when parking the car or the trailer, and a regular check upon the whereabouts of the children. Campground operators have some grim tales to tell about parents who would let others assume the responsibility for their youngsters and teenagers alike. Camping at its best is a relaxing family adventure, but it's not a time for letting the small fry roam at will—straight to a rushing stream. Nor can the campground operators be expected to supervise teenage activities without the assistance of responsible and concerned parents.

Considering the increasing use of the Nation's campgrounds, it's become more important than ever for campers themselves to be interested in the maintenance of campsites. A campground quickly becomes a slum when trees are stripped of limbs, tables are festooned with carved initials, or the toilet facilities are littered.

Courtesy and consideration for other campers is as vital outdoors as it is at home—almost more so, since four walls can contain noise to some extent.

Happily, most campers are thoughtful, considerate types who have a wide reputation for being the friendliest people on earth. They love to swap tales of their adventures over well-brewed tea or hearty coffee. Advice and assistance from the seasoned veterans can aid the beginner in getting out of all sorts of strange situations. And the veterans are not above laughing at their own mistakes, both past and present, like leaving the tent stakes at home for the first time in 15 years. It's a congenial business, camping—in a congenial outdoors. But do go armed with a healthy taste for adventure.

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**On the Lewis and Clark Trail**

**Across the Bitterroots**

**ED PARKER**

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**ATOP** a ridge of the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho you walk a narrow trail.

There's an excitement in you which builds with each step, for this centuries-old trail, in places worn almost knee deep in the earth, is a significant part of our country's early history.

Indians, explorers, prospectors, trappers, settlers, Army troops, and nameless others—all passed this way countless times in countless numbers. And among those who found this trail in the wilderness and followed it on across the forbidding mountains were Lewis and Clark.

Now the earth drops steeply from each side of the trail, and the view is from horizon to horizon. You are surrounded by rugged, mountainous country, remote from civilization, and looking much as it did when Lewis and Clark first saw it in 1805. Yet just a few hours ago you breakfasted at a hotel coffee shop back in Missoula, Mont.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was one of history's greatest overland explorations. Altogether the expedition traveled some 7,500 miles through the wilderness from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean and back. The trip lasted 2 years 4 months 9 days, and by far the most difficult times

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of the journeys west and east were those spent in crossing the Bitterroots.

The expedition west nearly failed as it struggled for 9 days around and across the rugged mountains and through dense forests. The Indian trail that the party followed was narrow and twisting, difficult to stay on, and often blocked by wind-felled trees. The first snows had fallen, and game had left the high country. The men were reduced to a diet of horsemeat and soup before they breached the mountains and arrived sick and exhausted at an Indian camp on the Weippe Prairie.

Their return trip in June 1806, under the expert guidance of three Nez Perce Indians, was less difficult, but still arduous and exhausting. By forced marches over snow which was packed so hard it supported their horses, they made the trip from Weippe Prairie to Lolo in 7 days.

Lewis and Clark did not find the easy water passage to the West which they had sought, but the expedition is considered by many historians as the single most important event in the development of the Western United States. Politically it secured the recent American purchase of the Louisiana Territory and extended American claims to the Pacific. Economically it provided the first knowledge of the resources which eventually led to the opening of our western lands for development and for settlement.

It took the determined and brave men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition—the Corps of Discovery—9 days to cross the Bitterroot Range. You, today’s automobile traveler, can drive through the mountains in an easy 4 hours along U.S. 12, the Lewis and Clark Highway, which was completed during 1961.

I followed the trail of the expedition across the Bitterroots with keen anticipation—I had never been in these mountains—and with a purpose. The Forest Service was beginning planning for the interpretation of historical sites and the development of other visitor services along the highway and on the primitive Lolo Trail Road higher in the mountains.

Al Swift and I had come from Washington to work on this planning with Ken Keeney, Chief of Information and Education for the Forest Service’s Northern Region, and others of his staff.

It was a clear-sky day when we left Missoula for our on-the-ground look at

_The old and the new in outdoor travel, Bitterroot National Forest._
the historic Bitterroots. We took U.S. 93 south and west for 11 miles to the community of Lolo. Here we turned westward on U.S. Highway 12.

On September 9, 1805, Lewis and Clark had reached this same point after traveling north from Lost Trail Pass through the beautiful Bitterroot Valley. By a creek they called Travelers Rest (Lolo Creek), they had camped for 2 days, their hunters shooting game for food and the horses grazing the surrounding meadows. And here they, too, turned westward toward the imposing Bitterroots, taking a trail used by the Nez Perce who lived west of the mountains. Every year the Nez Perce, including the women and children, crossed the mountains over this trail to hunt buffalo on the plains farther east.

Ahead of us then, as we left Lolo, were the mountains which had nearly turned back the expedition. For about the next 160 miles we would follow Lewis and Clark’s route across the Bitterroots, more than 100 miles of it through the Lolo and the Clearwater National Forests.

U.S. 12 winds through the mountains along the water grades of the Lochsa and Clearwater Rivers, and roughly follows the expedition’s route and the old Nez Perce trail for some 50 miles to a point just beyond the Powell ranger station. There the expedition left the valley of the Lochsa, which had become increasingly narrow and choked with brush, and climbed to the ridges above.

The rest of the way across the 6,000-foot mountains the Nez Perce trail stayed along the ridgetops, avoiding the steep-walled canyons that the Indians had long ago found impassable for men and horses. Since about 1860 this trail has been called the Lolo Trail, a name which now is also applied to a Forest Service road that is often on and always very near the historic Nez Perce trail. In a great many places along the road the old Indian trail is still visible even today.

So it is that the traveler today has his choice of taking the modern highway through the canyons of the Lochsa and the Clearwater Rivers or else the primitive, and ridge-hugging, Lolo Trail Road. Take both, and you will have a memorable journey, I can assure you.

Plan at least 2 days for your exploration of the Bitterroot country; or more if possible, for there’s much to see and do. This historic land is also rich with unusual natural beauty—dense forests, deep canyons, high alpine meadows, mountain lakes, and white water rivers. Fishing is excellent. So don’t make yours a fast rush on down the highway when you travel out this way.

We made ours a 2-day trip, traveling the length of the Lolo Trail west for the first day and staying overnight at Orofino. Here on the banks of the Clearwater River the sick and hungry men of the expedition camped while they hewed and burned out the “holler” of the five canoes that would carry them on to the Pacific. We returned to Missoula over the highway, disappointed only that rain kept us from crossing over one of the suspension bridges that span the Lochsa and hiking for a ways into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Tips for Campers

If you are camping, you’ll certainly want to stay longer than 2 days. Along the highway are a number of the Forest Service campgrounds from which you can explore the country and enjoy its pioneer atmosphere. If you are not camping, a circle trip like ours—beginning on either side of the mountains—is an excellent way to see this country. Take rain gear in case it’s needed and make the wilderness walk which I missed.

The interpretation of the historical sites and the development of the other visitor services along these roads are not yet complete, but they are well underway. Watch for Forest Service signs along the highway and the Lolo Trail Road. They give mileage distances, locate off-highway trails and roads, and interpret points of interest and historic significance like the campsites of Lewis and Clark and other places associated with the expedition.

U.S. 12 is a modern, 2-lane, all-weather highway, but to travel it your car should be in good condition and have a full gas tank. A breakdown could delay you for several hours, and please note that there are no service stations for nearly 100 miles.
between Lolo Hot Springs, Mont., and Lowell, Idaho.

The Lolo Trail Road is unpaved, narrow, and crooked, but the experienced and careful driver can travel it safely in the summer months. Before driving this road, however, take the precaution of checking its condition with a forest supervisor or ranger at Missoula and Lolo in Montana; at Orofino, Kamiah, and Kooskia in Idaho; or at the Powell and Lochsa ranger stations which are on the highway inside the forest. These Forest Service offices also can supply you with a forest map showing roads, trails, and other points of interest, among them:

Fort Fizzle—Nez Perce Indians revolted in 1877 against living on a reservation, and in July they fled the Idaho Territory by way of the Lolo Trail. Led by Chief Joseph, 250 braves, 450 women and children, and 2,000 horses crossed the mountains with Gen. O. O. Howard leading Army troops in pursuit. An attempt to block the Indians near Lolo failed when Chief Joseph kept his people high upon the ridges and simply slipped past the fortifications in the night.

Lolo Pass—Highest point (5,233 feet) on the Lewis and Clark Highway. On the crest of the Bitterroot Range, it marks the Montana-Idaho border.

Packer Meadows—Lewis and Clark fed their horses and camped in this large alpine meadow near Lolo Pass. It was a favorite stopping place for Indians.

Bernard De Voto Memorial Grove—A stately grove of towering cedars on the Lochsa River, dedicated to the famous historian and conservationist.

Powell Ranger Station—The expedition camped here on the way west, and from here left the valley to travel the ridgetops. The Lolo Trail Road begins near the station.

Colgate Warm Springs—Named for the cook of a hunting party that went into the Lochsa Valley in the winter of 1893. Heavy snows threatened to trap the party, and when Colgate became ill he was abandoned. His grave is nearby.

Jerry Johnson Hot Springs—Named for an early-day trapper, miner, and outdoorsman. The saline waters of these warm springs attract elk and deer.

Indian Post Office—Two mounds of stones on the Lolo Trail, built before the time of Lewis and Clark. The old trail turned off the divide at this point, and these mounds evidently marked the turn. Historians doubt the more romantic story that Indians passed messages by piling up the stones in various arrangements.

Indian Grave—In 1893, an Indian family picking huckleberries, hunting, and fishing along the Lolo Trail became ill. A 14-year-old boy, Albert Parsons Mallickan, died and was buried here.

Indian Crossing—Near Indian Grave the Nez Perce trail fords a creek. Here the trail cuts deeply into the streambanks, one reminder of the centuries that man has walked along this trail.

Lots of Big Game

Wildlife—Mountain goats, deer, elk, and moose may be seen any time of year. Deer and elk gather on the south-facing slopes during winter, and as many as 100 of them may be seen along the highway on a February or a March afternoon. Bear, coyote, and bobcat also are present. Fish include rainbow and cutthroat trout as well as the steelhead, an ocean-going trout that returns like the salmon to its headwaters birthplace to spawn.

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness—Largest in the United States, its 1.2 million acres are parts of four national forests: Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lolo, Bitterroot. Suspension bridges across the Lochsa River connect with trails leading into this land of primitive beauty which lies south of U.S. 12. You can travel by foot or horseback. Horses are available from licensed local outfitters and guides.

These are only some of the things that you can see and do in the Bitterroots. You can also camp, fish, picnic, hike, climb mountains, hunt, or just enjoy it all.

You can enjoy, also, one experience unusual for automobile travel. As you drive the Lewis and Clark Highway and the Lolo Trail for some 100 miles through the forests, you will not see a commercial building of any kind, nor even a single billboard. Here is an unspoiled part of our great American outdoors.

And it's all yours to enjoy.