LEWIS AND CLARK AT THE TOWER CREEK “PIRIMIDS”

August 31, 1805

Tower Creek Pyramids

"...Encamped in some old lodges at the place the road leaves the Creek and
asseds the high Country... passed remarkable rock resembling Pyramids
on the left side..."

WILLIAM CLARK

August 31, 1805—After satisfying them-
selves that they would be unable to follow a route along
the Salmon River to reach the Pacific Ocean, the expedi-
tion headed up Tower Creek to Lost Trail Pass on the
way to the Bitterroot Valley. Along the Salmon River and
its tributary streams the Captains noted a variety of
plants, including red hawthorns, several willows, Oregon
grape, Rocky Mountain honeysuckle, Cascade mountain-
ash, and Lyle’s angelica. Both Lewis and Clark observed
that the Lemhi Shoshone Indians displayed a great
reliance on roots, tubers and berries.

Native Plant Species

Yampah
height: 32 inches
habitat: open forest, grassy slope, mid-
elevation meadow

Clark observed “the Indian women collecting the root
of a species of forest which grows in the moist ground
and feeding their poor starving
children... the flavor of this root is not unlike that of
amissed.”

Dusky willow
height: 15 to 20 feet
habitat: stream banks, flood plain

The lodges Lewis, Clark, and their men
stayed in on Tower Creek were likely
made of woven willow. While not
specifically noted by Clark, lodges
were probably similar to the “small
cone-shaped lodge formed with
willow brush” Lewis mentions on
August 12.

Syringa
height: up to 12 feet
habitat: open forest, forest edge, season-
ally moist draw

Syringa is also
known as Lewis’s
Mock Orange.
Syringa is Idaho’s
state flower. It has
fragrant, showy
white flowers.
The strong, hard
branches were used
by native Americans
for bows and
arrows and infant
cradles.

Idaho artist Barbara Peets portrays Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and interpreter George Drouillard as they caomed upon Tower Creek “Pirimids” on August 31, 1805. The Corps of Discovery camped about a mile north of the pyramids that evening.

Invasive Plant Species

Knapweed
height: 1 to 4 feet
habitat: variety

Spotted knapweed plants can produce
up to 1,000 seeds
that may remain
viable for longer
than 8 years. Un-
common in Lemhi
County prior to
1980, today, in spite
of costly control
efforts, knapweed
is spreading rapidly.

Skeletexweed
height: 1 to 4 feet
habitat: dry to
wet sites

Rush skeletonweed appears leathery at
a distance. The seed bears a soft white
plume and is wind dispersed. Small yellow
flowers are scattered among the
branches from mid-summer to
fall. It is a recent invader in Lemhi
County.

Leafy spurge
height: up to 3 feet
habitat: range, badland and pasture

Its yellow-green color makes this plant
easy to spot in the spring and
summer. Riped seed capsules
rupture when touched,
throwing seeds as
far as 15 feet.

Introduced insect predators are pror-
ing helpful in the control of dense
infestations.

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Pseudoroegneria
stipoides
Salsola
salsola
Philadelphus
lewisii

Centaura
maculosa
Cnidium
juncum
Euphorbia
esula