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Honoring Tribal Legacies: An Epic Journey of Healing

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CHAPTER 3

Exploring the Deep Meaning of Place Names along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

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Image of elk along the river. Courtesy of the National Park Service.
“…nothing is comprehended, much less possessed, until it has been given a name…”

—Wallace Stegner (Stewart, 1982, p. xxviii)

“There is nothing that has such an air of verisimilitude as a map.”

—Henry R. Wagner (Wagner, 1968, p. 3)

Introduction

Given our enthusiastic embrace of place-based learning for Honoring Tribal Legacies, it behooves us to take a moment to consider the names we attach to places and the meanings we attach to these names. Naming practices can reflect the social identities we construct for ourselves, the way we see our natural world and our positioning in it, and even the way we look into the future. These considerations provide an entry point for teachers retracing the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (hereafter, the Trail) and the long-term effects of the expedition of 1804–06. At that time of Euro-American exploration and map-making, many Native place names were translated, distorted, or erased entirely. Understanding how maps are made, how place names are immortalized, and then going back to reclaim and analyze the original names associated with places are all activities that provide a fertile plain for enriching our understandings of this vast and beautiful landscape and cultural ways of thinking about the environment. They provide sacred elements for nurturing curriculum design and sprouting lively classroom discussions that will Honor Tribal Legacies and bring balance to our study of the past and its relevance today and tomorrow.

Standing in a sacred place, we have drawn from the four directions to bring our story to life. In doing so, the terms Indigenous, Tribe, Tribal, Tribal nations, and specific names of Tribes are used throughout this chapter in reference to the many peoples that are the Aboriginal inhabitants of the sacred place we now call America. The use of the terms American Indian, Native American, or Indian is retained when quoting published authors. Three primary authors, each with distinct and complementary approaches to the study of place names along the Trail, have contributed to
this collaboration, and the supportive hand of a team editor (Stephanie Wood) helped to bring them all harmoniously together. We begin with a piece from James Walker, a retired physician who has studied and published scholarship about early maps and the practice of cartography for many years. His contribution will help us understand how Native geographic knowledge informed European map-making, even if many place names were lost in the process. Dr. Walker helps us understand the history of how traditional maps were constructed, being part of a discourse largely of territorial appropriation, with a fast-paced timeline that pressed for the new American nation to reach the Pacific in short order in the nineteenth century. He shows us how mapping involved renaming, erasure, and was part of an expansionist machine that was first established on paper and then followed by physical aggressive settlement.

In the wake of our consideration of that historical backdrop, the contribution by Dr. Shane Doyle, an Apsáalooke (Crow) Tribal member, represents a healing approach that provides valuable Native perspectives and knowledge for our much-needed recuperation of place names. Dr. Doyle also helps us to understand and appreciate the rich meaning of Tribal place names. He brings in significant ecological relationships, plus spiritual and cultural-geographic considerations, such as food security and other strategies for survival, which facilitate our grasp of the insightful and respectful nature of the Native recognition given to rivers, mountains, and other landscape features. Like Dr. Walker, Dr. Doyle also includes original language for place names where they are still known, in recognition of how language uniquely captures significance and must be preserved. He also helps us see that, while specific words could be different from one Tribe to another, the meaning for a major feature on the landscape was often shared.

Finally, Ryan Cooper, a Geographer with the Trail, explains recent directions in mapping and describes the promising opportunities for re-inscribing original place names on new maps of the Trail. These innovations have emerged as a result of both developments in technology and a commitment to historical reconstruction that came out of the special collaboration between Tribes and the National Park Service during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. As a geographer working with the National Park Service on this important project, Cooper has first-hand experience with
the methodology and explains well the initial results and the opportunities to map place names and understand the stories and meanings to reveal the landscapes along the Lewis and Clark Trail as people originally knew them.

**Rethinking Maps, Map-Making, and Place Names**

Map-making is both an art and a social practice (Mitchell 2000; Sack 1997). Maps have decorative and stylistic elements, but they also illustrate the mapmaker's geographical understanding and can reveal colonial ambitions. Interdisciplinary studies—combining history, geography, social sciences, art history, linguistics, graphics, and others—have shown how historic maps contain multiple layers of information that reflect culturally specific knowledge and ways of thinking. The interrelationships between people and place are formed by the ideas that exist inside our minds and are written on the landscape (Duncan 2000; Schein 1997). Traditional published works, exhibitions, and classroom teachings have often focused on information that maps convey about geographical observations and data pulled from explorers’ and travelers’ accounts as though these are all completely factual and objective. In the last 30 years, however, scholars and teachers of the history of cartography have shifted their inquiry to the layers of social information that maps communicate. The emphasis of much of this literature has been on how sixteenth- through eighteenth-century European mapping conventions conveyed imperialistic ambitions to establish dominion and identity in the so called “New World.” Among these conventions place naming was a powerful cartographic and colonial tool.

In the nineteenth century maps and the use of place names played a dominant role in the construction of cultural identities in the American West. It is useful to begin this discussion with the definition of maps as "graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world" (Harley & Woodward, 1987, p. xvi). This broad definition allows us to understand maps in four ways. First, it recognizes culturally distinct methods of understanding space and place without assigning hierarchies. For example, we may then study and value traditional Indigenous ways of representing territory without defaulting
to practices that have been mainstreamed (e.g., Euro-American traditions). Secondly, the definition clearly states that a map (in any culturally distinct way of understanding that term) may convey much more than geographical information. Elements of map construction such as place names, boundaries, and symbols help to fashion social knowledge that is about the values and beliefs of the mapping society, often contrasting with those of another society being represented. Maps may thus be used by a dominant society as a means of establishing dominion over the landscape. Thirdly, the definition reminds us that graphic representations, such as maps, serve as an important form of discourse in transmitting information within a particular group. Among Euro-American cultural groups, and recognizing the colonial context, maps have always asserted powerful authoritative influences. Finally, the definition reminds us that "graphic representations that facilitate spatial understanding" will typically change over time, as does the context of our multicultural human world.

The more than 500 years of recording representations of encounters among different cultural groups in the Americas is a process still underway. As "things, concepts, conditions, processes or events" (Harley & Woodward, 1987) change, so does their mapping. These four dimensions will help us explore how maps shaped an enduring (if distorted) understanding of the American West by Euro-Americans in the early nineteenth century.

**Maps and Culturally Specific Understandings of Space and Place**

The familiar traditional elements of today’s printed maps authored by Euro-Americans derive from “scientific” or “quantitative” principles of mapmaking that first appeared in fifteenth century Europe. These include: a template of a co-ordinate system for establishing location (e.g., latitude and longitude), projection (for displaying a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional surface), scale, and direction. When using maps as way-finding instruments or for locating places, the application of these elements results in a judgment of the “accuracy,” “objectivity,” or “truthfulness” of the geographical image.
By way of contrast, in Native societies understanding of space and place did not rely on these same principles; nor was it important to create a non-perishable artifact (i.e., a physical map) to convey that understanding (Belyea, 2007, pp. 31–89; Lewis, 1998, pp. 51–183; Lewis, 1987, pp. 63–80; Ronda, 1987, pp. 81–91; Warhus, 1997, pp. 3, 7–56). Indigenous peoples had deep knowledge of their territory and shared this orally or by drawings in sand, earth, or on perishable objects such as animal hides, tree bark, and the like. Numerous accounts of explorers in the American West and elsewhere document the ability and willingness of Indigenous people to incorporate their geographic knowledge into a format more familiar to visitors (Hollis, 2011, pp. 145–153; Ronda, 1987, pp. 81–84; Short, 2009, pp. 21–46; Warhus, 1997, pp. 99–137). Physical maps that are directly attributable to Indigenous authors in the historic record have usually been transcribed by Euro-Americans, so that this contribution became embedded into the Euro-American traditional map. The latter must be examined carefully to reveal the Aboriginal source of information.

Geographical information from Indigenous sources was critical to the Lewis and Clark expedition, during its preparation, during its course, and in the construction of a mapped record of the event. In planning the expedition, Thomas Jefferson and Lewis and Clark consulted published maps including “A Map Exhibiting all the New Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America” printed in 1802 by the English mapmaker Aaron Arrowsmith (Allen, 1975, pp. 78–83; Beckham, 2003, pp. 39–40, 56–57; Belyea, 2007, pp. 45–49). This map contained important geographic information about the interior of the country west of the upper bend of the Missouri River, or in other words, it conceptualized river passages between the Mandan villages on the Missouri River and the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. This information, “new” to the people of the eastern United States, derived from one or more maps drawn by the Blackfoot Indians Ac Ko Mok Ki and Ki Oo Cus in 1801–1802 (Belyea, 2007, pp. 46–48; Moodie & Kaye, 1977, pp. 4–15; Ruggles, 1987, pp. 153, 189–190; Ruggles, 1991, pp. 60–64; Warhus, 1997, pp. 154–157). Also, in early 1805 a Mandan Chief, Sheheka or Big White, provided Clark with a description of the Yellowstone River and its tributaries. Clark incorporated many Indigenous place names on his surviving sketch of Big White’s map (Ronda, 1987, pp. 82–83).
In April 1805 when Lewis and Clark left the Mandan villages to head west, they sent back to Thomas Jefferson a map of the information they had obtained from Indigenous informants during their winter overstay. Draftsman and surveyor Nicolas King in Washington copied this map, and the two surviving copies acknowledge in their title, “The Country West of Fort Mandan is laid down principally from Indian information” (Moulton, 1983, pp. 10–11 and referenced maps). Subsequently, beyond the Mandan villages, Lewis and Clark obtained a great deal of geographic information from Tribal people, information Clark then transcribed into sketches that still exist (Moulton, 1983, pp. 10–11; Wheat, 1958, pp. 40–43). The journals of Lewis and Clark include multiple descriptions of these interactions that resulted in knowledge not only about routes and topographical features along their track, but also about the geography of more distant places not directly observed by members of the expedition. Even though all of this important, detailed geographical information from Indigenous sources was incorporated into Clark’s maps, it can be difficult to recognize it as such.

The most culturally distinct elements on maps that emerged from the encounters between Lewis and Clark and Indigenous informants involved language and words. Lewis and Clark recorded a substantial number of original place and ethnic names in their journals. When these Tribal names were applied to Clark’s maps, a reader could easily see that the West was occupied by large numbers of Indigenous peoples. The imprint of original place names and ethnic names on Clark’s map also made it clear that Indigenous peoples were significant contributors, indeed, co-authors, to these highly valued documents.

**Maps as Conveyers of Social Knowledge**

Map historian J.B. Harley (2001) wrote that within Euro-American mapping traditions, “As much as guns and warships, maps have been the weapons of imperialism” (p. 57). While this statement might be overreaching, it focuses attention on features of maps that convey socio-political rather than just geographical knowledge and how these features shape perception of other cultures. These elements include legends, symbols of power and possession (such as ships, flags, and boundaries), pictorial elements with stereotypical representations of people, and new place names.
For the Spanish, naming was a particularly important part of the ritual of establishing dominion and sovereignty in the Americas from the time of the first encounters (Greenblatt, 1991, pp. 86–92; Stewart, 1982, pp. 12, 73–75). Historian Stephen Greenblatt has examined how the application of European place names to the newly encountered American landscape in the sixteenth century was a form of “linguistic colonialism,” perhaps even a first necessary step in the process of establishing empire. In its most egregious form, Greenblatt (1976) proposes that by “discarding the particular words . . . you have discarded the particular men” (p. 576).

Place names established by Europeans were meant to be included on maps and in texts read by Europeans and to be understood within a European consciousness. For example, Christopher Columbus renamed the site of his first landfall, known to its inhabitants as Guanahani, giving it the new name, San Salvador. He subsequently applied names of Spanish royalty to islands of what Europeans called (mistakenly) the West Indies, using Española (or Hispaniola, which became the modern Haiti and Dominican Republic) and Juana (Cuba). Original names were replaced or “mapped out.” The new toponymy of the colonizing cultural group not only served a legal purpose in establishing possession, it also linked an identity of a place with one particular cultural group at the expense of any other (whether Indigenous or even another European group). Although the historical record is often sketchy in documenting Aboriginal names, it is highly likely that for every European name bestowed on a geographical feature, an Indigenous name was erased.

Cartographic naming and un-naming have been practiced by dominant culture groups in the Americas in every period of encounter since Columbus, including the earliest forays into the American West by Euro-Americans in the early nineteenth century. Lewis and Clark recorded a great number of Indigenous language place and Tribal names in their journals, and several scholarly studies on linguistic elements of the expedition have appeared over the years. A review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, but a few examples may illustrate the use and fate of many of these place names. Here we will pay particular attention to how they were recorded on Clark’s 1810 manuscript “Map of part of the continent of North America” and on the reduced printed version, “A Map of Lewis and Clark’s Track Across the Western Portion of North America,” published in 1814 (Wheat, 1958, pp. 49–60).
Many Tribal names were recorded in the journals, but never appeared on the maps: e.g., *Amahtearzzha* (a Hidatsa name for the Missouri River), *E-mah-tark’ah-zhah* (Hidatsa for the Little Missouri River), *Ar-sar-ta* (of Crow or Mandan linguistic origin, the modern Big Horn River). Many Tribal names that appeared on Clark’s maps were subsequently changed to English names, e.g., *To-war-ne-hi-ooks* (of Chinookan origin, became the Deschutes River), *Kooskooskee* (of Nez Perce origin, became the Clearwater River), *Tape-tett* (became the Yakima River), and a series of names of rivers draining into the upper Snake River (*Walsh le me, Tan mo a men, Cop pop pah ash, Nemo, Shusht-pellanimo, and She-com-shink*) were renamed during subsequent fur trapping forays by Euro-Americans of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Several Tribal names on the Clark maps retained phonetic links to their modern counterparts such as *Youmatolam* (from Nez Perce, the modern Umatilla River), *Wollawwollah* (from Sahaptin, the modern Walla Walla River). Only rarely will we see a Tribal name on the maps, such as the *Mult-no-mah* River, being changed subsequently to another name of Indigenous origin (e.g., the modern Willamette River) (Please note that the orthography of place names is not meant to be authorative. Spelling varies depending upon the source.)

Finally, for many locations, English names from the journals and on Clark’s maps never reveal a Native source or predecessor, such as the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin Rivers (unchanged on modern maps), the Philosophy River (modern Willow Creek), Wisdom River (modern Big Hole River), and Philanthropy River (modern Ruby River). Presumably, all of these rivers did have an Aboriginal name at the time of encounter among the local communities. But renaming was so prevalent, at least on Euro-American authored maps and among the waves of migrants who followed, that the authors of *Oregon Geographic Names* estimate that only about 6% of the modern place names in Oregon that they have examined are of Native American origin (McArthur & McArthur, 2003, pp. ix–xiii). Lewis and Clark historian Donald Jackson estimates that of the 148 names these men recorded for what became the state of Montana, only 20 were Indian names, and only half of those are still used on modern maps (Jackson, 1987, p. 88). These figures are a reminder not only of how linguistic and ethnic information is erased over time, but also how it can be partially recovered by reference to primary documents, such as Clark’s original map. Interestingly,
even the newly applied European names were not always lasting, either, for Jackson also notes that of the 128 non-Indian names applied by Lewis and Clark, only 17 are still used.

Many readers of modern maps might be surprised at the extent of the erasure of a Tribal linguistic imprint on the American West as recorded on Clark’s maps. Although this loss was uncoordinated and occurred in stages, the pace of extinction of Indigenous names and replacement with Euro-American ones was, nevertheless, rapid. Less than 60 years after the publication of the *History of the Expedition* and Clark’s map, both government-sponsored and commercially produced maps contained mostly modern place names. Replacement of place names over time may not have always been calculated and intended to exert political or commercial control. Nonetheless, James Ronda has described the practice of renaming on maps as a "re-order[ing] [of the West] according to the passions and desires of those who followed behind Lewis and Clark" (Ronda, 2006, p. 127). Such practices gave little thought to the consequences for the Native communities whose identity was place-based and whose struggles to retain their own languages in a colonial environment were already very challenging.

The erasures of Indigenous names over time can be traced through an examination of some of the most authoritative large-scale maps of North America (and subsequently the United States) up to modern times. For example, on the 1816 influential “Map of the United States with the Contiguous British and Spanish Possessions” by Philadelphia mapmaker John Melish, and on the 1822 “A Map of North America Constructed According the Latest Information” by Henry Tanner, almost all of the nomenclature of Clark’s 1814 map was retained (Wheat, 1960, pp. 62–64, 82–87). By 1838, however, Washington Hood’s “Map of the United States Territory of Oregon” contained both modern place names in lieu of Clark’s Tribal names as well as names in transition (e.g., *Chutes or Falls R. for Deschutes River*, *R. Eyakema for Yakima River*, and *Umatallow R. for Umatilla River*). Hood’s map first appeared in a Congressional document advocating for an American occupation of the area that was then called the Oregon Territory (Wheat, 1960, pp. 160–162). The map received widespread attention and was used repeatedly over the next five years in similar publications calling for American expansion to the Pacific Northwest.
Tanner Map, 1822. Includes many place names from the 1814 Clark map. Adds features, such as the prominent regional boundary lines and the name "Oregon Terr." that reflected contemporary ideas of western expansion. Photo from a private collection, with the owner's permission.
Chapter 3 - Exploring the Deep Meaning of Place Names

Tanner Map, 1822. Includes many place names from the 1814 Clark map. Adds features, such as the prominent regional boundary lines and the name “Oregon Terr.” that reflected contemporary ideas of western expansion. Photo from a personal collection, with the owner’s permission.

U.S. Army Topographical Engineer, Captain Washington Hood included various American and British trading depots/forts and proposed boundaries on this map, and he changed many Native place names with those applied by British, French, and American fur traders. Photo from a personal collection, with the owner’s permission.
By 1857, U.S. Topographical Engineer Lieutenant Governor K. Warren’s monumental “Map of the Territory of the United States from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean” included even fewer of the Indigenous place names derived from Clark’s map, although Warren did record many Tribal names in the West, including an early reference to the “Proposed Reservation/Coast Umpqua Willamette Indians” along a section of the Oregon coast (Wheat, 1960, pp. 84–91). This map was used in military and colonial administrative capacities for many years. It was meticulously compiled by Warren who tabulated 44 sources on the map beginning with the Clark map of 1814. No Tribal contributions were noted. One noteworthy river name on the Warren map deserves a brief digression, the KoosKoosKee River, also named the Clearwater River on this map. This was a pivotal river for Lewis and Clark, being the first navigable river they encountered on the western slope of the Continental Divide.

The Indigenous place name (Kouskouske) first appeared on an 1809 map, “Amerique Septentrionale” published by a Frenchman, Jean-Baptise Poirson in 1810 (Walker, 2005–2006, pp. 17–19). Poirson’s source of information was a letter written by William Clark to his brother upon the expedition’s return to St. Louis in September of 1806. The letter described the track of the expedition, noted many place names, and it was widely published. The name ("Kooskooske") appeared in this letter more often than any other river names except the Columbia and the Missouri. Considering the significance of this river to Lewis and Clark, the primacy of the Tribal name on a European-authored map, and the longevity of its survival on published maps, it is especially regrettable that the name was eventually displaced by its English translation, Clearwater.

In 1860, commercial mapmaker Joseph H. Colton’s “Map of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, British Columbia & Montana” depicted territory in Oregon west of the Cascade Mountains as being filled with names of topographical features, settlements, and color-coded counties. Only east of the Cascades did map viewers see recognition of the Tribal presence (Klamathor Lutuana Indians, Mohla Indians and so on).
Warren Map, 1857. This small-scale map of "all of the explorations of our territory west of the Mississippi River" located many known and proposed locations (i.e., reservation sites) of Indigenous groups. Warren also drew in the routes of recent Army surveys and the planned terminal course of a transcontinental northern railroad. Photo from a private collection, with the owner's permission.
William Clark’s map, published in 1814, transformed the geographical image of the American west for mapmakers in this country and in Europe. On Aaron Arrowsmith’s earlier map of 1802 the conceptualized landscape of the West included a single low elevation mountain range extending north-south and a few simple dotted lines for rivers stretching across the continent from the mountains east to the Missouri River and west to the Pacific Ocean. Most of the entirety of the western continent was a blank space. Clark’s map filled in the terrain and hydrography, and it also entered into the blank spaces names of Tribal groups: Shō-shō-nes, Chinook, Cathlamet, Clackamas and others, thus documenting that the region was extensively inhabited by Indigenous people. Most of these Tribal names were accompanied by Clark’s estimate of the number of “souls” living in the area, located by the name. Clark’s map gave a “spatial understanding” both of the complexity of the landscape and of the complexity and extent of the Native populations who lived there. This information was both geographic and social.

Over time maps of commercial mapmakers lost this layer of Tribal information in favor of layers of information that reflected increasing attention to the West as a place for the territorial expansion of the American Republic. In 1867 civil engineer William Keeler published a large map (88” x 39”) under the direction of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and with the supervision of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Keeler’s “Map of the U.S. Territories, Pacific R.R. Routes, Mineral Lands, and Indian Reservations” was packed with names of towns, rivers, mountains, military forts, reservations, overland transportation routes, mineral resources, railroad lines, government surveys and more (Wheat, 1963, pp. 211–213). All of these layers of “progress” displaced almost any vestige of original Indigenous presence except for a few retained names of topographical features.
Keeler Map, 1867. In this U.S. Government sponsored "National Map," it would have been difficult to locate a presence of Native people. Keeler noted that his map would appeal to those interested in "the rapid advance of settlement, and in the development of new features of grandeur . . . and new sources of national wealth . . . ."

Photo from a private collection, with the owner's permission.
Maps as Influential Discourse

Americans’ concept of national sovereignty extending to the Pacific Ocean developed gradually and haltingly during the first four decades of the nineteenth century.6 Discourse about American interests in the Pacific Northwest included intermittent but intense international diplomatic negotiations, presidential messages, congressional debates, editorial commentary, and an increasingly interested and opinionated cartographical literature. All of these layers of discourse were linked by their focus on a geographical area and by geopolitical events centered on that area. This discourse contributed to a gradually developing image of an American dominion of continental proportions extending into the Pacific Northwest. Armchair observers in the East would hardly know this was a place still populated and occupied by Tribal peoples. Diplomats, congressmen, newspaper editors, and mapmakers were all involved in the development and promotion of this image of a new, expanded nation both by describing and interpreting national and international events. Through the use of discourse, they pressed to make their dream a reality, flying in the face of the true situation on the ground.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the United States, Great Britain, Spain, and Russia all claimed sovereignty over some portion of the Tribal-controlled lands of the Pacific Northwest. By the middle of the second decade, Euro-American citizens in the East claimed a right to this vast region principally on the basis of three historical events: (a) Robert Gray’s entrance into and naming of the Columbia River in May, 1792; (b) the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803-06; and (c) the establishment of the private (but government approved) fur trading enterprise at Astoria in 1811. In 1814, the publication of the History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, with the folded map originally drawn by Clark, achieved rapid international recognition. In the same year, an English edition of the History with its map was published in London; and in 1815, Adrien Hubert Brué in Paris published a wall map, “Carte Encyprotype de L’Amérique Septentrionale,” that incorporated all of the new information from Clark’s map. In 1816, John Melish in Philadelphia published his “Map of the United States,” and in an accompanying memoir, Melish (1972) stated his intention to “show[s] at a glance the whole
extent of the United States territory from sea to sea” (p. 4). Of course, it would be many years before this region consisted of states within the American Republic. But the frenzy to map and claim continued; other American mapmakers followed Melish’s example. In the Pacific Northwest, “new” features on updated editions of maps were often boundaries, legends, color codes, and place names that reflected the actions of non-Native diplomats and congressmen, fur traders, explorers, and settlers. These maps graphically represented how American cartographers tried to legitimize the expanding domain of their own socio-political group and, at the same time, delegitimize the sovereignty of both other imperial European nations and, crucially, Tribal nations in the Pacific Northwest.

At the close of the second decade of the nineteenth century, three main players—the United States, Great Britain, and Russia—continued to claim sovereignty over the Pacific Northwest, and they were contesting a northern boundary somewhere above 42 degrees North Latitude. Needless to say, these nations did not recognize Native dominion in the region. And yet, the United States still had no military presence there, and the only American commercial activity centered on a few vessels trading along the coast. Ambitious and imperialistic mapping had contributed significantly to the state of affairs.

While Henry Tanner’s 1822 wall map, “Map of North America” continued to incorporate Native American information from Clark’s map, he eliminated the numbers of “souls” attached to each ethnic group on Clark’s map. Tanner overtly promoted his map as a patriotic (i.e., expansionist) document and for the first time attached the toponym “Oregon Terr.” to a vast area extending east from the Pacific Northwest. Tanner adopted the name, Oregon Territory, from a bill introduced to Congress just six months previously by Representative John Floyd of Virginia. Tanner employed this new name, previously applied only to a river, to further promote Floyd’s image of a new territory extending to the Pacific Ocean. Tanner’s map received very favorable critical, testimonial, and editorial reviews, was purchased by congressional leaders, and influenced the cartographic literature of his contemporaries. Updated issues of the map continued to illustrate geographical information from Clark’s map. What was different was the overlay of geopolitical information: color coding.
that reflected territorial possessions, boundaries that reflected international negotiations, and new place names that reflected the accounts of Euro-American fur traders and explorers.

In the fourth to fifth decades of the nineteenth century, other mapmakers added additional layers of place names, boundaries, and other markers of a newly asserted sovereignty that helped define the identity of an expanding nation-state. In the 1850s the Federal government implemented a system of survey and sale of public lands in the West that resulted in yet another layer of boundaries of townships and ranges. This new information was incorporated into both government-issued and commercially-produced maps (Walker, 2002, pp. 44–51). These were constructions familiar to an American audience accustomed to cartographic and national-identity conventions of European origin. At the same time, of course, the identity of the region was being redefined for Tribal communities with their much-diminished input. The cartographies of Melish, Tanner and others both reflected and contributed to the contemporary rhetoric of congressional speeches, newspapers, and texts. Thus, these maps became influential political documents in the same manner as Congressman John Floyd’s bill.
Chapter 3 - Exploring the Deep Meaning of Place Names

GLO Map, Oregon Territory, 1852. The U.S. General Land Office was responsible for western public land surveys that began in Oregon Territory in 1851. On this 1852 map, the overlay on the landscape of the rectangular survey grid and the prominent documentation of many northern Willamette Valley towns exemplifies the role of the map in the appropriation of territory and identification of favored occupants. Photo from a private collection, with the owner's permission.
Maps Reflecting Change in a Multicultural Society

In Western cultures place naming has been and continues to be a dynamic process over time. The more than 500-year historical record of printed maps of the Americas is replete with examples of naming and re-naming, some of which occurred over a relatively brief period of time. It took less than 60 years for most of the Indigenous names on Clark's 1814 map to be replaced, a process of effacement and re-naming that may be interpreted as either “cultural trespass” or “cultural change” according to historian Donald Jackson (1987, p. 85). This replacement was related to the repeated waves of Eastern migrants who converged on the western landscape after Lewis and Clark and displaced Tribal Nations, as exploration was followed by resource extraction, then by survey and settlement.

Naming and re-naming almost always have political and social implications that can be both appropriative and associative. These implications are particularly overt when the intent of the naming process is to appropriate territory. Clear examples of names as symbols of empire are the stamps of “Nova Francia” (New France), “Hispania Nova” (New Spain), and “Nova Albion” (New Albion, derived from an older name for Britain), over huge swaths of territory in North America on maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ironically, this occurred at a time when these regions were only sparsely populated by Europeans or not at all.

Map historian Christian Jacob (2006) refers to these “special cases” of naming when he observes, “It is an astonishing example when the original toponym is detached from the geographical country that it names in order to preserve only its symbolic and political meaning” (p. 205). Indeed, while the “symbolic and political meaning” of one cultural group may be thus transferred to another continent, it is lost for another cultural group whose very identity is often based on the place being re-inscribed. An example of the tenacity of such a practice is illustrative of how deeply embedded such cartographic practice had become. When the accounts of the voyages of George Vancouver were published in 1798, his “Chart Shewing Part of the Coast of N. W. America” carried the inscription, “Part of the Coast of New Albion,” from about 35 degrees to about 45 degrees North Latitude.
Indeed, the possessive implication of the toponym "Quadra and Vancouver Island" that first appeared on maps in 1798 is a clear example of what geographical historian Daniel Clayton (2000) describes as a cartographic “construction of space” that helped to create an “imperial fashioning of Vancouver Island.” This process of using toponymy on maps with appropriative intent continues today. A recent example is the act by the British Foreign Office to name part of Antarctica as "Queen Elizabeth Land," a move that resulted in a prompt protest from Argentina, which also claims territorial rights in the region. Klaus Dodds, Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London remarked, “I think it’s provocative and it’s significant because place-naming is one of the most powerful ways of reinforcing your sense of ownership of a territory, and the use of royalty is, in turn, the most powerful way of cementing a connection with the UK” (Rayner, 2012, n.p.).

But re-naming also sometimes functions in an associative manner when the intention is to connect the naming culture with a specific place, rather than, necessarily, a clear intention to possess or appropriate that place. The changing toponymy in the American West from the first half of the nineteenth century forward illustrates how powerful forms of a culturally specific discourse can occur via cartographic representations and can both construct and repress identities. Of course, this can—and apparently did—foreshadow and pave the way for expansionist action.

Geographic features may be largely immutable, but place names are not. For those communities who have experienced removal, exclusion, and erasure from Ancestrally charted territories, the recovery of some intellectual traditions can begin by re-inscribing the historic record with new maps and educational efforts. Cultural critic Edward Said (1994) has noted, “For the Native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by loss of the locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through the imagination” (p. 225). Recovery and change in “things, concepts, conditions, processes or events” (Harley & Woodward, 1987) continue in many communities today, and these changes will be mapped. In recent years many groups have made significant efforts to re-establish Aboriginal place names on
maps of their communities (Wood, 2010, pp. 129–142). In New Zealand, the Geographic Board web site states, “place names are important landmarks of history and culture of our nation and communities. They honour the people who live in New Zealand.” One of the Board’s functions is to “collect original Maori names and encourage their use on maps and charts” (New Zealand Geographic Board, n. d.).

**Tribal Place Names**

In contrast to the newly imported place names that marked the European style paper maps produced during the age of geographic exploration and colonial expansion, Tribal place names along the Trail were not meant to reflect a systematic identification method that resulted from an initial scouting report. Instead of an expedient and symbolic naming process that was part of the discourse of appropriation just reviewed, most Tribal place names were the products of ancient and reciprocal relationships between the people and their abundant homelands (Nabokov, 2007). These place names emanated from complex connections between human communities and the ecosystem and their significance to cultural-geographic history cannot be overstated (Basso, 1996). In fact, when these place names are compared and contrasted with the colonial names that replaced them in the nineteenth century there are several noteworthy distinctions that become evident. Exploring these distinctions is a key to understanding the important history behind both the Tribal and non-Tribal place names. In the sections that follow, we focus on a few examples of how exploring Tribal place names along the Trail can reveal remarkable cultural history there and how the National Park Service (NPS) is Honoring Tribal Legacies today.

**Conflicting Food Systems and Contradictory Worldviews**

Along the Trail, peoples and their cultures depended upon ecosystem-specific food systems that were very different from the portable food systems of the European colonial tradition. The Tribal traditions of hunting buffalo in the Missouri River Country and fishing salmon in the Columbia River region were ancient ways of sustenance that enhanced Tribal peoples' knowledge of natural
and ecological processes (Cajete, 2000). The contrasting way of life that was foreshadowed onto the Trail by the Lewis and Clark expedition was based upon a self-contained and mobile economic foundation: farming and ranching on privately owned land. The European style farm with cows, sheep, goats, chickens, and pigs could be uprooted and transported anywhere in the world where the climate and environment was suitable for livestock. This system enabled European colonists to settle Tribal lands and draw profits from them—basically eliminating the dietary need for both wild game and wild plants. This colonial economic system conflicted dramatically, however, with Tribal wild food systems because it required that traditional and ancient food webs be either altered or eliminated entirely in order to make room for the colonial way of life.

Rather than settling the land and living outside of the boundaries of the wilderness, Tribal people along the Trail harvested all of their resources from the entirety of the landscape (Cajete, 2000). Even as an agricultural revolution based on corn, beans, and squash spread across the continent at least 800 years ago, the upper Missouri River and Columbia Plateau remained a place of hardy and wealthy hunters and gatherers. Through the synthesis of their knowledge, and the application of their skills and abilities, the Tribal people who lived along the Upper Missouri and Columbia Rivers flourished and enjoyed a level of wealth essentially unparalleled by other hunter-gatherer societies around the globe. Ample supplies of salmon and bison were the staple foods on either side of the Continental Divide, but there were also elk, deer, and antelope, as well as fish and wild plants. The predominant task for Tribal people along the Trail was to know their place on many different levels and layers, so that they understood metaphysical aspects of their world (Basso, 1996). As people of a ceremonial oral tradition, they learned most prominently about themselves and their world through first-hand experience and dreams. As knowledge of their place was constructed and shared within Tribal communities over the course of generations, the spirits of the land were also recognized as integral aspects of the world that warranted respect and acknowledgement (Deloria, 2006).

These conflicting ways of being on the land for survival represented the crux of the rationalizing the hostility towards Tribal nations that is associated with colonizing the Trail.
Moreover, these conflicting ways of being also signify the vastly dissimilar relationships that Tribal peoples and Euro-American colonists had with the land. It was these different ways of living that spawned the unique place names along the Trail. Contrary strategies for survival contributed to the dissimilar life experiences for Tribes and Euro-Americans, and these different cultural understandings were expressed through place names along the Trail (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

![The Elk River. Photo by Mark Stevens. Creative Commons. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/14723335@N05/11374865404/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/14723335@N05/11374865404/)

**Inter-Tribal Place Names**

The larger geographic features along the Trail, such as the major rivers, and mountain ranges, had all been named for thousands of years by the time the Lewis and Clark expedition traversed it in 1804–1806. Many of the places were named based on their essential qualities, so these names were shared in common by numerous and distinct Tribal communities throughout the region, regardless of their language or political affiliations. The Elk River is one example that demonstrates how many well-known and revered Tribal names were lost to literate history because they were expunged from Euro-American maps by early explorers. Dozens of Tribes and more
than six different Tribal language families translated “Elk River” into their own lexicon of cultural geography. Although there were numerous other, lesser-known titles that referred to the river, such as the Apsáalooke term “Whirlpool River,” or the Salish title, “Hide Scraper River,” the most commonly known name for today’s Yellowstone River was historically “Elk River.” Tribes like the Piegan (Blackfeet), Salish (Flathead), Shoshone, Tsistsistas (Cheyenne), and Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), all knew the modern Yellowstone as the Elk River, or among the Apsáalooke (Crow) it is known as E-chee-dick-karsh-ah-shay.

Lewis and Clark’s most notable river-naming event occurred when their expedition reached the headwaters of the “Big River,” also known as the Missouri River, in what is known today as the Gallatin Valley. The three rivers that come together at the west end of that “Valley Where the Rivers Mix,” were named “Jefferson,” “Madison,” and “Gallatin” by Lewis and Clark in tribute to the political leaders of the day who proposed and funded their expedition. Two hundred years after Lewis and Clark named the three forks of the Big River—the Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin—are now synonymous with Montana trout fishing, whitewater rafting, and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Ironically, the official names of the rivers are forever linked to men who never even saw, much less drank from them.

Like most places within the Tribal oral tradition, there were often numerous names for rivers and places, with variations common among Tribes and even within Tribal communities. However, the most well-known titles became inter-Tribal in their recognition. The ancient names of Baáchuuaashe “Berry River” (Gallatin), Aashalatatche “Where the River is Straight” (Madison),
and Iichílaashe “Horse River” (Jefferson), have been largely lost to the dominant society, because they do not exist on any official map. But they are still on permanent record throughout Montana. Despite having been excluded from the official USGS maps, Tribal river names can be found on informational displays at the Headwaters State Park and also in some historic publications and numerous Tribally-specific maps produced by Tribal scholars for public and Tribal college use.

The three rivers that form the Missouri had especially meaningful names when they are considered from a cultural-geographic context. Each of their names signified a geographic fixture that played prominently in the northern Plains way of life. The “Chokecherry River,” also known as the “Berry River,” had the name of the predominant fruit of the Yellowstone region, wild berries. There were many types of berries that were harvested during the late summer by the Montana Tribes, including juneberries, huckleberries, and buffaloberries. However, the berry most commonly used in the Plains Indian recipe for the power-bar style snack known as “pemmican,” was the chokecherry, which grows on trees.

Archaeological evidence indicates that people living on the northern Plains have been relying on these potent berries for life-sustaining nourishment for thousands of years. The chokecherry berries can be found in any area where water flows, but the Gallatin River was extremely abundant with these important trees, which were critical for not just food supplies, but for hardwood needs such as arrow shafts and tipi pins and stakes. The Tribes often used fire to clear competitive undergrowth from other plants, giving the chokecherry trees an ecological advantage and ensuring their continued success.

The anti-oxidant value of the chokecherry berries are some of the highest of any berry in the world, as the magenta-colored fruits contain a
mega-dose of flavonoids, the anti-cancer compound found in most berries (Li, et al., 2009). The hardiness of the chokecherry trees and the healing qualities of their fruit were just part of their strengths, as the tart flavor was especially delicious dried in patties or mixed with wild game. All of these wonderful benefits of chokecherry trees made them the most utilized berry on the northern Plains. As a direct contrast to the seldom-referenced name “chokecherry,” which makes more sense locally, the name “Gallatin” is used for dozens of official places and organizations, including the Gallatin Valley and Gallatin Canyon, as well as Gallatin County and Gallatin College.

Continuity and Destruction: Same Place Name, Different Explanation

Before Manifest Destiny resulted in major changes on the landscape, life for humans in the Yellowstone River region was constantly hazardous, but endlessly enriching, especially for ceremonial life. The ceremonies of the northern Plains Tribes empowered individuals and communities to connect with the spirits of the land (Medicine Crow, 1992). An elemental part of Tribal life in the northern Plains and Plateau region was to fast without food and water at sacred sites. This act of sacrifice allowed individuals to communicate directly with the spirits of their homeland and receive important revelations, which could then be shared with the Tribal community (Medicine Crow, 1992). The continuous cycle of seeking and receiving visions are what helped to guide Tribal leaders through perilous and confusing episodes in order to give continuity to generational transitions (Peat, 2002).

The Crazy Mountains of south-central Montana are a sacred place where Tribal people have visited to fast and pray for millennia. During the summer of 1804, as the Lewis and Clark expedition traveled by canoe up the Missouri River, a famous Apsáalooke chief named Alapooish (Sore Belly) fasted on top of the highest peak in the Crazy Mountains and received a powerful dream that helped to propel him into history as a leader on the northern Plains (Medicine Crow, 1992). Alapooish was just one of many important chiefs to fast and receive revelations in the Crazy Mountains. One of the most famous Apsáalooke chiefs, Alaxchíía Ahú (Plenty Coups),
also received a key dream while fasting there as an adolescent in 1861. In his vision, Alaxchíía Ahú foresaw the Virginia City Gold Rush and the opening of the Bozeman Trail, which informed his Tribe’s diplomatic decisions when the invasion of the Crow homeland began in 1864 (Linderman, 2002).

The picturesque Crazy Mountains were known to the Apsáalooke people as Awaxaawapia Pìa, roughly translated as “Ominous Mountains.” An even rougher translation of “Pia” could be the English term “crazy,” because it infers an extreme and unpredictable nature. Awaxaawapia Pìa were well known for their unique qualities that included their stark physical stature, their ability to draw storm clouds upon them at any time, and their metaphysical power which was always abundant and potent for those who sought it in the mountains.

The contemporary tale of how the Crazy Mountains got their present name is based on an 1870’s yarn of how a pioneer family was ambushed and killed by Piegan (Blackfeet) Tribal members, with only one person, a woman, surviving the encounter. According to this popularized legend, the distraught woman escaped from the “Indians” grasp and disappeared into the wild and treacherous mountains, surviving there in isolation as a crazy outcast. Although highly dubious, the myth of how the “Crazy Woman Mountains” became the Crazy Mountains is written on a Montana highway road sign at the Interstate 90 rest area about ten miles east of Big Timber.
The sign and the story have provided countless travelers with a violent and melodramatic explanation of how the majestic Crazy Mountains were christened. In this version of events, the Crazies become symbolic of how the early pioneers suffered untold tragedies before ultimately winning the West. The appalling story of a pioneer family mercilessly attacked by “Indian” warriors fits handily with colonial assumptions about Tribal aggression and provides moral justification for removing the Piegan (Blackfeet) and others from the Crazy Mountain region. The Tribal oral traditions, which describe how the Crazy Mountains manifested their name, have been largely lost to history, but the contrasting spirit of the stories reveals their potency as cultural tools for understanding our shared history.

Science of Space and Place

Tribal place names often reflect a deep and complex understanding of the characteristics of the place, and the names themselves can be linked to the diverse nature of culture in North
America. One example of a place name that provides a deeper understanding of the way of life of the region is located along the E-chee-dick-karsh-ah-shay (Elk River) or now commonly known as the Yellowstone River, near present day Springdale. The place is known by the Apsáalooke people as Xooxaashe Alatshiile Awooshisee (Where the Corn Was Planted and Died). When this name is considered within a cultural and historical context, it provides a profound insight into the human experience in the region, and explains why the hunter-gatherer economy continued to be the dominant way of life in the area.

As the name suggests, members of the Apsáalooke population attempted to grow corn along the Yellowstone River at an early point upon their arrival in the region. Being former horticulturalists who had migrated to the northern Plains following a man’s vision of a promised land, the Apsáalooke people learned through trial and error that some of their traditional economic practices, such as growing corn, would no longer be the best option in their new homeland (Nabokov, 2007).

It was the Ancestors of the Siouan speaking people, including the modern day Crow Tribe, who had successfully taken corn agriculture from the ancient mega-city of Cahokia (St. Louis) on the Mississippi River and established a permanent farming village and trade center at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Utilizing stories and other elements within the Apsáalooke (Crow) Tribe’s oral tradition, the Tribe’s cultural historians have linked the group to the Cahokian Mound builders of around 1200 AD (Apsáalooke Tribal History Project, 2002–2012).
But as these intrepid voyagers and savvy agriculturalists ventured further west, they learned to come to terms with their new place that was inhospitable to growing corn. Through their lived experience on the land, they simultaneously formed their own identity and also marked their on-going history through the meaningful act of place naming. Far beyond simply assigning a familiar title to a commonly known space, the outcome of place names was also significant for its singular ability to embed and chronicle the story of a people’s survival on the land. The Tribal place names animate and enliven the natural world, making the landscape an open book of countless stories to be interpreted by wisdom keepers and passed along to future generations. As new people in a new land, the Apsáalooke composed a survivors’ guide by bestowing place names that chronicled their lessons learned.

According to their oral history, there were at least two other areas along the E-chee-dick-karsh-ah-shay or Yellowstone River: the Hagen Site, near modern-day Glendive, and the area around the mouth of the Rosebud Creek, near present day Miles City, where corn was planted but did not grow successfully. Fortunately for the Tribe, although the corn may have died, the people persevered in the Yellowstone region. As a clever, flexible, and opportunistic community, the Apsáalooke people quickly learned how to make the most of the economic opportunities available to them. They adapted their way of life to the land and climate and overall resources, and they learned to thrive in their homeland (Medicine Crow, 1992).

The deeper, unseen story behind this Apsáalooke place name, Xooxaashe Alatshiile Awooshisee (Where the Corn Was Planted and Died), signifies a profound amount of cultural, historical, and geographic data (Apsáalooke Tribal History Project, 2002–2012). The name connects people to places, places to climates, and climates to economy. Like so many Tribal places along the Trail, the name is drawn from a complex history of how people came to know the specific area. Every explanation behind a place name is unique and different, yet the root of each story is connected by the same interactional processes and through a web of relationships that stretch across time and space. The Tribal place names indicate that the places have a spirit and character of their own, and the stories describe how people have engaged with and perceived the spirit of that place.
Traditionally, Tribal elders shared these stories with younger members of the community, in many different kinds of venues, but most obviously around campfires during the winter, or while traversing the land on a hunt or wild plant harvest. Elders still share stories about Tribal place names today, in the twenty-first century, but times have changed. As Tribal communities see the passing of elders, the oral histories are slowly fading, and digital recordings and paper maps have begun to play a more prominent role in how young Tribal members learn about their Ancestral history. Yet, while the knowledge of the place names can still be transmitted without personal interaction, it is often the familial relationship that translates into a closer sense of connection to the land for the younger generations.

Another site along the E-chee-dick-karsh-ah-shay River that is significant to all of the Tribes of the region is an enormous granite escarpment located about 15 miles east of Livingston, along the north side of the river. The high hill is identified on the map today as “Sheep Mountain,” but traditionally, some Tribes knew it as “Hide Scraper” (Apsáalooke Tribal History Project, 2002–2012). The mountain acquired its name because of its obvious resemblance to a giant rock tool, commonly utilized by Plains Tribes for cleaning and processing animal skins. As the largest landmark along the river’s eastward path, the mountain is a significant site for many reasons, and its traditional name reveals its quintessential role in the upper Yellowstone region’s hunter-gatherer economy. During the cold winter months, Tribal communities set up their lodges in the nearby creek valleys, giving the people shelter from the wind, as well as access to water and firewood. All of the streams that flow near the Hide Scraper Mountain are smaller tributaries of the Yellowstone River.
The ancient name reveals the singular importance of hides and hide preparation in the Plains Tribal way of life. Hide scrapers were common tools that could be found in every tipi, and they were used on a daily basis, often for hours on end, and for months at a time, during the summer and fall harvests. During processing the tools were used to scrape any flesh or other irregularities off from the animal skins, preparing them to be further processed into either soft and pliable buckskin or hard and tough rawhide. The dry climate of the region allowed the hides to maintain their protective qualities for years without degrading and rotting away. In fact, animal skins formed the building blocks of Plains Tribal society.

The Hide Scraper is a striking landform, rising up majestically, 2,000 feet above the Yellowstone Valley—its steep rock facade peering due south, toward the north face of the Absaroka Mountain Range. Standing prominently as a symbolic beacon of the Plains Tribal economic way of life, the Hide Scraper beckons both hunters and animals alike, like a lighthouse in the midst of a sea of high, rolling hills and rugged mountain horizons. It was such a well-known and definitive spot for so many Tribes in the region, the Salish people often referred to the E-chee-dick-karsh-ah-shay or Yellowstone River itself as the Hide Scraper River, according to the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council (2008). The Hide Scraper promontory is located about 15 miles west and upstream from Xooxaashe Alatshiile Awooshisee (Where the Corn Was Planted and Died), and offers a stunning view of the nearby Awaxawapìa Pìa (Crazy Mountains) to the north.

Standing atop the mountain provides a 360-degree panoramic observation spot, with hundreds of square miles in plain view, so if game was not within close striking distance, it could likely be spotted in the area with the naked eye. The northward side of the Hide Scraper is a grassy plateau and sloping hill, providing a large pasture for migrating herds of bison, elk, deer, and antelope. Historically, the mountains’ natural shape and prominent location along the river have made it a year-round Mecca for most animals crossing its southwest corridor and continuing into the high country of the Yellowstone caldera. Across time, as game animals traversed the trails over and around the mountain, hunters took advantage of the prime grounds to harvest meat and hides.
Huge numbers of wild game provided both food and the raw materials for the hide-based culture. Tanned hides were the textile material utilized for creating mobile homes, or tipis, which were perfect shelters to accommodate the hunter-gatherer way of life. An average winter encampment of 20 lodges would process and store 4,000–5,000 pounds of meat for a winter’s supply, and all of the skins from those harvests were utilized as well—brain-tanned hides for new lodges and clothing and rawhide for such items as drums and parfleche suitcases or bags. During the long winter nights, hide clothing would be embroidered with dyed porcupine quills and, in the nineteenth century, decorated with glass beads.

The mountain’s place within the regional topography made it a central point of cultural affinity for thousands of years, and its name provides the link to that remarkable time in history. As recently as 2011, local hikers out for a walk with their dog discovered an obsidian rock cache totaling over 21 pieces and 16 pounds. This glass rock was discovered within several miles of the mountain and was dated to 2,000 BC. It is believed that the obsidian was taken from the Obsidian Cliff in Yellowstone Park. It was likely delivered by foot to the Hide Scraper Creek and left as a stash for Tribal hunters who would use the obsidian pieces to fashion arrow points.

The new identity of the mountain, Sheep Mountain, contrasts strikingly with its ancient Tribal name, which offered the world an opportunity to gain greater insight into the ancient northern Plains Tribal culture. The modern, official name of Sheep Mountain conveys the settlement of a new type of animal and a new way of life. The wild place was tamed and in recognition of this transformation, it was christened with the name of a domesticated animal of Biblical lore, "sheep." Sheep Mountain symbolizes the dawn of a new way of life in the Yellowstone region, just as the creek that flows directly across from it is now known as “Mission,” to signify the Christian evangelism that came along with Manifest Destiny.

**Modern Legacy**

Although most Tribal place names of significance along the Trail are not on any contemporary map, the National Park Service of the twenty-first century is now Honoring Tribal Legacies along
the Trail by recovering and celebrating them. Recovering the original Ancestral Tribal place-names and hearing the stories that explain and accompany those names is an empowering learning experience because it allows students to “peel back” a layer of time and modern culture, and to reveal in their mind’s eye the living landscape as the first peoples there knew it. Experiences of this type transform one-dimensional information into multifaceted social, scientific, and historical knowledge and deepen students’ own connections with the land, creating a more significant impact on their internalized investment in ecological, social, and environmental action. This contemporary model of educational collaboration also decolonizes the traditional narrative of the Trail and offers students a more complete and authentic perspective from which to recognize and appreciate both the Trail and the American West.

**Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Mapping**

The Trail was profoundly changed by the collaboration that took place during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, especially with the involvement of the Circle of Tribal Advisors, the creation of *Enough Good People* (2009), and the integration of more than 400 Native voices and over 1,800 hours of Tribal presentations in the Tent of Many Voices. As the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial concluded, the National Park Service shifted the focus of the administration of the Trail from coordinating commemorative events to protecting resources, providing for visitor use and enjoyment of the Trail, and offering technical assistance to partners. This shift in focus resulted in an operations analysis of the staff positions that would be needed to adequately address complex issues along a long, linear trail that covers a broad geographic extent and passes through numerous areas of mixed land ownership where natural, cultural, and recreational resources vary considerably. A Core Operations Analysis identified Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as being perfectly suited to address the unique and complex challenges faced by the National Trails System, as they allow users to visualize, question, analyze, and interpret spatial data in order to understand relationships, patterns, and trends. GIS-based maps can also be used to help understand situations and scenarios, make decisions, and improve communication.
In 2008, the NPS began building a comprehensive GIS program to better protect and interpret the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Trail. This would involve assembling as much existing geographic data about the resources of the Trail as possible and developing new layers of information to be used in mapping projects in order to understand the complexity of the Trail, respond to resource threats, and provide support and information to staff, partners, and visitors. Much of the natural and recreational resource GIS data were readily available for inclusion in the Trail’s GIS, while cultural resource GIS data were much less accessible. Perhaps most surprisingly, accurate historical data on the Lewis and Clark expedition largely had yet to be researched and compiled.
Early in 2008, Trail staff were approached by members of a group interested in historic sites of importance to Omaha cultural heritage. As a result, the National Park Service staff at the Trail and the Midwest Archeological Center, the Geographic Resources Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project entered into a joint project conducting collaborative ethnohistorical, cartographic, and non-intrusive geophysical archaeological research at several sites along the Trail. Part of this project entailed using the information recorded in the Lewis and Clark journals and the maps of Captain Clark to cartographically reconstruct the historic 1804–1806 channel of the Missouri River, the route of the Corps of Discovery, the location of cultural sites, as well as the place names given to physical features by Lewis and Clark. The geographic data was then linked to the University of Nebraska’s online Journals of Lewis and Clark. The cartographic reconstruction of Lewis and Clark’s historic route was developed by James D. Harlan of the University of Missouri-Columbia and was completed for the entire Missouri River in 2012. GIS data for other scholarly research on the historic route of the Lewis and Clark Trail was also developed and compiled, including the Lewis and Clark campsites located by Robert Bergantino, the trail cartography developed by Martin Plamondon, and the GPS data for the overland portion of the trail between the Missouri and Columbia Rivers collected by Steve Russell.

The important cartographic information revealed from the development of the GIS data for the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail contrasts with the popularly held notion that Lewis and Clark were blazing a new trail through an empty and previously uncharted wilderness. Rather, as many Tribal and non-Tribal scholars and historians now know, they were following an ancient and well-recognized system of trade routes that had been used since time immemorial (Allen, 1975; Moulton, 1983; Ronda, 1987; Wood, 1987; Wood, 2003). As already demonstrated above, the place names given by Lewis and Clark often memorialized members of the expedition or prominent political figures, events and occurrences that took place on the journey, or remarkable characteristics of the landscape. Place names applied by early European explorers are also found on Clark’s maps (Wood, 1987). For example, Clark relied heavily on the “Indian Office Map” created in 1797 by traders James Mackay and John Evans, which charted the Missouri River all the way to
Place Name Examples: Detail from William Clark's 1814 Map. A map of Lewis and Clark's track, across the western portion of North America from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. Image in the public domain.
the Mandan Villages. Original place names and their English translations also appear sporadically on Clark’s maps (Jackson, 1987). By the late 1800s, most Indigenous place names—and indeed most of the new place names given by Lewis and Clark—were replaced by subsequent fur traders, scientists, geographers, cartographers, and emigrants, as James Walker has documented here (and see Jackson, 1987).

Illuminating Original Place Names—The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Atlas

In 2012, the National Park Service completed the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Foundation Document (2012), which is a formal statement of the Trail’s core mission and provides basic guidance for all planning and management decisions. The Foundation Document identifies the purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values of the Trail. It underscores the
Trail’s commitment to understanding and respecting the numerous perspectives and interpretations of the encounters between the Corps of Discovery and Tribal Nations whose lands they were traveling through. The Trail provides an opportunity to explore and share diverse perspectives in order to provide a better understanding of the collective history of the United States.

One important component of this Foundation Document is the Trail Atlas, a dynamic, interactive, user-friendly mapping site that contains a number of the Trail’s different geographic layers of information, including historical data, natural and cultural resource GIS layers, recreational layers for visitors, and attributes and links to further information. The Atlas program was originally created by the National Park Service Planning Division to give staff access to the most important GIS layers in order to help make planning decisions, regardless of their level of experience with GIS. Trail leadership and Trail backers saw the value in the Trail Atlas beyond its original purpose as an internal tool for staff planning activities. They envisioned the Atlas as an interactive tool for partners and educators along the Trail and a portal into the world of the Lewis and Clark Trail for the public. Trail staff collaborated with the National Park Service’s Denver Service Center to make the Atlas publicly accessible on the web. The Trail Atlas serves out the geographic information gathered through collaborative projects, and it can be used by anyone to create and share their own custom maps.

Screenshot from Trail Atlas, showing geographic data layers and customization ability. Image courtesy of the National Park Service.
Unlike a traditional atlas, which consists of static maps with a specific number of geographic layers printed at a particular set scale, the *Trail Atlas* allows users to zoom in and out of areas of interest and choose the geographic extent and scale at which they want to view the map. Users can turn layers of information on and off in the Table of Contents; display different backgrounds (e.g. aerial photography, topographic maps, street maps); draw and add directly on the web map; export and print customized maps; add personalized geographic information and GPS data to the map; measure distance and area; find latitude and longitude coordinates; and, view photos and links for more information on the web. For ease of use, Trail GIS layers are organized in the Table of Contents by theme and, as time and resources allow, more data layers and tools are continually being added to the *Atlas*. The data in the web map are also accessible through a variety of clickable links to websites that provide a wealth of additional information about the Trail, including the online Journals of Lewis and Clark.

A close examination of *Trail Atlas* use has revealed three primary groups of users who have been creating custom projects—trail visitors, agency partners, and educators. In 2013 and 2014, National Park Service staff created training videos that they put on *YouTube* and conducted workshops on the *Trail Atlas* for educators, interpreters, and scholars. Feedback at a workshop held at the University of Montana as part of the Gilder Lehrman Institute resulted in the development and release of a mobile version of the *Atlas* that does not require the installation of additional plug-ins or software, which may be used on smart phones, tablets, and other mobile devices. Trail staff are proposing that educators use the *Atlas* as a tool to rediscover and map original place names along the Trail, working with their students. Ancestral place names may be identified and re-written on this map and could be used to identify the relationships between the landscape and peoples of this vast region. The *Atlas* can be seen as a tool for empowerment and can be used to reach back to reveal the landscape as people originally knew it. Projects developed in the *Atlas* can be printed, exported, and shared with others. Additions and modifications to the Atlas can be continually developed. By illuminating ancient place names using the *Trail Atlas*, traditional narratives of Lewis and Clark as discoverers filling in the empty spaces on the map can be altered to provide a more complete and authentic view of American history.
Endnotes

1 Dr. Walker wishes to acknowledge our editor, Dr. Stephanie Wood, for her assistance with this essay. He is also appreciative of the editing recommendations of Dr. Barbara Walker.


3 Some of this extensive literature, spanning several centuries, has been reviewed recently by Patrick Gautier Dalche, “The Reception of Ptolemy’s *Geography* (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)” in *The History of Cartography, Volume Three, Part 1, Cartography in the European Renaissance* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 282–364; also John P. Snyder, “Map Projections in the Renaissance” in the same volume, pp. 365–381.

4 In his chapter on “Linguistic Colonialism” (pp. 561–580) Greenblatt discusses the Spanish perception that the unfamiliar nature of New World languages implied that the Indians were at best culturally uncivilized and at worst sub-human. Greenblatt’s broader theme is how the Spanish linked this judgment with the business of conquest such that (the Spanish) language was considered “the perfect instrument of empire.”


7 In this masterful study of pre-colonial and colonial periods of Native-European encounters on Vancouver Island, Clayton explores “cartographic and geopolitical processes of inscription [as] modes of appropriation that prepared the ground for colonists” (p. 234). Although his research is focused on Vancouver Island, Clayton’s observations about the possessive role of European mapping conventions such as place naming apply equally to elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest and, indeed, to many other occupied regions in the world. See also, Ken G. Brealey, “Mapping Them ‘Out’: Euro-Canadian Cartography and the Appropriation of the Nuxalk and Ts’ilhqot’in First Nations’ Territories, 1793–1916,*The Canadian Geographer 39*(2). (June, 1995), pp. 140–156.
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