

There were also times when shelter was difficult to come by. Stephen Long tells of being “Driven before the gale, the men struggled to get their boat ashore. When they reached the riverbank, they clambered out of the skiff and ran to high ground. Sudden gusts of wind and a steady downpour made pitching the tent difficult, but the men finished before everything got soaked. At firsts the shivering soldiers found nothing dry that they could use to start a fire, but soon Long tore some lining from his coat sleeve and one of the others brought a partially rotted log that would burn. When they found the tent provided little shelter from the storm, the men spent the rest of the night hunched around the sizzling fire in their soaked, mud spattered clothes. When daylight appeared, the tired soldiers packed their wet baggage, bailed water from their skiff and pushed out into the storm.” [(1) p. 52] Long also describes how the “Wet explorers sat huddled on their horses with their backs to the storm. Once the hail passed they continued with water pouring in streams from our moccasins and every part of our dress.” [(1) p. 140]

In addition to caring for themselves, the care and safety of the livestock was also a consideration for the mountain travelers. Grass and water was not always available. James Pattie says “Warned by frequent traces of fresh Indian foot prints, we every night adopted the expedient of enclosing our horses in a pen, feeding them with cotton-wood bark, which we found much better for them than grass.” [(5) p.37-38] He also writes “We had to pack cotton-wood bark on the horses for their own eating, and the wood necessary to make fires for our cooking. Nothing is to be seen among these mountains but bare peaks and perpetual snow.” [(3) p. 69] Joe Meek speaks of hard times for the animals “the horses where greatly reduced from the scarcity of grass and the entire absence of cotton-wood.” [(2) p. 69]

The need for tools and accoutrements was a problem. With no way to obtain new items, the men had to rely on what could be found and fashioned from nature and their surroundings. Lewis and Clark speak of how “It was characteristic of this vexatious place that axe helves kept breaking, thirteen in one day. Wild Cherry proved to be the best wood to make replacements of.” [(6) p. 141] They also told how “This evening we exhausted the last of our candles, but fortunately had taken the precaution to bring with us mould