

B-4—INDEPENDENT (AM)

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# Lewis, Clark retraced

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Despite a century of development, the lands traveled by Lewis and Clark in their 19th century expedition haven't changed all that much, according to two men who retraced much of the famous journey.

Bill Burnham, 28, of 5909 E. Arabella St., Lakewood, and Tim Chamberlin, 27, of Belmont Shore, floated from the headwaters of the Missouri to the Gulf of Mexico in their aluminum canoe, "The Outrageous."

The two Long Beach State University graduates left Long Beach on the Fourth of July and reached the Gulf of Mexico on Nov. 2.

When Burnham and Chamberlin decided to make the journey, they bought their canoe and acquired maps from the Army Corps of Engineers in preparation for a practice run on the Willamette River in Oregon.

"Canoeng isn't much of a sport in Southern California so we went to the Willamette, Chamberlin explained. It's a rough trip and we learned the hard way after many spills. On our big trip we never turned over once but we did plenty of bailing water," he said.

They carefully planned their supplies and wrapped them neatly in waterproof bags. Fully loaded, the canoe weighed 400 pounds, a burden even for two strong men on a portage. (A portage is when it is necessary to carry a canoe around a dam or other obstruction.)

The first part of the 3,400-mile trip was the hardest, they agreed. There are 900 miles of lakes, many of them built by the Corps of Engineers for flood control. (The Army engineers are in charge of inland waterways.)

"The wind was our worst problem," Burnham

said. "We were often broadside to strong winds. Later we could sometimes use sails to help us along.

"Whenever we came to a Corps of Engineers station, they would do our portage for us," he said. They weren't just being nice, he added. The law requires them to do it since the Missouri is a navigable river.

At first, Burnham said, mosquitoes were a real problem, but an early winter solved that. "Fortunately winter came early. There was frost in South Dakota on Labor Day and we didn't see more mosquitoes until we reached the bayous of Louisiana."

The modern explorers camped out at night, cooking their food over huge fires they built to keep warm. They often visited the towns along the way to buy supplies and to refill their five-gallon water jug.

"If you are smart, you don't drink river water south of Sioux City," Chamberlin said. "It is polluted."

They also visited towns to talk with the people. "Those towns give one a sense of history," Burnham said. "Here everyone is from somewhere else, but those river towns were homesteaded by the great-grandfathers. The people have strong ties with each other.

"They weren't impressed by our adventure. They told us stories about other people who had come down the river."

There wasn't much time for reading, but the two men had a favorite book. It was the journal of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

"It is amazing how little the country has changed," said Burnham. "There are few Indians and no great herds of wild animals, but otherwise it is quite like what they saw."