

beds of clay in the vicinity of a snowy whiteness which is much used by the Indians for cleansing their clothes and skins, it not being any inferior to soap for cleansing woolen or skins dressed after the Indian fashion.” [(5), p. 4] James Clyman had yet another method for handling the laundry. “There is great quantities of soda found in many places all through California and Lye made of ashes is never used in the manufacture of soap, but a species of earth is found that answers well for this purpose and in fact many places there is found sinks or holes in the earth that fills with water in the rainy seasons and which after it has evaporated considerably by dry weather has all the apperance and qualities of Lye made from ashes and is collected for soap making.” [(4) p.226-227]

In the often harsh environment, shelter was something that was as varied as the weather itself. Sometimes a suitable shelter could have made the difference between life and death. The buffalo’s hide was a frequent source of shelter. According to Russell “We all had snug lodges made of dressed Buffaloe skins in the center of which we built a fire and generally comprised about six men to the lodge.” [(5) p.51] Meriweather Lewis also spoke of using the buffalo for shelter. “Captain Clark, myself, the two interpreters and the woman and child sleep in a tent of dressed skins. This tent is in the Indian stile, formed of a number of dried Buffaloe skins sewed together with sinues, it is cut in such a manner that when foalded double it forms the quarter of a circle and is left open at one side here it many be attached or loosened at pleasure by strings which are sewed to its sides for the purpose (atipi?) [(6) p.92] There were times when things other than buffalo hides were used for shelter. Clark writes “I took my servant and one man, Charbono our interpreter and his Squar accompanied, I perceived a cloud which appeared black and threaten immediate rain. I saw a deep ravine in which was sheltering rocks under which we took shelter and placed our guns and compass and C & C under a shelving rock on the upper side of the creek in a place which was very secure from the rain. [(6) p. 151-152] and later “We had all our baggage secured and covered with a roof of straw, our little fortification also completely secured with brush around which our camp is found. The greater part of our security from the rains & C., is the grass which is formed in kind of a roof so as to turn the rain completely and is much the best tents we have.” [(6) p. 387]