

STATE QUARTERS

# In the Wake of Lewis & Clark

The brave duo expanded America's boundaries, while the designer of the Missouri quarter tested the boundaries of artistic license.

by Barbara J. Gregory [ANA115657](#)



**W**ITH THE U.S. MINT'S launch of the 24th coin in its 50 State Quarters™ Program, Missouri officially is swept up in the current of numismatic affairs. The coin celebrates the upcoming centennial of Lewis and Clark's historic, 1,500-mile exploration of the West, which began 20 miles west of St. Louis in 1804. It also marks a change in Mint philosophy, ©

# The “Corps of Discovery”

**O**N FEBRUARY 28, 1803, President Thomas Jefferson won Congressional approval for a visionary project, an endeavor that would become one of America’s greatest adventures. Twenty-five hundred dollars was appropriated to fund a small expeditionary group whose mission was to explore the uncharted West. Jefferson called the group the “Corps of Discovery.” It would be led by Jefferson’s secretary, Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809), and Lewis’ friend William Clark (1770-1838).

Woolly mammoths, Peruvian llamas and blue-eyed, Welsh-speaking Indians: speculations such as these defined the West in 1803. The Lewis and Clark expedition later dispelled these myths, including the most widely held: the existence of a “northwest passage.” Such a route—a river or network of rivers that would cross the western mountains and reach the Pacific Ocean—would have allowed more direct commerce with the Orient and opened up the wealth of North America.

To ensure the expedition’s success, Jefferson pledged “the faith of the United States,” promising a limitless line of credit for any goods or services Lewis required. It was a small price to pay, for he expected Lewis and Clark not only to chart the new territory, but also to set the course of the nation’s destiny.

## Meriwether Lewis

Meriwether Lewis was born in Albemarle County, Virginia, on August 18, 1774, the second child and first son of William and Lucy Meriwether Lewis. His father, who had served as a lieutenant in the Continental Army, died in November 1779 after his horse fell into an icy stream as he was heading home. His widowed mother married another Army officer, Captain John Marks, six months later. The couple raised Meriwether and his two siblings while managing a 1,000-acre plantation about 10 miles from Monticello (Thomas Jefferson’s home). The young Lewis was said to have had an interest in horticulture, which was encouraged by his mother, a noted herb doctor.

Lewis joined the U.S. Army in 1794, serving six years and rising to the rank of captain in 1800, then serving as paymaster of the First Infantry Regiment. In early 1801, President Jefferson appointed him as his personal secretary. Lewis had been a childhood friend of Jefferson’s, and years later they strength-

ened their bond when Lewis was on military duty in Charlottesville, Virginia. There is no doubt Jefferson’s reason for appointing Lewis to this position was partly political; like Jefferson, Lewis was a staunch Republican. Later, Jefferson would write that “[Lewis] was brave, prudent, habituated to the woods & familiar with Indian manners and character.”

By appointing him to head the Corps of Discovery, Jefferson hoped Lewis would “make friends and allies of the far Western Indians while at the same time diverting valuable pelts from the rugged northern routes used by another nation [Britain] . . . and bringing the harvest down the Missouri to the Mississippi and thence eastward by a variety of routes.”



## William Clark

William Clark, the red-haired co-captain of the Corps of Discovery, was born on August 1, 1770, the sixth son and ninth child in a family of ten children. Originally from the same area of Virginia that was home to Jefferson and Lewis, Clark’s parents relocated the family near the Rappahannock River, where William was born. All of Clark’s brothers were Revolutionary War veterans, including the famed George Rogers Clark, who commanded Virginia’s troops in Kentucky during Jefferson’s term as Virginia governor. After the war was over, the Clark family migrated across the Allegheny Mountains and down the Ohio River to Mulberry Hill, near Louisville, Kentucky.



Clark began his military career at age 19 when he joined the Kentucky Militia. He later joined the regular army and was promoted to lieutenant. During this time, Clark “learned how to build forts, draw maps, lead pack trains through enemy country, and fight the Indians on their ground.” By 1795, he had received successive promotions to leadership positions, eventually attaining the rank of captain. Meriwether Lewis was among the men assigned to Clark. The two struck up a lasting friendship that would result in their leadership of the Corps of Discovery.

Strong, muscular and more than 6 feet tall, Clark was very good at eliciting information from native tribes during the expedition, which he recorded in his journal and sketches. (However, Clark had a less formal education than Lewis, and his journals were filled with confusing language, and grammatical and spelling errors.)

—Adapted from “Lewis and Clark: Inside the Corps,”  
PBS Online (July 2001)

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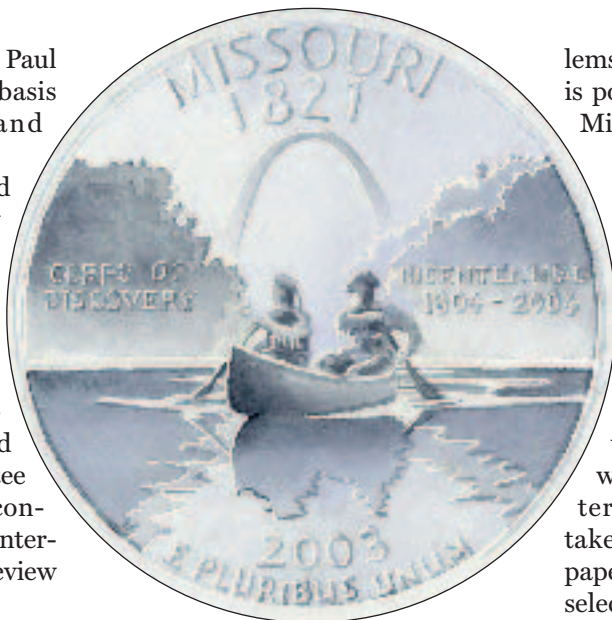
SKETCH: COURTESY OF PAUL JACKSON/SCOTT MILLER

thanks in part to Missouri artist Paul Jackson, whose design was the basis for the coin's reverse motif and theme of discovery.

The design process flowed smoothly enough. In February 2001, Governor Bob Holden announced the appointment of 12 individuals to the Missouri Commemorative Quarter Design Committee. A statewide design competition yielded 3,300 submissions from schoolchildren and professional artists. The committee narrowed the field to a dozen concepts, which were posted on the Internet in April 2001 for statewide review and voting.

The online poll drew 175,000 participants and resulted in the selection of five concepts, which included representations of a riverboat, the Pony Express and explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The designs were forwarded to the U.S. Mint for evaluation, in keeping with procedures put in place in 1999 at the beginning of the 50 State Quarters™ Program.

The five designs were studied by the Mint's Citizens Commemorative Coin Advisory Committee and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, the finalists were returned to Governor Holden for selection. These were displayed at *www.gov.state.mo.us*, and Missouri residents once again were called upon to voice their preferences. More than 217,000 responded over a two-week period in November, favoring Lewis and Clark's "Corps of Discovery" as the theme. The winning design depicted three men paddling down the Missouri River in a canoe (or pirogue), with St. Louis' modernistic Jefferson National Expansion Monument (commonly known as the "Gateway Arch") looming in the background.



Artist Paul Jackson's original rendering for the Missouri state quarter.

The selection of Paul Jackson's design was announced on November 22, 2001, by Missouri First Lady Lori Hauser Holden, who explained that the Mint "made some adaptations to ensure the best-looking quarter possible." No one was prepared for the backlash that ensued.

Jackson expected to be recognized as the creator of the winning concept, but was sorely disappointed. Not only was he not credited as such, but also he felt the Mint's reworking of his design was heavy-handed. "Entrants were told that the winning design would appear on the reverse of Missouri's quarter," he says. "Now it appears as if the competition was nothing more than a hoax. The United States Mint never intended to use our designs."

According to *Coin World* Editor Beth Deisher in a May 6, 2002, editorial, "From the start . . . , questions have swirled about as to whether individuals whose design concepts have been used on the various State quarters should be credited and/or publicly acknowledged. Most of the prob-

lems are rooted in the fact that there is poor communication from the U.S. Mint to the states."

The method by which the states arrive at the designs that are submitted to the Mint is theirs to choose. "The U.S. Mint provides a template, and the states invite their citizens to create or draw their design ideas and send them to the states," says Deisher.

"It's akin to buying a lottery ticket. Every buyer dreams about winning. In the case of State quarter designs, every individual who takes the time to render an idea on paper hopes his or her creation will be selected." Deisher goes on to note that "many of the states have gone so far as to describe their process as a contest and to declare winners."

All along, the Mint's policy has been to include only the engraver's initials on the commemorative reverse, regardless of whom is credited with the concept. Nevertheless, many states have publicly acknowledged the creative minds behind the designs, giving the artists their due but, at the same time, setting them up for disappointment.

The states and the artists whose works have been forwarded to the Mint are unprepared for the revisions made by Mint staff, Deisher says. "Often the design subjects and artistic renderings have been dramatically altered, sometimes to the point of being historically inaccurate."

Feeling he had been left upriver without a paddle, Paul Jackson embarked on a personal crusade. He prepared stickers picturing his original design and affixed them to the reverses of Washington quarters. Michelle Orzano, *Coin World* staff writer, reported on September 16, 2002, that Jackson and his entourage of supporters spent the quarters around the country, and even visited the Philadelphia Mint, where they©

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used the coins to purchase about \$40 in merchandise at the gift shop.

His demonstration did not go unnoticed. An Associated Press report from August 20, 2002, stated, "Doug Hecox, a spokesman for the Mint in Washington, said . . . that information about Columbia [Missouri] artist Paul Jackson's distribution of the quarters has been forwarded to the Secret Service because it may violate the federal laws against defacing currency."



CARTOON BY JOHN DARKOW, COLUMBIA (MO) DAILY TRIBUNE

Jackson reportedly responded, "I believe they are wrong and that this is merely a scare tactic." After consulting attorneys, the Mint revised its statement, indicating that Jackson had violated no laws in using the coins to broadcast his message.

Since Missouri quarters were struck earlier this year for inclusion in 2003 proof sets, the issue of the coin's design is moot. The Mint since has revamped its evaluation process for the 50 State Quarters, effective with those scheduled to be issued in 2005. According to Mint officials, the revisions are intended to "enhance the program's educational value and promote the historical accuracy and artistic beauty of the designs."

Comments Peter Rexford, nationally syndicated hobby columnist, "The original design of the quarter was nothing less than stellar. If it could have been produced as submitted, I think it would have been one of the best quarter de-

### New 50 State Quarters Design Evaluation Process

**Stage 1:** The United States Mint will initiate the formal state design process by contacting the state governor approximately 24 months prior to the beginning of the year in which the state will be honored. The governor, or such other state officials or group as the state may designate, will appoint an individual to serve as the state's liaison to the United States Mint for this program.

**Stage 2:** The state will conduct a concept selection process as determined by the state. The state will provide to the United States Mint at least three, but no more than five, different concepts or themes emblematic of the state; each concept or theme will be in narrative format. The narrative must explain why the concept is emblematic of the state and what the concept represents to the state's citizens. A narrative that merely describes a particular design is not acceptable.

**Stage 3:** Based on the narratives, the United States Mint will produce original artwork of the concepts, focusing on aesthetic beauty, historical accuracy, appropriateness and coinability. If the state has not provided at least three concepts, the United States Mint may produce additional concepts for the state.

**Stage 4:** The United States Mint will contact the state to collaborate on the artwork. The state will appoint an historian, or other responsible officials or experts, to participate in this collaboration to ensure historical accuracy and proper state representation of the artwork. The United States Mint will refine the artwork before forwarding it to the advisory bodies.

**Stage 5:** The Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts will review the candidate designs and make recommendations, and the United States Mint may make changes to address such recommendations.

**Stage 6:** The United States Mint will present the candidate designs to the Secretary of the Treasury for review and approval.

**Stage 7:** The United States Mint will return to the state all candidate designs approved by the Secretary of the Treasury.

**Stage 8:** From among the designs approved by the Secretary, the state will recommend the final design through a process determined by the state, within a time frame specified by the United States Mint.

**Stage 9:** The United States Mint will present the state's recommended design to the Secretary for final approval.

[www.usmint.gov/mint\\_programs/50sq\\_program/index.cfm?action=evaluation](http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/50sq_program/index.cfm?action=evaluation)

signs created so far," he says.

"It seems as though the submitted designs are handed over to a committee at the Mint, which makes revisions and/or improvements based on input, gut-feeling or experience," Rexford notes. "If that's the case, a wonderful quote from advertising executive David Ogilvy is most appropriate: 'Search all the parks in all your cities; you'll find no statues for committees.'"

Rexford is excited about the release of the quarter, but regrets the contro-

versy that surrounds it. "Perhaps if both the coin's designer and the Mint engravers could have put their egos aside for just a moment, there would have been substantially less discord."

And so it flows. Nearly 200 years ago, Lewis and Clark changed the course of history with their exploration of territorial America. Likewise, artist Paul Jackson's venture into the wilderness of coin design helped set a new course for the 50 State Quarters Program. ©