

BRIAN LAMB

C-SPAN

400 N. CAPITOL ST. NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20001

21 JULY 1997

BRIAN,

YES, THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION WOULD BE A WORTHY SUBJECT FOR C-SPAN TO TACKLE, BUT ONLY IF YOU DO MORE WITH IT THAN YOU ARE DOING WITH THE TOCQUEVILLE TOUR.

CASE IN POINT IS THE STOP IN ERIE THIS MORNING, WHICH WAS EMPTY OF INTEREST. NO ONE ASKED THE COLLEGE GUY ANY PERTINENT QUESTIONS ABOUT ERIE, THE ERIE CANAL, OR THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE. AND THE OTHER GUY - FROM G.E. - I'M NOT SURE WHY HE WAS INVITED TO APPEAR.

TAKE THE MATTER OF THE ERIE CANAL, IT OPENED THE WEST BY PROVIDING A DIRECT WATER ROUTE BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC AND THE GREAT LAKES, AND SET OFF A WAVE OF CANAL BUILDING.

IN 1825, WHEN THE CANAL OPENED, IT WAS THE LONGEST IN THE WORLD (363 MILES), AND IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO ATTRACT TO ITS DEDICATION FOUR FORMER PRESIDENTS - ADAMS, JEFFERSON, MADISON, MONROE - THE CURRENT PRESIDENT, JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, AND A FUTURE PRESIDENT, ANDREW JACKSON.

AND HOW ABOUT THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE DURING THE WAR OF 1812? AS IT HAPPENS, THIS MORNING'S PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE CARRIED A FRONT PAGE STORY AND PHOTO OF THE U.S. S. CONSTITUTION, WHICH GAINED FAME - AND ITS NICKNAME, "OLD IRONSIDES" - DURING THAT WAR.

IT WAS A WAR MARKED BY DEFEATS FOR THE UNITED STATES ON LAND - INCLUDING THE BURNING OF THE WHITE HOUSE BY THE BRITISH - AND VICTORIES ON WATER - INCLUDING THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE. DURING THE BATTLE, STEPHEN LAWRENCE, COMMANDING THE AMERICAN FLEET, SPOKE THE FAMOUS WORDS "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP" AS HE LAY DYING ON HIS FLAGSHIP.

O.TOC9



21 JUL '97

(2)

YOUR CAMERAS THIS MORNING SHOWED US A PICTURE OF THE REPLICA OF LAWRENCE'S FLAGSHIP ANCHORED AT PRESQUE ISLE, BUT NO ONE SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT. THE CONVERSATION HAD WANDERED OFF TO VOLUNTEERISM, OR SOMETHING EQUALLY INNOCUOUS.

IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO HISTORY, DO HISTORY AND STAY ON COURSE. DON'T WANDER AROUND LIKE A SHIP WITHOUT A RUDDER, PALAVERING ABOUT THE USUAL DRIVEL THAT FILLS AIRTIME EVERY MORNING ON WASHINGTON JOURNAL.

SO, WHY DIDN'T I CALL? TWO REASONS: FIRST, I'M RETIRED AND NOT INTERESTED IN ADDING A LONG-DISTANCE CHARGE TO MY PHONE BILL, AND SECOND—MORE IMPORTANTLY—I PREFER WRITING A LETTER BECAUSE I CAN BETTER ORGANIZE MY THOUGHTS, AND WASTE NO ONE'S TIME BUT MY OWN, AND YOUR ASSISTANT WHO READS THE MAIL. MOST OF YOUR CALLERS THESE DAYS HAVE NO SUCH COMPUCTION, AND ARE THE REASON I SELDOM WATCH ANYMORE.

ALL THE BEST

BUTLER, PA 16001

PS: HAVE READ STEVE ABROSE'S BOOK UNDAUNTED COURAGE. IT'S FIRST RATE, IN FACT IT GOT ME POKING AROUND IN HISTORY BOOKS TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON IN BUTLER COUNTY AT THE TIME LEWIS AND CLARK SET OFF ON THEIR JOURNEY. MAYBE I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOME DAY, OR, MAYBE NOT.

PPS: THE PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE I WAS BORN AND RAISED WAS NAMED LAWRENCEVILLE IN HONOR OF STEPHEN LAWRENCE,