President's Message

by Robert E. Gatten, Jr.

During this past year, it has been my pleasure to serve the foundation as president, largely because of the many very positive interactions I have had with the foundation members who perform the work that keeps the foundation alive and well. I have come to realize that the main responsibility of the president is to maintain communication and stimulate activity among the members of the executive committee, board of directors, committee chairs, chapter presidents, and others who expend so much effort to fulfill our goals and objectives. I am very deeply indebted to a number of individuals who have made a real difference in the last 12 months in the work of the foundation. First, I acknowledge with pleasure the fine work of the executive committee: Ella Mae Howard who has served not only as second vice president but also chair of the publication committee (which has had a major task of considering changes in the production of *We Proceeded On*); Barbara Kubik who has labored long and hard on many projects as secretary and as co-chair of the 1997 annual meeting, and John Montague who, as treasurer, has not only handled the “routine” tasks of paying foundation bills but also managed the foundation’s investments and greatly enhanced our financial bookkeeping procedures.

Since the beginning of November of 1994 the foundation has been fortunate to have the services of our first executive director, Jay Vogt. Jay has brought to the foundation his expertise in history and in working with volunteer groups and government agencies. It has been a real pleasure to work with the 2nd President of the foundation.

From the Editor's Desk

Sitting in Elmer’s Pancake and Steakhouse in Great Falls, Montana, while eating breakfast, award-winning documentary filmmaker Ken Burns asked, “Who are we as a people? It’s a tough question that you can never answer, but it is a quilt that keeps us warm.”

Burns and his partner, Dayton Duncan, are filming a 90-minute documentary on Lewis and Clark which is to be released on public television in 1997. They have faced and filmed a North Dakota blizzard in the dead of winter and spent some soggy days at Fort Clatsop on the Oregon coast. They have been and will be in and out of Montana this spring and summer capturing the wildness and beauty of the land John Steinbeck succinctly described in “Travels With Charley” by saying, “There have been hot days and cool nights in Montana.”

Even as I write this column on the last day of spring, the weather forecast is calling for heavy snow in the mountains. Never mind that we have already had 100 degree days. Sometimes Mother Nature does not pay a whole lot of attention to the seasons in Montana. The two filmmakers are finding that out just as Lewis and Clark did.

Back to the question Ken Burns poses. Who are we as a people? In a partial answer, Burns describes each of his films as a “swatch of fabric in the quilt of America’s identity.”

It occurs to me that as we draw closer to the bicentennial of the expedition, we might use that question as a theme. The journey that the Corps of Discovery made across two-thirds of a continent is indeed a small square in the quilt, but in retrospect it is an enormous contribution to our national identity. Lewis and Clark opened the door to an unknown world of people, plants, animals, geography, geology, commerce, recreation. That list goes on and on.

Their journey has made us look at ourselves, sometimes in comparison to them, sometimes in contrast. They are a perfect example of “the more we know, the more we know we don’t know.”

I comment every now and then that after five years as editor of *WPO*, I am still amazed at the vari-

(Editor’s Note continued on page 30)

ON THE COVER—The monument to Sgt. Charles Floyd, the only man to die on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, is in Sioux City, Iowa, the site of the 1996 annual meeting. Photo by Stride Hinds
Searching for the Invisible: Some Efforts to Find Expedition Camps

by Kenneth W. Karsmizki
Associate Curator of Historical Archaeology
Museum of the Rockies

PART I OF II PARTS

We might one find the camp sites of the 1803-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition? The journey took 863 days, with a temporary camp used by the explorers each night. Correspondence, journals and maps were produced by expedition members from the planning stage through a period long past the return to St. Louis in 1806. Intense interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition has resulted in extensive scholarship by professional historians and the lay public. Local historians such as John J. Peebles of the Idaho Highway Department and Bob Bergantino of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology have spent considerable time reading the journals, examining historic and modern maps, and making field studies to relocate the expedition's camps. At least three studies by professional historians and three archaeological field projects have attempted to relocate specific Lewis and Clark campsites. As yet, none of this research has yielded conclusive physical evidence of a single campsite established during the roughly three-year-long expedition.

So, what is the problem? How reliable is the historical record for locating the hundreds of campsites? Is it impossible to find physical evidence from even one Lewis and Clark campsite? How does one go about looking and what would one expect to find? In the search for answers to these questions it is useful to consider previous research which specifically addressed issues associated with relocating expedition campsites. Site-specific studies can be used to illustrate the kinds of problems that have inhibited efforts to locate campsites. The following essay will survey attempts by historians and archaeologists to locate campsites used by the Lewis and Clark Expedition during its 1803-1806 journey. In part, the survey of site-specific research was completed in an effort to determine the methodology used by scholars in their search for these historic campsites. This manuscript hopes to make a significant contribution in the form of a critical evaluation of previous methods. An assessment of these methodologies will provide guidelines for future researchers regarding what may or may not work in conducting field studies of other camp locations.

One obvious strategy for examining camp locations would be to
first consider those sites which were occupied for the longest time. At 150 days, 156 days, and 122 days the three winter encampments were clearly the most extensively used sites. The first one was on the east side of the Mississippi prior to the official launching of the expedition. The second was at the Mandan Villages, north of present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. And the third winter camp was Fort Clatsop, a site on the Pacific Ocean in the vicinity of Astoria, Oregon. Fort Clatsop was also the subject of the first search by professional archaeologists for physical evidence of the expedition.

Caywood’s Fort Clatsop Study

The archaeologist was Louis R. Caywood, and in his 1948 report he tells us that, “The site of Old Fort Clatsop is located approximately eight miles from Astoria [Oregon] and only seven-tenths of a mile off U.S. Highway 101.” Gary Moulton appears to indicate in his edition of the journals that Fort Clatsop was located at a different place, “about five miles southeast of Astoria...[and] just south of U.S. Highway 101” However, he goes on to say that the fort site “was relocated through archaeological excavations,” and he references Caywood’s 1948 article as the source for information.

Fort Clatsop was established, December 7, 1805, and served as the home for expedition members until March 23, 1806 when the company started on its return trip for St. Louis. Moulton indicates that “Remnants of the fort...were still visible into the early 1870s...” but Caywood’s article does not really say that was the case. He does say that,

Carlos W. Shane states in his affidavit that he located a donation land claim in 1850 on a tract of land which included the site of Fort Clatsop. He further adds: “A few feet from where I built my house there were at that time the remains of two of the Lewis and Clark cabins. They lay east and west, parallel with each other, and ten or fifteen feet apart. Each cabin was sixteen by thirty feet; three rounds of the south cabin and two rounds of the north cabin were then standing.”

Another archaeologist, Paul J.F. Schumacher, who searched for Fort Clatsop somewhat later added to Caywood’s information by commenting that, “the original logs were laid horizontally on the ground (probably without a foundation of any sort), and those few remaining logs still standing by Shane’s time were burned by him.” Schumacher also states that, “Shane probably did not set fire to the logs as he found them, but gathered them into a pile before igniting them.”

The comments of Caywood and Schumacher both suggest that, when Shane occupied the site in the 1850s, logs which he believed were remnants of Fort Clatsop were still in evidence. These logs were gathered and burned, probably before Shane built his house since they were located only a few feet from where he built. Assuming that Shane set fire to the logs at the beginning of his tenure on the land, it seems unlikely that remnants of the fort were still visible into the early 1870s. Equally important, a question remains: what is the basis for assuming that Shane was correct in asserting that the logs were the remains of Fort Clatsop? It appears that both Caywood and Schumacher accepted that declaration at face value and proceeded with their search based on this critical, and possible highly questionable, piece of information.

The inadequacy of the decision regarding the starting point for the search is exposed by other bits of information provided by Schumacher. In inferring the historical association of some of the materials recovered by the archaeological excavations, Schumacher notes that, “fired clay and late 19th century materials [found in trench 8] must be from the [W.H.] Smith home of the 1870s which stood in approximately this location according to the photograph of 1899. It could also possibly be the site of the previous Shane house if W.H. Smith built his house on the old Shane house site.”

Schumacher also mentions in his conclusions that there was “a striking lack of material in the area where the old 1856 surveying records of J.W. and John Trutch state the Shane house should have been.” If the Trutch survey included the location of Shane’s house, then we have to assume that the logs burned by Shane were burned prior to 1856 and, therefore, did not survive to the early 1870s. Of equal importance, regarding the 1856 Trutch survey having located Shane’s house, Schumacher mentioned that, “the county engineer stated that these old surveys may very well be off a hundred feet or more.”

All of these comments, when taken together, make one wonder. If the search for Fort Clatsop was based on such tenuous locational information, what were the chances of finding archaeological evidence of the Fort? The problems are: 1) the location of Shane’s house may be in error by as much as 100 feet or more; 2) the archaeological evidence suggested that they may not have found the location of Shane’s mid-1850s occupation; and, most importantly, 3) the logs burned by Shane prior to the 1856 survey may have been remnants of Fort Clatsop at all. It seems that both Schumacher
and Caywood did not question the validity of the information that assumed the logs were remnants of Fort Clatsop.

Setting those problems aside for a moment, a discussion is in order concerning results of the archaeological work by Caywood and Schumacher. In July of 1948, Caywood responded to a request by Lancaster Pollard, superintendent of the Oregon Historical Society, to conduct "exploratory excavations at Fort Clatsop." The Oregon Historical Society owned the site at the time of Caywood's work. He states that the entire area was tested with a metal detector, but that operation did not yield any metal objects. Caywood also mentions that the "actual method of construction of the fort is now known." As voluminous as the written record is of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, it is surprising to find that details of the construction of all three winter camps were not well reported in the journals.

Caywood states that, "The site of the fort has been determined approximately for many years. However, positive proof that remains of the camp were still extant has long been an unrealized objective. The problem [for Caywood] was to definitely determine whether or not there was evidence of the old fort on the site."

Caywood's approach to this problem involved trenches and test pits which were used to explore the suspected area of Fort Clatsop. Although he does not state the size of the area covered by his explorations, computations from the map illustrating his article suggest that approximately 725 square feet of surface area may have been excavated during the Caywood explorations; five small excavation areas and one large area were sampled.

In the course of the excavations, Caywood found "thin layers of orange-red burned earth and burned stones of about the size of baseballs and larger." These areas were probed further and they "proved to be fire pits containing charcoal and fragments of burned bones." Four of these pits were found at a depth of 10 inches below the surface and they measured 16, 11, 18, and 14 inches in diameter. Caywood says that the depth of the charcoal, i.e., the thickness of the deposit, ranged from nine to 12 inches. In pit number three, they found "a whittled stick." Caywood asserts that the "markings on the stick were left by a sharp instrument, probably a hunting knife."

In addition to the small fire features, the excavations exposed what Caywood described as "a large barbecue pit," an area 12.5 feet long, ranging from three to four feet wide, with a depth of 14 inches. From within the pit, they recovered "burned rocks, charcoal, wood, burned earth, ashes and several unburned animal bones." One piece of the unburned wood they believed "showed evidence of having been cut by a saw." Two holes found at the north end of the pit were thought to have been associated with a "framework for barbecuing," but similar holes were not exposed at any other point along the side or at the opposite end of the pit. Also found were
a flat stone with some markings which looked "roughly like the number '2'" a chipped piece of basalt, and some red material.

Caywood gives no more detail regarding the excavations or the materials found, but he claimed that, "Although no trace of a fort structure was encountered during the excavation, evidence is positive that white men at one time occupied the site." Positive association with a Euroamerican occupation was asserted based on the bias that "Indians are notoriously untidy" and that the area excavated "apparently had been thoroughly policed as if by a military group, and all refuse hauled away to a garbage pit." Caywood concludes that the "barbeque pit" could not have been aboriginal, and we can assume he reached this conclusion because of the piece of wood which he believed had been whittled using a "modern" tool. The possibility that the modern tool could have been in the hands of an Indian who acquired it through trade was not mentioned.

He concludes that the absence of objects from the "American period" indicates that the features were not associated with Shane. Caywood also considers the absence of artifacts as supportive of an association with the expedition since with "such a small amount of tools, equipment and trade goods, with them, they would not knowingly have left anything at the site." Furthermore, "If they had by chance left any object of iron, it would have been appropriated by the local Indians when the group departed."

The strength of Caywood's belief that the site is that of Fort Clatsop seems to rest on the fact that a direct association between the fire features and Indians was not supported by artifacts. Furthermore, the lack of physical evidence was consistent with what he expected in a Lewis and Clark camp. Finally, and what is probably most important, Caywood accepted as fact that the location "has been identified by many early settlers and Indians as that used by the Lewis and Clark party." Caywood says in closing that, "It can be safely stated that the excavations were done on the Lewis and Clark site of Fort Clatsop." Approximately five years after Caywood's investigations, Schumacher conducted excavations in the same area and remarked that, "I can find no support for Mr. Caywood's positive statement...that it can be safely stated that [his] excavations were done on the Lewis and Clark site of Fort Clatsop." Schumacher asserted that the lack of evidence did not prove anything, that trade goods in the hands of Indians could have produced the wood with tool marks, and, furthermore, that the wood had probably not been modified by humans in any case.

**Schumacher's Study—Fort Clatsop**

Schumacher's conclusions were the result of his own work at the site in December of 1956 and April of 1957. He went back in June of 1961 for additional archaeological fieldwork, and his excavations during those periods provided good coverage of the suspected Fort Clatsop site. In all, Schumacher's crews excavated 31 trenches, totaling more than 2,645 linear feet. Schumacher was searching in essentially the same location that Caywood had examined in 1948: the site locally identified as that of Fort Clatsop and also believed to be associated with the later home sites of Shane and Smith. Schumacher and his crews committed four weeks of field work over the course of three years (1956, 1957, and 1961) to fieldwork. The objective was to conduct an "archaeological exploration of the traditional site of Fort Clatsop" where they "had hoped to find evidence of the fort."

At the end of the excavations in 1957, Schumacher reported that they did uncover a "heavy concentration of middle to late 19th century farm and home materials in one particular area." He felt comfortable with the conclusion that this material was probably associated with the Smith house, ca. 1870-1899, and possibly also with the Shane house from the mid-1850s. The greatest concentration of these materials was found at the junction of trenches 8 and 9, which helped to convince Schumacher that the 1856 survey was indeed inaccurate. He also noted that, although they found no structural evidence of dwellings which could be absolutely associated with Shane or Smith, "the heavy concentration of burned red clay on the surface in the area where trenches 8 and 9 join could well indicate the former earthen floor of one of these structures."

During the excavations, Schumacher speculated that the burned red clay might indicate that structures associated with the later settlements of Shane or Smith had been burned. At another point, in trench 11, a "fire pit" was located which, it was reported, "makes an unusual right angle forming a corner if the corner of a structure had burned here." Although the possibility that this might be a corner of Fort Clatsop was considered, Schumacher regards that conclusion as unlikely since he assumed that Shane would have collected and piled logs rather than burned them as he found them.

As Schumacher continues, he reports that, "The second predominant feature appearing in our archaeological explorations were the 11 fire pits and the many other traces of small fires as seen in the
red burned clay and flecks of charcoal." Some fire locations were discounted since they were believed to be associated with ground fires or forest fires, while others were presumed to be linked to the late 19th century occupations because of artifacts found near the features. At least eight of the 11 fire pits could not be associated with either natural fires or with the late 19th century occupations. Of these fire pits, Schumacher says that, "Except for the heavy concentration of charred ungulate (probably elk or deer) and bird bones in fire pit 1 and a few similar charred bone fragments in fire pit 8, there was no other material or artifacts in any of the other fire pits." These findings were consistent with the four fire features found by Caywood. Schumacher did not find anything similar to the "barbecue pit" found by Caywood and he believed that Caywood's feature was, in fact, "of a more recent camper's vintage," rather than one associated with Lewis and Clark, as Caywood had asserted.

In considering the otherwise unexplained fire features, Schumacher offered this interpretation:

*My opinion is that these red clay fire pits indicate they were used sometime previous to 1850 (because of their depth below the present surface) [.7 feet to 2.9 feet]; that they were used over a long period of time, not merely by overnight campers (by their depth in thickness); that they were built by a group of people at approximately the same period (their similarity in shape, their rather heavy concentration in one area, and their equal depth stratigraphically). Now which group built the fire pits? No artifact evidence exists to give us a hint except for the charred bones. Both Indians and white men are said to have inhabited the site."15

While this is fairly speculative, essentially all that is being asserted is that the fire features, in Schumacher's opinion, were pre-1850 in origin. He then echoes some of Caywood's reasoning by saying that, "I can only infer that probably Indians would have left their camp fire sites more littered, and white men, especially if a military group, would have been more careful with their litter."

At that point, Schumacher rather tentatively claims that, "Therefore, it is possible that these camp fire pits were those of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." The reader has to be careful here. Schumacher says that it is "possible," not that it is so. Since there is no evidence to the contrary, an association of the fires with the expedition is indeed possible. Yet this is rather thin reasoning and, as Schumacher himself had remarked in his criticism of Caywood, a lack of evidence does not definitely prove anything. Much better evidence is needed before the argument that these fires are associated with the expedition is supportable. Schumacher points out that the arrangement of the fires is not patterned, but, he says, that is not a problem since they could be fires used while the fort was being constructed and fires used at a variety of locations within the cabins when they were occupied. Once again, that is certainly a possibility. An important part of the search process is hypothesis building and testing, which involves consideration of all possible explanations for the data recovered.

A final point that Schumacher makes is that he, like Caywood before him, found wooden stakes. In his field notes, he reported that,

*We found a quantity of hemlock stakes, pickets or pegs in the northeast section of trench 9. They were all situated vertically in the ground, pointed down, generally a foot or more below the present surface and were similar in shape to those uncovered in trench 2 during the December excavation. These pieces of pointed wood we had thought were man-made (whittled) but to my disappointment they turned out to be the hard center core or node of the evergreen tree branches where they are joined to the tree. These pieces are known to the local lumbermen as "buckhorns." Since these joints are full of rosin and do not rot, they stay hard and firm in the ground for many years. We were duped by their pointed appearance similar to man-made stakes or pickets, and had classified them as artifacts instead of the natural phenomena they are...Caywood, as well as myself, had been fooled by these objects."16

In comparing what Caywood and Schumacher did and said, one very important point needs to be made. In 1948, Caywood conducted exploratory excavations in the area expected to be the site of the Shane and Smith dwellings. In 1957, Schumacher also conducted exploratory excavations there. Caywood and Schumacher both found some Indian material, but both felt that the limited quantities of such material and the tidiness of the site suggested that it was not the location of an Indian occupation. Caywood did not seem to find evidence of mid- and late-19th century occupations, but Schumacher did find materials consistent with that period and was convinced that they were associated with Shane and Smith. Both felt that the fire features were
the most important piece of evidence revealed by the exploratory excavations and both believed that those features were probably associated with pre-1850 activities.

Based primarily on these fires, Caywood asserted that, "it can be safely stated that the excavations were done on the Lewis and Clark site of Fort Clatsop." After the 1956 and 1957 excavations, Schumacher remarks that, "I can find no support for Mr. Caywood's positive statement." But in his evaluation of the evidence recovered through his own research Schumacher states, "it is possible that these camp fire pits were those of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." The difference between Caywood and Schumacher's statements is essentially that Schumacher is being more tentative. Both appear to be convinced that, although they could find no conclusive physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, they were indeed working on the site of Fort Clatsop.

Schumacher closes his 1957 report by expressing some frustration that the objective of the project, finding evidence of Fort Clatsop, had not been achieved. He says that, regardless of the facts that the military regimen may have kept the site clean and the expedition was "down to the bare necessities...it is still remarkable that neither of us found any actual evidence of their four months occupation on the site." He acknowledges that the chance of "finding the actual remains of the fort were extremely slim." Yet, even after the work was completed, he firmly believed that, "Remains of the stockage of posts should still exist either as rotted wood or a shadow of a trench..." His final conclusion was that, "With exceptional luck we might have located it." Even considering the extensive work at the site, he continued to believe that they "could have very well missed the slight remains entirely."

This possibility seems to have nagged Schumacher for quite some time, and in 1961 he returned to Fort Clatsop for another week of excavations. That renewed effort yielded the same results as the earlier explorations: more late 19th century artifacts, more fire pits, and no solid evidence that associated the fires with either Indians or Lewis and Clark. Nevertheless, Schumacher's confidence had somehow been buttressed and he claimed that, "I strongly believe these fire pits are evidence of Indian or Lewis and Clark camp fires or of the fort wall when it was burned." No new evidence had been forthcoming that supported this conclusion and, surprisingly, the search conducted by Schumacher, and Caywood before

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him, appeared to have been based on the selection of a location based primarily on claims by local "informants," which might not have been credible in the first place.

Regardless of the negative results, Caywood and Schumacher did take research on the Lewis and Clark Expedition in a new direction, that of site-specific excavations by professional archaeologists. The interest generated by the Fort Clatsop explorations of Schumacher appear to have encouraged lay historians to examine locations of trail segments and campsites. One such analysis, conducted in 1964 by highway engineer John J. Peebles, investigated the route and campsites that the Lewis and Clark Expedition used in, what he refers to as, the Salmon River section of the overland journey. That segment of the route, which was travelled between August 17 and September 5, 1805, covered the Montana/Idaho border region.

Peebles' Study—Montana/Idaho Border

While reviewing Peebles' published research, several important points were noted which have implications for similar studies. Peebles' main sources were the daily journals of expedition members Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, John Ordway, Patrick Gass, and Joseph Whitehouse; the "compass traverse notes" primarily found in Clark's journals; and maps believed to have been drawn by Clark. In discussing these sources, Peebles offers a word of caution when he says that "Mileages from point to point frequently are mentioned in journal entries, but these figures must be used with discretion in plotting the course of the expedition. We do not know how these mileages were measured." Peebles also points out that the journals of the various participants give different mileages for the same trail segment, leading to the conclusion that mileages were often estimates and they may err by from 5 to 25%, with river distances typically falling short and land distances generally too long.

Peebles also offers the observation that,

**bearings are probably more accurate than the distances. It must be recognized, however, that most of the bearings undoubtedly where [sic] obtained as 'back azimuths'; that is, Clark read the bearing from each new angle point back to the previous angle point. It was necessary for him to do this because most of the time he was unable to identify the location of the next angle point. Consequently, in converting the back azimuths to forward bearings, errors may have been, and probably were, introduced as times. Also, in thickly timbered country, where the trail followed a circuitous route, Clark's bearings may have been based mostly on intuition."**

In addition to potential errors inherent in distances and bearings, Peebles notes that, "Occasionally, the information shown on the maps does not agree with the entries in the journals." He says that the journals should be considered more accurate, but also comments that, "Although Clark's maps can, in most cases, be regarded as hardly more than rough sketches, it is remarkable how the bends and islands shown in the larger streams can be correlated with the same features on modern maps."

Peebles believed he could locate three of the campsites with a probable accuracy of "within a few hundred feet." For five other campsites, he guessed that the "location may be in error by as much as 1/2 mile." And for the other eight campsites within his study area, Peebles believed that the "location may be in error by as much as 1 or 2 miles." Possible campsite locations with an assumed error of
several hundred feet pose an obvious problem for historical archaeologists. Site locations that may have an error ranging from .5 mile to as much as two miles are of limited value in terms of targeting archaeological projects. The locations must be much tighter than that before a serious archaeological project can be developed and before the expenditure of human and financial resources can be justified.

—FOOTNOTES—

Part II will look at archaeological studies at Camp Wood, Fort Mandan, Idaho sites and Montana sites.

1. The journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition are presently being re-edited by Gary E. Moulton (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln). Volume 1 of the set is the Atlas of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1983) and Volumes 2 through 8 (1986-1992) contain the journals written by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Three additional volumes will include the journals of expedition members, including Patrick Gass, John Ordway, Joseph Whitehouse, and Charles Floyd, and the last volume will be natural history. Moulton has also published “On Reading Lewis and Clark: The Last ‘Twenty Years,’ ” Montana: The Magazine of Western History (1988), an article which discusses scholarship regarding the expedition from 1968 to 1988. Donald Jackson had published “On Reading Lewis and Clark,” also in Montana: The Magazine of Western History, in 1968 (18:2-7) which took the same approach, a review of materials published prior to 1968.

2. John J. Peebles, “Rugged Waters: Trails and Campsites of Lewis and Clark in the Salmon River Country,” Idaho Yesterdays (Summer 1964), pp. 2-5. Examples of Bergantino’s published maps include the two mentioned in the text, Route and Camp Sites of Lewis and Clark in Montana, 1805-1806 (1981) and Great Falls Portage (1984). The investigations of those who are not professional historians or archaeologists should not be overlooked. An examination of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation’s publication We Proceeded On, shows a total of 15 articles have been published regarding campsite and trail locations. Many other articles have been devoted to specific activities at camps, astronomical readings and cartography.

These studies may be important from the standpoint of methods used, results of the research, and insights regarding the nuances of journal entries delineating camp activities and locational information. Examples of materials not specifically related to campsites also provide information, such as Bob Saindon’s article, “They left their mark: Tracing the obvious graffiti of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,” We Proceeded On (August 1987) 13(3) 20-23, and Joseph L. Cramer’s “Drifting Down the Yellowstone River with Captain William Clark, 1806—A Pictographic Record of the Lewis and Clark Return Expedition,” Archaeology in Montana (1974) 15(1): 11-21. The author is interested in information regarding other research which either examines the historical record for locations of Lewis and Clark sites or which has resulted in archaeological research at suspected camp locations.

Research in progress at the Lower Portage Camp below the Great Falls of the Missouri has uncovered evidence of an historic campsite. One piece of evidence is a wooden stake which has been radiocarbon dated to yield an age of 1810± 40 years. A single piece of evidence or a single date is not considered conclusive but other materials are presently being radiocarbon dated and the work is scheduled to proceed during the summer of 1995.

3. The Wood River Camp was occupied from December 15, 1803 through May 14, 1804, Fort Mandan from November 2, 1804 to April 8, 1805, and Fort Clatsop was established December 7, 1805 and abandoned March 25, 1806.


8. Caywood, “The Exploratory Excavation of Fort Clatsop,” p. 205. [Following references to Caywood in the text relate to this report unless otherwise noted.]

9. Caywood’s work was done prior to the advent of radiocarbon dating and, therefore, this technique could not be used to determine the age of the fire pits, wood, or animal bone.

10. Ibid., p. 209. At present, the whereabouts of these archaeological materials is unknown. However, an effort is being made to locate them and re-examine them.


13. Schumacher, “Archeological Field Notes, Fort Clatsop, Astoria, Oregon,” pp. 1-19, and Schumacher, “Field Notes—Archeological Excavations at Fort Clatsop,” n.d., 1-10. There were five trenches excavated in 1961 for which Schumacher did not provide length; the total linear feet of trench is, therefore, uncertain. [Following references to Schumacher in the text relate to “Archeological Field Notes, Fort Clatsop, Astoria, Oregon,” pp. 1-19, unless otherwise noted.] Schumacher’s work also predates the refinement and widespread use of radiocarbon dating.


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Lewis & Clark Meet the “American Incognitum”

by Arlen J. Large

Pozed for his Pacific expedition, Meriwether Lewis in October, 1803, took time out to send President Thomas Jefferson some old bones from Big Bone Lick, Kentucky.

Four years later William Clark made a post-expedition stop at the same place and shipped Jefferson an even bigger batch of bones.

These odd jobs by the two great explorers usually are treated as mere footnotes to the Lewis and Clark story, little digressions to humor a president who was something of a fossil nut. But there was more to it than that, much more.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition grew from its own political and economic context, but it rubbed against other contexts as well. Besides being the Pacific expedition’s mastermind, Jefferson right then was also a major international player in an impending breakthrough in biological science. For decades naturalists in Europe and America had been trying to solve the mystery of the “mammoth,” an animal known only by its outsized skeletal remains. Now the solution was at hand, devised mainly in Paris in the first decade of the 19th century.

As observers and collectors for Jefferson at a critical moment, Lewis and Clark—especially Clark—actually helped crack the case. This contribution has been sadly unappreciated by historians of western exploration, victims of the “not-in-my-field” blinders of academic specialization.

From 18th century scientist George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, came an explosive theory about a grand global division in the natural world. The Frenchman believed the western hemisphere’s damp climate and “ungenerous sky” stunted both animals and people. The American lion, or puma, is “much smaller, weaker and more cowardly than the real lion,” Buffon decreed. There are no camels or giraffes in America, and “one cannot even find there any animal that can be compared to the elephant for size or shape.” He portrayed the hemisphere’s typical human “savage” as weak, beardless and dumb.

Buffon’s theory triggered a long shouting match between his European supporters and outraged opponents in the New World. This “polemic of America” was demeaned by shallow parochialism and ignorance on both sides, according to Antonello Gerbi, a 20th century Italian historian of science. But Gerbi also observed that the harsh arguments, “however ill founded they were, contributed to the advancement of the science of nature, refining its methods, prying it painfully away from old errors and enriching its material.”

The best-known American rebuttal to Buffon came from Thomas Jefferson, who in 1781 had just stepped down as governor of Virginia. In his Notes on the State of Virginia, written that year and published in 1785, Jefferson answered the Frenchman by parading a menagerie of big New World beasts headed by the mammoth, which he claimed was five times bigger than a tropical elephant.

Jefferson knew about mammoths from skeletal parts unearthed by others at Big Bone Lick, a salty, swampy place near the Ohio River in Kentucky. From 1739 onwards it had been a source of mysterious “big bones” found...
by European and American travelers. Late in 1781, still revising his Virginia Notes, Jefferson asked Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark to “procure for me some teeth of the great animal whose remains are found on the Ohio.” It was Daniel Boone, just passing through, who carried Jefferson’s letter to Clark in Louisville. Clark, whose youngest brother William was then 11 years old, promised to send Jefferson some mammoth teeth and bones at “the first opportunity.”

Jefferson contended in his Notes that the mammoth had the tusks and shape of a tropical elephant, but was differently created to withstand colder northern climates. Also, he suggested mammoths still roamed the unexplored American West: “He may as well exist there now, as he did formerly where we find his bones. Like most of his late-18th century contemporaries Jefferson believed species couldn’t just die out. “Such is the economy of nature,” he said in his Notes, “that no instance can be produced, of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct.”

In 1793, when he was Secretary of State, Jefferson saw a chance to verify the fact of living mammoths. He and other leading members of the American Philosophical Society commissioned French botanist Andre Michaux to journey alone from Illinois to the Pacific Ocean. “Under the head of animal history, that of the mammoth is particularly recommended to your inquiries,” Jefferson wrote as part of the explorer’s instructions. That meant he should keep his eyes peeled for live ones besides asking the Indians where to find them.

Michaux’s mission was cancelled before it began, leaving Jefferson’s mammoth endeavors in temporary limbo. In 1797 he became both the federal
government's vice president and president of the American Philosophical Society. At his behest the society formed a committee to locate an entire mammoth skeleton. These American savants knew they had to keep pressing, because new ideas in Europe were fast making Jefferson's early theories obsolete.

For centuries Europeans had been finding huge petrified bones in the earth. They were remains, it was reverently supposed, of the race of ancient human giants reported in the Bible. Then in 1687 an inquisitive Italian doctor compared some new-found giants' bones to an elephant's skeleton in a Florence museum. They nearly matched. So how did elephants get out of Africa to Europe? Were they escapees from a circus? From Hannibal's army?

The answer came from Siberia. Yakut and Tunguz people there had been longtime traders in fossil ivory from big tusks they found in the ground. According to European travelers to Siberia, the locals believed the tusks belonged to a huge subterranean animal they called the mammoth. By the early 1700s a variant of that word—"mammoth”—was the name European scientists gave to any elephant-like animal that was native to northern climes. In English, "mammoth" ultimately became an adjective for anything big. The Siberian mammoth's molars had a flat grinding surface crossed by low corrugated ridges, like those of a tropical elephant.

In 1767 a surprise package arrived at the London home of Benjamin Franklin, colonial Pennsylvania's agent in Britain. The box contained four molars, four tusks and a rib collected at Big Bone Lick by George Croghan, an old friend and business partner of Franklin's. (A Clark family connection to the Lick is a recurring subtheme of this story; Franklin's fossil supplier was the uncle of William Croghan, who married William Clark's older sister Lucy.) Franklin noticed something odd about the Big Bone Lick specimens. Replying to Croghan, he observed:

"The tusks agree with those of the African and Asiatic elephant in being nearly of the same form and texture... But the grinders differ, being full of knobs, like the grinders of a carnivorous animal; when those of the elephant, who eats only vegetables, are almost smooth. But then we know of no other animal with tusks like an elephant, to whom such grinders might belong."

The next year Franklin sent one of the molars to a French scientist, Abbe Chappe D'Autechoche, and asked whether it resembled anything found in Siberia. Some London naturalists, Franklin noted, were arguing that the Big Bone Lick teeth "are not the grinders of elephants but of some carnivorous animal unknown..." For his part Franklin now suspected the knobbled teeth were those of a vegetable-eater, and asked for the abbe's opinion. Such questions dominated European discussions for several more years, but scientists there were slowly coming to believe that there were two kinds of prehistoric elephantine animals: the Siberian mammoth with flat corrugated grinding molars like a modern elephant's, and an unclassified American version—the "American incognitum"—with knobby grinders.

At this point the reader will profit by knowing in advance the solution all these smart people were groping toward. Modern classifiers say the Siberian, or woolly, mammoth (Mammuthus primigenius) became extinct some 10,000 years ago. These grass-eating, flat-molared beasts mainly ranged the upper latitudes of Asia, Europe and North America, while some closely related species supplied the "elephant" remains found at more southerly sites like Big Bone Lick. Mammoths were about as big as the African elephants (Loxodonta africana) living today, and are regarded as true members of the elephant family.

In North America mammoths lived side-by-side with a separate taxonomic family of slightly squatter animals also having long curved tusks and prehensile trunks. As will be seen, these hairy browsers on twigs and leaves finally got the name "mastodon" (Mastodon americanus) because of the knobby grinding surface of their molars. In the late 18th century mastodons confusingly were lumped together with mammoths. It was the ultimate detection of significant differences between them that first launched paleontology—the study of fossils—as a valid scientific discipline.

Jefferson in 1801 had become the Federal President. His private secretary was a Virginia-born army captain, Meriwether Lewis. If Lewis hadn't been aware of his boss's fascination with fossils, he got a quick lesson that year. Jefferson learned that a big deposit of elephant-sized bones had been located in the Hudson River valley by Charles Willson Peale. That versatile Philadelphia artist (who would later paint the best-known portraits of Lewis and Clark) was a member of the American Philosophical Society's mammoth-hunting committee.

Peale told the president he had permission to excavate the New York site, but complained he lacked proper equipment. Jefferson
quickly ordered Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith to send the artist a pump to keep water out of his fossil pit. The president also told Peale the U.S. Army would "lend you a couple of tents." Lewis probably was involved in dispatching this government help.

Peale took the bones back to Philadelphia and fitted them into a complete skeleton for a public exhibit opening in December 1801. He called the tusked animal a "mammoth," but may have missed the significance of an important clue: his "ANTIQUE WONDER of North America" had knobby molars.

In 1803 Jefferson ordered Captain Lewis to lead an exploring party of soldiers to the Pacific Ocean. Remember that for a similar mission 10 years earlier Andre Michaux had been told to watch for living mammoths. This time Jefferson wasn't that specific in his written instructions to Lewis. He now accepted the concept of species extinction, and perhaps was beginning to doubt that mammoths still lived. He also may have gotten tired of hearing federalists call him "a mammoth infidel"—twin jibes at his fossilizing and supposed irreligion. Instructing Lewis on animals to look for, Jefferson merely mentioned "the remains or accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct." But surely Jefferson still had the M-word in mind, and surely Lewis knew it. Among the Philadelphia scientists who gave Lewis pre-expedition coaching in May 1803 was Casper Wistar, another member of the Philosophical Society's mammoth committee. Wistar showed the captain some "elephant" molars that had been found in South Carolina. They had the same flattish corrugations that Europeans identified with the prehistoric Siberian mammoth. Lewis also went around to see the knobby-toothed "mammoth" skeleton on display at Peale's museum. The expedition's first leg took Lewis down the Ohio River. The captain reached Cincinnati in late September 1803 where he looked up William Goforth, a local doctor who had just been excavating at nearby Big-Bone Lick on the Kentucky side of the river. Goforth's specimens of grinding molars made it clear that two kinds of tusked beasts had once lived at the Lick: the "elephant," whose flat teeth looked just like those Lewis had examined in Casper Wistar's collection, and the knobby-toothed animal seen in Peale's museum.

Goforth gave Lewis a molar of each kind, doubtless after being assured that they would be forwarded to the president. Lewis also planned to stop at Big Bone Lick himself, where one of Goforth's diggers still had custody of "a tusk of immense size." Goforth said Lewis could have this tusk as well as the two molars. Before leaving Cincinnati the captain sent Jefferson a long description of the bones, and said Goforth's gifts would be forthcoming. Jefferson never got them. The boat carrying the boxed specimens down the Mississippi River sank at the dock in Natchez, and the shipment was lost.

Having picked up Clark in Louisville, Lewis and the exploring party spent the winter camped near St. Louis. There they dutifully asked residents about mammoths. An affirmative report came from Pierre Chouteau, a leading local merchant who traded with Indians...
on the Osage River, a tributary of the Missouri. Chouteau told Lewis about a salt lick on the Osage where "considerable quantities" of "the bones of the mammoth" had been found. Lewis noted down the location, but made no detour to visit it when the expedition started up the Missouri in the spring of 1804. 

Old-bone pickings were slim during the expedition itself.

On August 6, 1804, Sergeant Patrick Gass found "a Petrified Jaw-bone of a fish or some other animal" in a cave north of modern Omaha. A month later, in South Dakota, the party discovered what Clark thought was "the back bone of a fish," 45 feet long; the fossil may have been that of a water-dwelling dinosaur. (Right there the captains would have been interested to know that 200 miles to the west in the Black Hills, 20th century archaeologists would find an enormous deposit of mammoth tusks, teeth and bones.) Finally, on the Yellowstone in July 1806 Clark observed a yard-long "rib of a fish"—probably another kind of dinosaur—sticking from the riverbank near Pompeys Pillar.

Lewis and Clark were back in Washington in January 1807 with new examples of the value of negative results. Just as they hadn’t found the mythical water route across the continent, neither had they seen any sign of living mammoths. That non-observation gave scientists a new reason to conclude that the big mystery bones of America and Europe marked graveyards of extinction.

A month before the explorers’ arrival in Washington Jefferson and Casper Wistar were wondering how to get more fossils to fill gaps in the American Philosophical Society’s collection. They remembered the cooperative Dr. Goforth in Cincinnati, whose advice Wistar sought in a letter on December 1, 1806. Goforth replied directly to Jefferson, saying his original collection of "elephant" and "mammoth" bones had been stolen, but offered to dig up some more as a paid contractor for the Philosophical Society. At some point in February 1807 the president decided to entrust that job instead to someone in Washington who was showing a notably strong interest in old bones: William Clark.

In their post-expedition discussions, Jefferson asked Clark to hire some laborers and make a thorough new dig at Big Bone Lick. The bones would go to Jefferson, who would pay personally the eventual $200 expense. Lewis doubtless sat in on the planning, offering tips based on his 1803 stop at the Lick.

In September 1807 Clark employed 10 men and dug for three weeks at Big Bone Lick. From Louisville on November 10 he wrote a detailed 11-page report to Jefferson:

"This Lick is in a Valley surrounded with hills, the atmosphere Cold and damp. I had for the first time in my life the Rheumatism in My wrists, shoulders, hips and knees during the time I remained under the influence of the Vapour arising from the Lick, and several of the men who worked in the water were slightly attacked with a chill and fever."

Clark probably knew that Jefferson had once harbored the idea of living mammoths, but the explorer—with impressions of his Pacific journey freshly in mind—sought to close that door. Telling Jefferson about finding some unclassified bones, Clark said he believed these smaller animals "are entirely unknown and that their race, like their great contemporary the Mammoth, is quit extinct."

Clark reported finding 40 knobby grinders of the "mammoth" and six flatish "elephant" teeth, and said as a layman he could easily tell the difference.

"Can any doubt exist after this," he asked, "of the existence in this Country at some former period of both the Mammoth and the Elephant, as also of three or four other Animals now extinct in the U. States!" Clark sent an overflow of more than 300 excavated bones to the president’s house in Washington. That entirely satisfied Jefferson’s plan to reserve a few for his own display of antiquities at Monticello, and it was far more than the Philosophical Society needed. "The collection you have made is so considerable that it has suggested an idea I had not before," Jefferson told Clark in a December 19 letter. The new idea: bundle up the surplus bones and donate them to the National Institute of France, for which "I am bound to do something." That prestigious scientific body had elected him to membership as a "foreign associate" in 1801.

It wasn’t until late June 1808 that Casper Wistar came to the "mammoth room" (today’s East Room) at the president’s house to sort through the Clark shipment and designate the surplus bones that the Philosophical Society could spare for the gift to France. These Jefferson sent in mid-July to the American legation in Paris with instructions to forward the three boxes to Count de Lacepede, a professor at the Museum of Natural History. In a cover letter to Lacepede, Jefferson said that besides Clark’s collection of Kentucky bones, the gift included the horns of a bighorn sheep and a mountain goat skin obtained by Lewis and Clark on their Pacific expedition.

The president boasted to Lacepede of that trip’s success:
"It is with pleasure I can assure you that the addition to our knowledge in every department resulting from this tour of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke has entirely fulfilled my expectations in setting it on foot, and that the world will find that those travellers have well earned its favor. I will take care that the Institute as well as yourself shall receive Govr. Lewis's work, as it appears."  

Jefferson's gift boxes arrived in Paris in mid-September. Scientists of the National Institute decided Clark's Big Bone Lick collection should be examined by Lacepede and Georges Cuvier, known as the "Pope of Bones." Cuvier already had been working toward a solution of the mammoth classification puzzle, making a distinction between the Siberian mammoth and the knobby-toothed American species he called a "mastodon." Clark's specimens of two kinds of American prehistoric tusked-animal teeth helped him nail down the answer. Cuvier read his and Lacepede's report at a meeting of the Institute on October 10, 1808.

The flat, low-ridged molars dug up by Clark, said the Pope of Bones, were from "the true fossil elephant or Russian mammoth, which complete the proof that the remains of this animal, very different from the mastodon, although they have often been found intermingled with one another, are to be found mixed together in the same ground, and that consequently the two species probably lived together in the same countries."  

Cuvier's new nomenclature finally allowed Jefferson to get on the same page with the scientists in Europe. Now out of office, he wrote to Peale on May 5, 1809, from Monticello:

"I have no doubt that the marked differences between the elephant & our colossal animal entitle him to a distinct appellation. One of those differences, & a striking one, is in the protuberances on the grinding surface of the teeth, somewhat in the shape of the mamma mastos, or breast of a woman, which has induced Cuvier to call it the Mastodonte, or knobby-toothed; which name perhaps may be as good as any other & worthy of adoption."  

In a congratulatory September 10, 1809, letter to Clark, the explorer credited the explorer's 1807 Big Bone Lick specimens for the French scientists' classification breakthrough. "These have enabled them to decide that the animal was neither a mammoth nor an elephant, but of a distinct kind, to which they have given the name of Mastodon, from the protuberance of its teeth," Jefferson said.

Clark's Big Bone Lick harvest also helped trigger some scientific thank-yous to Jefferson for his patronage of fossil studies. Going through the American Philosophical Society's hoard of bones in 1831, Isaac Hays spotted a knobby-toothed lower jaw that he thought belonged to a yet-unclassified species of mastodon. He named the species Mastodon jeffersoni for the late president, "to whom the Society is indebted for the valuable specimens of this animal in their cabinet."  

Today a species of temperate-zone North American grazing mammoth sometimes bears the binomial Mammutthus jeffersoni, though it's also called Mammutthus columbi, the Columbian mammoth.

Bone-collecting, then, may have seemed just a sidelines to some historians of the Lewis and Clark adventure. To trackers of paleontology's first big triumph, however, it was an important part of the main event.

---FOOTNOTES---
7 Latin binomials designating an animal's genus and species smack of "scientific" precision, but in fact the nomenclature here is maddeningly untidy. Over the years specialists have used different terms for the genus of both mammoths and mastodons. Mammutthus now seems the preferred generic for mammoths, but some textbooks also show Elephas, Parelephas and Archidiskodon. The straightforward genus Mastodon now usually identifies mastodons, but the misleading Mammut is still seen in some of the most recent publications.
9 Jackson, Letters, 1:63
10 Ibid, 1:126-32
12 The fish jawbone collected by Gass now is at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and is pictured in the illustrations following p. 556 in Vol. 2 of Jackson's Letters. According to "Mammoth Graveyard," an Earthwatch Briefing Book (Watertown, Mass., 1993), the Black Hills deposit of Columbian mammoth bones
being excavated with volunteer help by Larry Agenbroad, Northern Arizona University, is "the largest primary accumulation of mammoth remains documented in the New World." Expedition accounts of old-bone finds are in Moulton, Journals, 3:474, 3:61 and B:226.


About the author...
Arlen J. Large of Washington, D.C. is a former foundation president (1983-84), a frequent contributor to WPO, a retired science correspondent of the Wall Street Journal, and continues to travel the world pursuing his many scientific interests. He certainly ranks among the top Lewis and Clark authorities in the nation, and he serves on the editorial board of WPO.

Quote from Rev. Francis Asbury (1745-1816) journal dated Sept. 8, 1803:
"Wednesday brought us to Charlestown (now Wellsburg, West Virginia), the capital of Brooke(e) County, situated at the mouth of Buffalo (Creek), eighty miles from Pittsburgh. We found the Ohio so low, that the boat of Colonel (Capt.) Lewis, who is going to explore the Mississippi, would not float over the flats."

Quote from Rev. Francis Asbury (1745-1816) letter dated Nov. 7, 1806 to Thornton Fleming:
"...Our missionaries healthy and successful in the new (Louisiana) purchase. When those new lands, discovered by Col. (Capt.) Lewis shall be peopled, we shall send out to the Pacific Ocean."

by Strode Hinds, Chairman 1996 Annual Meeting

It was a beautiful holiday afternoon. A group of gentlemen had collected on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River at Sioux City, Iowa, where they were talking, pointing and walking about on Memorial Day 1895. Discussion by the men concerned the place of a burial in April 1857. The grave had no marker, just many memories. These men had been present at that burial 38 years prior when the bones of Sergeant Charles Floyd were laid to rest for a second time.

Finally, one man was satisfied that he knew the location of the grave. He began to scratch the ground with his cane tip and located an area where the surface showed two different colors of earth side by side; one of the black surface dirt and the other buff colored as was the loess soil of these hills. Shovels and trowels were brought to expose a rectangular area about four by eight feet, the approximate size of a grave.

The meeting was adjourned and the men returned June 6, 1895 to excavate the area. This revealed the rotting top of a casket covering bones similar in appearance and number to those of Charles Floyd at the 1857 burial. The bones were replaced with the exception of the skull and the grave filled and restored. The skull was to be photographed and duplicated in plaster. There was concern about theft of the skull once the public became aware of the findings.

A meeting was called by those present on the hill and the Floyd Memorial Association was formed. J.C.C. Hoskins was elected president and Constant R. Marks, secretary. It was agreed that the next meeting of the association would be August 20, 1895, when a more proper ceremony would be conducted.

There had always been local interest in the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the grave of Sgt. Floyd. However, a press release by Reuben Thwaites of the discovery of the diary of Charles Floyd brought on much more interest. The publication of the diary by the American Antiquarian Society and a review by the Associated

MONUMENT FOR A SERGEANT

AUGUST 1995
The original group of men and many other concerned citizens returned on August 20, 1895 for the burial of the bones. A slab of marble four by eight feet, suitably engraved, was placed over the grave site marking the third burial of Sgt. Floyd.

By 1900 funds had been obtained from private citizens, state government and federal resources to ensure the construction of a monument. The design was to be a classic Egyptian obelisk. Several sizes were discussed, the final determination was one hundred feet high. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was to be responsible for the design and for cooperating with local contractors in the construction.

On Memorial Day 1900, 110 men met at the bluff at 7:45 a.m. to pour the foundation for the monument. The plan was to pour the complete foundation in one day to allow it to set and cure as one piece. The foundation was 22 feet square at the base, 11 feet high and 14 feet square at the top. The mass was to be reinforced by 32 pieces of railroad iron. The engineer felt that this job did not warrant a mechanical mixer for the concrete. During the next 10 hours, the men mixed and poured 143 cubic yards of concrete, estimated at 200 tons. The concrete was allowed to set and cure until August 20, 1900 when a cornerstone laying ceremony was held and construction begun on the monument proper. The bones of Sergeant Floyd were disturbed one last time when they were placed in urns and then placed in the concrete core at the center of the lower courses of the monument.

The construction continued until late fall of 1900 when some problems obtaining stone and Iowa winter weather halted the work. Construction was continued in the spring and dedication took place on Memorial Day 1901. The monument was presented to the City of Sioux City and became a part of its park system.

Captain James C. Sanford of the engineers did much of the preliminary studies for the monument. He was followed in October 1899 by Captain Hiram Martin Chittenden. Chittenden authored "A History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West" and was involved in planning Yellowstone Park as well as many waterway projects in the Seattle, Washington area. Also prominent in the Floyd Memorial Association was Elliott Coues. Encouraging action from the time of the publication of Floyd's Diary till his death, he gave a major oration at the cornerstone ceremonies and served as the editor of the first "Report of the Floyd Memorial Association."

Members of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. are invited to the Floyd Monument as a part of the 1996 annual meeting. It will be one of the sites visited during an in-town tour. Please plan to join us on August 4-7, 1996 in Sioux City, Iowa.


Press brought many letters to the New York Nation and to the Sioux City Journal. Among those writing was Elliot Coues who had just finished "The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." He encouraged interest and action and became an active partner in the ceremonies of 1900.

The Youth Achievement Award recognized a person or group of persons under the age of 21 who have increased their knowledge of the Lewis and Clark Expedition through outstanding composition, art, drama, photography, site preservation and enhancement, or other significant contribution. This award has been presented each year beginning in 1983 and has been awarded to 12 individuals and four groups. In 1994, Luke Hatch, a junior high student in Idaho Falls, Idaho, won a state History Day competition with his "Trailblazing Game" based on the expedition. He was chosen to display his project at a Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. during the national History Day competition. A second award was presented to the students of the Anderson School, a rural school in (Committees continued on page 30)
We Met Them at the Fair
Lewis and Clark Commemorated at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition

by Ann Rogers

Between April 30 and December 1, 1904, nearly twenty million people answered the invitation to "Meet Me at the Fair." The fair was the St. Louis World's Fair or, more officially, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

Weather-slowed construction and late-arriving foreign exhibits had delayed its opening from 1903, the centennial of the purchase, to 1904, the one hundredth anniversary of both the transfer of the Upper Louisiana Territory and the start of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Recreations of Monticello and Fort Clatsop, together with statues, portraits, letters, music, and monuments recalled Lewis and Clark's role in the history of the Louisiana Territory.

The context for these commemorations was truly a World's Fair in size, splendor, and diversity. At the western edge of the city, about 1,240 acres of Forest Park's wooded terrain with hills and lakes became the fairgrounds. Some exhibits were housed in new buildings on the adjacent Washington University campus.

The 3,000-seat Festival Hall, with a dome larger than St. Peter's, sat atop a hill from which three giant cascades flowed into the Grand Basin. Singing gondoliers brought from Venice guided their boats through the waters of the basin and connecting lagoons.

From gondolas, a variety of other conveyances, and broad walkways, fairgoers viewed a harmonious complex of ornate exhibition palaces. Made of "staff," a plaster-of-paris mixture over wood frames, the buildings averaged seven acres in size, with the Palace of Transportation covering fifteen acres. By day they appeared an enchanting ivory city. In the gaslight era, they were perhaps even more magical at night when outlined by thousands of electric bulbs.
France, England, Austria, Sweden, Brazil, and other countries erected buildings. China replicated the summer palace of its Prince, and Japan fashioned gardens with bridges and teahouses. Over a thousand members of aboriginal tribes lived in primitive villages they built around a lake in the 47-acre Philippine exhibit. (The fair had a resident population of about 15,000, along with an average of 100,000 visitors a day.)

The visitors included President Theodore Roosevelt, ex-President Cleveland, a Radcliffe student named Helen Keller, and her teacher, Annie Sullivan.

There were eight to twelve band concerts each day (with John Philip Sousa conducting some) and an observation wheel as tall as a 25-story building (created by a Chicago engineer named Ferris). Daily re-enactments of the Boer War by mounted troops using real weapons competed for attention with the Olympic Games—the third to be held since the revival of the ancient games and the first on U.S. soil.

About one thousand works of sculpture were approved for the grounds and exteriors of buildings. Enlarged from small models submitted by sculptors throughout the country, almost all were of staff and many were produced in a former locomotive roundhouse in Weekawken, New Jersey, before being sent in fifty-four railroad cars to join sculptures made at a production site on the fairgrounds.3

Exhibition palaces and other structures were ornamented with muses, cupids, griffins, and numerous allegorical figures. In keeping with the exposition's theme, portrait statues on the grounds related to the Louisiana Territory. St. Louis' founder, Pierre Laclede, was represented, along with Marquette and Joliet, whose journey down the Mississippi carried them past landmarks Lewis and Clark described during their 1803 ascent of that river. There were statues of General Anthony Wayne and George Rogers Clark, whose winning of the Northwest Territory east of the Mississippi made expansion into the Louisiana Territory possible. Indian subjects included a Sioux horseman extending a fist clenched in defiance and a group sculpture entitled "Destiny of the Red Man," symbolizing the departure of Indians and bison from the plains.

If so massive and diverse an exposition could have a focal point, it was the Louisiana Purchase Monument, a one-hundred-foot column rising from the northern edge of the Grand Basin. A figure depicting peace stood at the top of the monument, while allegorical representations of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers were at the foot. On one side was a high-relief tablet entitled "The Signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty." The work of the exposition's chief sculptor, Karl Bitter, shows Monroe, Livingston and Marbols at the Paris signing of the document dated April 30, 1803. (A bronze casting of the relief-sculpture is in the loggia of the Jefferson Memorial at St. Louis. Another stands on the grounds of the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City.)

The treaty formalized Napoleon's sale of the Louisiana Territory to the United States, and a statue of the emperor at the opposite end of the Grand Basin showed him slumped in a chair, with head bowed and eyes downcast. Jefferson, who had seized the opportunity to double the size of his country, was also portrayed seated, but the president sat erect with his head raised as he seemed to gaze with interest at the land before him.

The man Jefferson chose to be his eyes in the Louisiana Territory was Meriwether Lewis. He would not be an individualist on the frontier like Daniel Boone, whose statue showed him wearing a coonskin cap and stalking with hunting rifle raised. Instead, Lewis was selected by the president to lead a military expedition through the largely uncharted territory to the source of the Missouri River and on to the ocean beyond. In addition, he was instructed to gather detailed information about the vast region and its inhabitants, while conveying to Northwest tribes the government's desire for friendly relations and trade. Weeks before the explorers set out, Captain Lewis signed as official witness at the St. Louis ceremonies transferring the Upper Louisiana Territory to the United States.

In the group of heroic (or larger than life-size) portrait statues designated "pathfinders of the Purchase,"3 he was shown wearing buckskin and moccasins in a work by Charles Lopez. An account from 1904 notes symbols of the dual role Lewis filled:

One hand grasps the long rifle and the other the commission and papers of official character...He was at once the official representative of the Jefferson administration and the head of a hardy adventurous band finding a path to the Pacific.4

His partner on the expedition was also portrayed in an heroic statue, which, like Lewis', stood along the Grand Basin near the Cascades. Sculptor F.W. Ruckstuhl used facial features from the portrait of William Clark by Charles Wilson Peale, considered the most "historic" likeness.5

The statue at the exposition represented him appropriately as another of the "pathfinders of the Purchase." In frontier garb, with powder horn and hunting bag, he
is shown carrying a rifle in his right hand. On his left side he wears a sword. (Clark drew his sword when threatened by Teton Sioux early in the journey and later gave the weapon to a Walla Walla chief in return for an "elgiant white horse" and other assistance provided the returning explorers.) With his vigorous and confident stride, he appears a worthy co-leader of the Corps of Discovery.

The statues of both captains were shipped to Portland, Oregon, and displayed at the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition. Then they disappeared. As Robert Lange observed in 1980, "no one knows the whereabouts or disposition" of the figures. When their real-life counterparts neared St. Louis in 1806, Clark wrote of residents being astonished to see the men thought "to have been lost long since." Lewis and Clark had returned from the Pacific. Their statues, making the journey a century later, seem the ones to have been lost.

Another monument to the captains stood northwest of the Cascades. A mile-long series of lagoons flowed from the Grand Basin past six of the exhibition palaces. Low-arched bridges provided ten walkways across the lagoons. One of these graceful structures was named the Lewis and Clark Bridge; just to the east was the bridge named for Thomas Jefferson.

To the southwest of the bridges, in what has been described as "a gem of a garden," was a statue of Sacagawea. Bruno Louis Zimm's creation is said to have evolved from the New York sculptor's study of the Shoshone tribe and his use of a Shoshone woman as the model. Karl Bitter called it "a small monument of special interest...erected to the memory of the Indian woman who rendered such splendid services in connection with the Clark-Lewis expedition."

The representation of Sacagawea stood on a pedestal similar to those of the Lewis and Clark statues but could have been regarded as "small" compared to them and to the exposition's other "heroic" monuments. The figure, which was probably life-size, also seems small under the weight of the sturdy young child on her back. With passive expression and hands clasping a walking stick, she recalls Clark's description of the woman who had endured "that long dangerous and fatiqueing rout to the Pacific Ocean."

When the fair ended, there was no need to send the statue to the centennial in Oregon. A bronze representation of Sacagawea by Alice Cooper would be unveiled at Portland in 1905 as part of that event. The staff figure made for the World's Fair was not intended to be permanent and was probably destroyed along with countless other objects when the grounds were cleared.

But Bruno Zimm's creation was, so far as I can determine, not only the first statue of Sacagawea but the only figure among the nearly one thousand sculptures on the exposition's buildings and grounds that honored an historical woman. Zimm was also the sculptor of a figure symbolizing North Dakota, one of fourteen allegorical statues in the colonnade representing states carved out of the Louisiana Territory. In addition, almost every state in the union, as well as the Indian Territory, erected a building for hospitality and special displays. The exteriors of many replicated historical structures: Tennessee reproduced Andrew Jackson's Hermitage; Mississippi's building was Beauvoir, the last home of Jefferson Davis; California's took the form of the Santa Barbara Mission.

To represent their state and honor the man considered the "patron saint of the exposition,"
Virginians looked to examples of Jefferson's architecture.

*The choice lay between one of the university buildings designed by him and the home he designed and built for himself, and in which he lived and died.*

A replica of either would have been a fitting tribute; but Monticello, already standing at the time of the purchase, has more direct links to the territory. It was at Monticello that Meriwether Lewis and Jefferson made initial plans for the great journey. There Jefferson displayed Indian objects the captains sent back from Fort Mandan, and there he met with William Clark to discuss publication of the journals which described the territory and recorded the explorers' achievements.

Photographs of the full-size replica show an exterior faithful to Jefferson's design. Inside were displayed letters by Jefferson, "original manuscripts of historical articles," and the high-backed chair (now at Monticello) which family tradition says he used when presiding over the senate.

In one room, the University of Virginia exhibited its full-length marble statue of Jefferson by Alexander Galt (now in the University's Rotunda) and its Thomas Sully portrait showing Jefferson at seventy-eight in a fur-collared cloak.

Jefferson's original tombstone was sent to the fair by the University of Missouri, whose Columbia campus has been home to the obelisk since 1885.

Virginia Day celebrations drew that state's governor, A.M. Montague, accompanied by the Richmond Blues (a light artillery group serving at many Virginia ceremonies) and the Stonewall Band from Staunton. One report noted "several Virginia excursions arrived on the morning of September 23, bringing at least 3,000 passengers." Many "gathered around the granite monument which so long marked the grave at Monticello." The report concluded:

Fitting it was that the gravestone of Thomas Jefferson, Father of the University of Virginia, should stand during the Exposition among the exhibits in the palace of Education. Fitting it was too, that the State of Virginia should celebrate her
September 23, the anniversary of the Corps of Discovery’s 1806 return to St. Louis, was also celebrated by fairgoers as “Lewis and Clark Day.” William Weil’s band played his “Lewis and Clark” march; and a literary program and reception were held at the representation of Fort Clatsop.18 While the Oregon building bore little resemblance to the replica constructed half a century later near Astoria, its shortcomings are understandable. Virginia could see Monticello (then privately owned) and Jefferson’s designs. Oregon could do little more than guess about the winter quarters which had marked the trail’s western terminus. Nothing remained of the original structure when the Oregon Historical Society purchased the site in 1901, and Clark’s sketch showing two rows of rooms facing an inner yard was etched on the elkskin cover of a journal his granddaughter, Julia Clark Voorhis, had not yet released for publication.19

Oregon timber was brought to St. Louis for the structure, and dry moss was used to fill cracks between the horizontal logs of the main building.20 The recreation included two block houses (apparently not part of the 1805 design) “looking down on the sharp points of great logs set-on end” to form an eleven-foot-high stockade.21

In addition to impressive agricultural, horticultural, and forestry exhibits elsewhere on the fairgrounds, Oregon used the interior of its state building to display examples of beautifully finished native wood.22 The chief function of the Oregon Building, however, was to remind visitors of the expedition and provide literature regarding the Lewis and Clark Centennial to be held the following year. In one room a relief map showed the explorers’ route from the St. Louis area to the site of the original Fort Clatsop.23

The 1904 replica of the fort may have contained other displays related to the expedition. An early issue of the fair’s monthly bulletin mentioned that “many valuable exhibits prepared for the Portland Exposition” would be shown first “at the World’s Fair in St. Louis.”24 Unfortunately, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition’s official inventories do not include the contents of buildings erected by the individual states.

When the statues of Lewis and Clark were sent from St. Louis to Portland, the Fort Clatsop replica made a far shorter journey west. The rapid clearing of the fairgrounds turned the huge exhibition palaces into mountains of crushed staff, usable only as landfill, while many state buildings—made of more permanent materials—were sold and moved. Some were destined for Iowa, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. At least seven stayed in the St. Louis area, and four of these remain standing.

The Oregon Building was purchased by Anderson Gratz and moved to his property in the St. Louis suburb of Kirkwood. Rebuilt and renamed the “Wickiup,” it was used by his daughter for “parties and other entertainments” before being “destroyed by fire in 1913.”25

But during that magical summer of 1904, its meaning was never obscured. A sign at the entrance told visitors:

This structure is a replica of Old Fort Clatsop, the winter quarters, 1805-6, of Captains Lewis and Clark with their company after they had, in the greatest of American explorations, crossed the continent to the Pacific.26

Part II will go into more depth about Lewis and Clark portraits, letters, and enduring monuments to Jefferson and Clark. Some mys-
Serious "artifacts" may also be included.

—FOOTNOTES—


2Francis, a former mayor of St. Louis, former governor, and former cabinet member, was the Fair’s president and moving force.


4Francis, p. 199.

5The Forest City: Official Photographic Views of the Universal Exposition held in St. Louis 1904 (St. Louis, 1904) p. 116.

6History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, ed. Mark Bennitt (St. Louis, 1905), p. 73.

7Robert E. Lange, WPO, Vol. 6, no. 4 (Nov. 1980), p. 20. The statues of the captains were of staff. The Sacagawea statue may have also been sent to Portland.

8World’s Fair Bulletin (April, 1904), p. 36.

9The Forest City, p. 250.

10Karl Bitter, “Sculpture of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition,” address delivered by the Chief of Department of Sculpture at St. Louis, Feb. 10, 1904, Universal Exposition of 1904, p. 44.

11Francis, p. 277.

12World’s Fair Bulletin (September, 1903), p. 31.


14Howard Obear, Louisiana Purchase Exposition (Chicago, 1904), p. 29 and World’s Fair Bulletin (August, 1904), p. 33. The University of Virginia’s College Topics (October 12, 1904) reported the shipment of the Galt statue, the chair, and other objects to St. Louis. The Ablum Bulletin, Vol. 4, no. 4 (October, 1904) described their display at the Monticello replica.

15Bennitt, p. 64.

16“Tale of a Tombstone,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sunday Magazine, April 18, 1993, p. 16 and Jean Hamilton, “A Jefferson Monument on the University of Missouri Campus,” WPO, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May 1985), pp. 6-8. "Father of the University of Virginia” was one of the three accomplishments Jefferson listed when he wrote the inscription for his tombstone.

17Francis, p. 277.

18Daily Official Program, no. 126 (September 23, 1904), pp. 1-6.

19Francis, p. 257.


21The Forest City, p. 82.

22Obear, p. 25.

23The Forest City, p. 82.

24World’s Fair Bulletin (September, 1903), p. 23.


26Obear, p. 25.

Photo credits: View entitled “Pathfinders of the Purchase” from The Forest City; statue of Meriwether Lewis and statue of William Clark at the 1904 LPE from The Greatest of Expositions, Completely Illustrated, Official Views of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, WPO, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May 1985), pp. 6-8. "Father of the University of Virginia” was one of the three accomplishments Jefferson listed when he wrote the inscription for his tombstone.

About the author...

Foundation member Ann Rogers received her Ph.D. from St. Louis University and taught for 12 years, most recently at Maryville University. The expanded version of her book Lewis and Clark in Missouri was reviewed in WPO August 1994.

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AUGUST 1995
Colt Killed Creek Reclaims Name
Idaho

Colt Killed Creek had been on Lalia Boone's mind for a long time. The creek, named by William Clark in September 1805, has finally reclaimed its historic name, thanks to Boone's effort.

When the Lewis and Clark Expedition camped on the creek in 1805 they were hungry and miserable with dysentery. They found no elk or deer so they ate one of their horses. The creek, south of U.S. Highway 12 near the Montana state line, was dubbed Colt Killed.

Unfortunately, when expedition maps were reprinted in atlas form, the names of the smaller streams were left out. The creek was named White Sand on the General Land Office Map printed in 1907, the year Lalia Boone was born.

Boone, a retired English professor from the University of Idaho, had a passion for history and correcting historic names. She wrote the 413 page book "Idaho Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary." In 1986 she asked the United States Board on Geographic names "to restore the name bestowed by Lewis and Clark as part of the preparation for the Lewis and Clark Memorial Trail Bicentennial Celebration in 2005."

"We have lost sight of the great effort and suffering that went into this expedition," she wrote. "The name Colt Killed would carry a small portion of the accurate picture."

Her request was granted in 1988.

Boone since has died, but she left a legacy.

When foundation past president Jim Fazio returned to Idaho after a stint in the Midwest, he wondered if the change was on the maps. It wasn't. He asked the Forest Service about it last January. Dennis Elliot, resource assistant at the Powell Ranger District, said in early May that "Colt Killed" will soon appear for the first time on topographic maps. It will be listed on the Idaho highway map in 1996. It will not appear on the commonly used forest visitor maps until an update in 1998.

—Spokane, Washington Spokesman-Review

Ambrose and Lewis and Money
Montana

Can we accept that our heroes are only human? Dr. Steven Ambrose was the featured speaker at the Lewis and Clark Festival at Great Falls on June 24. His topic was Meriwether Lewis: Suicide or Murder? Reading from his soon to be published book on Lewis, he asked: Can we accept that Meriwether Lewis was a bankrupt alcoholic manic-depressive hypochondriac when he took his own life in 1809?

It was a view that Ambrose quickly tempered with the observation that "Lewis was probably the greatest American explorer and among the tops in the world. Lewis was a unique leader of men...a Virginian born and bred to leadership."

He added, "If I was ever in a life-threatening situation that required an instant decision, I would want Meriwether Lewis as my leader and I would, without question, do immediately what he told me to do."

Ambrose went on to detail the reasons why he supports the suicide theory over the murder theory. His book, "Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the West" will be published early next year.

The evening with Dr. Ambrose also turned out to be a wonderful evening for the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center fundraisers. They raised $8,000 for the center to be built at Great Falls. Ambrose pledged the proceeds from the sale of 100 copies of his upcoming book, at $50 each, to the center. A number of the books were sold on the spot.

Also, 27 of 52 small bronze replicas by Bob Scrivner of the Lewis and Clark statue at Broadwater Overlook Park in Great Falls were sold to members of the audience for $450 with $200 of that going to the center.

This came on top of an announcement at the opening of the festival that the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust in Vancouver, Washington had given the center a grant of $300,000. Combined with a state grant of $200,000 on June 14 and a donation of $202,000 from an anonymous donor on June 4, June was a whirlwind fund raising month for center supporters.

Over $300,000 still needs to be raised by September 30 to match the $3,000,000 federal grant for the interpretive center.

—Great Falls Tribune

August 1995

A Review by Judith Edwards

Ella Mae Howard has written a well-researched, fact-filled little book that details that part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that explored central Montana “between the Marias River and the Gates of the Mountains, west to the Continental Divide” (p. 6). The captains’ journal entries for central Montana cover the outgoing trip in 1805 and the homecoming journey in the summer of 1806. Clearly drawn and detailed maps accompany the text and help locate the reader as to time and place of textual references. There is a list of references and a list of expedition members who were on the expedition after leaving Fort Mandan.

This book is a beautifully researched, factually correct account of an important part of the expedition. I can see it being used for a traveler who is doing his or her own exploring of the region, or by a writer or a teacher as a reference text, or for pointing out to a class certain aspects of the Corps of Discovery, especially to students who live in the area of central Montana. But, and this is always a dilemma, how much fact can be put forth in a text for any readers without robbing it (and them) of the immediacy of the wonderful adventure that is at the heart of continuing fascination with the Lewis and Clark Expedition? The expedition members were, after all, people interacting with a rugged land, with undiscovered marvels, and if we can make these people and their adventures come alive we enable history to be something living, something with which we all can identify as living humans. History is not a bunch of facts about old, dead people and places, it is connection between then and now—enabling the imagination to access, “What if I were there?” The love of history must be visceral before it can be anything else.

In her acknowledgments, Ms. Howard thanks her artistic collaborators saying, “Tom English and Robert Moritz donated their artistic talents to add flavor to the text” (p. 5).

As it stands, this book is a wonderful primer—an excellent explication of text—for the central Montana part of the expedition. Perhaps a further edition could access, within its text, more of the flavor, while keeping the fact, that Ms. Howard credits to her illustrator. I would recommend it, as is, to any already devoted Lewis and Clarkers traveling in or writing about the area.

Foundation member Judith Edwards is the author of “Colter’s Run.” She holds a masters degree in creative writing/journalism from City University of New York.


A Review by James J. Holmberg

The death of Meriwether Lewis at an isolated inn on the Natchez Trace in 1809 has been an ongoing source of study, speculation and debate for many years. Supporters of both schools of thought (suicide or murder) regarding Lewis’s mysterious death eagerly read new information concerning the end of the great explorer. A number of books and articles over the years have examined Lewis’s death, reaching different conclusions as to whether the governor of Louisiana died by his own hand or by that of another. Ranging from straight historical research to fiction, theories about the causes leading to Lewis’s death and those involved vary, and the information and insights the authors bring to the subject often are enlightening and stimulate ongoing debate in the suicide vs. murder controversy. There have been good books and articles and there have been bad. Whether good or bad, the clear presentation of the subject as fact or fiction is crucial to the credibility of the book/article and its author. When authors knowingly and deliberately present their own theories, distortions, and incorrect information, even untruths, as fact, that is unacceptable.
Unfortunately, this is the case with David Leon Chandler's The Jefferson Conspiracies: A President's Role in the Assassination of Meriwether Lewis. "History" of this ilk is not new to Chandler. He has engaged in this type of flawed, tabloid style history and biography before. Chandler claims to have solved much of the mystery surrounding the explorer's death, including the roles played by those involved, their motivations, and why Lewis was assassinated. The dust jacket of the book proclaims it is "true history written with the compelling drive of the best of fiction," and that it is an excellent example of investigative research. A much more accurate description would be to call it malicious fiction masquerading as fact. In short, the book is a mean-spirited, misleading, and inaccurate work of fiction purporting to be history, whose real intent is not to solve the "assassination" of Meriwether Lewis, but to assassinate the character of Thomas Jefferson. Chandler actively seeks to lower the reputation of Jefferson, and other Founding Fathers, through the use of innuendo, snide comments, distortion, exaggeration, and outright misstatement. In the hands of Chandler, a perfectly understandable, explainable, or normal relationship or situation can become repugnant or scandalous. When describing the character of Thomas Jefferson, unprincipled, hypocritical, cowardly, lustful, and selfish do not ordinarily come to mind. By the time Chandler concludes his book, Jefferson is this and more. He is someone who cares only about his own pleasure and political goals, and who is willing to sacrifice anyone who gets in his way, even his "surrogate son" Meriwether Lewis. This, together with the almost constant misstatement of facts—often misstatements for no purpose, due only to sloppy research and an appalling lack of knowledge of the period being written about—make this book impossible to take seriously.

To this must be added Chandler's selective use of footnotes. He cites some sources, but leaves many uncited. Some of the footnotes are incorrect, the sources cited not supporting the text. But then Chandler does not really use footnotes for scholarly reasons. He instead uses them to lend an appearance of scholarship and credibility to his work. Such a combination makes The Jefferson Conspiracies completely unreliable tabloid pseudo history.

A recitation of factual errors would fill pages, and checking for all of them would take months. The list of statements that I knew to be errors numbered over 30, and the possible errors approximately the same. Again, such blatant sloppiness and disregard for accuracy creates a severe lack of confidence in the credibility of the book and its author. How can the reader believe anything Chandler writes if he cannot get even the simplest of facts correct? Errors such as:

1. The American Revolution began in 1774. (The acknowledged date is 1775. Chandler again contradicts himself and states 1775 later in the book.)
2. William Clark was Jefferson's "fellow Albemarlean." (Clark was born and raised in Caroline County, Virginia, until moving to Kentucky when a teenager, and never called Albemarle County, Virginia home.)
3. Kentucky is 240,000 square miles in area; making it five times the size of England and larger than France. (Kentucky is approximately 40,000 square miles, which is smaller than England and five times smaller than France.)
4. Lexington, Kentucky is located on the Licking River. (Elkhorn Creek runs near Lexington. The Licking is a number of miles to the northeast.)
5. The Ohio River was dotted with towns and trading posts such as Newport and Cincinnati in 1784. (Few towns and trading posts were located on the Ohio in 1784 due to much of its course still being through wilderness and very exposed to the danger of Indian attack. Also, Newport and Cincinnati were not yet founded in 1784.)
6. Travelers going to New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi rivers stopped at St. Louis. (Stopping at St. Louis in following such a course to New Orleans would necessitate the traveler detouring at least 100 miles north from the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi; and travelers simply did not do that. St. Louis would be more likely a goal of a traveler rather than a stop on the way to New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi.)
7. Kentucky became a state in 1791. (Kentucky became a state in 1792.)
8. Jefferson's interest in western exploration dates from 1786 and his association with John Ledyard. (Jefferson's interest dates back long before this, and the written evidence dates to 1783, when he proposed in a letter to George Rogers Clark that the latter make an exploring trip west of the Mississippi.)
9. The Lewis and Clark Expedition's main boat was a flatboat accompanied by two keelboats. (On the first leg of the trip the main boat was a keelboat, and the two accompanying craft were pirogues.)
10. Sacagawea was a prisoner of the Mandan who had been kidnapped from the Shoshone by a fur trading relative of her husband Toussaint Charbonneau; she rescued the expedition's boats; and she saved the lives of both Lewis and Clark.
1. Lewis and Clark located the source of the Columbia River. (They located the source of the Missouri, but not the Columbia: actually joining the latter closer to its mouth than its source.)

2. By August 18, 1805, the Corps of Discovery had conquered the Rockies. (In actuality, they were just beginning to enter the heart of that chain, and still had their hardest traveling of the expedition ahead of them.)

3. Fort Clatsop overlooked the "crashing surf" of the Pacific. (It did not overlook the Pacific, being located in from the coast a number of miles.)

4. The Natchez Trace ran from Natchez, Mississippi to Lexington, Kentucky. (It terminated as a route by that name at Nashville, Tennessee, not Lexington.)

5. Benjamin Harrison was the governor of Indiana Territory. (William Henry Harrison was governor of Indiana Territory.)

Chandler also makes a great display of supposedly uncovering previously unknown or little known facts, but this too is misleading. He makes a great show regarding the spelling of the Grinder name. Was it "Grinder" or "Griner"? He uses Griner, stating his reasons and crediting a Tennessee researcher for this discovery. It all sounds as if this is new information, but this question regarding the Grinder name has been raised in the past. Vardis Fisher (whose style Chandler seems party to imitate) made note of this variation in spelling in his 1962 book Suicide or Murder?: The Strange Death of Governor Meriwether Lewis, and opted for the better known and generally accepted spelling of Grinder. But by touting this other spelling Chandler seems to illustrate his research and investigative skills.

The appalling ignorance of the facts and the mis-statements and exaggeration are bad enough, and eliminate the book as history or biography based solely on these problems. However, Chandler compounds these problems, and destroys any remaining chance of credibility by using innuendo and the twisting of facts to paint an unsavory portrait of Jefferson and other leaders of that period. This appears to be the real intent of the book. Jefferson was by no means perfect. He had his faults, but what he accomplished is still studied and admired today. To refer to him as the Roman intriguer and betrayer Cassius is ridiculous. To intimate that Jefferson was to blame for the death of his wife because "although Martha was a frail woman who experienced difficult pregnancies, the robust Jefferson had been unwilling to deny himself the pleasures of the marital bed" is malicious.

In the end, Chandler really does not solve the mystery of Meriwether Lewis's death. He lays immediate blame for the plot to assassinate Lewis at the feet of James Wilkinson for various reasons; reasons which are either unsubstantiated or contradictory to established fact. Chandler fails to identify the actual assassin, giving us a choice instead of it probably being James Neely, John Fennier or Robert Grinder. But in Chandler's opinion, the real assassin was Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was responsible for Lewis's death because his political goals and secrets led to the explorer's death. Because of his scheming with James Wilkinson and the Spanish concerning Florida, he protected Wilkinson, not only preventing the latter from being removed from his powerful positions, but even naming him to powerful positions which allowed the infamous scoundrel to continue his intrigues. These intrigues in turn led to a plot to murder Lewis before he could reveal what he knew about Wilkinson and his activities. Rather than reveal his own involvement with Wilkinson and Spanish officials regarding the acquisition of Florida, and to keep Wilkinson from revealing what he knew, Jefferson decided that a "greater scandal" must be avoided. He therefore publicly stated his belief that Lewis had sunk into depression and drunkenness and committed suicide, thus sacrificing the life and reputation of his protégé on the altar of political ambition and expediency.

This is all too much. The errors, innuendo, snide comments, twisting of facts, etc., together with the exaggeration, purple prose, tabloid style writing, etc., make this book completely unreliable and detestable. To masquerade as history, and to misrepresent knowingly and carelessly the true facts regarding the period and the people involved is contemptible. There is indeed something "terribly wrong" regarding the death of Meriwether Lewis, and it is that this book about it was ever written and published.

NOTES


2. Ibid. Of the seventy footnotes citing Filson Club material, 66 were in some way wrong or failed to meet scholarly standards. The problems with them ranged from sloppiness to outright fabrication.

James Holmberg is the curator of the Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky.
Lewis and Clark Rendezvous a Success

Sixteen years ago several people in St. Charles, Missouri planned the first Lewis & Clark Rendezvous to celebrate the time the Corps of Discovery spent visiting their town. Each year, regardless of floods or storms, the rendezvous is held. This year it was moved to higher ground as the Missouri River overflowed its banks by almost 12 feet. The activities on May 20 and 21 took place along historic South Main Street. Tents, teepees, trappers, military encampments and demonstrators were scattered in garden areas and green spaces. The various fife and drum corps played and marched along the crowded street, much to the delight of all the visitors.

A new event this year was a military ball which was reminiscent of the ball held for the Corps of Discovery in 1804. Fiddle music played for the participants dressed in 18th century garb as they danced reels and marches on the brick street under the glow of gas lights. Spectators were invited to join the dancing and festivities.

Everyone "behaved with dignity" so a court martial was not required!

There was great anticipation for the launching of the replica of the Lewis & Clark keelboat built by Glen Bishop. It was scheduled to closely follow the journals by leaving Camp Wood on May 14 and arriving in St. Charles on May 16. The departure ceremony was scheduled for May 21 which would have marked the 191st anniversary of the expedition leaving St. Charles. Unfortunately, this trip was postponed, but hundreds of visitors climbed aboard the boat while it was on dry land.

You can see the Missouri River covering Frontier Park. This is a parking lot and the water almost came up to the boat—they might have had an unexpected launching!

EDITORS DESK—Cont. from p. 3

Editor’s Desk—Cont. from p. 3

ty of subjects that writers think of to write about the expedition and the people involved. Yet we still eagerly seek to know more and find that in many areas we are still guessing at the answers.

Just last week I received a letter inquiring about the music on the expedition. In the 21 years this magazine has been published there has only been one major article on the music (and dancing) on the expedition and that article essentially said, we don’t know; this is an educated guess.

If we continue to focus on the question of who were Lewis and Clark, the other expedition members, all of the many varieties of people they met on their journey and how they dealt with each other then we can perhaps have a clearer view of who we are as a people.

It is a worthwhile goal.

CORRECTIONS

Corrections to information given in President’s Message in May issue:
1. The correct mailing address for the Bicentennial Council is P.O. Box 9550 (not 9559), Seattle, WA 98109.
2. Charles Kuralt and Dr. Gary Moulton are co-chairmen (not merely members) of the Advisory Committee.

COMMITTEES—Cont. from p. 19

Gallatin County, Montana, for preparing a quilt based on Lewis and Clark. The students ranged from kindergarten to 7th grade. The quilt was ultimately auctioned at the school’s fundraising event. Last year’s recipients are typical of the creativity of past award winners, and it illustrates why the award is such a great way to recognize young people for their study of a great American experience—the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Currently the committee consists of Bill Jenkins, Mimi Jackson, Matthew Nowak, Barbara Rubic, Judith Edwards, Ella Mae Howard and Steve Lee, chair.
with Jay and to see how his presence has enhanced the work of the foundation, primarily in areas related to the trail itself. Jay's position is largely funded by a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, and I want to acknowledge their wonderful support and especially the fine working relationship that Jay and many of us have enjoyed with Dick Williams, the coordinator of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

The board of directors serves as the governing body of the foundation, and during the time between annual meetings provides advice and consent regarding major decisions facing the organization. I am grateful to the nine directors-at-large and the immediate past president, Stu Knapp, for their wise counsel this year.

The real work of the foundation is carried out by the members of the various committees, and I want to acknowledge the service of all committee members, and especially their chairs, for their efforts in the last year. Each deserves mention here, but space prohibits that. I want to note especially the work of some committees. Patti Thomsen, as chair of the Annual Meeting Site Selection Committee, has done a superb job of proposing the locations of annual meetings between 1998 and 2009 in order to balance geographical locations across the continent, sites that have been visited previously and those which have never hosted an annual meeting, and sites to which we have been invited and locales that have yet to extend an invitation but are desirable from the foundation's point of view. Ron Laycock, as chair of the Chapter Formation and Liaison Committee, has taken his committee's charge very seriously and has not only helped the formation of chapters in several states but has also made personal visits to a number of chapters to strengthen the ties between the foundation and the local chapters. Judith Edwards, as chair of the Education Committee, has wrestled with the demonstrated need for a Lewis and Clark curriculum guide for schools, and has taken a number of steps that have brought us closer to the production of such a guide. Ed Wang and the other members of the Finance Committee have done a superb job of analyzing the income and expenses of the foundation and have recommended a number of options to help us increase our financial status. Finally, I am pleased to recognize the outstanding leadership of Bob Doerk who has chaired both the Archives Committee and National Lewis and Clark Trail Coordination Committee. The latter group is the largest committee in the foundation and works at the heart of our mission to preserve the trail and educate the public about the accomplishments of the expedition.

Other individuals carry a heavy burden for keeping the foundation functioning smoothly, but often do so behind the scenes. Bob Doerk receives the foundation mail at Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403 and responds appropriately to that huge volume of correspondence. The foundation receives many requests for information about Lewis and Clark, and Don Nell responds superbly to each one (for a total effort of about four hours per day). Don carries out many other functions for the foundation, and I am immensely grateful to him and to Bob for their many hours of fine work that keeps the foundation working smoothly. Finally, there are a number of individuals, especially past presidents, who work quietly to enhance the foundation in many ways. Their efforts make a huge impact for good on the foundation, and I am extremely grateful for their good works.

The annual meeting in Charlottesville promises to be a magnificent one, and I want to acknowledge the fine leadership of Jane Henley, Howell Bowen and Dek Bowen, as well as the work of many people in the Home Front Chapter and others in Charlottesville, for making it all happen.

Many of you know of the plans for a Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River. Federal funds ($3 million) have been promised, providing that matching funds are raised by Lewis and Clark supporters in Great Falls and elsewhere. The deadline for raising those matching funds is September 30, 1995. There is still a major need for contributions, so please consider sending a tax-deductible contribution to the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Fund, Inc., PO Box 398, Great Falls, MT 59403.

Finally, the foundation needs the service of energetic and dedicated volunteers on foundation committees in the coming year. Please review the names of the various committees (listed in the directory that was mailed with the November We Proceeded On and in the Member's Handbook) and let me know by August 20 if you have an interest in serving. I hope to hear from you!

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