



# SeaHistory

## FOR KIDS



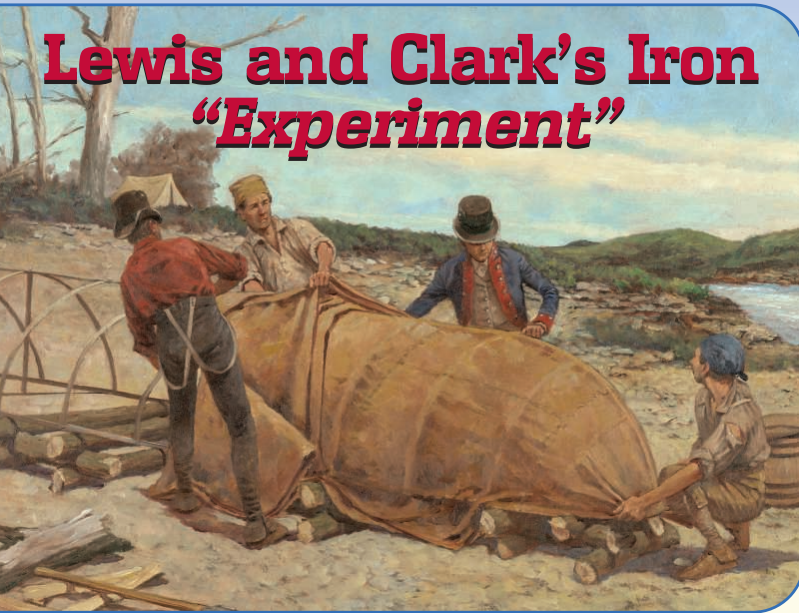
### You could catch a **code** out there!

In 30 November 1914, just weeks after England entered World War One against Germany, the crew of a British fishing boat was trawling in the chilly North Sea near the coast of Holland. As they dragged their dripping catch up onto the deck the men spotted a strange object tangled in the weave of the net. From among the pile of flopping fish they retrieved a wet, but still watertight, chest.

The fishermen pried up the heavy lid to reveal something even more valuable than the gold and jewels they were hoping for. Instead of treasure, the lead-lined chest was loaded with a stack of secret German military papers and a small book. After examining the book they realized that within its pages was the key to deciphering the top-

secret codes of the German military. Recognizing the significance of their catch, the fishermen immediately delivered the chest and the codebook to British authorities. From that point forward the British military was able to decipher the coded information sent by the Germans to their patrolling U-boats and warships. That tattered book, fished from the bottom of the sea on a cold November day in 1914, helped the British Navy safeguard hundreds of Allied ships and thousands of lives from destruction by German torpedoes during that terrible war.

## Lewis and Clark's Iron "Experiment"



Artwork by Keith Rocco, courtesy National Park Service

*"...my greatest difficulty was the frame of the canoe, which could not be completed without my personal attention ..."*  
—Meriwether Lewis 20 April 1803

Lewis and Clark discovered many things 200 years ago. That America is vast. That the Rocky Mountains are higher than they'd anticipated. That wolves, bears and even buffaloes can be dangerous. And that iron sinks in water.

In 1803, as part of the preparations for an historic expedition to explore the newly-purchased Louisiana Territory, Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis worked together to design an experimental, collapsible boat with a frame of iron. Named *The Experiment*, the craft was to be packed up and taken along to help transport the explorers and their supplies on the journey up the Missouri River. The frame was forged and sec-

tions of the boat were tested in the water at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The plan was that the frame would be unpacked and assembled alongshore, then be covered with animal skins, made watertight with tar and launched into the Missouri River.

*"...she leaked in such a manner that she would not answer. I need not add that this circumstance mortified me not a little;...to make any further experiments in our present situation seemed to me madness;...and the season was now advancing fast. I therefore relinquished all further hope of my favorite boat..."*  
—Journal of Meriwether Lewis—9 July 1805

One hot frustrating day in July 1805, after repeated attempts to get the animal-hide covering to maintain watertight integrity, Lewis gave up and buried the iron frame, along with a cache of letters and gear, near the expedition's camping spot along the Missouri.

Some historians now believe that they have discovered the site of that camp and archaeologists using magnetometers are trying to locate the hidden cache of supplies (including the frame of the boat). If the cache is located (and the goods are reasonably well preserved) it could prove to be one of the most enlightening set of artifacts associated with the historic expedition.

*"...ordered...to take her to pieces tomorrow and deposit the frame at this place as it could probably be of no further service to us....I bid adieu to my boat and her expected services"*  
—Journal of Meriwether Lewis—9 July 1805

Archaeologist Ken Karsmizki, of the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, uses satellite mapping to attempt to locate Meriwether Lewis's "favorite boat".

