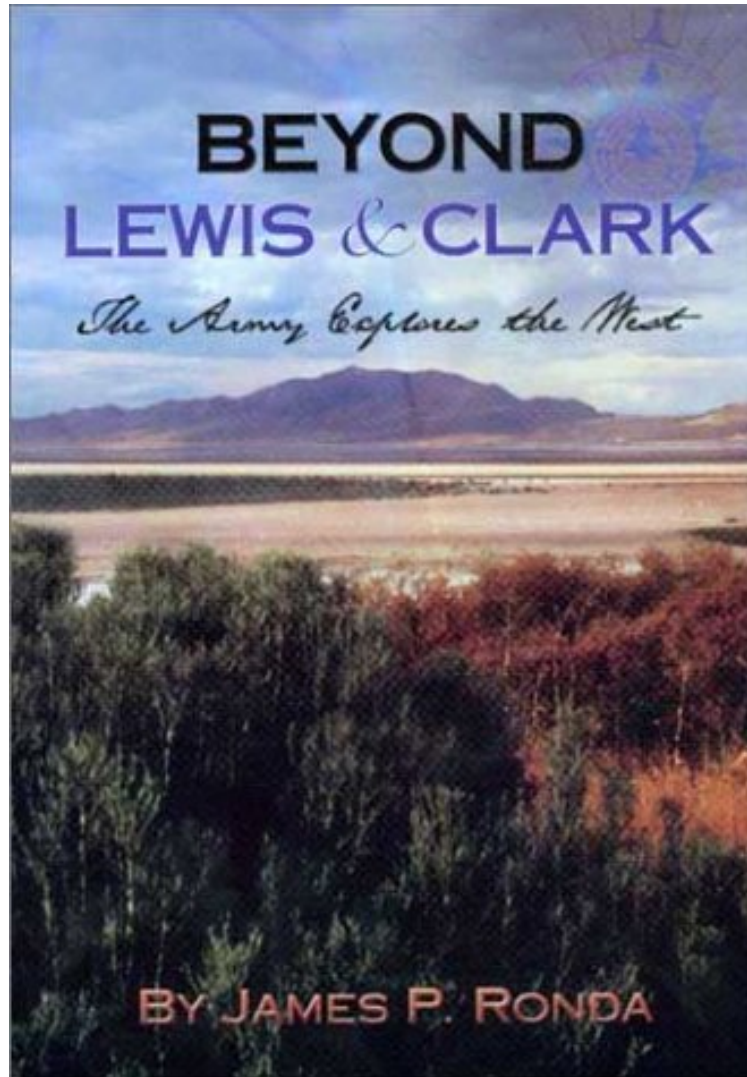


(Mobile ebook) Beyond Lewis and Clark: The Army Explores the West

## Beyond Lewis and Clark: The Army Explores the West

*James P. Ronda*

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**James P. Ronda : Beyond Lewis and Clark: The Army Explores the West** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond Lewis and Clark: The Army Explores the West:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Beyond Lewis Clark: The Army Explores the WestBy Barney ConsidineDepending on your point of view, this book may rate a higher score than I gave it. It fits nicely into an important niche in western history. It is well written and easily read. It gives us an intriguing taste of important historical events. However, it takes the plate away while we are still hungry. At the final page, we have a sneaking hunch that we read the wrong book. In fact, maybe the extensive references and footnotes are telling us that it takes an entire bookshelf to fill this niche.History books need indexes. The reader will especially miss the index that should

have been included here since there is considerable overlap between the several elements of the narrative. In addition, Ronda becomes a bit of a name dropper in this book and it is difficult to keep the players straight. People too often forget that the Lewis and Clark Expedition was a military mission. Ronda reminds us that the army was the nation's primary tool in exploring the west from the time the United States procured the Louisiana Purchase into the 1870s. The major player from 1838 until 1863 was the Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, although the Army housed topographical engineering within its Corps of Engineers both before and after that period. Ronda designates the Corp's officers as "soldier-scientists." Most were West Point graduates. They combined military organization with scientific discipline. In general, the Corps leadership gave their field personnel broad objectives combining geography and natural history. Gathering knowledge about plants, animals, terrain, and even human inhabitants was considered a fundamental part of mapping and surveying potential travel routes. Early missions such as those of Lewis and Clark, Pike, Long, and Fremont sketched a network, mostly along the rivers. Next surveyors and scientists filled in the blank spaces. Mapmakers, artists, and photographers helped record the findings. Ronda briefly describes the contributions of such men as Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, Charles Preuss, John Mix Stanley, and Timothy O'Sullivan. In addition to the pure exploration missions, the Corps of Topographical Engineers served two roles of great national importance. During the Mexican War, they combined their exploration objectives with on-the-march map making and battlefield service. That cartographic action was extended to mapping the Mexican-United States boundary after the United States victory in the war and the subsequent Gadsden Purchase. Then as the nation pressed to bind the west and east together with railroads, the Corps was called upon to explore and map possible routes. Since there were many potential routes, each of significant potential importance to various sections of the nation, the culmination of this great effort filled in details throughout the west. This book reminds us that economic and political factors should always be considered as we look at historical issues. Exploration of the west wasn't just about adventure and scientific research. Throughout his many books, Ronda has shown a great skill for keeping historical events based within the environments in which they occurred. This book has just 105 pages and is easily read. It is a good introduction to the early western explorers, many of whom are not adequately remembered in western history.

In "Beyond Lewis and Clark", James Ronda offers a corrective vision of the history of the Corps of Discovery. The nearly exclusive attention paid to Lewis and Clark of late has cast the broader pattern of army exploration in the West into obscurity. In this volume Ronda puts Lewis and Clark into the broad pattern of Enlightenment-era science and empire-building, and establishes how the Jeffersonian model of exploration endured to varying degrees via other army expeditions. Particular attention is paid to John C. Fremont, the pivotal figure in the evolution of the 'Army in the West', along with other notable explorers, including Stephen Long and Isaac I. Stevens. In a path-breaking interpretation, Ronda even places the pre-Little Big Horn exploratory ventures of George Armstrong Custer within the paradigm established by Lewis and Clark's initial forays. "Beyond Lewis and Clark: The Army Explores the West" is a companion volume to the exhibition organized by the Washington State Historical Society and traveling to the Virginia, Kansas, and Missouri Historical Societies. James P. Ronda holds the H. G. Barnard Chair in Western History at the University of Tulsa. He is the author of "Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark", "Astoria and Empire", and "Lewis and Clark among the Indians".

About the Author James P. Ronda holds the H. G. Barnard Chair in Western History at the University of Tulsa. He is the author of Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark, Astoria and Empire, and Lewis and Clark among the Indians.