



Meriwether  
Lewis

# Field Notes



William  
Clark

From the Badger State Chapter of the  
Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc

April 2011

Wisconsin's Chapter ~ Interested & Involved

Number 38

## During this time in history: (January-June 1804-06)

(The source for all entries is, "The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition edited by Gary E. Moulton, U. of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001.)

January 1, 1804, Camp Wood, Clark: "... Several men come from the country to see us and shoot with the men...I put up a dollar to be shot for; the two best shots to win. Gibson is our best shot; the country people won the dollar..."

June 10, 1805, Marias River, Lewis: "...I determined to set out in the morning up the south fork or Missouri River leaving Capt. Clark to complete the deposit and follow me by water with the party; accordingly gave orders to Drouillard, Joseph Fields, Gibson and Goodrich to hold themselves in readiness to accompany me in the morning..."

October 18, 1805, near present day McNary Dam, Clark: "...Indians came from the different lodges...two of our party, Peter Cruzatte and Gibson, played on the violin which delighted them greatly..."

December 28, 1805, Ft. Clatsop, Clark: "... Jos. Fields, Bratton and Gibson are to proceed to the ocean at some convenient place, form a camp and commence making salt with five of the largest kettles..."

February 10 1806, Ft. Clatsop, Lewis: "... Willard arrived late in the evening from the salt works...he informed us that Bratton was very unwell and that Gibson was so sick that he could not set up or walk alone and had desired Willard to ask us to have him brought to the Fort..."

June 18, 1806, Idaho County, Idaho, Lewis: "...Sent out several hunters...they saw a number of salmon in the creek and shot at them several times without success. We directed Colter and Gibson to fix each of them a gig in the morning and endeavor to take some of the salmon..."

## An Army Travels: Feeding the Corps of Discovery

### The Rules Are Set! By Jack Schroeder

As a military force, the Lewis and Clark Expedition were organized by specific U.S. Army protocols. This meant that food was provided through organizations called "messes."

The use of that term has caused much confusion among people such as children who encounter it for the first time. Everyone knows what a mess is when they make one, and messes are frequently created in the food preparation process, but it seems quite harsh to refer to all cooking and eating as a "mess."

The term *mess* comes from an Old French word *mes* meaning portion of food. By the 15<sup>th</sup> Century the word was being used in English to describe a group of people who ate together. That is why modern military dining facilities are called mess halls.

In 1800, American Army frontier posts had a formal method of feeding the soldiers through the establishment of messes. Each mess was composed of five or six men who ate food prepared by a cook. Each day the mess received an amount of rations which were intended to feed those men for that day.

On April 1, 1804 orders were issued by Captain Meriwether Lewis that established the three squads which would be the main unit of organization for the Corps. Each squad was composed of two messes, and was lead by one of the sergeants; Pryor, Floyd, or Ordway.

That day the sergeants distributed "*Camp Kittles and other Public utensils*" among the men. This included nesting iron kettles, spits, and axes. Each man already had his mess kit consisting of a tin cup and a spoon.



Continued on page 2

On May 26 Lewis stream-lined the organization by placing all of the men in a sergeant's command into a single mess. The captains then named Thompson as cook for Floyd's mess, Werner for Ordway's mess, and Collins for Pryor's mess. These three messes operated the keelboat.

**Continued from page 1**

The French engages who manned the red pirogue formed their own mess and elected their cook. Corporal Warfington commanded another mess in the white pirogue. The five messes are comprised of 45 men. One more mess was composed of the Captains, York, Drouillard, Charbonneau, Sacagawea, and Jean Baptiste.

*"provisions for one day will be issued to the party on each evening after we have encamped; the same will be cooked on that evening by the several messes, and a portion of it reserved for the next day as no cooking will be allowed in the day while on the ma[r]ch ..."*

With these instructions Lewis has established the general framework for feeding the Corps throughout the expedition. As needed, adjustments were made to take account of the changing situation. For instance when the Corps was in winter camp, hot breakfasts were added to the day's meals. Hunters away from the main body cooked for themselves, and ate as they were able, while saving the remaining meat for the rest of the group.

Lewis also established the rotation of meals:

*Day 1: lyed corn and Greece*

*Day 2: Poark and flour*

*Day 3: Indian meal and poark*

*And in conformity to that ratiene provisions will continue to be issued to the party until further orders.- should any of the messes prefer Indian meal to flour they may receive it accordingly - no poark is to be issues when we have fresh meat on hand.*

Lyed corn is dried hominy, which is corn that has been boiled with lye (usually from wood ashes) until the inedible hull is removed, and then dried. Greece is lard or fat rendered from animals. Poark is salt pork, and Indian meal is corn meal.

These provisions are nearly identical to what the men would have eaten if they had remained in their frontier forts, such as at Kaskaskia or Massac. However, cooks in the forts would have been able to provide a modest variety by including rice and bread in the diet. In an accommodation to their new geography, the Corps of

Discovery relied on corn for the large majority of their carbohydrates.

Meal times were also firmly established, but as usual adjustments were made to suit the daily circumstances. The Corps would normally start their voyage shortly after dawn each day, and would break for breakfast at 8 o'clock. At that time the men would eat whatever rations they had preserved from the previous day. Later in the journey, breakfast was sometimes eaten before the day's work began.

Lewis called noon, "our usual time for halting for that purpose (eating dinner)." This was consistent with the Army custom of breaking between 12 and 2 pm. to cook and eat the largest meal of the day. Cooking fires were generally only made for this meal.

Supper was eaten in the evening after the camp had been established. Cooking might also take place then if the Corps was staying for several days. This would also be the time when native visitors might be welcomed to visit.

Lewis and Clark applied the same flexibility to the task of feeding the Corps as they did to the other necessary work of the expedition. Combined with their careful planning, this helps to explain their success. They got pretty hungry at times, but no one ever starved.

In the next issue, a cook quits, or is he fired? Then as now, this matter is frequently unclear in the professional kitchen.

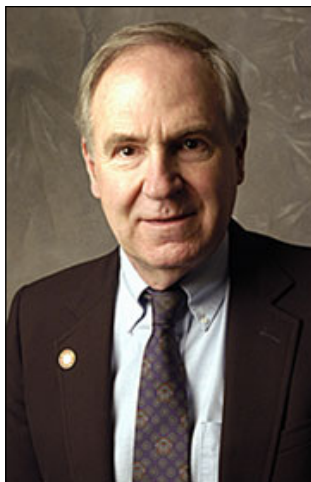
---

**Editor's Note: For comparative purposes, the following photo is offered of some of the Badger Chapter Members having dinner across from the White Cliffs of the Missouri River, during a three day canoe trip in 2008.**



## The Literature of Lewis & Clark

Dr. Harry Fritz is Professor Emeritus of History in the Department of History at The University of Montana in Missoula. After obtaining his B.A. from Dartmouth College he attended The University of Montana and Washington University in St. Louis for his M.A. and Ph.D. respectively.



**Dr. Harry Fritz -  
Author, Historian,  
"Man of Wit & Whim"**

Professor Fritz has taught courses in early American history, American military history, and Montana history. He was named University of Montana's Teacher of the Year in 1972 and 1999 and the Carnegie Foundation's Montana Professor of the Year in 2004. He has written and lectured widely on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Harry is the author of *The Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Greenwood 2004), *Montana: Land of Contrast* (1984, 2001). He is also the co-editor of *Montana and the West* (1984), *The Montana Heritage* (1992), and *The Montana Legacy* (2002). In 1985 and 1987, he served in the Montana House of Representatives, which was followed by service in the Montana Senate in 1991 and 1993.

One student remarked that Harry Fritz had the training, experience and unique ability to expound on... "the best stories you will ever hear, about historical events in Montana, and how each of them relates to a bar nearby".

*\* This Interview with Dr. Fritz was conducted by Idaho Public Television*

### **How important was this Expedition?**

Lewis and Clark are important historically. They provided the first written accounts of this entirely new territory, the entire Pacific Northwest. Their immediate impact was not as great as we might think, because their journals were not published for about eight years after they got back; and that was only about 20 to 25% of what they had written down. It comes off as purely a geographic expedition.

Omitted was the scientific information. Those weren't even published until the twentieth century. Ironically, the reputation of Lewis and Clark is higher today than it has ever been. Lewis and Clark have a reputation as natural scientists and ethnologists that they never enjoyed in the nineteenth century.

That excitement is still present. It draws Americans back in time to what they believe was a better era, when giants still strode the land and determined the course of American history.

Lewis and Clark have been described as the "writingest" explorers in American history. When Americans get beyond the videos and movies and biographies and encounter their writings, they can't help but fall in love with William Clark, who was a terrible speller and who spelled the word 'Sioux' twenty seven different ways, twenty seven incorrect ways. But you can make out what he says. Andrew Jackson once said he didn't have much respect for a man who could think of only one way to spell a word. He loved William Clark.

### **What are some key decisions that Lewis and Clark made?**

One of the key decisions, if not the key decision was to take an Indian woman, Sacagawea, from the Mandan villages into the West. She was far more important than her husband. A decision of equal importance involves another Indian person, Old Toby, a Shoshone Indian. They put the whole fate of the expedition into the hands of one old Indian man who showed them the route that everybody else said he didn't know what he was talking about... Toby showed them the Lolo pass and route over the Bitterroot Mountains.

### **What is the importance of the Rocky Mountains to the Lewis & Clark story?**

In actuality, the river travel is the least significant portion of the journey. Crossing the Rocky Mountains is the heart and soul of the expedition. It is the key of the trip. They believed the Rockies resembled the Appalachians in the eastern half, [which is] a single chain of mountains. They had no idea [that] the Rockies are not a single chain of mountains, [with] more than a hundred named mountain ranges in Montana and northern Idaho alone... [and] two hundred fifty to 300 miles wide. The key is getting through the Rockies. They are literally lost in the Rocky Mountains. Lewis and Clark crossed the Bitterroot Mountains three different

**Continued on page 4**

times. Their journey was not a straightforward expedition.

**Continued from page 3**

They spent one solid month in Great Falls, Montana, from the middle of June to the middle of July. Then once you leave Great Falls, on the Missouri River you are not traveling west; you are traveling south. You are getting further away from the Pacific Coast as you go. Three Forks, Montana, in late July, the Beaverhead River... they are going further and further out of their way to finding the Columbia.

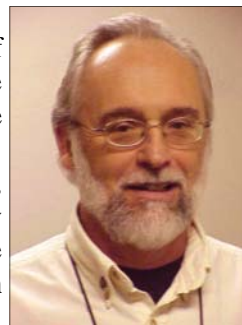
Most people thought the expedition had been lost in the West. Lewis told Jefferson that when he got to the Great Falls, he was going to send back four men in a boat. When he got there he figured he needed every man, so he did not send men back in a boat. Jefferson was expecting a messenger, but none came.



### Newsletter articles

Do you have an interesting thought about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, or know someone who shares our interest in "The Journey?" Would you like to share it with others through this newsletter? Then write to either Jim Rosenberger at punkinz@tds.net or Bill Holman at wghmch@chorus.net. If you don't have e-mail, call Bill at (608) 249-2233. If you include a picture with your article, we will be happy to return it upon request.

## President's Message – April 2011



**Jim Rosenberger**

We often hear that the story of Lewis & Clark has faded into the background since the end of the Bicentennial Commemoration. Yet this morning (Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>), while having my morning coffee and reading the Wisconsin State Journal, I find in the *TODAY IN HISTORY* column; "In 1806, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, having reached the Pacific coast, began their journey back east". We Remember! And it is good to see that periodically other elements of the Lewis & Clark story appear in the media.

This past January, the History Channel aired a segment of Brad Meltzer's "Decoded" entitled; "Secret Presidential Codes". While the show did mention the secret ciphers of President Thomas Jefferson, it dealt primarily with the death of Meriwether Lewis. I thought the show did a good job of discussing the mystery surrounding Lewis's death, the efforts of his descendants to exhume his body and the new information on Major James Neelly discovered by Tennessee attorney, Tony Turnbow.

**Continued on page 5**

## Seaman Says – April 2011

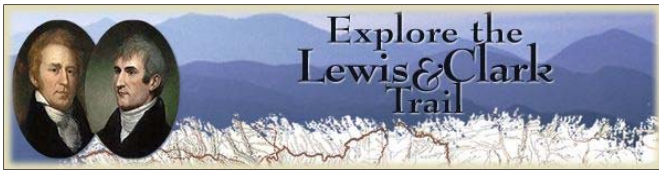
July 14, 1804; It is to be expected that, given my natural abilities, I am quite at home when IN the water. Now I am becoming equally as comfortable ON the water.

Our Corps of Discovery currently travels on the river in three craft, the largest being a keelboat of approximately fifty-five feet in length and somewhat over eight feet in width. The permanent party, to which I am assigned, travel on the keelboat and I believe I have become an able member of the crew. As an example, should the boat strike a sandbar and tilt in a precarious manner where the men must run to one side of the craft to right it, I immediately follow them and my weight contributes substantially to correcting the attitude of the boat.

I have also become quite adept at assisting them in propelling the craft on the river. The craft can be rowed and if any of the men become fatigued, I face the man; stand on my hind legs; place my front legs on his shoulders and push, thus helping him to complete the stroke of the oar. The craft can be towed by the men from shore and to assist here I volunteer to be placed in a harness on the tow rope and pull along with the men. The men can also "pole" the boat and while I am unable to work a pole, I march along with the men as they walk the deck and this seems to help them keep their mind off the effort it takes to move the boat against the current of the river.

But the most entertaining method of propelling the keelboat is when there is a proper wind and the sail can be hoisted. The wind fills the sail and the boat moves swiftly through the current with only one man handling the rudder. The rest of us can rest and relax for a time. I typically race to the bow of the boat and face into the breeze. Oh, the joy!





Cont'd from page 4

At the same time I felt it sensationalized certain parts, such as the alleged hatred of General James Wilkinson by Jefferson and Lewis, in an effort to build a case for the murder theory. I intend to do more research but so far I have been unable to build a good case for any hatred Jefferson and Lewis might have had for Wilkinson.

Recently a UTube video about the air rifle which was taken on the Expedition has been circulated on the internet and I forwarded an email with the video to Badger chapter members. The video educates the public about Lewis & Clark and the air rifle, for which I am happy, but it does contain some errors. The commentator refers to Sacagawea as "leading the Expedition" and the Expedition traveling through the Cascade Mountains to the mouth of the "Potomac River". It seems to me the primary purpose of the video is to use the Lewis & Clark Expedition to demonstrate and justify the importance and need for "superior firepower".

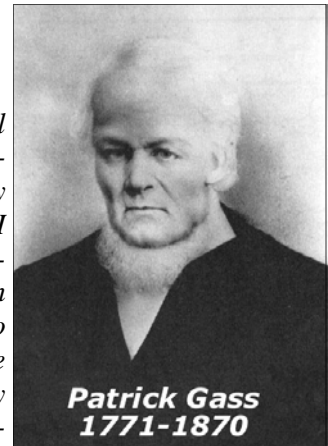
Why do I bring this up? Well, it relates to the various controversies that exist or can be created from the Lewis & Clark story and the time we can spend discussing or debating them. And that is exactly what we intend to do at our April 16, 2011 quarterly Chapter meeting to be held at the De Forest Public Library. Last October, at our quarterly meeting in Brown Deer, WI, Chapter member Jim Gramentine led us through a discussion about "Meriwether Lewis, the Risk Taker". We enjoyed that so much we are going to do an encore discussion about some of the controversies of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Topics such as the death of Lewis, how long did Sacagawea live and where did she die, was Charbonneau really a man of "no particular merit", what happened to Seaman and any other debatable issues we can find will be put before us for analysis and discussion. Your part is to think about and review the Expedition and bring your thoughts and ideas about what you think might be a controversy or an unanswered question. Let's talk about it, exchange viewpoints, learn and have some fun.

**E-mail Notice-Field Notes is posted on line, in color, before the paper edition is mailed out. Every issue, some of these e-mail addresses "bounce" because people have not notified us of changes, or because your e-mail address is not set to allow our messages to arrive. Be sure that this is not happening to you.**

## Letters from my cousin, Patrick Gass, With the Corps of Discovery

Dear Cuzzin Bill,

*From time to time I will try to send you some interesting bits from my journal. I surely hope I can get someone interested enough to publish them when we return to the United States. These are from my notes shortly before we left Fort Clatsop in March 1806.*



Sunday 16th. Last night it became cloudy and began to rain; and the rain has continued all day. The Indians stayed about the fort the whole of this day. Yesterday while I was absent, getting our meat home, one of the hunters killed two vultures, the largest fowls I had ever seen. I never saw any such as these except on the Columbia river and the seacoast.

On the 17th it rained occasionally during the whole of the day. We got a canoe from the natives, for which we gave an officer's uniform coat.

Tuesday 18th. The weather was much like that of yesterday, and some hail fell in the course of the day. Some of the men are repairing the small canoes, and making preparations to return up the river, as soon as the weather will permit. One of the hunters killed an elk.

The morning of the 19th was stormy, some hard showers of hail fell and it continued cloudy through the day.

Thursday 20th. The whole of this day was wet and disagreeable. We intended to have set out to day on our return, but the weather was too bad. I made a calculation of the number of elk and deer killed by the party from the 1st of Dec. 1805 to the 20th March 1806, which gave 131 elk and 20 deer. There were a few smaller quadrupeds killed such as otter and beaver; and one racoon. The meat of some of the elk was not brought to the fort.

Saturday 22nd. We had a cloudy wet morning. Three hunters were sent on ahead to remain at some good hunting ground until we should all come up; and six others to hunt near the fort. In the evening all these came in, except one, without any success.



Continued on page 7



*Interested - involved*  
**THE BADGER STATE CHAPTER  
of  
THE LEWIS & CLARK TRAIL  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC  
-Quarterly Meeting-  
Free and Open to the Public**



**SATURDAY, April 16, 2011**

**DeForest Public Library, 203 Library St.,  
DeForest, WI  
Parking at the Library**

**9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - Business/Board Meeting/  
Report on the Foundation**

**10:15 a.m. - 12 Noon - Discussion lead by Jack Schroeder on questions and controversies of Lewis & Clark History**

**An after meeting lunch will be held at the DeForest Family Restaurant, 505 West North St., DeForest, WI.**

**As a Chapter, we previously discussed the concept of Meriwether Lewis being a risk taker. Now we continue our discussions by looking at elements of Lewis & Clark history which have created disagreement and controversy. Led by Chapter Vice President Jack Schroeder, we will conduct a group analysis of some of these topics. We will review recent media releases on Lewis's death and the air rifle; questions about Sacagawea's life and death and if her husband, Charbonneau, was actually "a man of no particular merit"; why bring a dog on the Expedition and what happened to Seaman?**

**But don't let us dictate the topic. Think about the Expedition and develop questions you have about things you have read or heard that you feel need clarification or investigation. Together, let's try to find answers to some of these questions. It should be an interesting and fun time.**

**Your RSVP will help in the planning.  
Jim Rosenberger, 803 Arbor Vitae Place, Verona, WI 53593;  
608-845-6365; or punkinz@tds.net**

Sunday 23rd. There was a **Continued from page 5** cloudy wet morning. The hunter who remained out last night, came in early, and had killed an elk. We were employed this forenoon in dividing and packing up our loading; and distributing it among the canoes, which were five in number, three large and two small. At noon we put it on board; and at 1 o'clock left fort Clatsop. The afternoon was fair, we proceeded round Point William, went about 19 miles, and encamped at the mouth of a creek, where we found the three hunters, that had been sent on ahead; and who had killed two elk about a mile and an half distant.

HOOORAAAY!!! We're on our way home.

Your cuzzin, **Patrick Gass**

*(Note: Bill Holman, a Badger State Chapter member and the editor of the Badger State Chapter's "Field Notes," is the second cousin four times removed, of Patrick Gass. He has offered these "letters from the trail", which must have been held up in the mail.)*

## Committed to Lewis & Clark By: **Jim Rosenberger**

Chapter member Mark Nelezen has consistently attended meetings of our Badger State Chapter and it was no different when, in April 2010, our Chapter meeting coincided with the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation's board of directors meeting in Madison. Mark not only attended the meeting but also decided to make a larger commitment and joined the Foundation at that meeting.

In early November 2010, Mark attended the Cumberland Gap Regional Foundation meeting and in early January 2011 wrote an article about that gathering which appeared in the January edition for our Chapter newsletter, "Field Notes". At the end of January we were shocked to receive news that on January 26<sup>th</sup> Mark had suffered a serious heart attack. He was recovering but would be undergoing rehabilitation for some time. Of course our hearts, prayers and good wishes went out to Mark and his family and, while we hoped for the best, we thought it would be awhile before we saw him at another Chapter meeting.

Imagine our surprise when who should walk into our February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Lane Library in Ripon but none other than Mark Nelezen, looking almost as healthy as ever and a smile on his face. We were overjoyed to see him.

Modern Medicine can do wonderful things but this was bordering on amazing. I know our members enjoy listening to Todd Berens speak but Mark went beyond the call of duty to attend this presentation. Could it be that Mark's commitment to Lewis & Clark helped bolster him so he wouldn't miss this meeting? Stranger things have happened. It was just good to see Mark walk into that room. **(Ripon Meeting below)**



## Treasurer's Report

The Badger State Chapter had \$2993.52 in the Chapter Treasury as of April 1, 2011, and membership is now at 74. Thanks to everyone for supporting your Chapter.



## Badger State Chapter Officers:

Jim Rosenberger.....President  
Phone: (608)845-6365 E-mail: punkinz@tds.net

Jack Schroeder.....Vice-President  
Ph: (608)204-0052 E-mail: alljackallday@gmail.com

Mary Strauss.....Secretary  
Phone: (920)602-1639 E-mail: tom@ammeinc.com

Marcia Holman.....Treasurer  
Phone: (608)249-2233 E-mail: wghmch@chorus.net

## Board of Directors:

1-David Sorgel  
(608) 516-1830 E-mail: davidsorgel@onthunderlake.com

2-Dick Campbell  
(920)231-8267 E-mail: rmchistory@tds.net

3-Tom Strauss  
(920)602-1639 E-mail: tom@ammeinc.com

## Field Notes Editor:

Bill Holman  
Phone: (608)249-2233 E-mail: wghmch@chorus.net