

“Exploration” in the American West

From the first Europeans who set foot on the North American continent, the desire to explore the interior lands has been an essential part of the colonization process. Even though motivations to explore differed—economic, military, and scientific—the goals remained the same: to better understand the landscapes of the New World and expand European populations across those landscapes. French, British, and Dutch colonialists developed a beaver fur trade in the early-to-mid 17th century. The United States government routinely sent teams of soldiers and scientists across the continent, surveying geological formations, water routes, plants, animals, soil types, and precipitation levels. The United States government also built military forts across the continent, establishing a martial presence and developing migrations routes westward.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M555606;type=101>

Object: Painting

Maker: Thomas Mickell Burnham

Title: *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*

Date: circa 1850

Object ID: 92.11.1

Notes: Oil painting commemorating Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark and their 1804–1806 expedition from Missouri to the Oregon coast. President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the expedition shortly after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. This painting was completed almost 50 years after the expedition.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M600463;type=101>

Object: Painting

Maker: Kim Wiggins

Title: *Lewis & Clark Among the Mandan*

Date: 2004

Object ID: 2005.24.1

Notes: This oil painting depicts a scene recreating a meeting between Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark and the Mandan nation. The artist used passages from Lewis's and Clark's personal journals. Lewis and Clark are depicted in the foreground, receiving a pipe from Big White, the principal chief of the lower village of the Mandan. Other members of the expedition are included, including Sacagawea and her French-Canadian trader spouse, Toussaint Charbonneau.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M567386;type=101>

Object: Microscope

Date: circa 1800

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Object ID: 98.128.1

Notes: Field microscope belonging to a European entomologist. An entomologist is someone who studies insects. The microscope includes doublet-type glass lens and adjustable fittings.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M520659;type=101>

Object: Magnifying glass

Date: 1829–1850

Object ID: 87.124.2

Notes: Magnifying glass with Coddington-style lens to enable greater magnification. Typical of those used by naturalists on Federal surveys of the West.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M533037;type=101>

Object: Hunting bag

Culture: Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

Date: circa 1850

Object ID: 97.138.1

Notes: Hunting bag, made from various pieces of leather, fringe, and beadwork.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M579494;type=101>

Object: sculpture

Maker: Richard V. Greeves

Title: *Bird Woman*

Date: 2001

Object ID: 2002.4.1

Notes: Life size bronze sculpture portrays the Shoshone woman known as Sacagawea.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M533557;type=101>

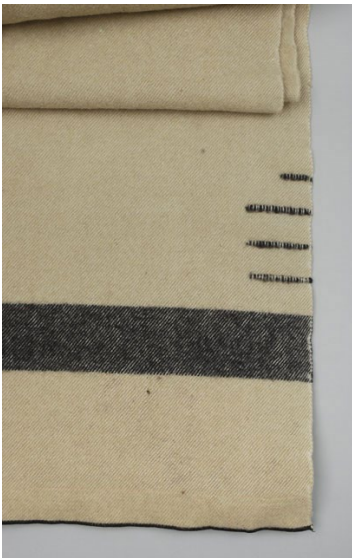
Object: Armlet

Maker: Narcisse Roy

Date: 1801–1806

Object ID: 90.63.7

Notes: One of the many trade goods made in Montreal for barter with Indians in the fur trade.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M576013;type=101>

Object: Blanket

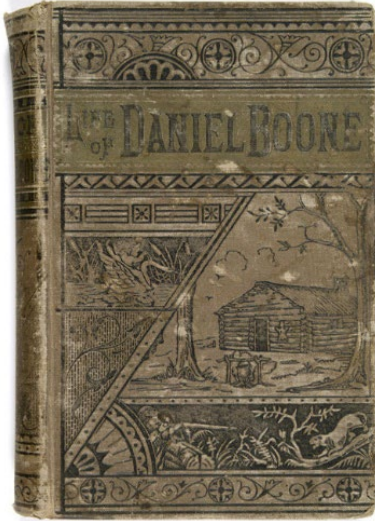
Maker: Hudson's Bay Company

Date: circa 1880

Object ID: 2001.19.3

Notes: Beige and black striped wool blanket, designed and manufactured by Hudson's Bay Company. This blanket is twice the size of one that would normally be sold or traded.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=CGAV03-B436;type=106>

Object: Book

Author: Cecil B. Hartley

Title: *Life of Daniel Boone*

Date: 1784

Call Number: ROSENSTOCK 90.253.761



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M642709;type=101>

Object Name: Rifle

Date: circa 1807

Object ID: 2012.2.35

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M561089;type=101>

Object: Scale

Maker: Henry Boker

Date: mid-19th century

Object ID: 85.1.1489

Notes: Hanging scale, which was used to weigh hides and furs.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M520770;type=101>

Object Name: Beaver trap

Date: 1800–1840s

Object ID: 90.96.3

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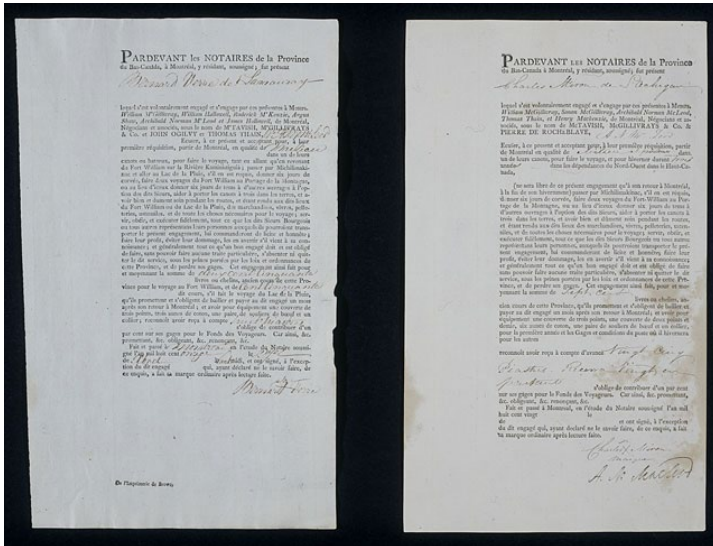
<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M552623;type=101>

Object: Document box

Date: 1800s

Object ID: 90.107.2

Notes: Painted iron document box with attached lid belonging to Colonel Jack Hays.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M576248;type=105>

Object Name: Contract

Maker: North West Company

Title: Voyageur Contract

Date: 1811

Object ID: 2001.23.1

Notes: Canadian fur trade company summer contract for an ordinary, unskilled voyageur to make the trip from Montreal to Fort William.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M545161;type=101>

Object Name: Drawing

Maker: Alfred Jacob Miller

Title: *Narrow Escape From a Grisly Bear*

Date: 1837

Object ID: 92.235.1

Notes: This drawing depicts Scottish lord, Sir William Drummond Stewart, shooting a bear. Sir William arrived in America in 1832 and traveled around the West for eight years; he hired artist Alfred Jacob Miller in 1837 to accompany him during his adventures.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M513619;type=101>

Object: Drawing

Maker: Seth Eastman

Title: *Upper Mississippi, near Ft. Snelling*

Date: circa 1841–1848

Object ID: 88.108.68

Notes: Sepia drawing featuring a river bend with nearby foliage and Fort Snelling, which is located in present-day Minnesota.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M542287;type=103>

Object: Map

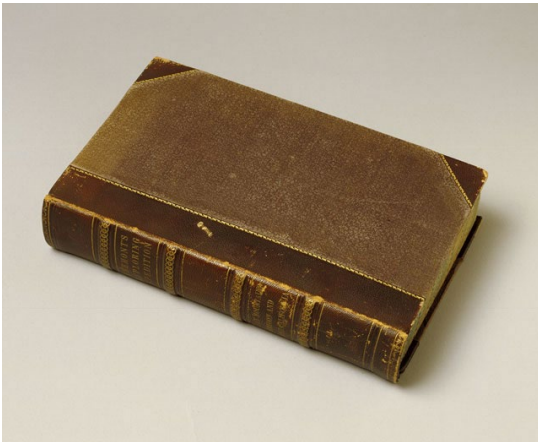
Maker: John Melish, J. Vallance, and H.S. Tanner

Title: *Map of the United States of America with the Contiguous British and Spanish Possessions*

Date: 1820

Object ID: 90.253.282

Notes: John Melish drew this map to show the competing territorial claims between the United States, England, and Spain. The map also includes information from Captain Meriwether Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark. This map shows the West in the year Congress passed the Missouri Compromise.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=ocm00563061%20;type=106>

Object: Book

Author: John Charles Frémont

Title: *Map of an exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842 and to Oregon and North California in the years 1843–44*

Imprint: 1845

Object ID: 90.253.312

Notes: A report on an exploration of the country lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, including a catalogue of plants and geological formations of the areas surveyed.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M563124;type=101>

Object: Riding breeches

Date: 1795–1810

Object ID: 91.58.6

Notes: Man's tan leather breeches, featuring a fall front with button closure, an adjustable waist with tie strings at back waistline, and button and tie closures below the knees.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M508940;type=101>

Object: Epaulets

Date: 1830s

Object ID: 88.167.6

Notes: Wool, cotton, and metal epaulets featuring the 1832 United States infantry pattern. Epaulets are decorative shoulder pieces usually featured on military uniforms.