On the Trail(s) with Lewis and Clark: Native American Beliefs Revealed

Donald J. Blakeslee
Department of Anthropology
Wichita State University
July 4, 1804

Capt. Lewis walked on Shore above this Creek and discovered a high moun from the top of which he had an extensive view, 3 paths Concentering at the moun
Lewis’ Mound

July 4, 1804
The Santa Fe Trail

- Bent’s old fort
- Fort Larned
- Bent’s new fort
- Santa Fe
- Westport
- Council Grove
August 25, 1804

“Set out to Visit this mountain of evil spirits . . . .”

“the Mound which was viewed with such turrow by all the different Nations in this quarter”

“which the Indians call Mountain of the little people or Spirits . . . . .”
Recipe for an ‘animal lodge’

- stream
- trail
- vertical rock or bluff
- lodge-shaped feature
- high hill
- entrance to the underworld
- profusion of life
Entrance at Thermopolis
Lewis and Clark reported native trails that shaped early western history. They missed most of the sacred geography.