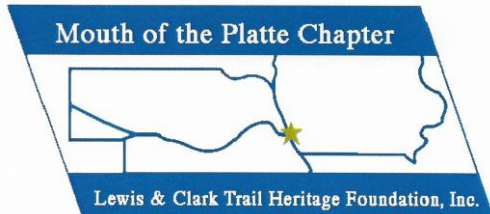


# Mouth of the Platte Chapter Newsletter

Northern Plains Region  
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation—Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance  
“Keepers of the Story~Stewards of the Trail”

March 2025 Edition



Dear Mouth of the Platte Members and Friends,

As I write this President’s column, I am observing the last remnants of ice melting into Beaver Lake. Three weeks ago, I was bragging to my Lewis and Clark friends in Great Falls, Montana, that we had experienced a fairly mild winter snowing season, having received only one inch of snow – 16 inches lower than our normal accumulation at that time. I should have known better! In the ten days following that conversation, we experienced two 5-inch snowfalls and bitter cold. Morning temperatures below zero froze Beaver Lake solid, and wind chills of 20 below required me to dress in many layers prior to walking my 12-year-old yellow lab, Lucy Lou, each morning, afternoon, and evening. It certainly required me to put on my insulated ski pants, long underwear, wool socks, a hooded sweatshirt and cover it all with my Land’s End insulated parka and wool stocking cap! A half-hour brisk walk in this weather was about all Lucy Lou and I could handle before returning to our warm home. On those walks, I often thought of our friends, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the Corps of Discovery. How did they survive crossing the Rocky Mountains, hiking in feet of snow with no road signs to follow and clothed in leather clothing they had sewn themselves, with only moccasins to protect their feet?

However, with the ice melting and spring arriving, our Mouth of the Platte Chapter is looking forward to many events in our area during 2025. In March, our Lewis and Clark Study Group will be culminating a 7-year journey reading the *Definitive Journals of Lewis and Clark* (Volumes 2-9) edited by Gary Moulton. In April, our Study Group will start a new reading journey focused on learning about the native nations encountered by Lewis and Clark. As texts, we will be using James Ronda’s *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* and the LCTA *Discovering Lewis and Clark* website, [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org).

For its spring meeting in April, the LCTA Board of Directors will join with the staff at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail headquarters. We look forward to hosting this event and showing the LCTA Board our historic sites at Lewis and Clark Landing and the magnificent Joslyn Art Museum that reopened last fall. On Sunday, I will guide them on a post-meeting tour of Lewis and Clark sites in the Omaha and Council Bluffs area.

In September, we are excited to have the LCTA Annual Gathering nearby. It will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, September 14-17 at the Kansas City Marriott Hotel on the Plaza. The Kansas City Riverbend Chapter has some great plans in the works. Check it out on the LCTA website [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org). It is only about a 4-hour drive from Omaha.

Keith Bystrom, MOP President

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Seven years. That is how long it has taken the Study Group affiliated with Mouth of the Platte Chapter to read through every word of Gary Moulton's *Definitive Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. A person can't do something that long without being changed by the experience. This time of Study Group's transition between reading the full set of Moulton journals and studying the indigenous peoples of the Western U.S. is a good place to pause and take stock of those changes. Some folks assemble a scrapbook to memorialize an accomplishment or an era in their lives. In this case, Study Group members agreed to contribute to a scrapbook of memories that only they are uniquely qualified to share—a collection of insights into the rich meaning that has accrued to them over their personal journeys across the continent and back with Lewis and Clark. We will here turn the “pages” of this retrospective scrapbook together, one by one, revealing the members' reminiscences and insights.

### **Questions about the Study Group Experience**

#### **1)What influence in your background prepared you to want to study Lewis and Clark?**

A: Mom's college minor was in history. Every summer vacation during my youth, my parents took us to explore a different state: Nebraska, South Dakota, Montana, etc. Also, as young adult, my friend, Jeff Dawson, walked the L&C Trail.

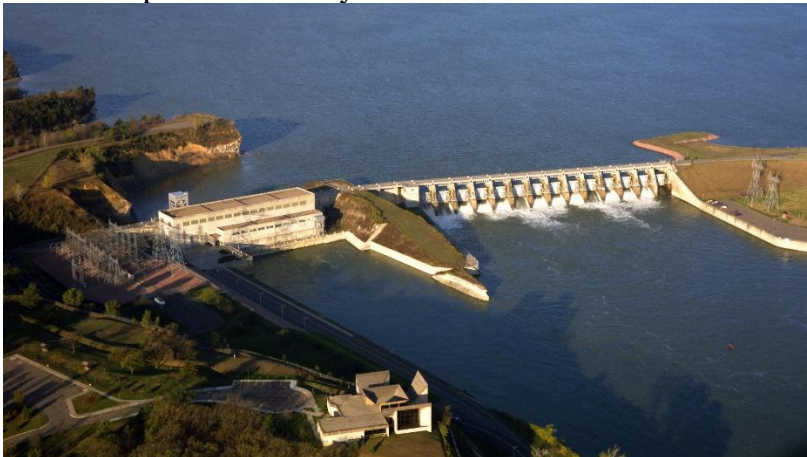
B: My father talked about the Corps of Discovery most of my life.

D: Interest in western U.S. history—cowboys and Indians stuff.

P: Reading *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose.

Sh: At around 13 – 15 years of age my family camped on the bluff overlooking the site where Lewis and Clark counseled with the Yankton people, now the site of Gavins Point Dam. There was a big metal sign on the bluff explaining what went on there. Here I had an “ah ha” moment realizing that history was here, too, not just in Rome or the east coast. This moment put Lewis and Clark in my head.

St: As an eighth grade American History teacher for 40 years, [I considered that] Lewis and Clark was one of those special periods in time. They travelled and stopped in the area where I live: Council Bluffs, Iowa. In my classroom, I showed maps, [designed] bulletin boards, and showed movies—all about the Corps of Discovery.



**Gavins Point Dam in Nebraska**



**Kira Gale**

#### **2)How and when did you get started attending Study Group?**

A: Right after the pandemic, Cass County Historical Society Museum had a flyer for a Living History event. When I attended, Lew and Denna Massey invited me to Study Group.

B: In 2003 [husband] Ralph was invited by Frank Taylor, and then I got roped in.

D: In the fall of 2004. I just showed up in response to an invite from Bob Hastert.



P: In 2017, I went to The Bookworm [a local bookstore] and saw Kira Gale do a presentation on her book. I learned about Study Group that way.

Sh: In 2010, I was finally open for new things as [husband] Tony and I were now empty nesters. We often stopped at Rebecca's Indian Trading Post as Tony was always in search of interesting new Indian stickers for our cars and embroidered patches for his cap collection. Rebecca many times asked me to join their free beading class, and I was finally able to do it in 2010. I sat down next to a lady named Mary Langhorst at my first class, and she asked me what I did for a job. I told her I taught Lewis and Clark classes to 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Gifford Farm Education Center. She handed me her card and said "next week you need to come with me." April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, I attended my first Study Group meeting at the WHTC. In 2011, I was president.

St: I started in 2021 or 2022 with the Study Group. I saw a notice on a bulletin board somewhere and I thought I would check it out.

### 3) Tell me about a particular Study Group session most meaningful/memorable to you.

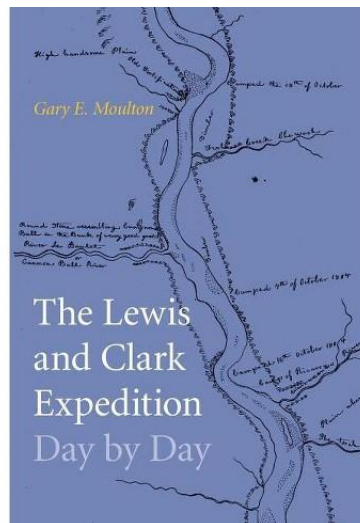
A: Anytime Shirley gave a presentation, her comments and show-and-tell artifacts demonstrated a deep connection with the material studied.

B: There were so many to choose from it is nearly impossible.

P: Anytime Betty does her Power Point presentations. It's different, and I really enjoy it.

Sh: Most meaningful and memorable to me were the rare sessions led by Kira Gale or Evelyn Orr. Both deep researchers. Ev presented good lessons where she asked us deep questions that we, for the most part, could not answer. She continues to amaze me through our phone conversations. She is a sharp one. Listening to Kira give a lesson made me feel like I did not know anything, yet she never condescended and she gave us amazing lessons sharing her book research with us. These two, in my opinion, are the best of us all.

St: All presentations given had my interest. Some were better, but I always learned something new from all of them.



### 4) How has attending Study Group enriched your understanding of the Lewis and Clark Expedition?

A: The members of the Corps became 3-dimensional human beings.

B: The repetition over and over clearly imprints onto your brain the most important [information].

D: It has given me an appreciation of the day-to-day experiences beyond the broad "historical significance" of the Expedition we get in American History courses in school. Issues like getting clothes washed (Camp Wood washerwomen!), placing the latrines, dealing with "thieving Indians", and all of the mundane issues that 28 months of wilderness living imposes on a large group of men with one woman and a baby/toddler in primitive, transient circumstances.

P: I also read Moulton's abridged version (*Day by Day*). This was more in depth, more nuanced.

Sh: I was weekly amazed at the heart and courage in these men. Lewis picked well. Learning of their daily, sometimes hourly, challenges set me to understanding more how these men were ordinary guys, yet totally exceptional. My enrichment came from knowing and understanding this.

St: I have learned so much about the travels of Lewis and Clark, not just from the volumes of the book, but from other members of the group. I enjoyed when we talked about the foods, clothing, animals and people.

### **5)How has preparing to lead Study Group enriched your understanding of the Lewis and Clark Expedition?**

A: Every member's life experience and area of expertise, where contributed to the lesson, amplifies our take-away. As lesson leader, I really learned from listening to others!

B: Any research into a topic will expand your understanding of the subject.

D: Forces me to study a particular aspect of the story in more depth.

P: Forced me to become more knowledgeable, to go more in depth, to embrace the material more thoroughly. I had to anticipate questions and observations from other group members.

Sh: The research involved in preparing your lesson; picking apart the footnotes, studying the flora and fauna of the area, working a timeline, reading and re-reading the lesson pages, showed me more details of the Expedition members' daily lives, which let me understand better their time in history. Nothing like an interesting footnote to pull me down a rabbit hole!

### **6)How has attending and/or preparing to lead Study Group affected you in any other way?**

A: I frequently get the question from friends/acquaintances: "Why Lewis and Clark?" BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS! And these men laid the foundation for U.S. history!

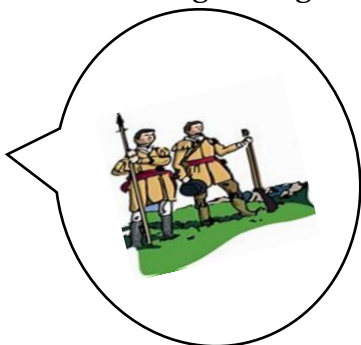
B: It has been a way to make new and exciting friends.

D: Given me a greater appreciation of the challenges faced by the Expedition and other pioneers and the various political and cultural differences of the various groups involved in the exploration.

P: Given me more to talk about. Made me a "nerd" in my social circle. I can always come up with an interesting L&C fact. "Did you know that L&C .... [fill in the blank]?"

Sh: Leading lessons has taught me to understand myself better. What is needed in preparing a lesson is hard for me, as I did not have the discipline needed. My issues with short-term memory retention played into my discomfort. Over time, my lessons were better as my discipline and lesson planning improved.

St: It was a challenge to express the given opinion from my books. I like it when people give their thoughts or personal experiences that go along with the lesson.



### **7)Who in Study Group has most influenced you and how?**

A: Don—He's a man of many talents. He seems to always know in which book or website to find an answer.

B: Kira Gale was a walking encyclopedia of knowledge, and Wayne Kobberdahl was a true humanitarian and a fountain of knowledge.

D: Kira Gale, Bob and Ava Hastert, and Ruth and Tony Hunolt by their in-depth understanding of the Expedition from a layperson's view; these people had knowledge and insight comparable to professionals and shared it graciously.

P: Keith Bystrom. He's so "into" it. He's a rock star for the group. I admire him and am impressed by him.

Sh: Kira Gale by far has influenced me more than anyone else in my Lewis and Clark circle. She asked deep questions on subjects the rest of us never thought about. She blew my mind with what she retained in hers. She used to call ME to talk about a question that bothered her in her research. She made me think deeper. Think about motivations of Wilkinson or Burr. She was my mentor, and I miss her so much. She and Ev and I would go on little excursions, like to the Moses Merrill mission site and the museums in Nebraska City.



Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City



Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha

### 8) What was your favorite Study Group field trip and why?

A: Both Ponca and the cemetery because they took us within a stone's throw of the river!

B: I attended a couple only.

D: The western Iowa flora trip led by Neal Ratzlaff because of the insight that Neal presented.

P: The oldest cemetery in Nebraska on Jerry Westhoff's property. The bluffs overlooked the river.

Sh: My favorite trip was one I organized in early 2015 where we traveled by charter bus to Kansas City to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art to see the Maximilian collection of Indian artifacts. He collected these items on his 1830-1832 expedition up the Missouri River. The item I wanted most to set my eyes on was a painted bison hide that was captured in a watercolor by Bodmer of a Lakota (I think) woman wearing the same hide. The entire collection of hundreds of artifacts went back to Germany with Maximilian, and this 2015 travelling collection was their first return visit since then. MOP offered "scholarships" to interested nonmembers so they could go along. The three scholarships I recall were to Lakota friends of mine who are descendants of Red Cloud and wanted to see his war bonnet.

St: To Ponca State Park. It had maps of L&C on the trails. Also, our fascinating visit to Joslyn Art Museum.

### 9) What was your favorite snack eaten at Study Group, and who brought it?

A: Don's salmon!

B: Snacks were plentiful and varied. Part of the pleasure was to find new things on the snack table.

P: Scotcheroots that Keith brings. I think Mrs. HyVee makes them for him!

Sh: The snacks that stand out in my memory are items reproduced that were eaten by the Expedition. I think you brought the *boudin blanc*.

St: Cookies, cupcakes, muffins, meat, and cheese. All members have contributed items.

### 10) Which was your favorite Study Group venue and why?



- A: Definitely NOT the climate-control-dysfunctional basement stage at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church!  
 B: I attended at all of them. A favorite is difficult to pick.  
 P: Sterling Ridge. It’s comfortable, and it’s close to my house.  
 Sh: My favorite venue is the building we started out in, the Western Historic Trail Center in Council Bluffs, which is now permanently closed. I loved going there and became involved in History Camp for Kids one year in which the theme was LEWIS AND CLARK.



Western Historic Trail Center in Council Bluffs

**11)What one word best describes your time/experience with Study Group?**

- A: Renewal.  
 B: Interesting.  
 D: Enlightening.  
 P: Interesting.  
 Sh: Edutainment.  
 St: Delightful.

**12)What other comments would you like to make about Study Group?**

- A: In college, I remember seeing small gatherings of students in social settings talking animatedly about scholarly topics. This group is definitely déjà vu!  
 B: Good friends, education, a good place to be.  
 P: I really admire that people want to talk about this. Everybody gets out of bed early and puts effort into showing up.  
 Sh: I enjoyed the camaraderie.  
 St: I look forward each week to learning something new.

**13)What additional reading—either books or topics—have you done as a result of Study Group discussions?**

- A: 1800s biographies. Trappers and fur traders.  
 B: In the 24 years I have attended, we have touched on many subjects, some with dubious or faint connections to Lewis and Clark.  
 P: Explorers, especially early western explorers, such as Alexander McKenzie.  
 Sh: I have read so many books because of Study Group. I can’t list them all here, but my book shelves are full as a result of Study Group and footnotes.

**14) How have your studies of Lewis and Clark influenced your personal travel and sightseeing activities?**

A: Not nearly enough in real life. Only in my dreams!

B: I have personally followed a good portion of the trail, made a number of quilts on the subject, tried to advertise the group.

D: Took several special trips and stopped at places related to Lewis and Clark during other trips that I'd never considered before joining Study Group.

P: Anytime we are near the trail or any place of early American History, I am more interested and excited to explore that.

Sh: Tony took me to Fort Mandan and On the Slant Village in 2022. That was our only Lewis and Clark adventure. I am going to Lewis' grave this year.

St: I am on the lookout to visit museums and their gift shops. I like to go to places where the Corps of Discovery visited at one time or another.



Fort Mandan



On the Slant Village, Fort Lincoln State Park, North Dakota

**15) Weekly attendance at Study Group is a huge commitment. What keeps you getting out of bed in the morning to fulfill that commitment?**

B: Friends, curiosity, to see if anything new will be presented.

D: The insight into the Expedition and the sharing by the members of Study Group.

P: Commitment. I need to show up for others as well as myself.

St: To be with new friends, new topics and the snacks.

**16) What do you hope to accomplish by studying the Native American Tribes in 2025 and 2026?**

B: My minor in college was Native American Studies. I am an adopted member of a Blackfeet tribe. More information about the Native Americans is always welcome and a good thing.

D: In-depth understanding of the culture and the distinctive traits of each tribe and the common traits of the indigenous people shared with the incoming people.

P: The indigenous people have been overlooked and taken for granted. We owe it to ourselves and to the indigenous people to learn about their culture.

Sh: What I hope will happen is that the individual groups of Indigenous peoples will be studied from their past to current times, lending awareness to their horrific struggles in both eras and looking for the good news.

St: More in depth information and to learn the contributions of various Indian groups.

**ADW:** As you can see, dear Readers, NO ONE has come away from the seven years of Study Group endeavor "empty handed". Members have built a community that satisfies a deeply seated need for companionship and shared experience, as well as for personal accomplishment. At its foundation, Study Group cemented together the lives of these individuals in a way impossible to produce by casual



contact among anonymous history buffs admiring a museum exhibit. From this sturdy base, each person has been strengthened and sharpened to press on to the goal of finishing a good work. The result of “knowing and being known” made everyone happier. Isn’t that a concept Thomas Jefferson embraced in the Declaration of Independence? “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” Jefferson, himself, would approve of what has here transpired.



Besides the question of personal and interpersonal satisfaction, these studious individuals have acquired a significant knowledge base in U.S. History exceeding that of the vast majority of their fellow citizens. The following section demonstrates the quality of their well-nourished understanding after ingesting the smorgasbord of Gary Moulton’s lifetime of effort—an understanding that far surpasses the sliced, diced, and julienned tidbits most American schoolchildren may have nibbled during their brief exposure to Lewis and Clark in “no child left behind” grade schools.

### Questions about the Subject Matter

#### 17) Which one of the journal writers is your favorite and why?

A: Gass has unique insights and an eye for detail.

B: Lewis. His in-depth explanations might be long and boring, but they feel real and accurate.

D: No favorite—each gives unique insight into certain aspects of the Expedition.

P: Lewis: He had a gift/talent with words. I love how he writes.

Sh: Lewis is by far my favorite journal writer. His page after page of minute and boring details on a particular specimen could sometimes be difficult to read, but other times they read like poetry. He was serious about his mission for Jefferson, dotting all the ‘I’s and crossing all his ‘T’s not wanting to leave any details out. I admire his dedication and I will always feel sad that his remarkable life was cut so short.

St: William Clark—He was smart, a good thinker, a firm but fair commander, and had the demeanor to deal with members of the Corps and the Indians.

#### 18) Which member of the Expedition do you most admire and why?

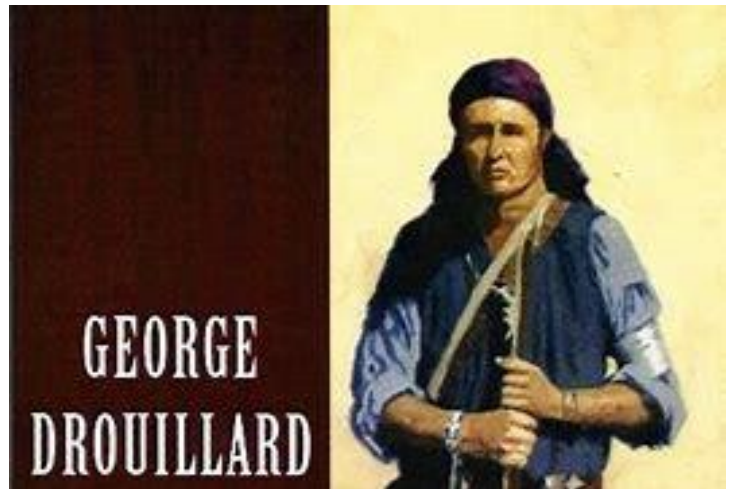
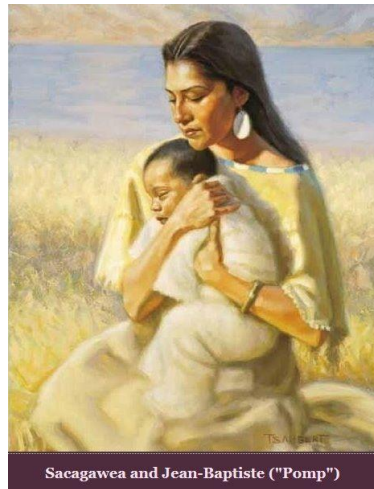
A: Lewis –It took humility to share command when Jefferson first put him in sole charge.

B: York was always my favorite. Slave or not, you do not read often of any resentment or mutterings.

D: George Drouillard—He does his job without fanfare, steps up to meet challenges, yet never seems to inject himself into the story for recognition.



**George Shannon**



P: Sacagawea. She did not consent to go on this trip, yet she contributed fully and hauled a baby to the Pacific coast and back!

Sh: I have always admired Lewis, but I truly admire George Shannon. He just wanted to be one of the guys and he was willing to do anything. He did whatever the others told him to do. Being the youngest fellow, he took a lot of teasing. Getting lost those few times did not help matters. I admire his gumption and courage.

St: Sacagawea. She was smart, creative, courageous, and one of the hardest working members of the group.

**19) Which member of the Expedition do you most identify with and why?**

A: Lewis. I can get carried away by scenes of visionary enchantment!

B: As a woman, I have a very high view of Sacagawea. A new teen mother with a small baby to care for, she still held the Expedition together in many ways.

P: Sacagawea. As a woman, myself. She was underappreciated. We have all been in positions where we are just expected to be there.

Sh: I identify with George Drouillard. He was half Indian and half white. My family is a mixed one, also—half Indian and half white and at times I have witnessed the disparity toward my Indian relatives by others in the world. It is hurtful for me to watch and more so to know that they live with that. Happily, this is a rare occurrence. I wonder what Drouillard experienced during his life.

**20) At what event of the Expedition would you most like to have been present and why?**

A: At the return to St. Louis in 1806. What a joyous celebration!

B: I would like to have stood with Lewis at the discovery of the Great Falls of the Missouri.

D: The meeting with the Shoshone; it was one of the most critical events of the Expedition—if the Shoshone had not accepted the Expedition, the Expedition would likely have failed.

P: At Dismal Nitch, when they reached the west coast and were not able to get settled down. I would like to have witnessed the VOTE about where to make Fort Clatsop. I would have witnessed York and Sacagawea vote. Now THAT'S history!

St: Visiting all the huge waterfalls with the sounds of thunder. I also would have liked listening to the music and dancing to the drums and the fiddles as they celebrated their friendships.

**21) Which scientific discovery made by the Corps do you consider the most significant and why?**

A: As a language teacher, myself, the linguistic relationships of the tribes.

B: They made so many that it is hard to state which was the most important.

D: The geological significance of the Rocky Mountains and the Continental Divide and its significance in understanding Western exploration and settlement.

P: Disproving the water passageway to the West. It was a “non-discovery”. They disproved the theory.

Sh: For me, the most significant discovery was that there was no all-water route to the Pacific. On their return, this was made known to all and the cheese, having been moved, caused everyone to think differently. Finally knowing for sure was something the fur companies used when they started into the West.

St: New animals, flowers, soil, etc.

**22) If there were one question you could ask a particular member of the Expedition, what would it be?**

A: Of Clark: After all you had been through together, how could you justify returning York to his former slave status on the return to civilization?

B: How in the name of common sense did you do it???

P: At the risk of sounding like the psychologist [that I am], I would ask Lewis on his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday about his mental status: “Are you feeling like your life is worth it? Would you end it?” I would put down for posterity this speculative issue.

Sh: A question bothering me since I read of it the first time was WHY wasn't Sacagawea with Lewis' forward party when they were trying to locate the Shoshone? Isn't this just the reason they wanted her on the Expedition?

**23) What image of the Corps, as a whole, most stands out in your mind?**

A: The dancing—joyous release after pain, fear, exhaustion, and exposure.

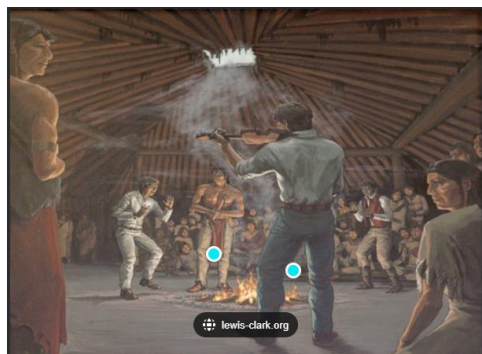
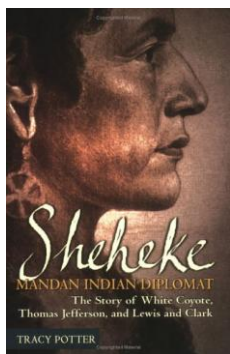
B: The camaraderie, the mutual respect shown, achievement of it all.

D: The completion to the assignment with limited internal conflict under extremely challenging circumstances.

P: This group of people, who started out with no idea of what they were getting themselves into, embraced it and didn't complain. They just DID it.

Sh: What most stands out in my mind is the image of the men pushing, pulling, rolling, shoving, the boats around the five falls on the Missouri. In my opinion, it was pure will and the desire to not disappoint the captains that got them over.

St: Brave, loyal, and showed respect for each other.



**24) Which Native American involved in the Expedition story most stands out to you and why?**

A: Sheheke—He was brave enough to go to the home of the whites and was later ridiculed for truthfully telling what he saw there. It shows the incredible divide that the whites and Natives had to surmount in relating to one another.

B: My choice would be the Shoshone or the Nez Perce. Without their help, the Expedition would probably have been a disaster.



D: Sacagawea. She was generally a “behind-the-scenes” participant, but she had several instances where she made significant contributions to the success of the Expedition. I especially respect her insistence on seeing the whale in direct challenge to her typical subservience as a slave woman.

P: Sacagawea.

Sh: Watkuweis, the Nez Perce woman, who counseled the chiefs not to kill the Expedition. Once again, the men were saved by a woman. Pretty impressive.

St: George Drouillard. He had many assets: hunter, scout, woodsman, interpreter of Indian sign language, tracker, negotiator, messenger, diplomat, fur trapper, endurance, and good judgment for dangerous times.

**25) If there were one question you could ask a particular Native American involved in the Expedition story, what would it be?**

A: Sacagawea: How many of the paper records slipped away from you downstream?

B: It would be to Cameahwait, brother to Sacagawea: How did you feel at the return of your sister?

P: To Sacagawea: Tell me your story. You were abducted. You were a trauma survivor. You were sold to Charbonneau. Tell me about yourself.

Sh: I would ask Sacagawea if she gave up her blue bead belt willingly or was she coerced? Also, was she satisfied with the compensation she was given for it?

**26): If there were one question you could ask a particular person (someone who did NOT go on the Expedition) involved in furthering or obstructing the mission of the Expedition, what would it be?**

A: Of Wilkinson—Did you have anything to do with the death of Meriwether Lewis?

B: Why did the Spanish oppose the Expedition so hard? What did they have to gain?

P: Of Thomas Jefferson: At what point while the men were gone did his attention go elsewhere? When the men were presumed dead, at what point did he give up on them?

Sh: I would ask the leader of the expeditions of the Spanish who tried to stop L&C, who had a very inaccurate map of the Missouri River: If you knew Lewis and Clark were not coming anywhere close to your silver mines, would you have not bothered with them?



**27) What question would you most like to ask Gary Moulton?**

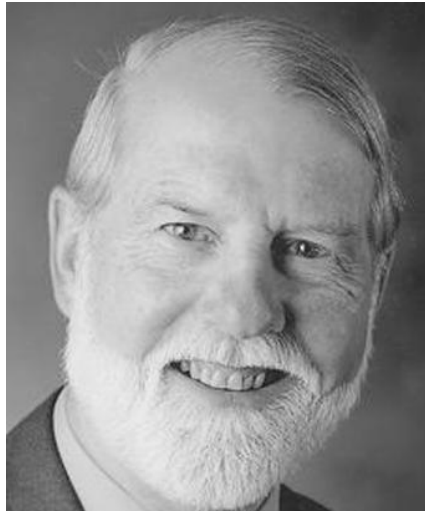
A: What was your biggest surprise in doing your Lewis and Clark research?

B: Were you ever tempted to stop midstream and say, “Enough is enough. I quit!”?

P: I would ask him how he got a copy of the Journals. Did he have a transcript? Did he have a photocopy? Were they scanned? What did he use as an archive?

Sh: Only an observation: I am just puzzled at the items in the journals that you chose NOT to footnote.

St: What motivated you to want to write about the Lewis and Clark Expedition?



**Gary Moulton**

**28) What comment would you most like to make to Gary Moulton?**

A: You enabled me to find the answers to my lifetime of questions about Lewis and Clark. Thank you!

B: Great job done!

D: Thank you for the journals!

P: Thank you for your effort in doing this! At times, it must have felt like a thankless task.

Sh: I would like to thank you and your staff for your hard work, efforts, and dedication in completing such a mammoth undertaking as editing so many volumes. I am indebted to you for making the journals so readable. Even though you needed to footnote more items!

**Final Comment by St:** What event in American history can be compared to the Lewis and Clark Expedition? The trip to the moon, picking the crew with the particular skills needed to get to the moon, selecting needed supplies to take along, unknown dangers that lay ahead of them, etc. Getting to the moon is like getting to the Pacific Ocean and safely returning home. They could have died so many way and so many times. But, like comparing this to going into the moon and back, they proceeded on!

**ADW:** To sum this all up:

Since food is a pleasant and inevitable concomitant of every Study Group interaction, let's continue the nourishment metaphor. There is, in the future, a banquet of diverse information awaiting this group of Mouth of the Platte scholars. Beginning with James Ronda's *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, they will uncover as much as they are able to do regarding the Native peoples whose lives sharpened and were sharpened by interactions with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Many other authors and videographers have prepared contributions to the companion knowledge base for the Lewis and Clark story—information known by the 19<sup>th</sup> century living, breathing Native actors, but obscured and unavailable to the whites of the 1800s by virtue of the cultural straightjackets in which those whites lived and moved. The resources available on the website of the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance ([www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org)) will play a significant role in Study Group's pursuit of cross-cultural awakening. However, it remains to be seen what contributions might yet be uncovered by Study Group members as a result of their interactions with the material, each other, and their own social networks. No one can anticipate or limit Study Group's effervescent gestalt!

We invite you all to come and partake. As Lao Tzu said many centuries before Christ, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

CONGRATULATIONS, STUDY GROUP!

-ADW

[A: Ann, B: Betty, D: Don, P: Peg, Sh: Shirley, St: Steve]

## Supplement to Study Group Notes:

### SCOTCHAROOS RECIPE

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, or as needed
- 1 ½ cups peanut butter
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup white sugar
- 6 cups crisp rice cereal
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup butterscotch chips

Gather all ingredients. Generously butter a 9x13-inch baking pan; set aside. Mix peanut butter, corn syrup, and sugar together in a large pot; cook and stir over medium heat until peanut butter melts. Bring mixture to a boil. Remove pot from heat.

Stir in rice cereal until well combined.

Transfer mixture into the prepared pan and pat it down with buttered hands. Melt chocolate chips and butterscotch chips in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat; stir until smooth.

Spread over top of bars.

Cool completely, about 20 minutes, before cutting into 24 squares.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/15585/scotcharoos/>

### Dinner Speakers: December 2024 – March 2025

**December 17 (Denny's Restaurant, Omaha): Karla Sigala and Kevin McCarthy**

Topic: [\*Big Medicine—The York Project\*](#)



**Karla Sigala & Kevin McCarthy of the National Park Service present their 2025 Feature Project**

Partially as a result of this presentation witnessed by 12 MOP members, the theme for this March newsletter has emerged as “One man sharpens another.” National Park Service team members Karla Sigala (Interpretation and Education Manager) and Kevin McCarthy (Visual Information Specialist), aided by David Bulin (Education Technician), brought MOP new information about *Big Medicine: The York Project*. This three- to four-year multi-phase NPS endeavor is set to launch publically during Black History Month (February) of 2026, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the declaration of U.S. Independence from Great Britain. Though the timing is auspicious for its symbolic quarter-millennial link to our national independence, there is something more that helps answer the question of



“Why now?” Specifically, the 30-year dedication of one man – Kentucky lawyer Hasan Davis – to telling/re-enacting the story of York, a Clark family slave whose presence on the Expedition was not voluntary, has so inspired NPS historians that Hasan could be said to have “sharpened” the NPS vision of this worthy endeavor.

The vision began with analytics of the NPS website (<https://www.nps.gov/lecl>), which receives over one million views per year. Said analytics show that the inquiring public is seeking information on York; website meta-data consistently rank searches involving York as the fifth or sixth most numerous, following close behind searches on the name “Sacagawea”, the only female member of the Corps. Clearly, the American public resonates with these two individuals and is ready to think more deeply and truthfully about racial history in the U.S. More than that, as Karla revealed, Gen Z wants “real” history strongly enough to spend the time and energy to “ground truth” it.

To date, development of the vision has brought to fruition several phases of the overall NPS project.

Early 2023 – Lewis and Clark Trust granted NPS money for the development of a studio presentation on York.

April 2023 – Professional filming of Hasan Davis in first-person re-enactment of York: *My Name is York*

Summer 2023 – Strategic hiring of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) intern Nya Bell, Alabama State University Senior, whose mandate was to build a network of contacts and develop methods to engage community members.

July 2024 – Transformative 4-day river journey conducted by Missouri River Outfitters, along the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument—*Big Medicine: York Outdoors*. Eight black educators and environmental stewards from across the country paddled, hiked, and camped along the same rivers traveled by the L&C Expedition over 200 years ago. The trip was filmed, and the footage is being made into a 25-minute documentary for release in June 2025. Watch a teaser for *Big Medicine: York Outdoors* at <https://youtu.be/KIRk6bubaw4?si=L7OVsA8TxlG05Z>.

Finances limited the length of this initial video, but NPS anticipates that multiple projects will eventually spring from the filming of this expedition.

December 2024 – *Big Medicine: Conversations on York*: Hasan Davis facilitated a dialogue with Omaha community members regarding York’s legacy and its connection to civil rights today. This interaction was filmed by New Multimedia at the Union for Contemporary Art, a local organization whose mission is to strengthen the cultural and social landscape of Omaha by using the arts as a vehicle to inspire positive social change.

June 2025 – Premier of 25-minute *Big Medicine: York Outdoors* video at the Union for Contemporary Art

Summer 2025 –*Slice of History* events: NPS will partner with *Made by Us*, a coalition of over 100 history museums, sites, archives, and youth-focused civic education organizations, to hold video screenings of the *York Expedition* documentary for pizza parties at sites along the L&C Trail. The connection of *Made by Us* to young influencers and youth-oriented publications will help NPS reach a Gen Z audience.

2026 – Zachary Stocks writes *Big Medicine: Interpretive Guide and Toolkit*, intended to be used by more than 150 museums in 16 states. The *Toolkit* presents history, slavery, and person-hood as non-negotiable concepts. Rollout of all components of the project.



Karla Sigala of National Park Service talks to re-enactor Mike Bowman

Back to the idea of “One man sharpens another” –Karla introduced us to other individuals whose involvement in the York Project continues to drive it to completion:

- **York, himself:** His critical contributions to the L&C Expedition were detailed both in the written journals of Expedition members and in oral accounts by members of Tribal Nations encountered by the Expedition. Members of the Arikara Tribe referred to York as “The Big Medicine” for his power and the color of his skin.

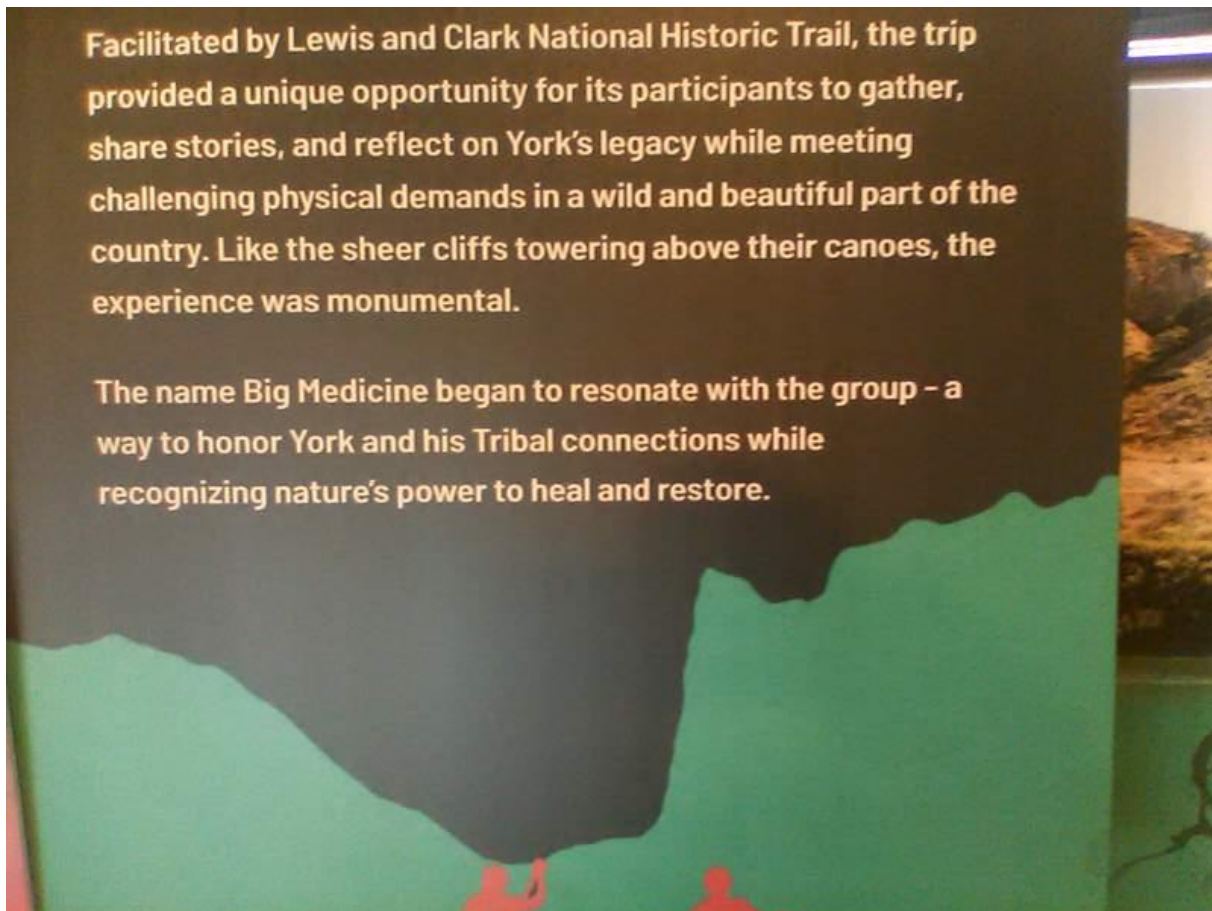
- **Ashley Danielson**: Volunteer and Partnership Specialist
- **Loren Yellow Bird, Sr.**: Interpretive Specialist
- **Hasan Davis**: Activist and Living History actor. His portrayal of York is enriched by decades of research and experience traveling the L&C Trail. (In Commonwealth of Kentucky, he is a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice).
- **James Edward Mills**: Founder of the *Joy Trip Project* (a program that takes young men outdoors), author of *The Adventure Gap*, National Geographic Fellow, Leader/Organizer of the York Expedition trip
- **Alex Wiles**: Head of New Multimedia, partner with Lewis and Clark National Park Service to produce the components of the York Project
- **Zachary Stocks**: Public historian, museum professional, Executive Director of Oregon Black Pioneers, writer of *Big Medicine: Interpretive Guide and Toolkit*
- **Kassey Trahanas**: Supervisory Park Ranger at the NPS
- **C.J. Goulding**: Co-founder and Executive Director of *Boyz in the Wood*
- **Malcolm Davis**: Founder of Affrilachian Art Institute; writer and re-enactor of *The Slave, Monk Estil* (black Civil War Soldier); son of Hasan Davis.
- **Amber Wendler**: PhD candidate in ornithology, author of *Been Outside*.
- **Carolyn Finney**: Storyteller, PhD. author of *Black Faces/White Spaces*, member of NPS Advisory Board
- **Andre Lambertson**: Director of *Big Medicine: York Outdoors*, Netflix Fellow, Emmy-nominated film director, active investigation of crime stories.

The interaction of these people and others has inspired the NPS to revive York's story and to create a full-length feature of York. This film would be available to NPS partners and to the wider public. NPS is seeking \$500,000+ in funding and a creative partner for this venture.

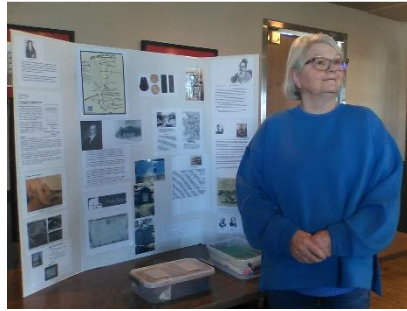
If Karla has whetted your appetite to know more about this people-sharpening project, please contact her: [Karla Sigala@nps.gov](mailto:Karla_Sigala@nps.gov). As a 25-year veteran of the National Park Service, connecting people with the healing power of the great outdoors is her specialty!

Thank you, Karla for an informative presentation!

-ADW



Topic: *Fur Traders in the Omaha/Council Bluffs Area*



### **Paula Imes addresses monthly meeting**

For this monthly meeting, nine MOP members witnessed an excellent Paula Imes one-woman show! As MOP Vice-President, Paula undertakes the task of opening our meeting every month with a reading from the Expedition journals. She brings attendees up to date on what the men were doing on our meeting date in the years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806. Brief examples on this date were:

1804 at Fort Wood: Expedition had not yet left the St. Louis area. The captains were discussing regulations and how to perform courts-martial, if necessary.

1805 at Fort Mandan: One man had “the pox”. Hunters provided 3 elk, 4 deer, 1 fox, 2 porcupines, and 1 hare.

1806 at Fort Clatsop: Shannon and LaBiche killed 2 elk and left the carcasses in the field with plans to get the meat the following day. There’s a lengthy quamas narrative.

After taking a break for lunch, Paula stood to tell us about several local fur traders. She covered Jean-Pierre Cabanne and his partner, Bernard Pratt. Cabanne was born in 1775 in Aquitaine, France; moved to St. Louis; married Julie Gratiot; and had 11 children. In 1805, he was licensed to trade in the territory northward from Kansas City. His trade competitors were Manuel Lisa and Pierre Chouteau. He quietly kept a native wife, Mary Jane Barada (Omaha/French), whose grandfather was an early settler of St. Louis. After Cabanne took over the Robidoux trading post, he and his son-in-law’s brother, Peter Sarpy, were involved in the scandalous activity of transporting whiskey, so Cabanne lost his license to trade with the Native Americans. He ended up selling his interest in the trading concern to Joshua Pilcher, and Peter Sarpy had to leave the area.

Trader Manuel Lisa was born in New Orleans in 1772. His father was from Spain. His wife was Polly Chew. In 1803-1804, Lisa sold supplies to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In 1807, Lisa led an expedition to Montana. Lisa wanted to trade with the Southwest Indian tribes, but James Wilkinson derailed those plans by sending Zebulun Pike to the area. For Lisa, the War of 1812 was a boon because he was able to trade with Natives on both the British and American side of the conflict. Lisa was a member of the American Fur Company that purchased the steamboat *Yellowstone*. He died young, a man broken by his difficulties.

Peter Sarpy was born in 1804 in St. Louis. He married Nicomi, whose mixed-race daughter (Mary) by American surgeon John Gale later married Joseph La Flesche (Iron Eye), the last chief of the Omaha Tribe. Mary Gale and Joseph La Flesche were parents of the famous La Flesche sisters, Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte and Susette La Flesche Tibbles (see p. 28). Peter Sarpy’s wide-ranging experience included his work for fur trader John Jacob Astor near Bellevue; his work for fur trader John Cabanne at the Robidoux post; his establishment of Fort Jackson, Colorado; the sale of wares and whiskey; and the establishment of the Bellevue, Nebraska, post office. Peter Sarpy was a Chouteau relative. He sold goods to settlers and transported immigrants across the Missouri River. His post was north of the area in Bellevue that is now Haworth Park.

Hard Heart was an Iowa Indian who traded north of present-day Council Bluffs. He was married to Peter Sarpy’s native wife’s mother. Hard Heart Found himself in opposition to his tribe during the War of 1812, so



was ousted by the tribe and lived with another tribe. Later, the tribes federated. Natives eventually killed him, his brother, and his brother's wife.

Lucien and Logan Fontenelle had a large trading post near Bellevue, Nebraska, with lots of large buildings and 2-story houses. Fontenelle Forest has an extensive archive on their fur trading activities.

Eventually, fur trading posts died out because the *voyageurs* began taking trade to Indian Territory.

Paula recommends the following books:

\**The Iron Eyes Family* by Norma Kidd Green (1969)

\**Beaver Skins and Mountain Men* by Carl Burger

\**Voyage of the Steamboat Yellowstone* by Donald Jackson

Thanks for an informative presentation, Paula!

-ADW

### **February 18 (Denny's Restaurant, Omaha): Doug Friedli, Director of MRBVC**

*Topic: 2025 Events and Activities at Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center*

This event was cancelled due to frigid weather. Doug agreed to postpone to our March meeting.

### **March 18 (Denny's Restaurant, Omaha): Doug Friedli, Director of MRBVC**

*Topic: 2025 Events and Activities at Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center*



**Doug (standing, in blue) distributed copies of the MRBVC events calendar to MOP (photo courtesy of Shirley Enos)**

Dedication to the Lewis and Clark cause and a phenomenal skill set came together in the person of Doug Friedli, Director of the Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center. On March 18, Doug graciously carved out time from his duties at the Center to drive to Omaha for a simple lunch at Denny's Restaurant with 14 of his ardent admirers. As these folks have a vital interest in the welfare of the Center, they listened eagerly to his narrative of recent developments at the Center, as well as plans for its future. Doug was the perfect person to bring the news.

I say “carved out” as wood was the prime order of the day. This particular day was the inauguration of work on the wood palisade (fence) at the Center’s Fort Wood reproduction. During the MOP luncheon, Doug maintained constant availability to his crew in Nebraska City. With temperatures climbing into the 60s, the hope was that trenching could begin there for the purpose of erecting the first of the logs harvested over the winter by the Fichter brothers, Sterling and Isaac, from a piece of land near their farm owned by the Department of Natural Resources. Even though a blizzard was in the forecast for the morrow, preparations could begin TODAY. One gets the distinct message from this can-do guy that TODAY is the day for action. As an example of that productive attitude, the fact that Denny’s Restaurant couldn’t provide technology for an electronic presentation, nor turn down the ambient music in our private meeting room in the absence of their manager, didn’t slow him down in the least. If he felt dismay, the good humor of his countenance never wavered; he pulled out a paper back-up and began to talk.

The photos were good: Master Builder Butch Bouvier, re-enactors Mike Bowman and Shirley Enos (both of whom were in attendance), Dave Bradley, Thomas Hamilton, Claude Overstreet, and Mark Throckmorton. In addition, Doug had heart-warming photos of modern child visitors to the Center whose passion for the re-enactors’ tools and trades led them to crank and saw and twist away, boring holes, making rope and sawdust, feeling furs, and asking questions with rapt attention.

The Center isn’t just a resource for child visitors who have never ventured beyond the streets of Omaha or held a tool in their hands. It’s a refuge for adults whose hectic lives leave them starved for interaction with the world of nature. “Brown Bagging with the Birds” continues to be a popular event during the winter months, when the wild, feathered ones take advantage of the Center’s seed and suet feeders. Against the snow, their plumage—whether dark or bright—stands in dramatic contrast to the whiteness. Within one hour on one particularly snowy Friday noon, Doug and dedicated volunteer Shirley Enos counted 25 bald eagles over the Center. This land, deeded to the MRBVC Foundation prior to the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, is perfectly situated to immerse visitors in the world and experiences of the explorers!



In addition to the wild birds and the ideal spot from which to closely observe them, the Center hosts permanent and traveling exhibits and events to delight, entertain, and educate. One such recent event was a February 16 presentation on butterflies by photographer and self-educated naturalist Steve Hassler. Another such event has been a Native American Artifacts Show held annually in mid-March. When I referred previously to Doug’s phenomenal skill set, his “super-power” of networking comes to mind foremost. Doug has the remarkable ability to develop and maintain the human relationships that make miracles transpire. In the case of the Native American Artifact Show, his persistence in

welcoming the dialogue between whites and Natives held open the Center’s doors to four members of the Otoe/Missouria Tribe. This Tribe suffered much historically due to the whims of white policy-makers, but its members have, nonetheless, decided to write their own history and move ahead into a future focused on healthy interactions with whites (see p. 21 for more on this topic).

An excellent time to visit the Center is during its monthly (soon to be semi-monthly, i.e., twice per month) “Saturday with a Soldier” re-enactments. On these days, the Center’s activities spill out onto the grounds and take the form of interactive displays curated by folks with a passion for history and handcrafts, based out of canvas tents and the developing fort structures. The crowning instance of “Saturday with a Soldier” is the Lewis and Clark Reunion on September 20-21 (also Applejack Weekend in Nebraska City).

For folks with a soft spot for sweets, MRBVC holds an annual birthday celebration for Captains Lewis and Clark, complete with cake, punch, and a speaker specially chosen for his or her impact on the Missouri River corridor or the greater Lewis and Clark story. Several years ago, that speaker was photographer Alex Wiles, who has gone on to film the *York Project* featured on page 14. The speaker for 2025 has not yet been revealed.

For the full list of MRBVC activities planned for the 2025 season, see page 32. When you visit the Center, if you like what you see—and you will--, please give generously to further its work. One final nod to Doug’s phenomenal skill set involves sustaining the Center’s mission on a budget in the neighborhood of \$300,000, whereas it would cost somewhere near \$900,000 to have the facility staffed and maintained by the federal government. I don’t intend this information as a criticism of the federal bureaucracy. Let it just serve as encouragement for us to better support the Center financially. Imagine what Doug and his crew could accomplish if they were fully funded with the federal government’s budget! Doug shepherds the Center’s finances well.

Thank you, Doug for making the trip to enlighten MOP. We greatly appreciate you!

-ADW



Jack and Peggy Christ enjoy listening to Doug Friedli



## Native American Artifacts Show

### Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Trail & Visitor Center

### March 8, 2025

On March 8, about 40 guests gathered at the Native American Artifacts Show (Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center) to hear an oral history of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe spoken by four members of the Tribe. This gathering was a first of its kind at the Center. The tribal people journeyed from Red Rock, Oklahoma, to share their words at the invitation of MRBVC Director Doug Friedli (see p. 18). The interaction was facilitated by Cassandra Dean, Director of the Gage County Museum. Four MOP Chapter members participated: President Keith Bystrom, Vice-President Paula Imes, Steve Wymore, and Mike Sweeney.

Though many interesting stories were shared by the tribal people in person, we here respect the intimate oral nature of the story-telling experience and reproduce only a summary of the written history composed by the Tribe for their website: *The Otoe & Missouria Tribe: Five Hundred Years of History*. The unabridged version of the written history can be read on their website [www.omtribe.org](http://www.omtribe.org).

Prior to the 1500s, four modern tribes – Otoe, Missouria, Winnebago, and Iowa – were part of a single tribe living in the Great Lakes region of North America. During the century between 1500 and 1600, the four peoples separated and migrated west and south, though they continued to live near one another in the lower Missouri River Valley through the early 1800s. This summary deals only with the Otoe and Missouria people.



Trade was a vital part of the Otoe and Missouria life for centuries. The Natives traded with the Spanish, French, and Americans. For a time, the Missouria Tribe controlled traffic and trade along the Missouri River and its tributaries.

Trading contact with whites brought new diseases for which the Natives had no immunity. Smallpox decimated the two tribes and weakened their dominance in the region. The Missouria Tribe, in particular, lost many members to disease, while many healthy warriors that remained lost their lives in battle with other tribes. In the late 1700s, the depleted Missouria Tribe traveled north up the Missouri River to live with the Otoes (their relatives).

Together, these peoples were primarily hunter-gatherers. They had a tradition of migrating to follow the buffalo, as bison and other game made up the majority of their diet. They also did subsistence farming of corn, beans, and squash. They stayed in the general area of modern-day Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas.

In the summer of 1804, the Otoe-Missouria were the first tribe to hold council with Lewis and Clark in their official roles as representatives of President Jefferson. The captains brought a message to the tribes that signified the beginning of the end of the way of life the Tribe had previously enjoyed.

By the mid-1800s, American settlers began to arrive and occupy Otoe-Missouria tribal lands. As the number of settlers increased, the tribal people fought to protect their land. As a result, the U.S. government sided with the white settlers by confining the Otoe-Missouria Tribe to a reservation along the Big Blue River in southeast Nebraska. Then, life was hard. The government expected the Tribe to farm instead of following the buffalo, which would cause them to lose long-established traditions and social structures. In fact, buffalo hunting was not allowed at all.

Despite government expectations that the Natives would farm the land, the federal government broke treaties with the tribe by selling the reservation land to non-Indians and not delivering to the Tribe promised food, medicines, livestock, and other essentials. Many Natives grew sick and many died.

In 1881, the federal government moved the Tribe to a reservation in Red Rock, Oklahoma. In 1887, the newly created Dawes Act broke up the Otoe-Missouria reservation in Oklahoma by opening up the land to settlement by non-Indians and development by railroads. Before long, one-half of reservation land no longer belonged to the Natives. It wasn't until the 1960s that the Tribe was able to win a court battle to reclaim their land.

As of this year, 3,300 tribal members remain in the United States, most in the state of Oklahoma. A Tribal Council leads the tribe. Gaming revenue earned by the Tribe has funded other successful ventures.



As a result of 100 years of government policies that displaced Native children from their homes to government boarding schools, discouraged Natives from learning and speaking their birth language, and prevented Native traditions from being passed down from one generation to another, the Tribe has struggled to preserve and regain their language and traditions. In some cases, they do so by studying tribal information documented by non-Indians during the earliest years of White-Native contact. Tribal members perpetuate tribal traditions in feasts, dances, powwows, and songs.

One of the speakers at MRBVC on March 8 is a Native princess who will soon share her tribal stories and tribal perspectives at Harvard University at the university's invitation. Members of MOP wish her great success in that endeavor.

-ADW

## MOP Board Meeting Minutes Summary

December 3, January 7, February 4, March 3, & April 1, 2024

23

**Treasurer's Report:** Checking: \$2,332.06. Savings: \$2,743.93. LCTHF Grants: \$13,352.59. The grant total includes our new \$10,000 grant for the Sculpture Icon Trail.

**Membership Report:** Northern Plains Region is down 10 members from last accounting. The MOP Board wonders if having a universal renewal date would help members remember to renew.

**Past Monthly Meetings:** December 17: 11:30 a.m. at Denny's Restaurant in Omaha. Program: Karla Sigala and Kevin McCarthy of NPS presented *Big Medicine: The York Project*. Attendance: 12. This is an excellent endeavor to acknowledge the valuable contribution of York to the Lewis & Clark Expedition. (see p. 14)

January 21: 11:30 a.m. at Denny's in Omaha. Program: Paula Imes, MOP Vice President, presented *Fur Traders in the Omaha/Council Bluffs Area*. Attendance: 9. MOP members benefitted from Paula's life-long interest in and research into the local fur-trading scene. (see p. 17)

February 18: Cancelled due to weather.

March 18: 11:30 a.m. at Denny's in Omaha. Attendance: 15. Program: Doug Friedli on *What is Happening at Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center in Nebraska City in 2025*. Doug brought us up to date on progress at Fort Wood and told us about a lot of fun events over the spring and summer months. (see p. 18)

**Future Monthly Meetings:** (Social Hour at 5:30 p.m.)

April 15: 6 p.m., Denny's Restaurant. Program: Jim Johnston on *Native American Tribal Artifacts and Tribal Cultures*

May 20: 6 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant. Program: Peggy Christ on *L&C Books Published within the Last Few Years*

June 17: 6 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant. Program: TBD

**Lewis and Clark Interpretive Wayside Exhibits:** These projects do not lend themselves to progress over the winter. In order to move forward on our new Sculpture Icon project, MOP and the City of Omaha are seeking information on signs missing from the Riverfront and signs recently replaced on the Riverfront.

**Relationships:** Cass County Historical Society: Cass County will hold Spring Living History Day on April 26 (see p. 31)

Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Trail and Visitor Center: Made progress on the Wood River Fort Annex over the winter. Butch redesigned fireboxes to draw more efficiently, and arrangements were made for palisade logs to be cut and delivered to the site by the Fichters. For a full list of seasonal activities, see p. 32.

National Park Service Headquarters: LCTA Board of Directors will meet at NPS HQ on April 23, 24, & 25. MOP members are welcome to join the LCTA BOD for an evening at the Luminarium on Thursday, April 23. For the visiting dignitaries, Keith Bystrom will conduct a tour of local L&C sites on Sunday, April 26.

Omaha Parks and Recreation: Dennis Bryers has retired. Keith is in contact with his replacement, Quentin, regarding signage on the Riverfront.

Sioux City Lewis and Clark Center: Received an LCTA grant of \$7,500 for development of new exhibits. Spring SFTS meeting at this location on April 13.

Western Historic Trails Center: No news on the prospect of salvaging the granite elevation map. (see p. 7)

Study Group: Steady attendance at weekly meetings. The group finished reading through the journals. (see p.3) They wrapped up seven years of study with a celebration. Study Group has embarked on a study of the 51± tribes of Native Americans encountered by L&C during the Expedition. For this study, primary use will be made of Ronda's book *Lewis & Clark among the Indians* and the LCTA website information on each tribe.

**Northern Plains Region Report:** For news on a December SFTS wreath-laying ceremony, see p. 24. The Spring SFTS meeting will occur at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 13, at the SCLCIC. With good weather, the Honor Guard will drill at the Riverboat in the morning. (see p. 25)

**Southern Prairie Region Report:** Registrations are open for the September Annual Gathering in Kansas City, hosted by SPR.

**LCTHF (LCTA) Board:** Ask Keith Bystrom for a summary of the activities planned for the Spring Board meeting, which will take place in Omaha. The remaining donation from Ava Hastert (\$125) paid to print Omaha guidebooks for this event.

**Newsletter:** Next issue: June 2025. Submission deadline: June 10. Excellent cooperation between MOP & SFTS.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Dunlap Woolard, MOP Board Secretary (firedogpoet@yahoo.com)





On March 2, 2025, Brad Holder wrote:

[Here is] a little about the [Wreaths Across America](#) event that was held on December 1, 2024. The Floyd Honor Guard has partnered with the Sioux City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center (SCLCIC) in this event for at least five years. Missouri River Historical Development (MRHD) furnishes the Christmas Wreath.

This year, we dealt with an ice storm that hit Siouxland. There was going to be at least five Floyd Honor Guard members that were going to help out, but only three brave souls could make it – Mike Berger (our Captain Lewis), Pete Murray (our Private Howard), and Brad Holder (our Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor). Amanda Gibson, Education Coordinator from SCLCIC, filmed the wreath laying. We had one brave member of the public that showed up as well...my brother.

We marched up to the Floyd Monument very carefully with the ice covering the area. Captain Lewis placed the wreath on the fence around the Monument, while Private Howard had a rifle and saluted. Sergeant Pryor carried the American flag of 1804 in honor of all veterans to be remembered this day across America.

We were able to get another Wreath across America event in the “books”.

Take care,  
Your obedient servant,  
Brad Holder

On March 23, Denny Leonard wrote:

The annual spring meeting of the Honor Guard will be at the Sgt. Floyd Riverboat Museum and Welcome Center at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 13.

If the weather allows, Sgt. Ordway will hold a muster and practice drill at 10 a.m. on the front lawn of the riverboat.

The Sgt. Floyd Tri-State Chapter meeting will be at 2 p.m. at the Sioux City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center.

See you then,

Denny Leonard (Sgt. Ordway)

## SPRING MEETING of the

*Sergeant Floyd Tri-State Chapter*

*Lewis & Clark*  
TRAIL ALLIANCE



**Sunday April 13, 2:00 pm.**

**Sioux City Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center  
900 Larsen Park Rd., Sioux City, IA 51103.**

Our spring chapter business meeting will be held at 2 o'clock. This shall be followed by the afternoon's program entitled, "**Medicine on the Lewis and Clark Trail.**" by **Pete Murray**. Pete will present an overview of the medicines, tools and treatments given to Expedition members and indigenous Americans along the trail.



SEE YOU THERE!

# Noted in Passing

**Ronald G. Laycock**  
**April 15, 1934-March 17, 2025**



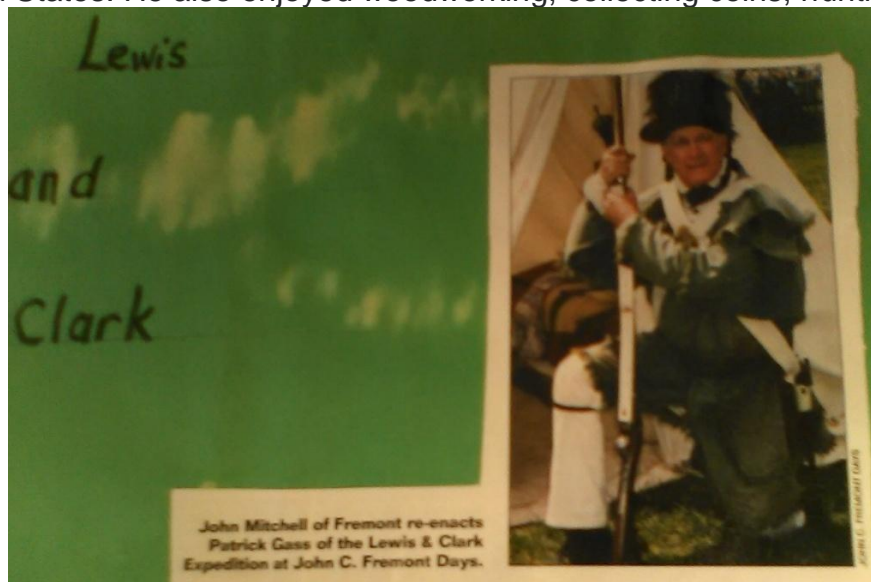
Ronald George Laycock was born April 15, 1934, in Madrid, Iowa, the son of George Ross and Edna Marguerite (Simonson) Laycock. He grew up and attended school in Madrid, Iowa, graduating from Madrid High School. After graduation, Ron attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and received a bachelor's degree.

On July 11, 1964, Ronald married Lone Patricia Torrin in Roseau, Minnesota. They raised three children: Becky, Mike, and LeAnn. They lived in Glenwood, Minnesota, and Benson, Minnesota. Ron worked as Director of Human Services for Swift County for many years.

Ron was always willing to share his leadership to advance his church and community, serving on many committees, councils, and boards at church. He committed many years to serving on the Project Turnabout Board, Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Swift County Hospital Board, Scofield Place, and others.

Ron enjoyed many trips with his family to many places, especially Holden Village in Washington state. He and Lone enjoyed many trips in

retirement, including traveling to the Netherlands, Italy, Australia, and taking bus trips to various places in the United States. He also enjoyed woodworking, collecting coins, hunting, and fishing.



This photo was part of a notebook compiled by Andy Woolard in 2002 as partial requirement for Fourth Grade study of Nebraska History. It was probably sourced from *Nebraskaland* Magazine prior to 2002. Perhaps some of our readers knew re-enactor John Mitchell of Fremont, shown here. I have been unable to positively identify him through Internet sources.



After a recent move to Madison County, Nebraska, I was surprised to discover that I could no longer receive broadcast television from the Omaha, Nebraska, stations. Instead, my primary news station in northeast Nebraska is now KTIV Channel 4 broadcast television out of Sioux City, Iowa. Imagine my delight during the Christmas season when I heard a broadcast advertisement for the gift shop at the Sioux City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, encouraging folks to buy gifts for their history-loving family and friends!

On Wednesdays every week, during noon news, KTIV Channel 4 runs a short segment on the history of Siouxland.

The big news on April 9 concerned an 1804 Jefferson Peace Medal recently unveiled at Mead Museum in Yankton, South Dakota!

My favorite news, by far, is the live footage of Niobrara State Park, captured by the Channel 4 webcam.

This webcam is sponsored by

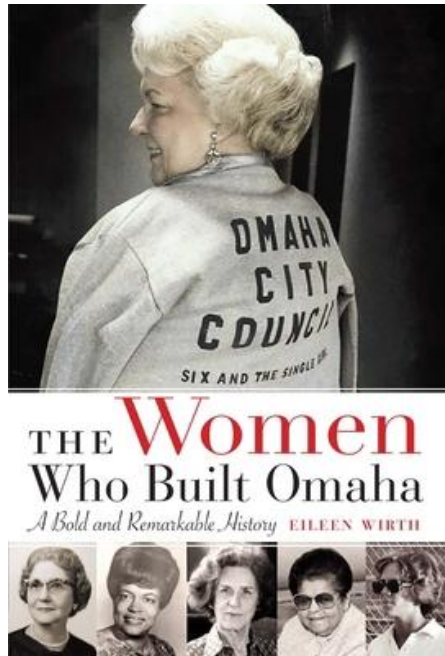
PONCA TRIBE



OF NEBRASKA



Lewis and Clark might have seen such a sight in 1804 when they came through Nebraska.  
Bet you can't guess what this is!  
(answer on page 29)



The delightful truth about Omaha, Nebraska, is that many local organizations cooperate to share the privilege of preserving and promoting the history of our region. As Study Group is preparing to embark on a course of reading to better understand the Native peoples of the West, it seems appropriate to take note of a recent speaker hosted by Sarpy County Museum (2402 Clay Street, Bellevue, Nebraska): Eileen Wirth, author of *The Women Who Built Omaha: A Bold and Remarkable History*.

On March 29, Ms. Wirth addressed a *Lunch and Learn* crowd at the museum. While Ms. Wirth's very readable book quite naturally majors on white women in Omaha's history, she did devote one entire chapter to notable Native American women. Principally, her narrative focuses on Suzette La Flesche Tibbles, first certified Indian teacher on the Omaha Reservation, eloquent translator for Chief Standing Bear during his well-known federal trial, and international lecturer on Indian rights.

Other female Native influencers mentioned were:

Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte – first female Native American physician

Mary Mitchell – mother of former Tribal Chairman Dr. Rudi Mitchell plus seven siblings, four more of whom earned college degrees

Octa Keen – nursing instructor at UNMC and Clarkson School of Nursing, daughter of Mary Mitchell, mother of Taylor Keen

Tami Buffalohead-McGill – student advisor at Creighton University and Nebraska Methodist Health College, mentor to Native high school students

Please see page 32 for other opportunities available through Sarpy County Museum.

*Thanks!*  
to everyone who  
provided information  
for this issue



Thank you to the library  
staff at each of these  
northeast Nebraska  
libraries:  
Battle Creek Lied  
Library  
Pierce Lied Library  
Norfolk Public Library



**LIED BATTLE CREEK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



**LIED PIERCE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



**NORFOLK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Answer to page 27: Ladybug Congress on a cold day!

Thank you  
for your  
donations!  
**Jack & Peggy  
Christ  
Brad Holder  
Paula Imes  
Anonymous**



Jim Christiansen enjoys a  
MOP Board meeting.

Thanks,  
again,  
**Ava Hastert**  
  
for your  
generous  
donation!



Dear Readers:

My dear friend, Dr. Pete Pirotte, is one of the most original thinkers of my acquaintance. Recently, he explained to me a concept that I think perfectly applies to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as to those of us with a great appreciation of the natural world.

We have been taught, and often practice, the use of the word “outdoorsman”, to refer to those with a strong affinity for nature...people who spend lots of time NOT IN A BUILDING.

Dr. Pirotte says he eschews the word “outdoorsman” because its ultimate reference is to doors, which invoke the concept of man-made structures with doors as man’s natural habitation. Instead, he prefers a word he personally derived from what he sees as his natural habitat: the world out under the heavens...the welkin. Webster’s Dictionary defines the welkin as the “vault of the sky.” Second definition is “the upper atmosphere.” As the welkin dominates the natural world and has no reference to man, nor to his constructions, Dr. Pirotte considers the welkin to be his natural habitat. Thus, he is not an “indoorsman” nor “outdoorsman”.

Dr. Pirotte is a “welkiner”—one who abides most comfortably under the open heavens, day or night, rain or shine. The welkin is his home and natural abode.

Thank you, Dr. Pirotte, for a larger, grander conception of man than that afforded by the common vernacular!

The men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were definitely welkiners!

**Ann Dunlap Woolard, Editor**

[firedogpoet@yahoo.com](mailto:firedogpoet@yahoo.com)

P.S. The following photo is of a mural on the wall of my new “office”—the Lied Pierce Public Library. Lovers of Lewis and Clark will notice that the image on the left is of the indomitable Sacagawea!



Others in the photo, from left to right, are: Abraham Lincoln, John G. Neihardt, Willa Cather, and Mother Theresa. Panels not pictured to the left and right of this one show Albert Einstein, Henry Fonda, John F. Kennedy, Maya Angelou, and Rosa Parks. The Expedition’s Shoshone interpreter shares the spotlight with some world-changing personalities!

The quote printed across Chimney Rock is from:

*My Nebraska*

By Esther Kolterman Hansen

“This is America’s last frontier, where the history of the winning of the West was etched in the face of this big land by the moccasins of Indians and fur hunters, by the wheels of covered wagons, and the hoofs of oxen and horses, ridden by unknown numbers of cowboys, adventurers, miners, and soldiers. Your recorded history of today is the platform from which our tomorrows are launched.”



## 2024 Events involving [Friends of Fort Atkinson](#) Members

Date	Event	Location
May 3 & 4	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
May 30 & June 1	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
July 5 & 6	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
August 2 & 3	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
September 6 & 7	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
October 4 & 5	Living History Weekend	Fort Atkinson
November 1	Candlelight Tour	Fort Atkinson



## Cass County Historical Society Museum

646 Main Street, Plattsmouth, Nebraska

**April 22** (12:00-1:00 p.m.): *Burlington Shops*, Speaker: Dave Nielsen

**April 26** (12:00-4:00 p.m.): *Living History Day*—In the museum, there will be activities for children, including a May Basket Workshop, Making a Rag Doll, Playing “Stake a Homestead” and “Lewis and Clark Bingo”. There will also be demonstrations of spinning and quilting by Jill Lokke and Sandra Allgeier. The log cabin, caboose, and pirogue at the end of Main Street will also be open. Re-enactors Mike Bowman, David Bradley, Thomas Hamilton, and Mike Reazer will be camped by the pirogue to talk about Western Expansion and the Lewis and Clark Trail. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, contact the museum at 402-296-4770.

**May 13** (12:00-1:00 p.m.): The Nebraska Homestead Act of 1862 & the Martin Family Ordeal of 1864

For information contact:  
 Doug Friedli  
 Executive Director  
 Lewis & Clark Visitor Center  
 dougfriedli@gmail.com  
 mobile: 402-873-2215



MISSOURI RIVER BASIN

## Lewis & Clark VISITOR CENTER

Website:  
[www.LewisandClarkVisitorCenter.org](http://www.LewisandClarkVisitorCenter.org)  
 Address:  
 100 Valmont Drive  
 P.O. Box 785  
 Nebraska City, NE 68410  
 Telephone: 402-874-9900



### Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Trail and Visitor Center Events Calendar

- April 12 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- May 10 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- June 7 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- July 12 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- August 9 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- August 14 (Wednesday): Business after Hours—Lewis and Clark Birthday Celebration
- September 20-21 (Saturday/Sunday): L&C Reunion #21 during Nebraska City Applejack Festival
- October 11 (Saturday): Saturday with a Soldier
- December 30 (Tuesday): Christmas for the Birds (kids build bird feeders)
- January 1, 2026 (Thursday): First Day Hike



**Sarpy County Museum**

Celebrating Human Ingenuity in the Heartland.

### Sarpy County Museum 2025 Tentative Events Calendar

- April 17—Czech Easter Traditions—Colleen Kurlmel
- May 2 or 9—Kids' Day at Log Cabin with Butch Bouvier
- May 21—Lunch & Learn—State Parks Across Nebraska with Bob Hanover
- June—Lunch & Learn—TBD
- July—Lunch & Learn—Quilt Focus
- August—Quilt Show and Wine and Walk fundraiser
- August—Lunch & Learn TBD
- August—Divots for Depot Golf Tournament
- October—Spooktacular
- December—Holiday Open House



For information contact:  
Amanda Gibson  
Education Coordinator  
lcuser@siouxcitylcic.com  
712-224-5242



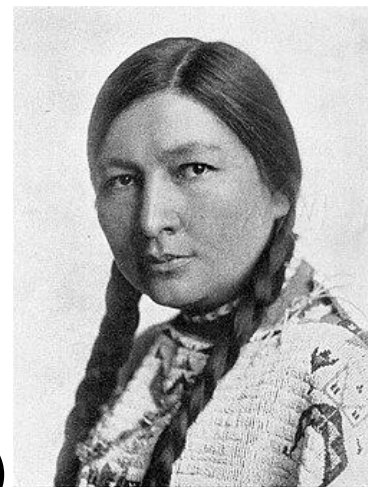
Website:  
<https://siouxcitylcic.com/>  
Address:  
900 Larsen Park Road  
Sioux City, Iowa 51103

The LCTA Grant of \$7,500 is going toward three cultural programs that will be a part of our 2025 Summer Series held on our outdoor stage. Dates are not confirmed yet; we will share that when we get closer to the summer months.

We are gearing up for the busy school tour season that runs from March through May. We expect to host over 2,000 school kids during this time.

We are initiating Wednesday 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. programs alternating weekly adult and family activities. We continue to have our weekly Sunday programs, varying from lectures to music.

- April 13** “A Divided Mind: The Life and Work of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin – aka Zitkala-Sa” by Nancy Gillis  
**April 27** Musical performance by “Sisters of the Outlaw Trail” by Marci Broyhill/Teresa Kay Orr  
**May 4** Dr. Bruce Forbes  
**May 11** Mike and Jack Langley music  
**May 18** Musical performance by Joan Wells/Kris Simon  
**May 25** Musical performance by Dan Holtz



## Zitkala-Ša (Red Bird)

February 22, 1876-January 26, 1938

Zitkala-Ša was a Yankton Dakota writer, editor, translator, musician, educator, and political activist. She was also known by her Anglicized and married name, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. She wrote several works chronicling her struggles with cultural identity and the pull between the majority culture in which she was educated and the Dakota culture into which she was born and raised. Her later books were among the first works to bring traditional Native American stories to a widespread white English-speaking readership. She was co-founder of the National Council of American Indians in 1926, which was established to lobby for Native people’s right to United States citizenship and other civil rights they had long been denied. Zitkala-Ša served as the council’s president until her death in 1938. Zitkala-Ša has been noted as one of the most influential Native American activists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Working with American musician William F. Hanson, Zitkala-Ša wrote the libretto and song for *The Sun Dance Opera* (1913), the first American Indian opera. It was composed in romantic musical style, and based on Sioux and Ute cultural themes.

[For the complete Wikipedia article on Red Bird, click here.](#)

## Mouth of the Platte Chapter Activities

### Weekly:

#### **Lewis and Clark Study Group**

(You need not be a MOP member to attend study group.)

Meets: Every Wednesday, 9-11 a.m.

Primary Location: [Our Savior's Lutheran Church](#)  
600 Bluff Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa  
Scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays

Secondary Location:

[Sterling Ridge Retirement Community](#)  
1111 Sterling Ridge Drive (126<sup>th</sup> and Pacific Street)  
Omaha, Nebraska 68144 (402-281-0472)  
Scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays

**Please call Jim before coming. Sometimes we have unexpected last-minute venue changes!**

Contact: Jim Christiansen (402-657-4600)

### Monthly:

#### **MOP Chapter Dinner Meetings**

(You need not be a MOP member to attend lunches.)

Meets: Third Tuesday of the month

April 15: Jim Johnston

Topic: Native Artifacts and Culture

Time: 6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. social hour)

Location: Denny's Restaurant  
3509 S 84th St, Omaha Nebraska 68124  
402-393-7343

Meal: Denny's Menu, Bring your Senior Discount Card!

May 20: Peggy Christ on recently published L&C books

June 17: TBD

Contact: Keith Bystrom 515-451-5045 or  
knbystrom68@gmail.com



#### **MOP Chapter Board Meetings:**

Meets: First Tuesday of the month

May 6: 11 a.m. (Harmony Court)

June 3 or 10: 11 a.m. (Harmony Court)

July 1: 11 a.m. (Harmony Court)

### Annually:

**June:** [Lewis and Clark State Park, Onawa, IA](#)

**July:** **White Catfish Camp Dinner**  
Catfish Lake at the Lodge, LaPlatte, NE

## Upcoming One-time Events

34

**Our Chapter:** See list of Dinner Speakers at left

<https://www.facebook.com/MouthofthePlatte/>

### **Other Chapters:**

#### **Sergeant Floyd Tri-State:**

President: Doug Davis: [xjewelerdoug@hotmail.com](mailto:xjewelerdoug@hotmail.com)

Next meeting: April 13, 2025 at SCLCIC, Sioux City, Iowa

#### **Southern Prairie:** [SouthernPrairie@lewisandclark.org](mailto:SouthernPrairie@lewisandclark.org)

[www.facebook.com/SouthernPrairieRegionLewisandClark](http://www.facebook.com/SouthernPrairieRegionLewisandClark)

President: Dan Sturdevant (816-679-5925) [dan@sturdevantlawoffice.com](mailto:dan@sturdevantlawoffice.com)

### **National Organization:**

**LCTA 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting:** September 14-17, 2025

Location: Kansas City Marriott Hotel on the Plaza

Watch the promotional video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaQ0yT5Q1oc>

**Event Info:** [lewisandclark.org](http://lewisandclark.org)

### **Other Organizations:**

**Cass County Historical Society Museum:** Tues-Sat 12-4

**Discovery Expedition St. Charles:**

**Durham Western Heritage Museum:** Tu-Sa 10-4. Su 12-4

**Florence Mill:** [9102 N. 30<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha, NE](#)

**Fontenelle Forest:** 8-5 [Fontenelle Trading Post](#)

**Fort Atkinson Living History:** See page 31

**Historic Downtown Plattsmouth Association:**

[historicdowntownplattsmouth@gmail.com](mailto:historicdowntownplattsmouth@gmail.com)

**Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Visitor Center:**

Monday – Saturday 10-4. Sunday – 12-4 pm (see p. 32)

**Mormon Trail Center, Winter Quarters:** M-Sa 10-5, Su 12-5

Pioneer Pathways to Zion, 1846-1890

**Nebraska History Museum Special Exhibitions:**

Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat 9-4. Thurs 9-8. Sun, Mon closed.

[Villasur Hide Painting Reproduction \(Online only\)](#)

[Siouan Archeology \(Online only\)](#)

[Susan LaFlesche Picotte Memorial Hospital \(Online only\)](#)

**Pow Wows in Iowa:** [www.powwows.com](http://www.powwows.com)

**Riverfront in Omaha:** 5 a.m. – 11 p.m.

**Sarpy County Historical Museum:** Tues-Sat 10-4.

**Sioux City Lewis and Clark Center:** T, Th, F 9-5 Wed. 9-7

Sat. 10-3-Sun. 12-5

[Lewis and Clark Cookbook](#)

**Sioux City Public Museum:** [Click here for virtual tour](#)

[Native American Artwork featuring Chuck Raymond](#)

**Sgt. Floyd River Museum and Welcome Center:**

**Permanent Exhibits**

[Click here for virtual tour](#)

**Washington County Museum:** Tues-Fri 9-5. Sat 9-1.

Frahm House: By appointment

[See What's in Our Basement: Video tours with Faith](#)

[Click here for virtual tour](#)