Earth Lodge Exhibit Dedication – April 2013

Mouth of the Platte members joined others at the dedication of a new interpretive sign at the earth lodge exhibit at the Nebraska City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center on April 28, 2013. The sign was provided to the center with funds from a grant to the Mouth of the Platte from the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. The sign, designed and produced by the interpretive planning firm Big Muddy Workshop of Omaha, informs visitors about the replica earth lodge. Earth lodges were the typical dwellings used by the Oto-Missouria Indians in this area at the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition. – Dick Williams

Pictured: Shirley Beck, Ava Hastert, Bob Hastert, Father Tom Coenen, Mary Jo Havlicek, Kira Gale, Henry Gale, Katie Blesener from Big Muddy Workshop (designer of the sign), Dick Williams. Also in attendance for the day: Dick Beck and Mary Langhorst

Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

45th Annual Meeting

July 28th – July 31st

Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

Washburn, North Dakota

Registration

After June 15 ................................................... $395
Future Explorers ........................................ $150

President's Message

Greetings from your President;

Some great things are happening within your Mouth of the Platte chapter – thanks to some devoted people. I will comment on a few of these great things here, but I’m certain I will miss something – please forgive me that oversight?

MOP has one of the best attended study groups in the country! Ava Hastert and Ruth Hunolt guide these sessions that involve close to 30 participants. The group meets weekly from September – May at 9:00 a.m. each Wednesday, and it meets on the second Wednesday of each month in June, July, and August. All sessions are held at the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs. Elsewhere in this newsletter are synopsis of some of the programs from building a tipi to searching for the ten lost tribes of Israel to the life of Standing Bear to the life of Thomas Jefferson to Napoleon’s biography and his decision to sell Jefferson the Louisiana Purchase to bison to impromptu discussions of almost anything about Lewis and Clark or our area of the Mighty Mo. Ask anyone involved and they can tell you more – or just join us on a Wednesday morning at the Trail Center.

Evelyn Orr and Shirley Enos and Mike Bowman have done tremendous work on the Lewis and Clark trail signage from Nebraska City to Sioux City. They tracked down sign locations, found duplicate signs for those damaged by weather, flooding, or vandalism, and are still helping landowners of signage sites to restore the Lewis and Clark signs. Be sure to tell them “Thanks.”

Shirley Enos leads MOP’s Lewis and Clark Country Family Days events and coordinates a devoted – though small in number – group of volunteers to provide day-long family experiences on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Attendance hasn’t been up to expectations due to weather issues, but the joint program with Gifford Farm on July 6 was great exposure for MOP. Give Shirley a big “Thank you!”, I certainly do.

MOP has been active at events at the Nebraska City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, at the Missouri River History Conference, in the Middle Missouri River Lewis & Clark Network’s “Welcome to Lewis & Clark Country” campaign, and several other events and activities around the area.

The upcoming picnic in conjunction with White Catfish Camp at Western Historic Trails Center – with a trivia contest with prizes, birthday cake for one of our “older” members, and great fellowship – some great dinner meeting programs (“Shannon” in August!), a possible “field trip”, our annual Christmas dinner, these are great reasons to renew your membership in MOP if not already done.

Thanks for your support of MOP’s activities.

Don Shippy

MOP Board of Directors

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LEWIS & CLARK and COTTONWOODS

Would the Journey of Discovery have had a successful outcome without the cottonwood tree? Probably…but with additional challenges. A search of the online version of “The Lewis and Clark Journals/The Definitive Nebraska Edition” retrieves 131 hits of “cottonwood” or “cotton wood” and 30 hits for “cotton trees.” Cottonwood logs were used for the building of Ft. Mandan. Cottonwood lumber was used for making furniture, could be carved into utensils and used for fuel. Cottonwood trees were used for the building of dugouts when the iron-framed boat sank. Cottonwood trees were cut to make wheels for the portage at Great Falls. The bark, twigs and small branches of cottonwood trees could supply food for the horses. As Lewis and Clark moved into higher elevations, true to their assignment to note differences in plants they saw on their travels, they noted the differences among the cottonwood trees.

Cottonwood trees are members of the willow family. Other members of the family are aspens and poplars. Common traits of the family are their love of water; they shed their leaves in the fall and grow new ones in the spring; there are male and female trees; the trees bear flowers; the trees are “chatty,” meaning the leaves make noise in the breeze; they are fast growers; they have shallow root systems; and all reproductive events (pollination, fertilization and seed dispersal) are primarily wind-blown. Various species of cottonwood trees are found in the U.S. from coast to coast and border to border, in southern California and northwest Mexico. Cottonwood trees usually live 80-300 years. The bark of a cottonwood tree is thick and deeply fissured. Mature bark can resist heat from prairie fires. Cottonwood seedlings must have light. The cottonwood is the state tree of Nebraska, Wyoming and Kansas.

Most of my information about cottonwoods was found in “The Cottonwood Tree - An American Champion” by Kathleen Cain. – Ava Hastert

New Home for the BOYS TOWN LEWIS & CLARK Stamp Collection

The one of a kind panels, displaying postage stamps connected to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, are now in their new home - “The Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail & Visitor Center in Nebraska City.” They had previously hung in the Boys Town Visitor center for years. Prior to the Bicentennial Richard (Dick) Buse, a Boys Town Stamp Room volunteer spearheaded a very ambitious project, to research, collect, and display postage stamps issued over the years depicting some phase of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He and some helpers at the Center, put together this very special L&C Bicentennial display.

With word the display may be dismantled, Evelyn Orr, Al and Margenne Henricksen, and Mary Langhorst stepped in and saved this piece of history. Their tireless work resulted in the display panels moving to The Missouri River Basin Center in Nebraska City. Many thanks to these Mouth of the Platte members and their desire to do whatever it takes to keep the Lewis and Clark heritage for future generations to discover and enjoy. – Evelyn Orr and Scotty Stickels
LEWIS & CLARK & the Tribes of Israel

When Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis were preparing for the Expedition, Jefferson asked members of the American Philosophical Society to pose questions to be answered by the Expedition. In a letter of May 17, 1803 to “Merryweather Lewis”, Doctor Benjamin Rush provided an extensive list of questions in response to this request. One of the questions regarding the Indians was “What Affinity between their religious ceremonies & those of the Jews?” Underlying this question was a fairly widely held theory that the Native Americans were direct descendants of the “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel”. This question of Dr. Rush was of sufficient substance that it was included in “Clark’s List of Questions” that he drafted in 1804 for the Expedition.

On May 1, the Study Group reviewed the Biblical history of the tribes of Israel from the beginning in Genesis 12 in 2166 B.C.E. The study followed the Israelites through their establishment in the Promised Land in 1406 B.C.E. into its “golden era” under the monarchies of David and Solomon from 1011-931 B.C.E. We studied the division of the nation of Israel into the “Northern Kingdom” of Israel comprised of the ten tribes that “got lost” and the “Southern Kingdom” of Judah comprised of the two tribes that never “got lost”. The study continued through the destruction of these two kingdoms as independent nations in 722 and 586 B.C.E. respectively.

The “Ten Lost Tribes” became “lost” in 722 B.C.E. when Israel (the “Northern Kingdom”) was conquered by Assyria and the Israelites were dispersed throughout the Assyrian Empire as a method of controlling conquered people. Students of history and of the Bible continue to search for these ten lost tribes. Many theories are presented even today of the destiny of these members of “the Chosen People” – even to theories that the United States is home of the descendants of one of the tribes who emigrated here from various western European countries or that the native peoples of the two American continents are descendants of all ten of the tribes. There is plenty of material on these theories for another Study Group session for someone to research. – Don Shippy

MAJ Stephen Long, United States Army
1784 Hopkinton, NH – 1864 Alton, IL
Five Expeditions 26,000 miles

Timeline:

- 1814 Second Lieutenant of engineers teaching mathematics at West Point
- 1816 promoted to Major in Corps of Topographical Engineers
- 1817 led a military excursion up the Mississippi River to the Falls of St. Anthony at the confluence of the Minnesota River
  - Recommended the Army establish Fort Snelling
- 1819 married Martha Hodgkiss
  - Surveyed for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
- 1819 Yellowstone Expedition—designed the Steamboat Western Engineer with a strong engine, enclosed paddlewheel, 75 x 13 hull with a 19 inch draw, a bulletproof pilothouse, a cannon on the bow and howitzers on the sides and rifles and sabers on board, and a smoke breathing dragon to frighten the Indians.
  - September 17, 1819 the steamboat was at Fort Lisa, a trading post of the Missouri Fur Company
  - Engineer Cantonment was built as winter quarters
  - Stephen Long returned to the East Coast
Timeline cont’d:

- **1820** Month of May, Stephen Long returned with new orders from President James Monroe to cease work on the Missouri and instead explore the Platte River and its sources
  - 1820 Month of June, Long and 19 men travelled up the North bank of the Platte and encountered Pawnee and Oto
  - 1820 Month of October, Long assembled with 400 Omaha Indians where Chief Big Elk spoke “Here I am, my Father……”
  - Long’s report was that the Plains of Nebraska to Oklahoma were unfit for cultivation and labeled it “A Great Desert”. By the end of the 19th century the “Great Desert” had become the Nation’s Breadbasket.

- **1823** Up the Minnesota River to the headwaters of the Red River of the North and beyond
- **1826** Long patented steam locomotive designs
- **1832** Organized the American Steam Carriage Company
- **1834** Worked on the Western and Atlantic Railroad, Georgia

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**The Tipi, The Original Mobile Home**

Spelled Tipi, Tepe or Teepee it’s all the same, a unique dwelling designed for quick set up and tear-down, cool in summer and warm in winter. There are several different kinds of conical dwellings from antiquity but none compare to the tipi which has smoke flaps to direct the smoke from an inner fire pit. These were the dwellings of many Tribes of Native Americans of our Great Plaines for hundreds of years. There were also many Plaines Tribes that lived in earth lodges who used the tipi for short trips away from home and for bison hunts.

The basic structure is a tripod of poles (there is also a four pole set-up) with several more poles as secondary support. The tripod required no outward guy ropes for support and could withstand tremendous wind. Tipis were pitched with their back side (opposite the door hole) to the prevailing wind, not always facing the east as we have heard. They do not form a perfect cone but are steeper on the back side to help withstand wind, with a longer slope to the front. The cover or “skin” was originally sewn from many animal skins. The most popular being bison.

As early as the 1860s , however, canvas was available from the U. S. Army and was readily accepted as it was much lighter in weight than animal hides and required much less effort to construct. The smoke flaps (which make a tipi unique) located on either side of the smoke hole at the top of the tipi could be repositioned to accommodate any direction of the wind so as to ‘draw’ the smoke from the inside fire pit up and out the smoke hole.

When the owners of a tipi were away from home, they would position two sticks in the ground in front of the door in the shape of an X, and the smoke hole at the top would be closed by crossing the smoke flaps over it. This was as good as any dead bolt lock of today. No one would enter.

The comfort of the tipi was not lost on the U. S Army of the early 1800s whose soldiers would barter for a tipi any time they could to replace the stifling tents they were issued. In 1856 an Army officer, Henry Hopkins Sibley, who had been with John C. Fremont on the Great Plains in the late 1830s, invented a tent shaped like a tipi and called it the Sibley Tent.
The biggest disadvantage of transporting a tipi was the poles. Each tipi needing at least seventeen poles, each pole weighing fifteen to twenty pounds. The Indians did not find this to be much of a problem, however, turning the poles into travois 'to drag' their homes down the trail. A camp or village of Indians with men, women, children and all of their household supplies could move faster and farther in a single day than the best equipped army of the time.

The artist, George Catlin, commented in the 1830s on how incredibly quickly a great camp of Indians could be either pitched or struck. He said of a Sioux village that within a minute of seeing the lodge of the chief flapping in the wind, (this being the signal to move camp) 600 lodges also flapped in the wind and in one minute more all were flat on the ground. Their horses and dogs had all been secured and each one was quickly loaded with its burden.

Tipis are still used and revered in many camping circles and mountain man reenactment camps across the globe today. Large clubs of tipi campers exist in many European countries, Norway, Bulgaria, and Great Britain to name a few. These clubs exist here in America as well.

A tipi of bison hides could have lasted up to two years but was usually beginning to rot by the end of one year. It was the work of women to construct the tipi skins or covers. I do not know the ‘woman hours’ that went in to tanning hides and sewing them together, with fifteen to twenty hides needed for a family sized tipi, but it surely was labor intense work. With modern rot resistant blends of fabrics tipis can now last for years and of course can be ordered from a factory ready-made.

Tipis are warm in winter thanks to the inner liner giving the tipi an insulating layer of air. They are cool to camp in during the summer as the bottom edge of the tipi can be rolled up all around or on opposite sides propped up by sticks. This causes air to enter the tipi at the bottom and circulate out the smoke hole at the top. An inner rain guard could be strung from pole to pole inside if needed allowing any rain that might enter through the smoke hole to run out behind the inner liner.

All the way around, the tipi is of a completely functional design yet comfortable, strong and most importantly to the Native Americans of our Great Plains, mobile. – Shirley Enos
Recent MOP Dinner Meetings Highlights – April, May, and June

April 2013 – Betty Smallen

- Traveling the trail from East to West with the many sites of the trail to see
- Statues, murals, and iconic images celebrating these two great men

May 2013 – Dan Sturdevant

- Insights on how technology is positively impacting the trail and web presence
- Update on the upcoming annual meetings in 2013, 2014, and 2015
- Clarification on three Lewis and Clark national organizations
  - Our Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation – MOP is one of the largest chapters
    - http://www.lewisandclark.org
  - Lewis and Clark Trust – National Fundraising Organization
    - http://lewisandclarktrust.weebly.com
  - Lewis and Clark Foundation – Great Falls, MT Interpretive Center
    - http://www.lewisandclarkfoundation.org

June 2013 – Lewis and Clark Festival Onawa, IA

- Keelboat and Buckskinners
- Next generation of Lewis and Clark enthusiasts
- Rain and more rain on Saturday and Sunday

Join us for upcoming Dinner Meetings @ Tish’s!!!

5:00 Social – 6:00 Dinner – 7:00 Presentation

- August 20th – Bill Hayes as Shannon
- September 17th – MOP Annual Meeting
- October 15th – Bev Hinds presents Ding Darling
Missouri Network (Mid Mo), markets the trail from Rulo, Nebraska to Pickstown, South Dakota on both sides of the river. Visit the organization’s website to learn more: www.lewisandclarkcountry.org

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**ANNUAL WHITE CATFISH CAMP PICNIC**

**Saturday, July 20, 2013**
Western Historic Trails Center 5:00 pm
Mouth of the Platte members' dinners are FREE!

- The next MOP dinner meeting will be Saturday, July 20, 2013 at Western Historic Trails Center, 5:00 pm gathering time; 5:30 Dinner
- FREE picnic dinner to Mouth of the Platte members. Each member may bring 1 guest FREE. All additional guests of each member will need to pay $12.00.
- Includes cake for dessert!
- Annual Lewis and Clark Trivia Contest with prizes!
- If you come after 4:30 pm, use the west end of the Richard Downing Ave (back gate) as the Trails Center closes to the public at 4:30.
Death of Meriwether Lewis: A Historic Crime Scene Investigation
Authors James E. Starrs & Kira Gale

Book Review and Commentary by Lew Massey

Lewis and Clark Study Group has truly been a weekly spark and invigoration for me. It's a constant array and shower of historical yummies of the early 1800's, doubling and exploring the new territory of the United States, i.e., the Louisiana Territory. You have taken history classes, memorized dates, places, and names. There was this guy and that guy, this woman or that woman; but, rarely a mention of how they died. Lincoln's assassination and who did it was mentioned and memorized. How someone died is not usually a question included in a history lesson. How about Hamurabi or Attila the Hun? How did they die? We normally don't mention it. Did you know that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson "died within hours of each other, on the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1826?" The cause of death for both was unspecified. This information was found on line by Binging "the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams". This is more trivia that you won't get in a history lesson.

When Kira Gale, at Lewis and Clark Study Group, mentioned the title of her second book and that she had received the Death of Meriwether Lewis, A Historic Crime Scene Investigation from the printer, I was shocked at the mention of a crime scene investigation. I was shocked that there was an argument about his death being murder or suicide. One of my college majors was history, yet, somehow this hadn't been proposed around me. Why did it take 40 years more for me to get exposed to the question? Had I been living in a cocoon? Why isn't it part of the vernacular in this area? Thanks to James Starrs and Kira Gale for the intriguing plot. The research for this had to be staggering.

What went through my mind as the revelation appeared at our club meeting? This guy may have committed suicide? Someone may have killed him? What an intellectual shock for me! I had to have a copy of that book! (Kira even sat next to me!!)

Another thought immediately going through my mind was how could there be a question of suicide? Did Thomas Jefferson pick someone incompetent to be the leader of the expedition? There was too much to gain! Jefferson was more than competent. Jefferson felt Lewis was the most competent person in America to complete the mission and the goals Jefferson felt were necessary.

At the time of the American Revolution, the thirteen colonies were producing half of the business of the British Empire. Ship building in the colonies was enormous business for Britain. The North American fur business was indeed competing with Britain's fur business. The Far East spice industry was a booming business that Jefferson wanted for the United States. Doubling the size of the United States would give all that business to the U.S. We wanted ALL of the business! (Besides, Napoleon was losing ground in Santo Domingo. That put the Louisiana Territory on sale because our emissary was sent to buy New Orleans. Napoleon wanted to sell the whole territory; he needed cash to fight his wars.) Jefferson could see far into the future. No, Jefferson was not incompetent. NOT AT ALL!! (I am convinced he was our most competent president.) Since the number of characters in the life of Lewis was almost incalculable, to pick one who killed him would be an insurmountable task. Maybe!

As I was reading, the intrigue of a motive for killing Lewis seemed fleeting. The idea that Lewis committed suicide was absurd. I can guarantee that no American who was owed money by the Federal government would ever commit suicide before he collected it. Reading the suspense caused me to wonder: "Who cares if he committed suicide or was murdered?" After a few more minutes of reading, the same question popped up in the Starrs/Gale book on page 59 of "Part One, The Coroner's Inquest" asking the same thing. The question was, "Why bother after all these years, why bother about this death that occurred in the early 19th century?" asked by Dr. E. G. Chuinard. That's two of us with the same thought. Suddenly it occurred to me: "Is it really important to people to know this?"

(Two people with the same thought is a quorum to conduct a poll.)

Then I thought, "I'll take a poll." "Who will I ask?" I thought. "Should I ask highly educated people only? Who? Who, should be in the poll? Ah, ha! I'll poll people in my cell phone directory. They are a mix of blue collar, professionals, and highly educated. None are low income. (How many should I call?) I decided to call 25. I explained to each that I belong to a Lewis and Clark Study Group. I gave each a short talk about the group and asked each to answer a question about Meriwether Lewis. Each one was tickled to be in the poll. The first question: "Do you really care if Meriwether Lewis committed suicide or was killed by someone?" Nineteen said, "No." Six said, "Yes." The second question: "Do you want to help pay for exhuming the bones and having them examined?" One hundred per cent answered, "No." Even the ones who answered yes to the "suicide or murdered" question, felt it was not worth paying to exhume his body after 200 years. Those who answered "yes" in the poll, said the reason they felt it was important was to keep history right.

I encourage you all to read the Starr/Gale book. See if you wonder "who cares?" after 200 years.
Mouth of the Platte Bulletin Board

2013-2014 MOP Board of Directors –
Candidates for Reelection at September Dinner Meeting
- Don Shippy – President
- Dick Williams – Vice President
- Della Bauer – Treasurer
- Mary Langhorst – Secretary
- Mary Jo Havileck – At large member
- Tom Coenen – At large member
- Scotty Stickels – At large member

Other Nominees are welcome and can be brought forth for consideration!!

MOP Merchandise Available –
Coffee Mugs and Polo Shirts!!!
See Mary L for details and to order!

Please don’t hesitate to submit study group or other articles for inclusion in your MOP newsletter...
Mouth of the Platte Chapter Memberships

All memberships are renewable annually by March 31.

Memberships

- Individual membership........ $20
  $ _____
- Family membership........... $25
  $ _____
- Student membership .......... $10
  $ _____
- Business/Organization ....... $25
  $ _____

Charitable contributions to support:

- Mouth of the Platte Chapter programs $ _____
- Newspapers in Education ........ $ _____
- Boy Scouts of America activities ... $ _____
- Gifford Farm Lewis and Clark programs $ _____
- Western Historic Trails Center .... $ _____

Total enclosed: $ ________

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Current member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation? □ yes □ no □ send info
A Short Note from the Short Editor

Send any comments, suggestions, and ideas to -- editor4mop@gmail.com

Thanks for the support to date and in the future – Scotty Stickels