

This Stretch of the River

Craig Howe and Kim TallBear, Editors

This Stretch of the River
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Where Are They?

Charmaine White Face

There is an old legend of the Titonwan of the Oceti Sakowin. In it, animals desire to kill the first human beings, the two-leggeds, because they fear that the two-leggeds will destroy them and the other relatives on Unci Maka. But the winged ones have pity and want to help the two-legged beings. A great race is held around the Black Hills, more than 500 miles, and the winner will determine the fate of the human beings. The racetrack becomes red with the blood from the hooves, feet, and paws of the animals running the grueling race. But the magpie is smart and rides on a horn of the buffalo, the fastest runner with the most endurance. As they near the end, the magpie, who has conserved his strength, flies ahead of the buffalo and wins the race. As a result, human beings are allowed to live and the buffalo nation must provide for their needs.

In any natural field, one that has not been cultivated by human beings, there might be hundreds of species of plants. Each year, the field will change as seeds grow in relation to the amount of moisture, temperature, and sunlight available the previous winter and spring. But even though this ever-changing living tapestry produces varied kinds of plant life with each new year, there will always be one dominant plant: grass, broad leaf, or perhaps cacti. The less dominant will grow among the more prolific, sometimes in small family clusters, sometimes alone, standing proudly. Perhaps a bird flying overhead has dropped one seed on its way to feed its young, and the seed, left in a favorable position, has grown into a single entity, thus adding a touch of difference to an otherwise homogeneous mixture.

Were human beings allowed to co-exist with each other and the rest of creation in certain geographic areas in an environmentally sustainable manner, just such a tapestry would develop over thousands of years. Such was the North American continent when the Europeans invaded. However, such a tapestry was not conceivable for Europeans, after almost 2,000 years of conquest, pillage, and use and abuse of what were known as "natural resources."

When Lewis and Clark traveled along the Missouri River, they were a part of this mindset. They could not know that the indigenous peoples they were encountering had cultures thousands of years old, very complex societal systems, and an understanding of nature that America still does not grasp today. Nor did Lewis and Clark, like the cultures of America or Europe today, realize or understand the indigenous peoples' comprehension of the vast spiritual dimensions of this world.

Lewis and Clark were merely the starter cells of a vast, cancerous way of thinking that is rapidly killing Unci Maka. That thinking started in Europe thousands of years ago. "Natural resources," whether they be oil, minerals, timber or crops, were to be used solely for the production of "things" for the enjoyment and comfort of human beings.

In their journals, Lewis and Clark described the countless numbers and new kinds of species they encountered: the large herds of buffalo drinking at the river, the amazingly graceful antelope and deer lowering their heads to the water in the early evening, the many kinds of waterfowl everywhere. They also expressed the need for interpreters for the many indigenous languages they were encountering, but only for the purpose of trade and business, only for the purpose of conquest and use.

So where are they? Where are the buffalo? Why are they not still running free across the prairies? Where are the black bears, the brown bears, the grizzly bears? Why are they not in the Black Hills? Where are the wolves? They live in family and clan units too. They once lived all over the Midwest. Where are the moose that once traveled in these areas? Where are the mountain sheep that lived so plentifully among the spires and tables in the Badlands?

Where are the plants that were not given Latin names by scientists and botanists but disappeared under plows, or water caused by dams, or were eaten by cattle? Where are the tallgrass prairies? There is a tiny one left in North Dakota, near Fargo, completely surrounded by farms. Yet, at one time, the tallgrasses, taller than a horse, were found all over in the Midwest. How many plants and animals will die, and how many threatened and endangered species will become extinct, so a new railroad line can be built through one of the last pristine grasslands? We are supposed to nevermind that railroad lines are obsolete and only increase air, water, and land pollution. After all, we are told, the railroad cars will carry what is left of the coal in Wyoming to points east. These are parts of the legacy of Lewis and Clark.

Where are the myriad streams of clean water that once flowed in the Black Hills, in the Badlands, all over the prairies, following each spring and summer rain? Where are the flocks of waterfowl that once covered the waterways in South Dakota? A pitiful few have become full-time residents of the location across from the mouth of the Bad River where Lewis and Clark encountered the Tetonwan, that place which is now the capitol of the state of South Dakota.

Where are the thousands of trees, shrubs, and bushes that once lined the Missouri River and were the homes, shelter, and food for innumerable animals and birds? Where are the fish and turtles and other small aquatic life that needed the trees and shrubs and bushes to extend their branches over the water so that their breeding places would be shaded from the hot summer sun? Where are the insects that inhabited the trees, shrubs and bushes and were food for some of the water life?

Where is the clean air of the Great Plains? Now it is filled with the noxious fumes of mining for coal and methane and oil. It contains the radioactive particles of hundreds of abandoned uranium mines, particles to be breathed in by humans and cattle, to settle on grass and crops that will be eaten by humans and cattle, and to be carried by the wind elsewhere. These also are part of the legacy of Lewis and Clark.

Where are the Black Hills places that were sacred to the Tetonwan and other indigenous nations? Is there a consequence for the destruction of something sacred? How many burial sites containing the remains of the ancestors of the Oceti Sakowin and other tribes have been crushed under cultivators so crops of winter wheat can bring in the almighty dollar? How many sacred places and burial sites, areas that were left in reverence for thousands of years on the prairies, are being considered for destruction so coal can be strip-mined to increase the pollution in the air? How many petroglyphs, places of communication with those wiser than the two-leggeds, have been vandalized with the initials of plunderers, or destroyed by "educated" people to be placed in museums? These are also the legacies of Lewis and Clark.

Where are my people, the Tetonwan and the rest of the Oceti Sakowin? Where are the ones of whom Thomas Jefferson said, "On that nation, we wish most particularly to make a friendly impression, because of their immense power..."

Where is the honor of a nation that made treaties with the Oceti Sakowin but then violated them? Where is the integrity of a nation that would go against its own Constitution in order to have access to gold? Where is the humanity of a nation that would steal children to change them from being who the Creator made them to be?

Where are my people of whom William Clark said, "These are the vilest miscreants of the savage race, and must ever remain the pirates of the Missouri, until such measures are pursued, by our government, as will make them feel a dependence on its will for their supply of merchandise?"

Where are the thousands and thousands of Tetonwans who perished from starvation, bullets, smallpox and other diseases after Lewis and Clark traveled up the Big Muddy? Where are the Wahpekute, the Wahpetonwan, the Mde-wakantonwan, the Sisonwan, the Ihanktonwan, and the Ihanktonwanna, the other six nations of the Oceti Sakowin?

Where are the children buried who died in residential boarding schools generation after generation? Where are the ones who survived the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse of the boarding schools and died later of the consequences of their experiences? Where are the burial sites of their parents, the ones who were prisoners of war, who whispered secrets to their grandchildren hoping a miracle would happen and some seed would remain of the Oceti Sakowin?

Where are the ancient family practices of the Oceti Sakowin? Where is the strong societal structure that forbid a son-in-law to talk to his mother-in-law? Where are the whipbearers so that no woman or child had to fear abuse at the hands of a man? Where are the old laws that guided nations for millennia to live and thrive on Unci Maka? These absences are the greatest tragedy of the legacy of Lewis and Clark.

Reflections on Mnisose after Lewis and Clark

Kathryn Akipa, Gladys Hawk, Craig Howe, Lanniko Lee,

Kim TallBear, and Lydta Whirlwind Soldier

*A Dialogue between members of the Oak Lake Writers' Society held at The
Birdsong Inn and Guest House, Java, South Dakota,*

February 12, 2005

cheap like our land
that was sold at four pennies an acre
but no indian was there that day
as whitemen sold to whitemen
making convenient policy makers
because back then
and maybe even now
indians were never seen as being equal
to the white people
just a copper penny
next to a shiny nickel

what would you do
if someone put a price tag on your home
and sold it with no remorse?
this country became
one big wholesales store
and it never closes
because there's always something to buy
and something to sell
and pretty soon
no one will be able to tell
...what truth really is

here's a nickel for your thoughts

Kim TallBear In this collection of essays, we have decided to center the river as an actor, and not simply think of it as a subject or something simply acted upon in our response to Lewis and Clark. So, we—Craig and I—want to have you all philosophize about rivers as entities or beings in themselves. It's kind of an open question where you might talk about the meaning of the river to you personally, to your family, to your tribe.

Lanniko Lee All my life I have known the river to be part of a larger expression of our relationship to everything that is—everything that exists. A good example is what Arvol Looking Horse¹ published in his wonderful "World Peace and Prayer Day." In it he describes the earth as a living organism having anatomical functions similar to that of the human body. Mnisose, the river we know, is a major artery. As a major artery it is meant to flow for the life of the world.

In fact, long before scientists began speculating about the alleged benefits of changing the river, my family, like Arvol, talked about the river as doing the work of circulation. Circulation is the vital function of the Mnisose. After all, flowing water brings necessary changes. So when I think about the man-made dams that obstruct the river's flow, I can't help but grieve over the loss of a river flowing and the loss of its life-giving and healing forces coursing through Unci Maka, Grandmother Earth, to the ocean.

Another important conversation for indigenous people regarding caring for the earth is the ability of the rain forest to continue functioning in a healthy way. So much destruction of the rain forest is occurring. Soon it will not be able to do what it was meant to do—provide the essential respiratory exchange needed to keep body Earth healthy. Arvol's message was a proposal to all humanity that we pay attention to how the relationships of the parts of the world work and how we are all responsible for Earth's health. This is good Lakota reasoning.

I remember the elders of my family asking how the clouds would be able to come if there were no trees to call in the clouds. This was after hearing John F. Kennedy's speech about the progress and the good that would come after the river was dammed and hydroelectric power would be available to improve the lives of everyone. My recollection of those times is a mixture of strong emotions interfused with memories of ceremonies and

dire prophecies; photographs were taken by those who wanted to remember a river that was destined to be changed. Strong emotions were displayed; everyone living along the river was affected by those changes.

Kim Gladys and Lydia and Kathryn have also talked a lot about the effects on the people and also what the river meant to them personally. How do each of you feel about the Missouri River project and the inherent contradiction for Native people of referring to the River as a "project"?

Lanniko When I grew up, the river was at the center of conversations about the sacred. The river helps explain our belief about the sacred permeating our lives. Images of baptisms are prominent in my memory. All of the songs that we sing when we are burying our people who have grown up along the river are always focused on the water. Gladys can probably talk about that.

Gladys Hawk My piece in this anthology is my personal experience of the river. But it was the Grand River I was talking about. It wasn't far from the Missouri, though. I am also familiar with the Missouri just traveling back and forth to Moberge. I write about a time when all of the river was still there, but it was being planned to be flooded. I remember seeing the surveyors when they came along the hillside right above our house; they were way up there, so I rode on my horse and I went up there and I asked them, "What are you doing?" There were two guys there with their tripods and they said, "Well, some day the water level is going to be this high" [gestures]. I looked at that and I looked down towards our house and to the river and to the east. I couldn't imagine it; I just could not imagine that. But that was when I was only about ten. And it wasn't until '58, '59 and '60, when I was in my twenties, when we actually saw it happen, when they cut down all the trees along the river and it was bare.

Kim Some of us here were talking last night in the kitchen about the sense of disbelief that people had. First of all, that morally the Army Corps could do this and second, that technologically it was possible. And I wonder if, because it took so long from planning to the actual flood, the sense of disbelief was really big? Or did people gradually accept it would happen?

Gladys I think they gradually accepted it. What more could they do? Their homes were taken away. I just want to say the impact that it had. There was an old man that lived where the bay is now. His name was Ed Hawk. He was an old man with a blind eye. All he had was just two little sorrel horses that he used for his wagon. He had them in the corral and one little log cabin where they wintered. And he lived in a one-room log house. He would not sign anything that the Corps brought in. He just stood his ground. And the Corps came in and they bulldozed his little house. [One gasp of disbelief, then 30 seconds of silence.]

Lydia The damming of the river displaced a lot of people and multiple generations from the river. It destroyed a way of life that was centuries old. I remember somebody telling me that their grandparents would go to the river every Sunday and sit on the bluffs overlooking the water just to see their land disappearing under the water. They would reminisce about the old days, their gardens, their livestock and their homes. And they would feel sad over how their lives had changed since their land was flooded.

As a Sicangu, I didn't grow up along the river. But when they started building the dam near Pierre, my dad worked on it for one summer. He was really torn about that, but he had to support a family. So he just worked on it one summer and then found work elsewhere. But I remember every summer my grandparents would take us to the river by Pickstown, Fort Randall, to see how far the water had come up. We would spend the day, go to Fort Randall and have a picnic and they would sit and talk about the river. They were in disbelief that this could be done. But I was a little kid and as a little kid you don't pay too much attention. As Sicangu we lived so many hours away from the river, but we still went to the river to see what was happening every summer.

Lanniko Another arrogant, irresponsible act occurred even before politicians set in motion those changes to the river. Locals took it upon themselves to move prayer stones off the river—very large boulders that had previously been prairie altars where mortals communed with the sacred. If you go down the river road here, you will see those prayer stones with hand marks on them made during prayer—prayers that were given for that river. One such group, not American Indians, decided to construct a building in Gettysburg, South Dakota; a big prayer stone was moved in to attract tourists to the community. Now if you want to visit one of these stones, you can visit the Dakota Sunset Museum and pay a fee to see the prayer stone, but not to touch it, nor do you have the open, private prairie setting to use the stone as it had been used for hundreds, possibly thousands of years. By moving those stones off the river—it's like another group of people is shaping even our memory. Between that and the river project, maybe they were thinking we would forget our past. Those who were involved in making the decisions to change the river—they knew what they were doing culturally and economically to our lives. I don't know how they can possibly be unaware of what they were doing.

Kim Kathryn, in your essay, you talked about your mom getting a new teaching appointment in Iowa and leaving Lower Brule. Did you actually see what happened after the flooding or did you leave before it got flooded?

Kathryn We left before it got flooded. But a couple of girls who my mom taught came with us on the move. And then when we took them back we heard the stories, the horrible things that happened with the flood. At the store the people would talk around the stove and they would sit there smoking and

they just couldn't believe it. "How could they do something like this? How is this possible?" They would ask. The underlying feeling that I remember as a child when I was probably about eight was "How could man think that he is so powerful that he could change the course of the river?" And I remember that there was almost a feeling of toksta. They are going to find out the river will take its own course eventually and it will come back on them. You can't change the course of something like that—so powerful—so mighty. Somewhere you're going to pay for it. That was the feeling of disbelief that the people around the stove and the women in their sewing circles had. It just seemed like such an absurd and far-fetched plan. How could the wasicu think like this?

It reminds me of when they decided to go to the moon in the later 60s—the same kind of idea—a kind of disbelief! [laughter]. But the dam in particular worried a lot of people because a lot of them could not afford to move the graves and they worried about their relatives. Sure enough, three weeks after the flooding they saw caskets floating down the river. That flabbergasted people in the Lower Brule area. Out of respect, I didn't want to put that scene in my essay. It could hurt people to be reminded of that. Some of them, those were their relatives.²

I remember such disbelief from my child's point of view. I didn't fully understand the whole thing. I just knew that a flood was coming and that the village would be gone—everything that we knew there. And I think that is the reason why I wrote in my piece about the happy memories as a child, to show the tragic loss. My point was to show that this is on the continuum of what began when Lewis and Clark sailed—the so-called progress of America and how it continues to impact Native Americans in modern times. When you lose a village where you did have such good memories—yes, some of them were tragic and life goes on—but when you lose a village like that and you know that you will never be able to walk in those places again because they're under water, it's hard to imagine.

Kim You just stated clearly the importance of the dam in the legacy of America. Lewis and Clark were also part of that movement towards "progress." I'm also interested in what you all have to say about the need to respect the river, its power, and the possible consequences of not respecting it.

Lydia I grew up listening to old people and their philosophies. One of the phrases that they always used was "mni wiconi," which means "water is life." It also means respect for water—respect for river. As long as you have water, there is life. The old people use that phrase in their prayers and everyday conversation.

Lanniko Vine Deloria and Dan Wildcat in their book, *Power and Place*, have also talked about Indian peoples' respect for the river.³ They talk about our understanding of the changing nature of the river, our understanding

of flood plains, of the appropriate places for habitation, and what kinds of things people did to fit their own lives into the balance by understanding the river's changes. They state that with that knowledge, people were able to take care of themselves, while non-Indians build on the flood plains with a lot of investment and insurance. They make money off tragedies that they participate in creating. A critique of capitalism comes across in their book—a conversation about non-Natives who build on the flood plains and reap benefits from loss. They say we never did that because we had a responsibility for not just ourselves, but our whole family—for those communities along the river. We had to have a sense of our responsibility as humans, an understanding of the river phenomena and its changing nature. We had to respect it so that we could share that wisdom with those around us.

Let me give a couple of specific examples of how understanding and respecting the river translated into taking care of our families and communities. We sang songs when we were burying our family members who had grown up and died along the river. We focused on the power of the water, both the sacred power and the power expressed in the cycles of nature. Each spring—as our elders taught us—the seasonal power expressed in floods brought about the renewal of the landscape, of life.

I have another example of how we linked river knowledge and river power to the knowledge and power in our human lives. Late one summer evening when my grandmother and I were down at the river getting water, a light breeze started the cottonwood leaves chattering overhead; she told me to stop and listen. A sliver of moon hung in the sky and she motioned up to it and then to the trees: "Listen to the cottonwood women talking," she said to me. I asked her what they were saying and she said that I should always remember that I am like the river and that one day I would flow and become a woman. Like the popping trees in the spring, and later when the ice was breaking, I would live a springtime, like the river, and bring life into the world. It was then that I learned about how the seeds of cottonwood trees are imbedded into the soft river soil by the swift moving waters that flooding causes in the spring run-off. I learned about the gift of life, and she made clear to me the Lakota saying, "Our children are sacred," with her explanation of how young cottonwood trees were the gifts of floods. I learned then to respect those powerful changes and appreciate our connection to the river, the trees, and the land.

Our everyday lives were spent learning lessons about change and our people used those lessons to make decisions like where to build our homes and where to plant our gardens. Immigrants have not learned much from American Indians when it comes to human connectedness to the land. Our understanding of home is probably because we know Earth as our grandmother, Unci Maka. Unfortunately, our perspective and the wisdom of our

elders are never fully appreciated, especially when it comes to stewardship, or when environmental changes are contemplated.

To go back to your comment about disbelief, I think it is untrue that indigenous people had no real sense of the power of technology. On the contrary, our people were more keenly aware of the power of making choices. It wasn't that we all disbelieved that the river's course could be changed. We were in disbelief that the wasicu would do such a thing. Our choices as Lakota people were made from a different way of discerning the world.

Kathryn I just want to make a comment about the Dakota world. Although I lived along this river as a child, we Dakota don't in general live that close to the river. Of course we do have the Mississippi, the Yellow Medicine, the Great Sioux, the Minnesota. . . a lot of rivers. The water was always a very big part of our lives too. It's like you say, Lydia, mmi wiconi.

My father, my step-dad, Woodrow Keeble, was born in 1917. His dad was Isaac Keeble, who was very traditional, and never learned to speak a wasicu language. My step-dad used to tell us how to get up in the morning. The old way of making your day is to go out on your own to the east. You face the sunrise and when the sun breaks, you acknowledge the creator, "Wakan Tanka Tukansina." You acknowledge the day and the gift of life that you have and the woods and everything around you on every horizon. That is one of the important things that they did in those days when we lived in camps—we always camped by some kind of water. You would go down in that sacred moment of silence early in the morning to greet the creator, to wash your face, or to use the water in some way to bless yourself. Because it is mmi wiconi.

My dad used to tell about how when he was a little boy, his dad would tell them, all six of them, all boys, "Inajin po," and they would get up. They lived on the west side of Pickerel Lake and they would all have to run down to the lake and he would make them jump in the water. They would all have to go in for a swim in the morning, until the ice formed and they couldn't get through the ice any more. And if the little ones tried to complain, he would tell them that it makes your heart strong. And it made my dad's heart strong. He was North Dakota's most decorated war hero from World War II and Korea. He was never given the medal of honor that he was recommended for three times because it was a racial issue—and that's been acknowledged now. But that's just an aside—a plug for my dad! [Laughter]. He lived when it was important to greet your day with the water and to face the sun and commune with Wakan Tanka.

Kim I grew up in Flandreau [SD] mostly, always living about a half mile from the Big Sioux River. Every time I go by a river—it doesn't matter if it's that one or another one—I always look down and think, "I wonder where that goes?" It's always struck me that rivers are roads, yet I haven't spent a lot of time on rivers, canoeing or anything. But I've always felt that they are

going somewhere, going somewhere in a good way. I've always been interested in what's at the other end. I don't know if I focused on rivers as travel routes because I always wanted to go somewhere ever since I was small, to travel and see other places, or because there is something in my cultural memory—I don't know how to describe it—in which rivers were our roads. And I think rivers are still central to the Dakota landscape today.

Lydia Rivers were important boundaries for us. In land descriptions, in maps, in designating meeting places, a river would be mentioned. We had Lakota names for all of the rivers in our territory. The Minisose was the grandfather river. The course of the river can be changed, but how does the change affect the environment? How does that change affect the lives of the people, the animal and plant nations? These were not issues that the government thought about when it built the dams. How many of those animals and plants that Lewis and Clark saw are now extinct? And, how many more will disappear? Can man ever replace what was lost?

Lanniko Last spring I went down to St. Louis and traveled back up the river during spring break. I went along the road coming up and I made a point of going off the road and I saw those levees, big mounds directing water up away from the river, and it reminded me of a picture from when I went to parochial school. We learned all about how the great gardens of the world in the Christian belief were created, how they were all built by slave labor. The whole idea was to turn the desert into the Garden of Eden. When I came up the river from St. Louis, I was reminded of all of that human energy needed to reshape the landscape, and how the newcomers didn't call us people of the river. Yet that's where we were *always*. We were instead called people of the plains.

And it became a self-fulfilling prophecy, that label, one that reminds us of what has been taken away from us. Whether it's the Big Sioux or the Grand or the Cheyenne, we were people of the rivers. Yet now some of our own people don't have an understanding of what the river is. Especially young people have no real understanding of that history. Many of them grew up away from the river, moved off the river to Eagle Butte and live on the Cheyenne River Reservation. They have very little understanding of the cottonwood stories, the fish stories. They don't interact with the landscape—which they can hardly do when they're in the [boarding school] dormitory or with parents or relatives who are caught up in BIA employment or tribal employment or they're in the churches—when they're part of the institutions that shape them with western thinking. They don't have the same kind of connection with the landscape which in itself is the primal, sacred language of the very being of indigenous people.

When Lewis and Clark came up, I can't help but think that with all their litany of what they saw, the things they described in their journals, that they were thinking in terms similar to the Garden of Eden. And the plant

life and birds and animals were there waiting for them to catalogue as new species, to re-name. They were coming from a Christian philosophy of understanding, of what happened in another part of the world. To name and catalogue—to try to know everything—is a way that is opposite to the way we had. We didn't go about naming objects, plants and phenomenon like Western explorers; our belief back then was that the "thing" gave its power and the knowledge of its being-ness to us. We didn't have names for everything because not everything gave us its name. The landscape is loaded with mysteries.

Certain plants gave us the power to heal when we used them and they gave us their names. Such knowledge came to those who made it their work to help others through healing. Those people were taught how to work with those things; they received that knowledge through dreams and the like. Today, people who hold such knowledge have also learned that it is not valued like scientific knowledge. We don't talk about those things today. Instead, our people give up that powerful knowledge to be treated by Indian Health Service and Western medical practitioners.

Kim Your comments bring to mind one of my pet peeves. I used to do environmental program planning for tribes and I don't like when people so often say that we are inherently environmentalists—that it's in our blood. Because I think that discounts the fact that we got knowledge of our landscape by interacting with it and having a relationship with it. We—our ancestors—learned those things and cultivated that knowledge; they weren't just born with it. It's about practice. And if you don't acknowledge that, then you don't necessarily have to practice. So you lose a lot of knowledge by not using those resources every day like in the past and then having a thoughtful spiritual relationship with them.

But I was also interested in something else you said, Lanniko. Were you relating Lewis and Clark's classification of species to cultivating a landscape or creating a certain kind of landscape?

Lanniko The Christian heritage they inherited—Jefferson, Lewis and Clark—has a certain understanding of the Middle East and how the Middle East deserts were manipulated to be habitations for large numbers of people. So when we talk about large populations of outsiders coming into this country, what better way to accommodate them than to harness ideas—with roots in Middle East history—to build the nation and to overcome the landscape that was here to accommodate the European? That was what I was referring to when I said that there was a design. And that design is still evident along that path that I drove to St. Louis and back. There are long mounds that were created to hold the water, to pull that water farther away from the channel of the river in order to create farms. But now all the cities are choked with big plumes—pollution emissions in the air and effluents in the water. They've harnessed the power of the river but that

power has another objective now. Rather than being gardens, it is trapped by industries.

I think that with the advancing technology, the vision that was there has changed. I can't help but imagine that in the abundance of what Lewis and Clark saw, they must have felt they had fallen into some wonderful magical place. Whatever they saw when they were out there with their surveys and looking at the raw, innocent landscape, seeing what potential was there—I would be very curious to see what they saw for the future of that landscape. What did they anticipate they would achieve?

Kim Craig, do you want to talk a little about your perspectives about what the intentions of Lewis and Clark were? We've had some debate amongst ourselves—more in the pieces we've written than in spoken conversation—about what the intentions and goals of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery were. For example, in terms of Lewis and Clark's classification of species, Lanniko made an interesting point in relating the classification to the eventual taming of the landscape. It's not a direct connection perhaps in terms of their goals, but can be seen as part of an overall vision.

Craig Howe Theirs was a scientific expedition. Jefferson charged them with recording all of those things that were new to science. It was not new to humanity. It was old knowledge to all of those Indian tribes. Lewis and Clark were documenting it for scientific purposes, so it was a new "discovery" for them. At most, in terms of future settlement, they were thinking about how to get trading posts up here. The records do not seem to support that they were considering that non-Lakotas or non-Indians would be living up here in vast numbers. It is hard for us to imagine, but at that time they couldn't see the US population exploding, I don't think. They were not that visionary. Jefferson himself thought it would take hundreds of years before non-Indians would get here. So the idea was not to be negative but to be good to Indian tribes because there was no way they could alone extract the resources of the area. There were too few Americans, so they had to try to figure out a way to use the Indians to exploit the natural resources while simultaneously making Indians dependent upon the US.

In the bigger picture today, I think we put a lot more emphasis on Lewis and Clark; we make them into a bigger event than they were. Because the non-Indians are celebrating the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark we too put too much emphasis on it. Lewis and Clark didn't cause anything in my mind. They came and they left.

Lydia It was the beginning of the end of the Mnisose, the beginning of the end to a way of life as our people knew it.

Craig The fact is that there were non-Indians here for decades before Lewis and Clark came.

Lydia But before them it wasn't a scientific expedition to record rivers and tribes and start counting Indians. The Europeans who came before them learned to live with the Natives. Lewis and Clark had a purpose to record what would be in their way when they did finally come. They were a scouting party. They learned that the Lakotas are a fierce tribe that they'd have to deal with. They were probably the first grave robbers to enter Lakota territory.

Lanniko I don't think we can speak of Lewis and Clark without speaking of Jefferson. He was a visionary individual. Anybody can talk about empire-building, but he had so many projects ongoing in different aspects of his personal life. And being the public man that he was, some of those projects spilled over into the public realm and this one was one of them.

Kim I just read something about Jefferson being essentially the first American archaeologist in that he started excavating the mounds on his property. Today, we all know about that method of scientific inquiry, but at that time, trying to decipher human history through examining human bones was not something people did. It was a very weird thing to go dig up bones and study them. So it is argued that he was very much a scientist in his own right.

But this brings me back to the idea that rather than Lewis and Clark's individual intentions or even those of Jefferson, what's more important is what that journey has come to symbolize for people. That's why Kathryn's point is interesting—that they were part of another continuum, not necessarily that they directly impacted something but that they were part of a broader cultural movement that resulted in the kinds of things that you're talking about in your pieces about the taming of rivers. But that also gets back to Craig's point too: You don't have to attribute to them intention or necessarily direct responsibility for these things. But certainly I would view them as part of American westward expansionism because science is part of that. Science was very much a tool of expansionism.

Craig Yes, science also involves "discovery." Another kind of wanting to be the first . . .

Lanniko Politics too. You don't want to forget that. You can't practice science without practicing politics.

Kim It was one of Jefferson's big political tools, right? Science.

Lanniko Yes. To me that's just another language for being able to be intrusive. The whole business of excavating is the story of European expansion and control.

Craig What Jefferson was trying to do was give the fledgling United States a "History." In Europe they had the castles and ruins, and so what he was

trying to do when he wrote a paper about this was to show that over here there was a history. He also wanted to show how things were even bigger over here than in Europe. So he was looking for these mastodon bones. . . .

Kim Yes, Jefferson and others were having fights with French naturalists who said "Oh, *nothing* has happened over there." So, if you know that he was fighting with French naturalists and trying to prove that there was history here worth talking about . . .

Craig Right! So he used American Indians to show them how much better this continent was. "Look, American Indians are taller and stronger and did more than you Europeans and your ancestors." Jefferson, on that level, was promoting the noble savage. He was promoting a sense of indigenousness here. Later, maybe he argued another side, but at that time he was trying to give the US an identity separate from Europe. And he argued, "What does the US have that Europe doesn't? It has this indigenous history, it has American Indians and it has the landscapes and the species that are unique here—that you do not have over in Europe and so that's what makes this new country strong." That is what would give this country a unique identity.

Kim I see that as an early sign of Euro-Americans trying to become indigenous here.

Craig And that's why when they dressed up at the Boston Tea Party, they didn't dress up as colonists. They dressed up as Mohawks. The whole idea was to take on the identity of the land so they became Indians in order to fight against the British.

Kim So why are Lewis and Clark so important now? Is it just because we all the feel the need to respond to the commemoration? I certainly never thought about them before the bicentennial very much. I remember knowing who they were—we probably all heard about them in school. But have others of you thought about them extensively and the repercussions of what they did?

Lanniko Not me. But I realize that the bicentennial event is an attempt to rejuvenate a sense of belonging here. People are all capitalizing on an historical event in order to have some prominence here today. There are squabbles all up and down the river about how to sell the bicentennial. Although more recently there has been more positive language. I just heard on public radio about the indigenous perspective, indigenous commemorations. But that also seems like another effort to try to bring capitalist enterprise to this part of the world. As Americans we've exhausted everything; we've wasted and exhausted so much that we're now looking at capitalizing on history to get the world to come and see and spend their money here.

Kim It sounds like you're talking not only about whites but about indigenous people too.

Lanniko Yes! Absolutely! It's cultural enterprise—cultural tourism that they're hoping to achieve, not only whites but Indians too. They're talking about the positive financial repercussions of the Lewis and Clark commemoration today as a result of people coming to this part of the world to see who we are . . .

Kim Craig was saying in an earlier meeting that the Lewis and Clark centennial in 1904 was not such a big deal, right?

Craig Right.

Kim So, Lewis and Clark have in fact been revitalized as historical figures. In 1904, most Americans didn't know who they were.

Craig Yeah, it wouldn't even be close to how it is now.

Lydia Now, they're creating American heroes for their own history books.

Kathryn I didn't really think about them before this commemoration. In school, yes, they were some more wasicu people I had to learn about. But when I was a kid, the only thing that was interesting about them—in depictions of them—they kind of looked more like us. I thought, "How come they wear clothes like that?" They weren't going around with the little powdered wigs and the fluffy blouses. They looked more like real people—the way they were dressed. But they were still wasicus. I never really gave it too much thought. My thing as a kid was trying to keep them all straight. I had to keep all these American heroes straight in my mind and I didn't really make too much effort to do that [laughs].

Lydia They also took Indians and created Indian heroes for their own history—those Indians who helped white people. When you're a little kid trying to hang on to your identity and your cultural pride and you see those Indians who helped the whites destroy our way of life, like Sacajawea, you began to wonder why people cannot accept and appreciate differences. If we don't conform, we cannot be successful in the eyes of the whites.

Gladys Who interpreted that name? I always ask that because I'm curious. Apparently in 1904 they must have had a dedication in Moberge because my oldest sister had a picture of my grandfather and my grandmother—they were young then—standing near a monument to Sacajawea just across the river from Moberge. There was a chain fence around it and all of our relatives were standing there. The women had on shawls, of course. I thought "that must have been an important day." They must have dedicated that monument that day. My grandparents, they said "Zintkala Winyan."

Lydia What?! Oh, I always thought "wea" in Sacajawea sounded like "woman" [referring to winyan, the L/D/Nakota the word for "woman"]. Zintkala Winyan, oh, Bird Woman.

Gladys Zintkala Winyan, that's how they talked about her and it means Bird Woman.

Lydia Now that makes sense! I always wondered about that name. In Lakota "saca" means, something brittle and hard. Some people were even pronouncing it "Sacacawea." You know what "caca" means so that couldn't be right.

Gladys I was wondering if "Sacajawea" was a spin-off of "Zintkala Winyan," that the wasicu couldn't pronounce it. I wondered if that was the best that they could do and now we know her as Sacajawea.

Kathryn Is that what it means in her language?

Craig She had two names. One is Shoshone and one is Hidatsa. And one of them, I think, means Bird Woman. But it would have been strange if she had a Lakota name because Lakotas never saw her. She was never on this stretch of the river.

Gladys But I heard them talking about her where I grew up, "Zintkala Winyan." She was known. I never heard of Lewis and Clark, but people talked about her.

Craig I can't remember hearing about Lewis and Clark at school.

Lydia I remember seeing pictures, the explorers standing in canoes and pointing toward the west and wearing buckskin clothing like real frontiersmen.

Kathryn This whole bicentennial has forced me to look at it. Of course, as an adult you have a different view when you know the history that has ensued.

Lanniko When I was a girl, I somehow got it fixed in my head that Sacajawea was a barren woman. "Saca, saca," which in Lakota means dry or shriveled up, like someone's hands when they have been in water a long time. And then "wea," which sounds like "winyan", and I put that together to mean *dry woman*. That's what got stuck in my head [laughter]. I was a child interpreting "Who was this woman? She couldn't have children from a man of her own people." I had this really wild imagination! I thought she could only have a child with a wasicu, a Frenchman. She had Little Pompy.⁴

Kim Do you think she is more important to non-Indians than to Indians, because we don't talk about her that much?

Craig Sacajawea makes the Voyage of Discovery a great story because then it's a multi-gender and multi-cultural story. That's why it resonates with people so strongly.

Lanniko That's the reason that we created the Unity Fest and the Sacajawea Learning Center in Moberge [SD]. The reason why we did it there is because people from other places in the world know about Moberge because of the brutalities that have been publicized all over the world in newspapers. So when strangers come through the door who have that knowledge, some of them do ask questions and I refer them to our efforts to try to change that history with the Unity Fest, to learn about one another and

hopefully have some better understanding of our human-ness, our frailties and also our capabilities to relate to each other in a positive way.

Craig I think again that if we look at the historical documents, none of the Winter Counts mention Lewis and Clark. So if we use that as a milestone, was this event that important? Little Big Horn is so important to non-Indians. It's the most written-about battle. And Lewis and Clark are so important to non-Indians. But again, using the Winter Counts as evidence, Lewis and Clark are not that important.

Lydia It's not that Little Big Horn was not an important event to us, but that people were afraid to talk about it because they were afraid of retaliation. It couldn't be put in a winter count because then it could be taken as evidence against those involved. Bad enough the 7th Cavalry took revenge against Big Foot and his band at Wounded Knee.

Kim Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday has stated that "Lewis and Clark remains in my mind one of the great epic odysseys in American history." So what's your interpretation of such a perspective?

Lydia For the Americans it is [an epic odyssey] in their history, but I don't see it that way.

Craig I think in human history it is an epic odyssey. We have to go beyond "the" Indian viewpoint as if there is a single Indian viewpoint and we have to judge Lewis and Clark on where they fit in the big picture of human history. At that time and in this place they tried to do something that they thought was really, really important. It was against a lot of odds that they fulfilled their mission, although they failed in the main thing they went to look for—that [water] passage to the Pacific. And they had to realize that failure early and yet they soldiered on. In lots of ways, they brought all types of new knowledge back. They were outdated by the time they got back. To me, that's the important point—that they didn't cause anything. By the time they got back, they were meeting non-Indians going up the river. You can read the journals; all the way down, they were meeting non-Indians coming up the river. They weren't the first. All these peoples along this stretch of the river had seen non-Indians before.

Kim I think that's how "the" history books are portraying them, as being the first.

Craig And a lot of us buy into that. Lewis and Clark wanted to be the first—that was their whole goal. And by us perpetuating the idea that they were the first, they're winning in a sense—we're still bought into their incorrect history. They weren't the first—they weren't even close to the first. They weren't that important as individuals. But that journey, as a journey, was on this almost epic scale in terms of the importance it has had to this nation. The truthfulness of these epic journeys is a whole different issue. But

a lot of nations have these epic journeys and we can have that in the migration stories of Native tribes. This was the epic journey for this nation.

Kim So, it's more the way the story is told than perhaps what actually happened?

Craig And I think the great thing for us, the great opportunity we have, is that it's in historical time and we have the documents so that we don't have to treat it as myth. We can come back and interrogate it. And we can challenge that epic journey of this nation. And we can challenge it using the technologies and the techniques of that nation. And I think we have abundant evidence to challenge that—the truth value of that epic journey.

Kim I don't mean to pick on Momaday, because it's important to know the context in which he made his statement. But while one might truthfully make that statement, as a Native person I would never say that without also saying "and this is what it means to us—it doesn't mean the same thing to us." Liz [Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, a founding member of the Oak Lake Writers] has also pointed out that he said he was in awe of the Lewis and Clark journey.

Craig I can see it! If you sent 40 guys with the knowledge they had at that time, to do all that, it's awe-inspiring at some level. I'm awed by the fact they were able to do it. Now, that doesn't mean that I think it's an awesome thing, right? I'm awed by the fact that they decided they would do that. How it's played out I think is completely wrong. And that's part of what I'm trying to do is to show that the myth that came out of that is a myth not based on fact.

Kim And a related question is, "How is what came out of the Voyage of Discovery operative today?" What are the contemporary manifestations of it globally? This idea of expeditionary force—voyage and discovery—still resonates in foreign policy discussion today. Liz gets at that in her essay included in this collection—the discovery and the saving of people—those kinds of dialogues are still pervasive in American culture today and the fact that we are a moral nation that has God as our symbol. So you're not just colonizing for self-interested reasons, but you're colonizing because you're saving the world and you're bringing democracy to the world. She relates this still pervasive idea to the ways Lewis and Clark is celebrated today.

Craig To me, that's not what they were doing.

Kim No, not necessarily what *they* were doing, but it's the way the story is told—it's what the story means. She's saying the story means something to Americans—it's part of that overall belief system. In a way, it doesn't matter what Lewis and Clark themselves intended.

Craig Maybe we should talk about the differences between Lewis and Clark? It's kind of "the hero," singular, isn't it? Two men made into one word. To what extent do we differentiate between them?

Kim I know I didn't think about them as individuals until I read Ambrose's book that foregrounds Lewis.⁵ Now I know that they were very different people and their lives had very different outcomes.

Kathryn My son, Zion, had a comment about that. He said "I think I might have committed suicide too if you had named me Meriwether. Meriwether, that's a jacked-up name!" [laughter]

Craig It is interesting, the insistence on that being basically one word when at least one side of the equation—Lewis—was a tormented being.

Lydia In the end of my piece, I wrote, "What was he thinking when he put that buffalo robe on the floor and ended up killing himself?"

Kathryn I wondered that too, why did he do all of that? Almost like . . .

Lydia Like he might have had some regrets.

Kathryn Maybe that's what it was—almost like a ceremonial act. It seemed like he was trying to soothe his mind.

Craig Apparently a number of individuals from the expedition had significant difficulties. Several of them were charged with homicides after the expedition. They had problematic lives beyond the experience of the expedition. But in terms of Lewis, the Slaughter book argues that those guys had to adjust to a new way of thinking and a new way of being and basically that Clark was able to become more Indian and Lewis couldn't and that just led to his spiral downward.⁶ Slaughter uses writings by Clark to show that he starts to talk like they record the Indians talked. And he wrote a speech about their horses being stolen even before they were stolen. In his journal he wrote a speech about how he was going to talk about it even though it hadn't happened yet—that in a dream he heard the horses talk to him and say they'd be taken. It's just really interesting. Because Clark *could* accommodate himself to this new way of being out there—he lived, whereas Lewis couldn't accommodate himself. He was too "civilized" and he couldn't accommodate himself to this other mindset.

Kathryn Do you have any historical insight as to why he committed this suicide the way that he did? Did he leave any notes?

Craig He was in debt, big time. He was supposedly mismanaging funds and he had the worst case of writer's block. He got back and he hadn't written one word. He was supposed to write up the journals because he was supposedly the best writer. And he didn't write one word from 1806-1809 despite pressure from Jefferson to publish.

Kim If you read Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage*, he makes the case that by our standards today, Lewis would probably have been considered mentally ill—bipolar disorder—although they didn't have that term then. He didn't deal as well as Clark emotionally with the trials of being immersed in other cultures and with a bunch of charges who didn't always do things the way he wanted them done.

Craig For small offenses he would go ballistic. And these are things we don't hear about. For example, a hatchet was stolen. Well, they didn't know it was stolen. A hatchet was lost and Lewis wanted to burn that Indian camp—the whole camp. The guy was almost off his rocker. I think Cruzatte tried to kill him [laughter]. I think you can make a strong argument that Cruzatte tried to kill him. The story is that Cruzatte thought Lewis was an elk and shot him, but I think he knew it was Lewis and he really *tried* to shoot him and because he only had one eye, he missed and got him in the butt! [laughter]

But before we stop, Gladys, if you feel comfortable, I'd like to hear the rest of that story about Ed Hawk. Was this along the Grand River where he lived?

Gladys That's right. In fact, the Corps built a park there—it's called Indian Camp. And people still come there—there are RV hookups there. That was part of the plan of the Corps.

Craig So the water was backing up from the Missouri River dam up the Grand River? And so they came in and they just bulldozed his house?

Gladys Yes, but he was living along the Missouri—he was at the part where the Fool Soldiers Band commemoration was, near the place they call Mile Long Bridge.

Craig So what's the fuller story on that? Why did they just come and bulldoze him?

Gladys He wasn't the only one. But he just wouldn't sign and he was in his 80s. The water was backing up and I think they just wanted him out of there because they wanted to clear that bottom land as much as they could.

Kim So if they bulldozed and you didn't sign, does that mean you didn't get any compensation at all?

Gladys I don't know that. . . . But many people were instantly displaced—were made instantly homeless.

Craig What happened to Mr. Hawk? Do you know?

Gladys I know that they finally moved him into a house in town—in Wapakala [SD]. And he lived there a very short time and then of course he died. This displacement really had an effect on a whole bunch of families because whole families lived together. And now they were displaced and they could

no longer live together as family units and so they had hard times. They had hard times finding places. And I kind of blame our tribe for this in part—I'm not putting the whole blame on them. They weren't educated enough to really have a big plan up there to meet the needs of these people who were suffering.

So, there was a white man from McLaughlin. His name was Wendell Keller. He moved a bunch of these one-room shacks into town and boy he was making lots of money off of that, charging rent. No running water, and of course no indoor bathrooms. So there were a lot of people coming in and making money off of these people. And so that's an impact of the flooding—a direct impact and I blame that on the river [project]. Even though for all the good that it did, we're back to square one. There's no water there. I mean there's a lake there, but we have water problems everywhere, on the reservation especially. So that's just what I experienced with my own eyes and my own knowledge during that time. So I couldn't tell you more than what I know.

Craig Do you know what happened to those two sorrel horses of Ed Hawk's?

Gladys When he moved into town, there was no place. The grazing land was gone. What could you do with them? People who had a lot of horses, who had a lot of chickens—there was no place to take them in town. There was no place where maybe they could put up a chicken coop and continue with that way of life. So, I don't know what happened. They probably sold them.

Craig Or people might have just taken them too. . . .

Lydia People were self-sufficient then. They raised stock and they had gardens and then to be placed into town where they had no income, no water, and no lights. . . .

Gladys You know, there was a cultural side to the loss too. My grandmother died when I was only about 11. But I lived with her during that time. And here's what I saw. When she had a hide she would take it down to the river and she would stake it on the side of the water that was flowing—for days, I don't know how many days. That was her way of cleansing that hide and stretching it out and drying it—using part of it for rawhide and the other part for tan hide—for the tops of the moccasins. So that cultural way was also taken from us. I don't know how they tan hides now. They even have classes on it: "How to tan hide." When I saw that, I thought "Oh, my God!" The way that I saw it certainly can't be what they're teaching. Because I saw it step by step by step, how she did it. If I were to tan hide, I would want a river close by so I could do it the particular way that my grandmother did. But if I were to do that today, I'd keel over because I am no longer the resourceful person that my grandmother was at 80. You see, the loss of that way of life is what the river [project] did to us.

The other thing that I've noticed is that we can no longer go by the weather and predict how we're going to prepare. I think that has a lot to do with the water and the trees. What little trees we had are no longer there. We could predict different things by the river, the trees, the birds, the animals—the way they acted.

Kim But if the river's changed and the birds and animals are gone, you have no way of knowing.

Gladys You have no way of knowing all of those things. We lived so close and we depended on these birds and animals, on how they acted, how they sang, the owls at night. Now we watch the TV and they tell us the weather forecast and that's what we're going by today. But the Indians had their own natural ways of interpreting a lot of that.

Lydia Cultural knowledge.

Craig Can that cultural knowledge—can those interpretive skills and abilities—can new ones develop along this type of a river?

Gladys Probably, but not as thorough as the way I was raised.

Lanniko So much knowledge needs to be a part of the language for you to have a conversation. We need a new language and a new knowledge of that landscape—new because the landscape has changed after the river changed. And in order to articulate our ongoing experiences, to interact, to be reflective, to listen to the small voice and the great barrenness which is our river today—we need the kind of language I'm talking about, the kind of language that's been lost to a great degree and that we need to redevelop.

Lydia It will probably take generations to develop that new conversation.

Gladys It begins in the soil. The soil has changed. For example, let's say that you want to transplant ceyaka' along the river. Maybe it will grow. Maybe it won't. But it all depends on that soil that's underneath. It has changed from the flooding. What did it bring? We don't know. So whether or not that will be an annual plant that grows by itself—you don't know that. You can't depend on that. Whereas when the river was there, you knew where to go to pick certain things because you knew it was there.

Craig So, in a positive long-term look, we as a people can develop that new type of relationship?

Gladys I think it's possible. We can try, I guess. There are people out there who are trying that. At Sitting Bull College, Linda Bishop-Jones teaches about native plants—ethnobotany.

Lanniko Her educational foundation is in traditional western botany. The tribal aspect of it is new to her program and our elders have been helping bring her knowledge up to where we have a compatible understanding of the landscape. She is learning the plants' stories.

Kathryn I don't think it will ever get to that again—to what Mrs. Hawk is telling us about—that we'll have all of the elements around us that can tell us how the winter's going to be, how tomorrow's going to be. My grandpa used to talk about that and I never even memorized it, how he used to ask, when the beavers build their lodges in a certain part of the lake, is it close to the shore or out in the middle? He would predict the winter by that. My grandma used to say how the day would be tomorrow by the sunset. She would say, when it goes down as a red ball like that it will be a good day—a sunny and clear day tomorrow and then you can do things outside. But I think technology interrupts that too much and I think that kind of knowledge is only going to be relegated to universities, colleges, and special interest sections of bookstores. I think that we ourselves as Native people are too interrupted by technology. It's permeated our modern, daily Indian-ness. In the TV generation you can really see the loss of our language. Up on my reservation, a lot of the cultural ways are leaving us because of that technology. It's a double-edged sword. We can watch KELO-land news and see these blizzards forming way out there and coming in—these Alberta Clippers. But if we were out on our own, especially now, without that knowledge that died with our grandparents, we'd be probably caught in a blizzard and die for our lack of knowledge.

Lydia So, are we beaten down and are we quitting? Hell no! [laughter all around]

Gladys The change in environment has also affected our stories—stories associated with the river. But now, with the way the water is, say, and twenty years down the line, are there going to be stories on that same level—of, say, Inktomi—that were associated with all of these elements of the surrounding area, the land and everything? They won't be the same and so it has affected that possibility. Let me give you an example. Inktomi stories about coyote, rabbit, and others—common stories that were native to us—were associated with all of the natural elements. They came out of the natural environment that we were familiar with. But if you take away the natural world as we knew it, you can no longer create or tell the stories. You can't tell the stories anymore to younger generations because those animals are no longer there to be used to tell the stories in order to teach the values those stories were intended to teach. And the stories don't resonate with the young people because of that.

Lydia Disrupting the river disrupted a way of life and a way of transferring knowledge. It broke a link. And it was not just the river, but also the boarding schools.

Gladys There is an absence there. The whole generation is changing. The other thing is, and I know that this is probably on all the reservations, but we are really experiencing on Standing Rock a lot of young people taking their

own lives. Now we try to reason as to why. She [gesturing to Lydia] talked about that one time and she came up with some possible reasons—one of which was that children have nothing to do. Their parents are not there. We have a different way of life today where one parent is working here and the other is working over there. When the children come home from school, there is no parent there. Right away, they turn the TV on and they play these games and they see all of this drama—all of this crime. And when they have a personal problem—and everyone has problems—who are they going to turn to talk about it?

When we were growing up, we and our parents were constantly associated with the land and the river. We had something to do. We had our parents to listen to us, to tell us when to plant, how to take care of a horse. Even that by itself could be a whole class, how to take care of a horse. Now that generation today has no experience with any kind of things that make sense to them except the fact that they want to copy other kinds of generations, listen to hip-hop. They want to be noticed. There really are no black and white answers to why they take their lives. We just buried one here about two weeks ago, I think. The young man who killed himself was 16 and absolutely a nice-looking young man. Now, even his parents don't know why he did that. At his funeral—they had a huge funeral for him—they heard some younger ones saying, "Do you think that if we killed ourselves, we'd have a big funeral like this? Are they going to pay attention to us?" That's what we're hearing, because we're aggrandizing that young man through this funeral. He's actually a hero in their sight and that's a sad part of it.

Lydia The kids don't have the outlets that we had growing up. Like when we had problems, we had ceremonies. We went into a sweat to pray and talk about our problems in the sweat. And people, you know, talked to you afterwards and encouraged you. When we were kids and we went into a ceremony, everyone listened and people supported and encouraged one another, but some people don't have that anymore. The positive thing is that people are realizing what was almost lost and they are relearning and restoring what was nearly lost.

Lanniko When I was growing up, the river was not just industry to us. It gave us fuel, water, food, furniture, clothing, toys. Everything that we had came from the river—including the bullhead puppets [laughter].⁸ Up the river were little dams where there were little creeks where those bullheads were. But what I was going to say was that we had not just a physical sense of who we were, but we were tired at night from the work. We would go to bed and sleep and our nights were filled with wonderful dreams of our experiences. And now we have a generation of young people who don't have such experiences—such interpretations of a world in their dreams. I wonder about that all the time. If they don't have that way of contributing to

the community, by hauling wood to the elders, such things that bring value to us as a person—are they turning their knowledge of who they are—in terms of our community—inward? Do they look to see a worthless being, a person who is in the way or who is the butt of someone else's anger? If you are a young person in today's world, this is what the aftermath of the river changing has brought. There is a world of difference between understanding through knowledge of place how the world has come about and understanding the world through what these young people have—canned knowledge.

Across from the [Sacajawea Learning] center we have in Moberge, I have watched a whole hillside slide into the river. Every time she comes over [gesturing to Gladys], we go out and look at that hill. We're going to go over there [gesturing to the group]. We need to be on that river when we're talking about it! We need to be physically standing on the river to look out across, to see the hills; the places we once played on are now silt. Who is telling the story of this devastation? It's good that we have something to say about the bicentennial commemoration, but the more important conversation is related to the ongoing legacy of scientists trying to put their imprint on the landscape—tearing up the land. And even our Indian people feel they need to engage successfully in making money off the land in order to survive. But as Indian people, we used to know and live off the resources that were there. We knew not to alter it in such a way that those resources would then not be there for us.

Kim There's one final question that should be addressed. What are your hopes for this book—why do you think it's important that we have this conversation? Why did you want to be a part of this project in the first place?

Kathryn I feel it is important to have Native voices speaking about this whole thing. It seems that many times nationally in the United States our voices are so little and do not have impact, nor are they sought. I thought that this was a good opportunity to be able to say something. And as we have said, writing is cathartic. The loss that I experienced as a child in Lower Brule—if you write about it you don't have to go out and hatchet somebody [laughter].

Lydia I feel similar to Kathryn. This is an opportunity to express ourselves—our thoughts—what we really think about that journey and how it affected all of us.

Craig I think it's a chance to write something that's contrary. It's a chance to examine the Lewis and Clark myth using the evidence. Collectively, as Oak Lake Writers, it's a wonderful opportunity to participate with published authors who are Lakota, Nakota, or Dakota. I think it's important to promote that type of literature. In terms of the book itself, it will be evident that we don't all think the same and that is a very important educational message—that is, that there isn't "the" Indian viewpoint on this. We're go-

ing to have viewpoints on the importance of Lewis and Clark and all aspects of this bicentennial commemoration.

Gladys It's an opportunity to preserve our personal experiences as we lived along the river and for readers to try to understand and to imagine how it really was when now there is nothing there to help us go back and investigate how it was.

Lanniko I have a fourteen-year-old daughter and I want her knowledge of history to be whole—not just what's in a textbook. When we look at the standard South Dakota geography book, there's no mention of what we've been discussing here and yet that is a sanctioned part of the curriculum that has been developed for all of our public schools, including the tribal schools. And that's the reason I feel that it's important to make what little contribution I can make to bringing that history that is not in any textbook.

Also, we can't really begin a conversation about Indians' role as stewards unless we talk about participating in river management. How can we get the river flowing again or help make changes that will recover the resources that were lost? We have something that non-Native people don't have. They need to be able to digest someone else's experience of the phenomenon of Mnisose before they can have a re-direction in their thinking.

Kim My reason is much the same as Craig's. First, I was thrilled when I heard about the Oak Lake Writers because I lived on both coasts for a while and grew weary of being the only Indian among other writers. I didn't want to serve the purpose people too often wanted me to serve—to have the perspectives and demeanor they expected me to have. When Liz told me about the Oak Lake Writers, I thought "Wow, I can sit around with other Dakotas, Lakota and Nakota people" and that is a unique opportunity, as is being in South Dakota with other writers. Having grown up here, I always thought the great writers were in other places, but they're here too. So, I was very inspired by that.

Second, because I focus on "cultural studies," for lack of a better term, I am really interested in the cultural politics surrounding Lewis and Clark today. I'm not so much interested in who they were as individuals. What is fascinating is the way Americans are constructing an identity and using them as symbols. And so this is a chance to think about American nationalism, particularly white American nationalism. Lewis and Clark are a good vehicle for thinking about and critiquing those ideas.

NOTES

¹ A Lakota traditional chief and the keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe.

² Editors' note: Kathryn Akipa was uncomfortable mentioning in her autobiographical piece (also published in this collection) the caskets on the river. She felt that using that image might be to capitalize in her individually written piece on particularly painful memories of the desecration of the dead.

However, she was more comfortable leaving the reference in the dialogue transcript because the image was shared in conversation among L/D/Nakota people, thereby representing an exchange or mutual remembering rather than an individual promulgation.

³ Vine Deloria Jr. and Dan Wilcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001).

⁴ "Little Pompy" (a nickname apparently given by Clark) is what Lanniko remembers Lakota people calling Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau, the son of Sacajawea and the Corps of Discovery interpreter, Touissant Charbonneau.

⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

⁶ Thomas P. Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

⁷ Lakota word for "tobacco."

⁸ Just prior to the taping of the dialogue, Lanniko Lee told the group a hilarious story from her childhood. Her uncles made puppets from the heads of bull head fish they caught in Minisose. They dressed the puppets up in hats and made wigs for them and put on impromptu puppet shows at the dinner table.

Solitary

Kim TallBear

for Arlene Heminger Lamb

A chair in grass that turns to sand
and rocks at the river.

The rod, the flies bright painted or
nightcrawlers,

what was needed for
slow water.

She was a fisherwoman.

She had a granddaughter who stayed
cool in green rooms all day

not liking sun, breathed cream-coffee
turned cold in her grandmother's cup.

The fisherwoman sat

solitary, breathing rocks, wet

like earth, breathing sweet grass, the field.

'Cross the narrow water,

old, dry, cut boughs,

shade for the people,

the old dance grounds.

Perhaps she imagined bells jingle,

the hide of the drum, a deep voice

contest calling.

She must have felt her house

at her back, a mile up the road.

She'd wanted it so long.