

Why Indianapolis is the Gateway to the West, not St. Louis

Because water was the only way they could get through the wilderness facing them, in 1803, when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase, they started on the only waterway that would take them to it. They started not in St. Louis, but 100 miles due south (not west) of Indianapolis (not settled until 1820), across from Louisville, Kentucky, on the Ohio River.



It was in the town of Clarkesville, Indiana (named for William Clark's older brother, George Rogers Clark, an Indiana Territory resident and Revolutionary War officer) that on October 14, 1803, Lewis and a small company of explorers began collecting the gear and supplies they would need for the expedition ahead. Funded by the government, the new America wanted to learn about its new real estate acquisition (this territory included the whole of today's Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska, parts of Minnesota and Louisiana west of the Mississippi River, including New Orleans, big parts of north and northeastern New Mexico, South Dakota, northern Texas, some parts of Wyoming, Montana, and Colorado). In all, this

is 22.3 percent of the territory of the present day United States.

Floating between Kentucky and what is now Indiana and the state of Illinois, they headed north once they reached the Mississippi River. After roughly 150 miles, they came upon a St. Louis of less than a thousand mostly French people, which had been under Spanish control since 1764 (it began under the French flag in 1700 when a French mission had been established there), that did not want the explorers going any further. As unexpected guests, they left Meriwether Lewis behind to negotiate and moved on. They spent the night up river about a mile away.

The next day, on Dec 12, 1803, after having been denied permission by the lieutenant governor of St. Louis to use the Missouri River, which was 15 miles further north, they stopped when they got to it. It was there that the Corps of Discovery (52 person crew: 37 military, 12 boatsmen and 3 civilians), as they came to be called, established their winter camp on the Illinois side of the Mississippi, in what is now the city of Hartford, at the mouth of Wood River Creek.

On March 9, of 1804, the bar to entry was cleared in an official ceremony called Three Flags Day when the upper Louisiana territory was transferred from Spanish to French to American control. Two months later, on May 14, 1804, the Corps proceeded up the Missouri under sail.

Gone for two and a half years, the explorers skirted six of the 15 future states that were a part of the deal Thomas Jefferson had made with Napoleon Bonaparte so he could finance his wars back in Europe. Bound by the President's orders to find "the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent for the purpose of commerce", they traveled on the Missouri River west across what would become Missouri. When they reached the present day Kansas City, MO, at the Kansas River, they continued north on the Missouri all the way to what is now North Dakota where they headed west again.

The Missouri River stopped at the Continental Divide, the Rocky Mountains in Montana. Soon they would come to learn that a Northwest water passage to the ocean did not exist. Because Jefferson also wanted them to establish a US claim of "discovery" to the Pacific Northwest and Oregon territory, however, they continued on. Out of the 3,700 miles they traveled between the Mississippi River and the Oregon coast, then, the 398 arduous horseback miles over the Rockies made for the only time they were not on water¹.

In presenting the above about early St. Louis and also the Lewis and Clark expedition, I am showing that St. Louis was more of a hindrance to Lewis and Clark than they were an important part of their journey. The reader should also be able to see that the only "gateway" the Corps of Discovery,

traveled through in St. Louis was when they were allowed to enter the Missouri River, 15 miles to the north.

As such, their journey did not blaze a pathway for future pioneers. Their almost primarily water based expedition took place well north of the overland trails covered wagons would come to use to move through the frontier. **If anything, Lewis and Clark had shown where not to go to settle the West.**

Upon their return, they then compared notes with this Nation's administration. It was determined that the waterways in its new real estate acquisition were not going to be practical for commerce. Roads would have to be cleared through it. America's first interstate, the National Road, was signed into law in 1806 by Thomas Jefferson as a way to make these new lands accessible to wagon travel.

Our early leaders were aware of the importance of roads to settle new lands. They knew the 828,000 square miles they had just bought for 15 million dollars had to have an American presence to keep Britain and other European powers out. In this understanding, they knew they had to be able to move through their new purchase on roads and not just the Missouri River² since there were no trails (that could be turned into roads) in the future state of Missouri - none!

And it was St. Louis, like an island in the middle of the newly purchased American frontier that did little more than facilitate

access to a river that got settlers of the West to the other side of the state - where the trails did begin. A French trading post, roughly 750 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, it was already a 40-year-old river town when Napoleon sold it. Little known in the East back then, it was only accessible by boat (on the Mississippi). This continued to be so until 1849 when pioneers finally began passing through it on their journey to California gold.

In St. Louis, early western settlers could buy a wagon or transfer the one they had to another steamboat that (this trip was not made by land as there were no trails since this would have been a day or two away, when you consider the average covered wagon traveled eight to 20 miles a day) would reach the mouth of the Missouri River. On an average of four to five days later they would end up 250 miles away in Independence, MO (at the edge of Kansas City). It was from there, their horses went to work pulling their wagons on either the California, Mormon, Santa Fe or Oregon trails.

To get all of these Westward bound travelers, approximately 350,000 from 1849-1868 (per the below, the Mormons began in 1847 and travelled north of the Missouri River), to their trailheads, the Missouri River was busy. According to some records, there were no less than 60 steamboats on the Missouri at any given time. Besides the freight of covered wagons, they also carried U.S. mail and newspapers.

It is also important to note that this main connection to the West, was unnavigable from late Fall through early Spring (the Missouri River was frozen from mid-December until mid-March). Beyond settlement of the West, it wasn't long before this also limited the ability of Kansas City and other western settlements (and thereby St. Louis) in Missouri to ship crops, such as corn, harvested in the Fall, back to the East.

It took 149 years after St. Louis had been formed as a French mission in 1700, as we said above, before its nearby waterways would begin to fill up with early pioneers. As the gold, and free land seekers from the East (the Mormons, 60-70,000, including 3,000 handcarts, bypassed St. Louis, as well as the Missouri River in search of religious freedom, when they started in Nauvoo, in eastern Illinois) trundled along on the National Road, they left civilization behind once they crossed over the White River on the National Road wood covered bridge in Indianapolis. They braced themselves for the water travel that was next once they reached St. Louis. As the wagon transfer dock that it essentially was, once they got there, there were no trailheads for:

<u>Trail</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Santa Fe	1822	Trade with Mexico
	1859	Gold, Pikes Peak, CO
Mormon	1847	Salt Lake City worship
	1862	Gold, Banack City, MT
California	1849	Gold

Oregon	1862	Homestead Act
	1859	Gold, Pikes Peak, CO

All these overland trails, used by half a million people, began, as we've said, in Independence, Missouri (next to Kansas City, MO) and not St. Louis. To use the same criteria, water travel, that has made St. Louis "the" Gateway to the West, would make the city of San Francisco, formed in 1776, a far more legitimate holder of this designation. Seated at the edge of an even larger body of water, the Pacific Ocean, because news of the discovery of gold was slow to reach the East Coast, many of the first prospectors actually arrived by ship from South America and Asia. As such, it was a gateway to the California gold of the West a year before St. Louis entered the equation.



Once the January 24, 1848 news of the discovery of gold was announced by President Polk on December 5, 1848, just short of a year

San Francisco Bay circa 1850's

later, it wasn't long before people in the East as well as Europe were then coming to San Francisco by ship. Most traveled five months around Cape Horn, while others risked malaria by taking the Panama shortcut. In one year alone, between April 1849 and April 1850, maritime historian, James Delgado, says that some 62,000 49ers arrived safely in San Francisco by vessel. This is almost double the total number who came by overland routes in the same 12-month period - easily making San Francisco the 'First' Gateway to the West.

In fact, as time went on, according to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, more than a third of the people who immigrated to California during the Gold Rush from 1848 to 1855, came by sea. And even then, people were not 240 miles away from the start of a wagon trip to the far away goldfields. Prospectors from all over the world (25 countries) were able to reach the mining camps, 100 nautical miles away (near Sacramento on the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento River), once they got to San Francisco. They not only used San Francisco as a stepping stone to the nearby precious metal fields, but many stayed there after arriving, with many using it to administer other operations that helped settle the West. This was not the case in St. Louis. It was not a destination

To make it even more difficult for St. Louis to call itself "the" gateway, there was no bridge over the Mississippi. It was not until 1874, well after the California, Colorado and Montana

Gold Rushes, that the 6,442 foot long Eades bridge made this connection. In other words, the only way pioneer travelers from the East, had ever been able to reach St. Louis was to place their wagons on a steamboat to get to it (for their boat ride to the Missouri River).

Nor did early St. Louis city leaders, as far back as 1934, ever intend for the Arch they foresaw to reach across the mammoth Mississippi river. They had no intention to symbolically connect themselves to what the fiction they produced deemed to be the "East". Where it passes St. Louis, the Mississippi River is almost 2000 feet wide. What they needed was a justification to rid the city's waterfront of "blighted" property and bring in federal construction dollars to help them do so. In fact, according to Tracy Campbell, author of "The Gateway Arch" A Biography", city engineer, W.C. Bernard, presented the plan as "an enforced slum-clearance program."

Designed in 1948, after several false starts, the Great Arch was completed in Oct. of 1965. To make it real, 40 square blocks of riverside property were bulldozed, including 290 businesses, mainly small factories in historic cast-iron buildings, employing some 5,000 workers. To get the federal government to keep their fabricated contention alive, The Arch that resulted is run by the National Park Service.

Sadly, Indianapolis never rallied its citizens or put out a rigged bond election (in funding the Great Arch, the St. Louis Post-

Dispatch counted 46,000 phony ballots) to retrofit its waterfront with a replica of the National Road wooden bridge which had been dismantled in 1902. In never coming to the table to challenge St. Louis, St. Louis being referred to as “The Gateway to the West” has stood the test of time, complete with federal support. This is wrong!

Going back to the bridge over the Mississippi River it never had, St. Louis remained officially disconnected from the East when the Great Panic of 1837 bankrupted the National Road. An important passageway from Washington DC, it stopped 63 miles short of St. Louis, in Vandalia, Illinois.

As rail travel was becoming increasingly prevalent in the East, St. Louis was slighted again when, well north of it, about 350 miles, in 1869, the transcontinental railroad, connected the coasts. It was then that, as the railroad hub of the East, while St. Louis was forgotten, Indianapolis became an even more active player. Year in, year out, Indianapolis moved an unimpeded, massive flow of people and their belongings to Chicago for the trip to California as we will discuss in more depth below.

And then almost 50 years later, St. Louis was bypassed once more when the first coast-to-coast road for cars, **the Indianapolis based** Lincoln Highway, ran close to the coast-to-coast rail right of way. The Lincoln connected San Francisco with New York City in 1914. And then in 1986 when the Lincoln was updated with Interstate 80, St. Louis was

forever removed from the coast-to-coast transportation equation.

Why is Indianapolis the Real Gateway to the West?

Now that we have looked at why St. Louis was NOT the Gateway to the West, here is why I, and notable others, maintain that Indianapolis was the Gateway to the West. In



the following, I will expand on some of the above thoughts. Now an Indianapolis resident, where I live five blocks west of the White River, I reside in what was once the beginning of the American frontier. Until the National Road wood covered bridge crossed it in 1834, it was the White River that was the line in the sand between the civilized East and the wild and untamed West.

The thick underbrush and forests that blanketed these lands made it hard to get a horse through them. In fact, legend has it that a squirrel could travel from the Atlantic all the way to the state of Missouri without ever touching its feet to the ground. That is why, as we noted above, the only way Lewis and Clark



could explore and map the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, that had doubled the size of the country, was to travel to it on water.

Since their journey began at the only place they could get through the frontier when they started from Clarksville, Indiana, one has to ask the question:

‘if St. Louis was the Gateway to the West, why didn't Lewis and Clark start there?’

As for the White River, after it was crossed with a wood covered bridge³, the next task for the road builders was to clear a way through what would in 1818 become the state of Illinois. Known as the Indiana Territory until 1809, it was so densely forested, that few white men had set foot in it. And even to get to it with a road, the Wabash River, 75 miles west of Indianapolis, which forms the border between present day

Indiana and Illinois, had to be crossed. This was done in 1847.

And yet even after it crossed the Wabash, the National Road

didn't even make it to the Great River. It fell, as I said above, 63 miles short, stopping in Vandalia, IL, only 100 miles after it left the Wabash. Even though the official Government road failed to reach its destination, until 1869, the largest preponderance of westward bound overland travelers from the East, as well as from Europe,

CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD.			UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD		
					
<p>COMMENCING MAY 17, 1869, Express Trains will run daily as follows:</p>			<p>THE GREAT PLATTE VALLEY ROUTE</p>		
<p>EASTWARD.</p>			<p>Is now complete and running daily passenger trains, forming in connection with the Central Pacific Railroad an ALL RAIL ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA and the PACIFIC COAST!</p>		
Leave Sacramento.....	Miles.	Time.	<p>Through to San Francisco In Less than Four Days! Avoiding the dangers of the Sea.</p>		
.. Colfax	54	6:39 A. M.	<p>Direct Connections made at OMAHA</p>		
.. Truckee.....	120	9:50 A. M.	<p>With Chicago and Northwestern, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and St. Joseph and Council Bluffs Railroads, and Missouri River Line of Packets to and from all principal Eastern and Southern Cities.</p>		
.. Reno	154	2:10 P. M.	<p>CHEYENNE,</p>		
.. Wadsworth.....	189	4:20 P. M.	<p>With Stages for Denver, Central City, Santa Fe, and points in Colorado and New Mexico.</p>		
.. Winnemucca.....	324	6:30 P. M.	<p>BRYAN,</p>		
.. Carlin.....	445	8:30 A. M.	<p>With Stages for the great Sweetwater Mining District.</p>		
.. Elko.....	468	1:45 A. M.	<p>UINTAH,</p>		
.. Toano.....	559	8:30 A. M.	<p>Stages leave on arrival of Union Pacific trains for Salt Lake City and Southern Utah.</p>		
Arrive at Promontory.....	690	10:00 A. M.	<p>CORINNE,</p>		
<p>WESTWARD.</p>			<p>For Helena, Virginia City, and all points in Montana.</p>		
Leave Promontory.....		6:15 P. M.	<p>PROMONTORY,</p>		
.. Toano.....	131	3:00 A. M.	<p>With Central Pacific Railroad for White Pine Silver Mines, Sacramento, San Francisco, and principal cities in California, Nevada and Idaho.</p>		
.. Elko.....	222	8:25 A. M.	<p>First class Hotels and Eating Houses at convenient points on the line.</p>		
.. Carlin.....	245	9:35 A. M.	<p>Pullman's Palace and Sleeping Cars accompany all trains.</p>		
.. Winnemucca.....	366	4:10 P. M.	<p>For through rates on freight to Montana, Sweetwater Mines and other points, apply to H. BROWNSON,</p>		
.. Wadsworth.....	501	12:05 A. M.	<p>General Freight Agent, Omaha.</p>		
.. Reno.....	536	2:10 A. M.	<p>C. G. HAMMON,</p>		
.. Truckee.....	570	4:20 A. M.	<p>Gen'l Sup't, Omaha.</p>		
.. Colfax.....	636	9:50 A. M.	<p>J. BUDD, Gen'l Ticket Agent, Omaha.</p>		
Arrive at Sacramento.....	690	1:20 P. M.			
<p>FARE.</p>					
Sacramento to Terminus.....		Coin			
Children not over twelve (12) years of age		half fare; under five (5) years of age, free			
100 pounds baggage (per passenger) free.					
<p>Two Trains daily (Sundays excepted) between Sacramento and Marysville, without any change of cars:</p>					
Leave Sacramento at 6:30 A. M. and 2 P. M.					
Arrive at Marysville at 9:30 A. M. and 5:30 P. M.					
Leave Marysville at 5:30 A. M. and 10:10 A. M.					
Arrive at Sacramento at 9:45 A. M. and 1:20 P. M.					
<p>For tickets and other information, apply at the Company's offices in Sacramento.</p>					
<p>CHAS. CROCKER, General Superintendent. T. H. GOODMAN, Gen'l. Passenger Agent.</p>					
<p>The following are the present rates of fare via UNION PACIFIC and connecting Roads:</p>					
Promontory to—	Currency.				
Omaha	\$81 50				
St. Louis	101 50				
Chicago	103 50				
Cincinnati.....	114 85				
Niagara Falls.....	118 90				
New York	123 50				
Boston	126 50				
<p>(Rates are subject to change.)</p>					
May 17, 1869.	265d&sw tf				

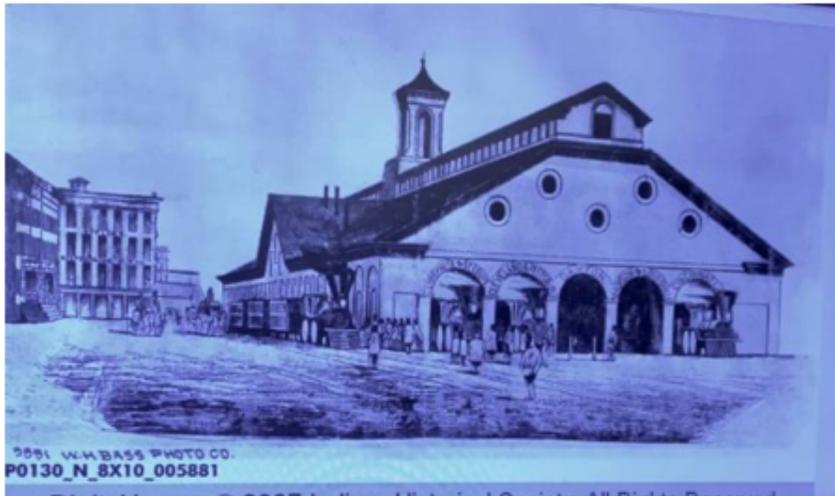
all used the National Road wood covered bridge over the White River in Indianapolis to get to the Mississippi River, 240 miles (8-30 wagon days) away.

Once trains reached California from Omaha and Chicago, the National Road yielded to rail. As St. Louis fell off the back, Indianapolis, began to play an even larger role in getting people to the West Coast because of its state-of-the-art Union Station.

Even before it was built in 1853, by the 1840's, Indianapolis had already become widely known as "the railroad city of the west". Its new terminal was the first in the United States to centralize rail lines under one roof. Like the O'Hare International Airport of rail travel in 19th century America, when it opened, six different railroads, instead of each one having its own terminal, all converged upon Indianapolis Union Station.

Once transcontinental rail reached Chicago, coast to coast train travel began to explode. One of the reasons Indianapolis Union Station figured so prominently, was because it made Chicago easily accessible to ten different states (southern Ohio and Pennsylvania, as well as Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina) with the inclusion of the large population centers of Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Washington, DC. As such, **once rail went**

coast to coast, from 1869 on, St. Louis, well south of the coast to coast rail line, was, to say again, removed from the equation of westward expansion.



The ability to travel to the West Coast all year-round was another advantage to rail. Indianapolis, with its widely accessed Union Station, could send even more people to the promise of

California and the rest of the West, without losing four months out of the year to a frozen Missouri River. In 1870 alone, for example, 2,000,000 passengers a year traveled on 80 Union Station trains a day. They used the first picture that you see here, as its second incarnation, pictured below it, was not built until 1888.



In terms of opening up the West, before the automobile took things to a whole new level, it was the railroad that moved most of the people to California and all the lands west of the Mississippi. Back when an average wagon trip to the West cost \$20,000 in 2020 dollars and took six months, by reducing this cost by 85% and travel time to one week, train travel became almost the only way Americans made

their way to the Golden State. As such, even after all the precious minerals had been extricated from California, Montana and Colorado, the lands of the West still called out to the East with other opportunity. With regard to trade alone, within 10 years of the completion of transcontinental rail, for example, \$50 million worth of freight was moving from coast to coast every year.

It was also rail that promoted home building in the West. One of the ways railroads got paid for the spurs that branched off of the transcontinental railroad was through the land grants they had received as payment from the government for the tracks they had laid. In turn, the railroads then merchandised the lands they had acquired as a way to attract people to build houses all along their rights of way, all throughout the West. Many had entire real estate divisions responsible for selling this land through incentive programs.

The above said, **Indianapolis**, once the entryway to the frontier with its National Road wood covered bridge, the railroad hub of the East, the railroad city of the West, and the birthplace of both the automobile industry (as we show in the chapter entitled “Manifest Destiny and Taming the Western Frontier for Carl Fisher and the Automobile Age”) and the first road to cross America, the Lincoln Highway, **is the REAL Gateway to the West!**

Why St Louis was NOT the Gateway to the West

- If St. Louis was the edge of the frontier, “the start of the West”, why didn’t Lewis and Clark begin there? Why instead, did their journey begin close to Indianapolis?
- Lewis and Clark did not lay over for the winter in St. Louis. They were turned away before they began their trip west on the Missouri River. They spent it on the other side of the the Mississippi, along the Wood River Creek in Illinois
- St. Louis was more of a hindrance to Lewis and Clark than they were an important part of their journey.
- When Lewis and Clark arrived in St. Louis, they were turned away. Before they could began their trip west on the nearby Missouri River they had to spend the winter on the Illinois side of the Mississippi, in what is now Hartford, IL.
- Lewis and Clark traveling by water only skirted six of the 15 future states that were a part of the Louisiana Purchase
- In conquering the West, early government officials knew roads were needed, that it could not be settled by using only its waterways

- Water based, Lewis and Clark had shown where **NOT** to go to settle the West
- **There are no wagon trails in the state of Missouri**
- Gateway: an opening that can be closed by a gate • a frame or arch built around or over a gate • a means of access or entry to a place • a means of achieving a state or condition
- St. Louis was the wagon shipping dock of the West. The wagons left St. Louis by steamboat on the Mississippi where they were transferred to the Missouri River which they then continued on as freight for 250 miles to Independence, MO
- St. Louis was only accessible by boat, it did not have a bridge that connected it to the East
- Using the same criteria to make St. Louis the gateway to the west, could qualify San Francisco as the more legitimate holder of this title considering its its close proximity to the gold fields and all the water traffic it received
- The National Road from the East, stopped 63 miles short of St. Louis in 1837
- The Missouri River that steamboats moved covered wagons across the state on, was frozen four months out of the year
- The transcontinental railroad went well north of St. Louis in 1869 removing it from the equation of westward expansion when the lions share of such settlement took place
- St. Louis was bypassed again by the first coast to coast car road, the Lincoln Highway
- Mormons bypassed St. Louis and Missouri when they left from Illinois

- Was calling St Louis, the Gateway to the West, their Dept of Tourism's way of rebranding the city? Changing its name from Mound City, a reference to all the native American Indian burial grounds found there?
- The Gateway Arch does not cross the Mississippi River. It does not connect the “east” with the “west”. It was built on what used to be 40 blocks of blighted commercial real estate along the river in downtown St. Louis.

Why Indianapolis was the Gateway to the West

- Lewis and Clark started their exploration of the West, 100 miles south of Indianapolis
- When wagons began heading west, it was at the White River in Indianapolis that East Coast civilization stopped
- America’s first interstate, the National Road from Washington DC crossed the White River in Indianapolis with a wood covered bridge in 1834
- At the bridge’s peak, 90 Conestoga wagons, the 18-wheelers of their day, crossed the National Road Bridge from sun up to sun down, every hour of every day
- The majority of westward bound covered wagon travelers from the East as well as Europe all used the National Road wood covered bridge over the White River
- After the transcontinental railroad bypassed St. Louis, Indianapolis played an even larger role in settling the West
- By the 1840s, Indianapolis was widely known “the railroad city of the west”

- As the railroad hub of the East, Indianapolis moved massive amounts of people and their belongings from most of the East, and even Europe, to Chicago en route to California
- Just as Indianapolis was the last main stop before pioneer wagons made their transfer to water in St. Louis, Indianapolis was also the last main stop for rail passengers headed to the Chicago stop on the transcontinental railroad
- America's first coast to coast car road, the road that built America, the **Indianapolis-based** Lincoln Highway, completely bypassed St. Louis, as does I-80 which much of the Lincoln became

1 In 1979, when I biked across the United States the first time, I started down the Oregon Coast from where Lewis and Clark ended their journey in November of 1805. This is a picture of me with one of the boats they made, a dugout canoe, at Fort Clatsop on the coast at Astoria, OR.

I'm showing it in because the Lewis and Clark expedition (with the exception of 398 horseback miles as I show below) was almost completely water-based. Nor did they even lay over in St. Louis. They were told by the lieutenant governor of that 1000-person city, they could go no further west. By west, since there are no trails in Missouri, they would have to move in that direction on the Missouri River, for which the mouth was 15 miles away.



In this picture, about 100 miles from Portland, Oregon, is where their journey ended at the mouth of the Columbia River. This after floating across parts of Idaho and Washington

After leaving the Missouri River in Montana, before they could get back on water, they made use of the 38 horses they got from the Shoshone Indian tribe, from which Sacajawea (the Indian ambassador they traveled with) originated, for their overland miles. And this was in addition to their 18-mile, one-month long portage around the Great Falls on the Missouri River in the middle of Montana.

Before their horses could continue on over the Continental Divide, they had to get through the Rockies where they are known as the Bitterroot Mountains. Forty torturous miles later, they entered what is now Idaho. From there, dividing into scouting parties, they ground on, with the help of the local Indians, over a ten day period for another 150 miles on their way to the Clearwater River. From Sept 22 to Oct 7 they built five Ponderosa pine dugout canoes for the river trip that would take them to the Snake River near Lewiston, ID.

On October 7, they left their horses with Chief Twisted Hair for use on their return trip. They then floated on the Clearwater to the Snake and took it to southeastern Washington where it meets the Columbia River, at Beacon Rock in northern Oregon. It was here, 45 miles east of Portland, where their destination, the Pacific Ocean, 150 miles away finally became visible.

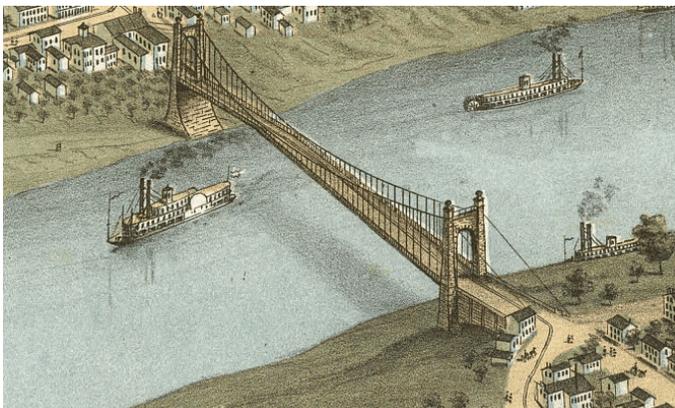
2 Our early leaders knew that the lands of this or any country could not be settled by fleshing out its river ways. Roads, whether paved or dirt would be needed. This can be illustrated by Iquitos, Peru, approximately 600 miles from the Pacific Ocean on the Amazon River. Even though it was settled as far back as 140 years before St Louis, in 1624, because roads are few and treacherous, it remains remote (like the three other major cities on the 3,997 mile long Amazon). This as in the absence of roads, most of the rest of South America remains unsettled to this day.

3 From the Chapter - "The Gateway to the Frontier, Indianapolis Riverfront at the National Road" -

"The two bridges co-existed until 1902 with the National Road Wood Covered Bridge functioning as a toll bridge and seeing less and less use until the time came to widen the Washington St Bridge

While the Washington Bridge was being rebuilt, the National Road Bridge made out of poplar (which is termite resistant) was dismantled because there was no way to enlarge the Washington Bridge approach with the covered bridge's approach in the way."

As for the National Road, well before it reached the White River, it had to get through the Appalachians, and then over the Ohio River. The job of getting over the Ohio was so huge however that they crossed over the 600-foot wide White River first, having done so in 1834. The narrowest part of the Ohio was in Wheeling, West Virginia, where it flowed around Zanes Island. In 1836, they crossed the river's back channel, the side closest to the state of Ohio with a handsome two-span covered bridge. 13 years later, in 1849, they crossed the main channel once a lawsuit about ship height had been settled. The result was the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, the longest in the world at 1,010 feet.



As an aside, I rode across this bridge in 1979 on my first bike ride across America. However, I did not know its rich history. Because this bridge was designed during the horse-and-buggy era, 2-ton weight limits and vehicle separation requirements (cars cannot run bumper to bumper on it) still apply. It was also strategically important during the Civil War.