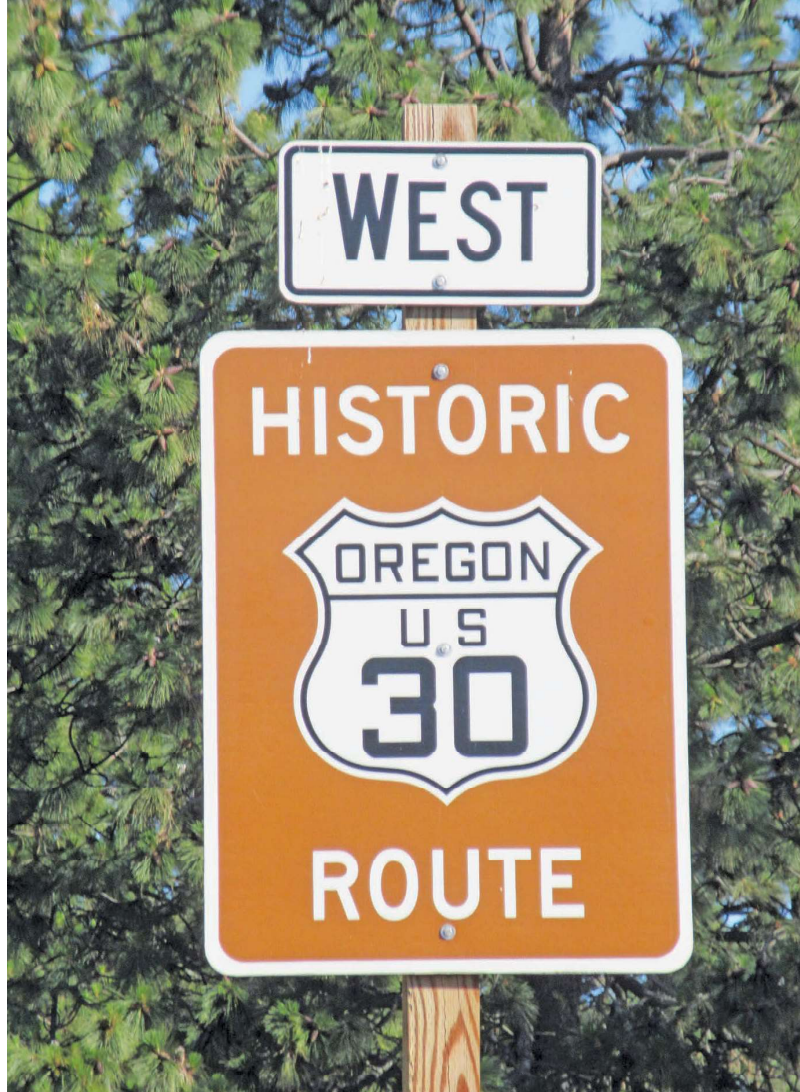
We had a history-filled last tour day! After eighteen months and over 4,000 miles of travel, Lewis and Clark spent 10 days exploring this area at the mouth of the Columbia, including Cape Disappointment, looking for a favorable site for a winter encampment. On November 24, expedition members voted to cross to the south side of the Columbia (now Oregon) where game was reported to be plentiful. There, they built a fort named after the local Indian tribe, the Clatsop. Fort Clatsop would be their home for the next three months before they retraced their route back to the United States. In our motorized vehicles, we crossed the river north and back into Washington and drove to the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center to learn about the Corp's struggles on the Pacific shore. We visited the Fort Clatsop replica in cool, rainy weather, much as the Corps experienced. Here we finished President Jefferson's mandate to Lewis. The VMCCA Corps of Discovery had crossed the continent in seven summer tours from Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 2017 to Astoria, and we made it to the Pacific Ocean in 2024. Seven brave travelers had traveled all the tours and celebrated their accomplishments at the concluding banquet in Astoria.

We would like to acknowledge Carl Edem and the other six tour directors who have put together these wonderful tours. Often the journeys were hundreds of miles away from the tour directors' homes and required multiple 'test drives' to finalize directions and arrangements.

Sadly, the late Ken Gunderson, a driving force for the Lewis and Clark VMCCA Tours, could not be with us as we saw the Pacific. Many a toast was raised in his honor and in his memory.

A "Return Trip" hub tour is being planned for June 2025 in Three Forks, Montana.

*(Photos by Trisha Copley, Holly Crawley, Judy and Jim Johnson, and Bob Murray)*



*Above: A Historic U.S. Route 30 marker.*

*Below left to right: Kris Edem, Carl Edem, Lloyd Hill, Mary Ann Hill, Nathan (guest of John Nikodym), and John Nikodym, raise a toast to the late Ken Gunderson.*

