



Uncovering the Truth About Meriwether Lewis

Thomas C. Danisi

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The critically acclaimed biography *Meriwether Lewis*, coauthored by Thomas C. Danisi, was praised for its meticulous research and for shedding new light on the adventurous life and controversial death of the great explorer who became famous through the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Now, the author, with some help from contributors, extends his groundbreaking studies of Meriwether Lewis with this compilation of historical essays that offers new findings based on recently discovered documents, tackling such intriguing subjects as:

- The court-martial of Meriwether Lewis: Danisi's discovery of the astonishing never-before published transcript of the entire court-martial proceedings affords him the distinction of being the first historian to mine the document for the many insights it offers into the then-untested twenty-one-year-old officer, who eloquently defended himself and won his case.
- Documentation straight from the medical ledgers of Dr. Antoine Saugrain, the physician who treated Governor Lewis, which helps to confirm that Lewis suffered from malaria prior to his celebrated trek to the Pacific Ocean with the Corps of Discovery and continuing through his service as governor of the Louisiana Territory. Was Lewis's death, as reported, the result of suicide, or was he merely a victim of this episodic and incurable disease?
- Documentation that proves the true nature of the much-discussed Gilbert Russell Statement given at the court-martial of General James Wilkinson. Some historians have argued that Wilkinson orchestrated Lewis's murder, but Danisi's research sets the record straight.
- The role of Major James Neelly in Lewis's last days. This subject has gained much prominence through the History Channel, according to which Neelly supposedly lied to President Thomas Jefferson about his presence at Meriwether Lewis's burial, but Danisi has evidence to the contrary.

The author presents an abundance of additional material to fill in previous historical gaps regarding the mysteries and controversies surrounding Lewis's life and death. In doing so, he paints a vivid picture of the brilliant rise of an ambitious young man by virtue of courage, talent, and political connections, and the tragic fall of a conscientious public servant under the weight of chronic illness, bureaucratic pettiness, and the political intrigue that was rampant throughout America's Wild West.

This superb contribution to Meriwether Lewis research is a must-read for students and scholars of American history and anyone with an interest in one of our nation's most important explorers and public servants.

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