

Bob Shattuck (-2002)



Long-time Foundation member Bob Shattuck died peacefully on February 27 (2002) in Grass Valley, California, following an illness of several months. Bob was a recent member of the LCTHF board of directors and had been founding president of the California Chapter. He was 72.

A man of few public words, Bob nonetheless was extremely well-read on the history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Oregon Trail, and various men and events in the history of his home state of California. His library contained some 500 books, and he apparently had read them all. He had prepared note cards on most of his Lewis and Clark books containing pithy two or three-sentence reviews. For one 1963 item he wrote: "This is the worst book claiming to be history I have ever read. The author made obvious mistakes about Lewis & Clark, Kearney, Frémont, and Carson. He knows absolutely nothing about the Indians." For another: "Western History written by a philosopher. He should have stuck to philosophy. Many errors in the Lewis & Clark chapter; I wonder how many in the rest of the book." A speculative book on Lewis's death gained this judgment: "The author is not accurate in the history that I know, so he is probably shaky on the rest." And Bob's comments on a well-known biography of Lewis: "Downgrades Clark's role. Considers the expedition the Lewis Expedition. He also thinks Lewis's death was not suicide, but murder. I disagree with both."

It was important to Bob that his Lewis and Clark books go for the benefit of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, and before he died he so donated them. Some of his Oregon Trail books went to the Oregon-California Trail Association, and some of his California books went to benefit the California Chapter of the Foundation. In an act of quiet generosity, Bob made the Foundation sole beneficiary to his life insurance and retirement savings. He also purchased an annuity that will benefit the Foundation tens of thousands of dollars over the next several years. In these ways Bob will have a positive, ongoing, and constructive influence on the bicentennial that he did not live to see and on the preservation of the story that he loved.

We will all miss the tall bearded fellow with the crew cut in the wide plaid short-sleeve shirt and Levis, camera slung over his shoulder. He has been a fixture at annual meetings for years. He knew that a string tie was as formal as one had to go at any meeting celebrating western history.

One book in Bob's library was a book of quotations. He highlighted few of the many epigrams in the book, but this one attributed to Grellet was noted: " I expect to pass through this world but

once; any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

Godspeed, Bob.

-Ludd A. Trozpek

from *We Proceeded On* 28(2):44 (May 2002)

(Shattuck was a Director of the Foundation, 1997-2000.)

*Prepared by Bob Gatten, 2011*