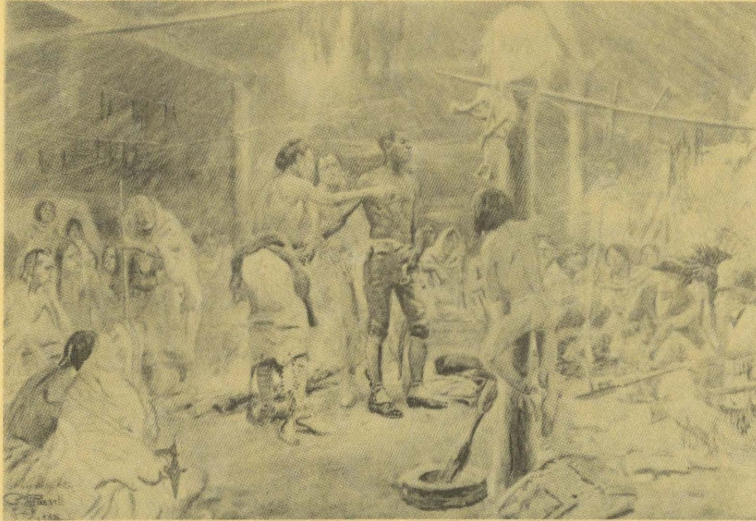


Black Historical Perspectives In The Northwest Passage



York allows Mandan Indians to see if his black skin color will rub off.

Because York was a slave, there is not much information available about him. In the diaries of the expedition, Clark makes mention of York's abilities as a hunter and his general resourcefulness on the trail. Legend has it that York was very popular with the Native Americans, particularly the women, who were fascinated with the color of his skin and his sense of humor. The Lewis and Clark party arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River in the winter of 1805, camped for several months and then traveled back to Missouri. The expeditions were considered a tremendous success and York was given his freedom in 1806. He soon left Missouri for parts unknown, but rumors from Native Americans at the time indicate that York went back west and lived with the various tribes he had met during the expedition.

Marcus Lopez and York are the only known Black explorers during this time. It is safe to assume that others probably existed, as the area was popular with fur traders, sailors and other adventurers.



*York of the Lewis and
Clark Expedition*