



Meriwether Lewis

# Field Notes



William Clark

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

July 2010

Wisconsin's Chapter ~ Interested & Involved

Number 35

### During this time in history: (Feb. 1805-Jan. 1806)

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

February 6, 1805, Ft. Mandan, Lewis: "... Shields killed three antelopes this evening. The blacksmiths take a considerable quantity of corn today in payment for their labor. The blacksmiths (Shields, Bratton and Willard) have proved a happy rescue to us in our present situation as I believe it would have been difficult to have devised any other method to have procured corn from the natives...I permitted the blacksmith (Shields) to dispose of a part of a sheet-iron stove...and for each piece about four inches square he obtained from seven to eight gallons of corn from the natives..."

June 10, 1805, at the Marias River, Lewis: Shields renewed the main spring of my air gun. We have been much indebted to the ingenuity of this man on many occasions; without having served any regular apprenticeship to any trade, he makes his own tools principally and works extremely well in either wood or metal, and in this way has been extremely serviceable to us, as well as being a good hunter and an excellent waterman..."

January 1, 1806, Ft. Clatsop, Lewis General Order: "...Each mess being furnished with an ax, they are directed to deposit in the room of the commanding officers all other public tools of which they are possessed; nor shall the same at any time hereafter be taken from the said deposit without the knowledge and permission of the commanding officers; and any individual so borrowing the tools are strictly required to bring the same back the moment he has ceased to use them, and in no case shall they be permitted to keep them out all night. Any individual selling or disposing of any tool or iron or steel instrument, arms, accoutrements or ammunition, shall be deemed guilty of a breach of this order and shall be tried and punished accordingly. The tools loaned to John Shields are excepted from the restrictions of this order..."

## Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Board With the Badger State Chapter at the Wisconsin Historical Society



### In This Issue:

**Above & page 2: Touring the Wisconsin Historical Society**

**President's Message: Illini Chapter Regional Meeting**

**Page 3 - Minnesota News**

**Page 3 - Jim Rosenberger adds a new job**

**Page 4 - A History of the Badger State Chapter**

**(& much more)**

## President's Message July- 2010

The last few months have been a busy time for your Chapter president. A Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation board of directors meeting in Madison, a Foundation regional meeting in the Chicago area and a Minnesota Chapter picnic.



**Jim Rosenberger**

The Foundation board of directors selected Madison, WI to conduct their April 2010 board meeting and I believe this was the first time a Foundation board meeting was held in a non-trail state so it was quite an honor. We took the opportunity to combine this Foundation board meeting with a Badger Chapter meeting and it turned out to be quite an event. On the afternoon of Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> we met at the Wisconsin Historical Society and under the guidance of Harry Miller, looked at documents related to Lewis and Clark history. Of course the main item of interest was the journal of Sgt. Charles Floyd but we also saw letters written by Sgt. Patrick Gass, Thomas Jefferson, the family of John Ordway, Journals edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites and numerous other impressive documents. Harry Miller and the Wisconsin State Historical Society did an excellent job of displaying Wisconsin's connections to Lewis & Clark History and we sincerely appreciate their work.



**Foundation Director's Meeting - Madison, WI  
April 24, 2010**

Foundation President, Jim Mallory, invited us all to attend the Foundation board meeting on Saturday,

April 24<sup>th</sup> and a number of our Chapter members did so. (Picture-preceding column) While an all day business meeting may not sound exciting, we all found it very interesting to see the Foundation board in action. President Mallory has worked hard to operate the Foundation in a "transparent" manner so the membership can observe, understand and take part in the operation of the Foundation. Chapter members took part in the discussion on all issues and the directors appreciated the input. But it wasn't all business. Chapter members shared meals and breaks with Foundation board members and I think we all established new or enhanced friendships and got a better appreciation for the effort board members put into the operation of the Foundation.



**Stephen Forrest, Director of Operations & Member services of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, welcomes Badger State Chapter member Mark Nelezen into membership in the Foundation,**

On May 7, 8 and 9, I attended the Illini Chapter's regional meeting in the Chicago area and Lou Ritten and the Illini Chapter did a marvelous job of show casing the history of a major metropolitan area. Of course the highlight for me was seeing the journal of Sgt. John Ordway at the Newberry Library. **(Picture on following page)**

**Continued on page 3**



### 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.



Continued from page 2

Above: Newberry Library

Just think, in a matter of a few weeks I was able to be within a few inches of both the Floyd and Ordway Journals! But to view the historic site of Ft. Dearborn on Michigan Ave. in downtown Chicago and the “Chicago portage” comes in as a close second. I think we all came away with a better appreciation of the history involved in settling and developing what has become the major U.S. city in the mid-west. And again, the ability to renew and build new friendships in our Lewis & Clark community has to be one of the greatest benefits of these gatherings.

I am also a member of the Minnesota Chapter and on June 19<sup>th</sup> I traveled to the Minneapolis area to attend the annual picnic and a brief Chapter meeting. Sadly, the Minnesota Chapter has voted to dissolve effective September 30, 2010. I did invite Minnesota members to join our Chapter, submit articles to “Field Notes” and per agreement by the Badger Chapter board of directors, I offered our support in any way that we could to keep them involved in the Lewis & Clark experience. I believe Minnesota members will remain active in the Foundation and will continue their interest on a local level but in a more informal way rather than through the structure of a Chapter.

I received a surprise phone call from Foundation president Jim Mallory telling me that a member of the Foundation board had resigned and that he would like to enter my name as the replacement, serving the remaining two years of a three year term. I had to think about that as well as discuss it with my wife, Mary. This would add to the time I spend with the Corps of Discovery and fortunately, Mary is right there with me for most of it. But still, how much is enough? Her response, was classic; “Well, of course you should take a Foundation board position”. What a trooper!

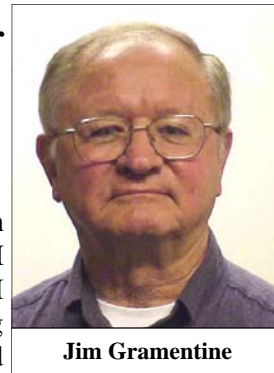
That was all I needed and effective June 8, 2010, I became a board member of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and will do my best to represent the non-trail states and help move the Lewis & Clark legacy into the third century.

As I write this, the next events coming up are our own Badger Chapter picnic and the Foundation annual meeting in Nez Perce country in and around Lewiston, Idaho. I hope to see as many of you as possible at these events.

## Genesis of the Badger State Chapter

### In the Beginning

Returning home to Wisconsin from Great Falls in July 1998, I considered how impressed I was by my first annual meeting experience with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Founda-



Jim Gramentine

tion. Both the history sessions and the field trips had been exceptional, and these were topped off by the dedication of the newly completed Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center on July 4<sup>th</sup>. My week in Great Falls had been informative, stimulating . . . and a lot of fun.

Noting that Minnesota, a non-trail state, seemed to have a thriving chapter, I learned from my meeting attendance roster that twelve other badgers were listed, several of whom, including future board president Patti Thompson, I had met in Great Falls. Why shouldn't Wisconsin also have a chapter? Perhaps I could be helpful in its formation. My wife, Sarah, had not been able to attend the annual meeting, but she too thought the idea had merit.

Following a western trip in August that included the Lolo Trail with Circle O Outfitters, we wrote to all “badgers” whose names we received from the Foundation together with a few from northern Illinois and Michigan’s U. P. We invited all seventy to attend a brainstorming meeting in Milwaukee for a feasibility discussion.

That only three accepted the invitation for the November 21 meeting was at first discouraging and resulted in a change of venue from the Schlitz Audubon Center to our home in Mequon. Sarah recorded this event in her daily journal as follows:

Cont'd on page 4

*"We had a tiny Lewis and Clark meeting here today to explore founding a Wisconsin chapter of the Trail Heritage association. Three others came -- one fairly local [Dan Kacmarcik from Caldonia], one from Madison [Dave Bubier, who would prove to be Jim's successor as Badger president], and one from Marshfield [Tom Swenson] - - all interested and interesting. So despite the low turnout, perhaps something will come of this. Between Wisconsin football and deer hunting season, our timing could have been better."*

**Continued from page 3**

### The First Year

Accordingly, we proceeded on, writing to the same list again and finding a few names to add. By the end of 1998, the membership had grown to twenty names, encouraging and no doubt assisted by the fact that dues had been set at only \$10. Ron Laycock at the time chaired the foundation's committee for new chapters and provided invaluable encouragement and numerous practical suggestions, notably concerning bylaws. Accompanied by his wife, Ione, Ron visited with us and Treasurer Dan Kacmarcik that first year, and he later provided one of the chapter's first programs at a meeting in downtown Milwaukee.

Early on there was considerable debate about what to call our fledgling organization. "Wisconsin Chapter" seemed both dull and parochial; we feared that it would discourage members from other states. In that regard, "Badger State Chapter" did not seem much better, but it was colorful and provided a fortuitous reminder of one of Lewis and Clark's important zoo-



logical discoveries. While no one thought of this in advance, the name placed us first alphabetically on the foundation's chapter list and eventually would provide the challenge for a chapter member's research into the nature of badgers, especially their cries.

Badger State became an official chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation with the presentation of its charter on August 4, 1999, at the annual meeting in Bismarck, ND. By then we had thirty-two members and were pleased by what had been accomplished in a single year. The Bismarck meeting was significant too in that it was the first annual meeting that Jim and Mary Rosenberger attended and where they met several badger friends to be. Little did they realize how their lives were about to be changed!

This annual meeting was memorable too in that Stephen Ambrose, himself a University of Wisconsin graduate, spontaneously agreed to sit in on a chapter meeting following a keynote address he delivered the evening of August 2. Steve had many thoughts about how to grow the chapter and how to make membership an interesting experience for all concerned. He concluded by inviting us to have a chapter meeting at his home in northern Wisconsin, something we did not follow up on in time.



### And It Was Good

Individuals who have not yet been mentioned but who both joined the chapter and were active during its first year included: Judy Coccia, Norma Kolthoff, Dave Lapacek, Gary Ludwig, Bob Ortwein, Harriet Pppard, John Pollock, Jean Turman, and Dick Williams.

Believing at the time that chapter officers should turn over regularly, I stepped down as president at the end of 2000 and would later become active at the foundation level. Dave Bubier was the logical choice to succeed me, with Jim Rosenberger agreeing to serve as vice president and program organizer. The membership now numbered over forty and would continue to grow under Dave's and Jim's dedicated leadership. The rest, as they say, is history . . . and another's turn to write.

### 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.**

## Meriwether Lewis' Family Seeks the Truth about the His Death

By Thomas C. McSwain Jr.,  
Howell Lewis Bowen, and  
Jane Lewis Sale Henley



Since 1809, mystery has shrouded our Uncle Meriwether Lewis' death. Lewis and Clark historians and devotees have debated ceaselessly about what caused it. Did he die by his own hand or was he murdered as the victim of a robbery or a conspiracy led by some nefarious character? Was he, as some assert, suffering from alcohol and drug abuse, syphilis, or malaria? There continues to be no consensus on how he died and there were no eye witnesses to "the deed".

Although some believe that this debate is a recent phenomenon, it actually traces to 1809 when, Lucy Marks, Uncle Meriwether's mother and our progenitor, believed he was murdered while President Jefferson and William Clark accepted reports of suicide. Less than forty years later, in 1848, the Tennessee Legislature Committee appointed to erect the monument over his grave, opened the grave to make sure the monument would be in the correct location and examined the upper portion of the skeleton. They concluded that "It seems to be more probable that he died by the hands of an assassin" than by suicide.

In 1996 a nine-person Lewis County, TN Coroner's Jury heard sworn testimony of historians and scientists and unanimously concluded there is "very little tangible evidence" for a credible ruling on the manner of his death—an exhumation should take place. The District Attorney General sought a state court order for an exhumation, but the National Park Service (NPS) intervened through the federal district court in Tennessee which ruled that the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) permit process was the only way to secure authorization for an exhumation.

Since 1996 we have been seeking the necessary ARPA permit, but until recently the federal government has repeatedly impeded our family's quest for the truth. In January 2008 the Honorable Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, determined that the exhumation was appropriate and in the public interest and that final approval of the ARPA permit would be subject to compliance with the

National Environmental Policy Act. On June 17, 2009, Dan Wenk, the NPS Acting Director re-affirmed this policy statement on behalf of the Department of Interior and the NPS. The necessary Environmental Assessment is now underway.

Today, almost 200 family members seek to find the truth about Uncle Meriwether's death to set the historical record straight for ourselves and for future generations of Americans. We are not seeking to prove one theory or another. We just want to find the truth. We want history to be history, and not fiction or conjecture. We have launched a web site, [www.solvehermystery.org](http://www.solvehermystery.org), and undertaken a public relations campaign to call attention to this initiative.

Some historians and other scholars have objected to our campaign for an exhumation. Frankly, we're puzzled by their resistance as good scholarship is a search for the truth. There are those too who think an exhumation and examination of remains may be inconclusive so why disturb the burial site? While there is the chance that the project may not give us definitive answers, we believe it necessary to give science a chance to solve the mystery and give us more information than we have now. Moreover, we ask ourselves what would Uncle Meriwether likely think about our decision to seek exhumation of his remains? Among many other talents, Uncle Meriwether was a scientist as he showed time and again before, during, and after the expedition. If he in fact committed suicide, we believe he would want that substantiated and his scientific bent would want us to know more about why, if it is possible to determine at this point. On the other hand, if he was murdered, we believe he would surely want the truth to be known. So as we seek to find the truth some 200 years after his death, recognizing that we may not be completely successful, we believe we are acting as he would wish us to do.



Such truth-seeking has precedent. At the behest of his descendants, what then was called the Veterans Administration (VA) ordered the exhumation of the remains of President Zachary Taylor in 1991 to determine whether he was assassinated by arsenic poisoning or

**Continued on page 6**

died from some other cause. The **Contd from pg. 5** exhumation and scientific tests reaffirmed that he died from natural causes as originally thought.

In his 1998 Memorial Day address at Arlington National Cemetery, President Bill Clinton endorsed the decision of the Defense Secretary to exhume the remains of a Vietnam War veteran from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: "It was the right course of action, because science has given us a chance to restore his name and bring comfort to his family, and we had to seize it." At the same ceremony, then-Defense Secretary William Cohen said: "We disturb this hallowed ground with profound reluctance. The reluctance we feel seems, in this case, to have been outranked by the family's demand for the truth."

In the case of Gov. Lewis, the family's quest for the truth is outranked by no other demand. While an exhumation of Meriwether Lewis may not be welcomed by some, such action is appropriate—and even morally required—when requested by family members.

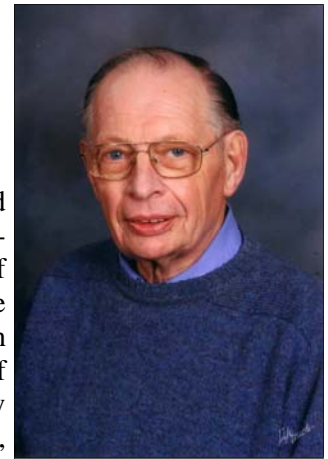
We ask all members of the Meriwether Society to respect and support our family's wishes in this matter. In addition, we call on Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and NPS Director Jon Jarvis to expedite the Environmental Assessment and to clear any further bureaucratic or policy hurdles so that Gov. Lewis' remains finally may be exhumed and examined, and so that he can be provided a proper Christian burial.

In the words of President Thomas Jefferson: "For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead ... ."

*Thomas C. McSwain Jr. of Shepherdstown, WV, Howell Lewis Bowen of Charlottesville, VA, and Jane Lewis Sale Henley of Weems, VA are great-great-great-great Nephews and Niece of Meriwether Lewis. They are members of the Home Front Chapter, LCTHF and are officers of the Locust Hill Graveyard Foundation, which maintains the Lewis family's cemetery near Charlottesville. In addition, Jane Henley is a past President of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.*

**Note: Reprinted with the permission of Thomas C. McSwain Jr. Neither the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation nor the Badger State Chapter has taken a stand or offered an opinion on the issue of the exhumation of Meriwether Lewis**

## Where was Lewis when Little Pomp was Born?



**Ron Laycock**

The journals of Lewis and Clark are full of many stories, and perhaps one of the better known is the birth of little Pomp on February 11th, 1805. Of all the journalists only Lewis records the event, Clark and some of the men were away on a hunting trip. Only Patrick Gass, who was on the overnight hunting trip when the birth occurred wrote "On the 12th we arrived at the fort, and found that one of our interpreter's wives had in our absence made an addition to our number".

Most of us have thought that Lewis administered crushed rattles from a rattle snake to hasten the birth. Such was not the case. Lewis wrote "Mr. Jesse informed me that he had frequently administered a small portion of the rattle of the rattle-snake, which he assured me never had failed to produce the desired effect, that of hastening the birth of the child". Lewis goes on to write "having the rattle of a snake by me I gave it to him and he administered two rings of it to the woman broken in small pieces with the fingers and added a small quantity of water".

Lewis never administered the potion, and indeed was never even there for the birth of the child, since he wrote "I was informed that she had not taken it more than ten minutes before she brought forth". He was told about the birth of little Pomp. Where was Lewis? Why was he not there? Perhaps he felt helpless being with the young mother who was in excruciating pain. Perhaps he was uncomfortable being in the presence of a woman giving birth. Perhaps he had other important things to do. We don't know. All we know is that he wasn't there when little Pomp was born.

Just something to think about. - Ron Laycock

*Note: Ron Laycock was a founding member of the Minnesota Chapter, president of the Foundation from 2003-2004, one of the original members of the Bicentennial Council.*

**Seaman Says...September 14, 1806:** We have departed from a camp the men called Travelers Rest and are now making our way through some of the highest mountains I have yet seen. We are all working very hard to cross these mountains and reach the Columbia River. The men are tired, wet and cold; on a number of days we have had to walk through snow. The men complain of this but with my heavy coat of thick black hair, I find this climate much more comfortable than the heat of the Great Plains.



I have great fun in burying my head in the snow and spraying the fluffy snow on some of the men. I sometimes run between the men, nearly tripping them and I hear them complain about how frisky I am.

One problem we all share is that of hunger. Food is sparse in these mountains, so much so the men, I am sad to say, found it necessary to kill a colt for food. The men eat the meat, while, for the most part, I am given bones to gnaw on. But I did eat well when on the plains and have a reserve of fat from which to draw on. In addition I have used my retrieving skills and caught some smaller creatures to feed on as well as finding some fairly good tasting roots.

The men complain of eating a dried soup Captain Lewis has brought along but I don't believe I will try it. The smell of it while it is cooking keeps me at a distance and numbs my curiosity to taste it. I believe the men have the same reaction but since it is all they have, they swallow their pride along with their soup. Captain Clark has gone ahead looking for food and a way out of these high mountains. Until we hear from him, we suffer through.



**(From) The Men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition**

By Charles G. Clarke

(Born in 1899, Charles G. Clarke was an early pioneer of cinematography who won four Academy Award nominations )

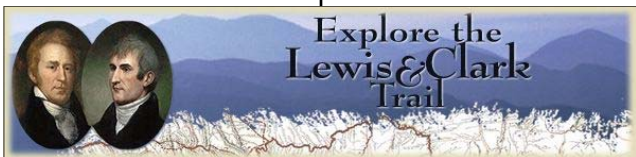
*“A Biographical Roster of the Fifty-one Members and a Composite Diary of Their Activities from All Known Sources” (Note: Lewis, Clark, & York were featured in issue #16)*

**Along with the Expedition Party were:**

SCANNON, Captain Lewis' Newfoundland type dog. This animal was much admired by the natives for his sagacity and they frequently offered to trade for him - which Lewis always refused to do. He had paid \$20.00 for him.

**Four Horses**

These were taken from St. Charles by the hunters to go along the river banks while the boats were being worked upstream. Three horses were lost enroute and the last one was stolen by the Teton Sioux on September 24, 1804. They were valuable to the expedition for they enabled the hunters, in addition to bringing in game, to explore inland from the Missouri. The information thus obtained was added to the captains' written description of the creeks and country of the lower Missouri.



**Treasurer's Report**

The Badger Chapter has \$2,578.48 in the Chapter Treasury as of July 6, 2010, and 73 paid up members.



**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 Butts.....Secretary  
Phone: (920)458-4518 E-mail: tbutts4518@charter.net

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

**Board of Directors:**

1-David Sorgel  
(608)795-9915 E-mail: davidcollette@centrytel.net

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