

Home Front Chapter



**of the Lewis & Clark Trail
Heritage Foundation**

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Home Front Chapter General Meeting

**Thursday, March 24th, 2011
St. Paul's Church, Ivy
7:30 p.m.**

SPEAKER: Roger Nelson

Presenting:

The Virginia Canals in Our Area

Our Speaker

Roger Nelson, our speaker for the March meeting, is the President of the Virginia Canals and Navigation Society. He is a resident of Wingina in Nelson County. Mr. Nelson has a vast knowledge of the canals in and around the James River, the history of the canals and wonderful stories about the oldest canal system in the United States.

Please join us for an informative evening. Refreshments will be served.

National Park Service Meeting

On December 9, 2010, a public forum was held with the National Park Service at Darden Towe Park. Our gratitude goes out to those of you who made the effort to attend the forum regarding the extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to include the "Eastern Legacy".

This meeting was a wonderful chance to exchange comments and hear from those who have been so closely involved with the Lewis and Clark story. Dr. Dan Jordan, former President of Monticello,

was the first speaker. We heard from so many who were involved. Our own Jane Henley, Howell Bowen and re-enactors like Craig Rockwell, who has portrayed William Clark during the "Bicentennial" for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

There were so many who gave such good reasons for extending the Trail. For those who were not able attend you missed a wonderful evening.

Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center

The Exploratory Center Board met on February 9, 2011, to look over the seven site plans and drawings submitted for the new Exploratory Center. Many wonderful ideas have been incorporated in these site plans. It was "mind boggling" to try and figure out which one plan will serve the needs of education; outreach; meeting the public; displaying the various boats, articles and tools that have been brought together and will fit into the specified site that has been dedicated. Anyone wishing more information on this wonderful endeavor should contact the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center.

Chapter Member Speaks at the Smithsonian

(As Reported by the Carolina Chapter)

Chapter member Lorna Hainesworth spoke at the Smithsonian Institution's Resident Associates Program February 12, 2011. This was an all-day seminar entitled: "Lewis and Clark: The Great Adventure." Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation president, Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs, was also to be one of the speakers at the seminar. Lorna presented her program on the letter from Meriwether Lewis to William Linnard. (Lorna presented her excellent program to Home Front Chapter members on November 19, 2009.)

The Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

Stephenie Abrose Tubbs, President, L&CTHF, writes: After careful consideration and consulting with the Foundation Leaders, Board members and a consulting team with years of successful non-profit experience, we are happy to share the new mission and vision statements of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, along with the strategic goals for the next three years. The mission, vision and strategic goals are measurable and attainable and present our Foundation to the world in a stronger and more relevant light. We are excited about the opportunities that await us once we embrace these fundamental principles and share them with the global audience.

Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Strategic Goals

Adopted 29 January 2011

Mission Statement

We preserve, promote and teach the diverse heritage of Lewis and Clark for the benefit of all people.

Vision Statement

The Foundation will be the nation's premier non-profit organization for the preservation of the Lewis and Clark Trail and the sharing of its stories.

Strategic Goals

1. To reassess and restructure the Board to make it effective
2. To develop and enhance organizational infrastructure
3. To provide the leadership to establish a true national trail from Sea to Shining Sea
4. To reassess and formalize the relationship between the Foundation and chapters for the mutual benefit of both
5. To strengthen and diversify the financial underpinnings of the Foundation to make it sustainable
6. To facilitate partnerships among the Lewis and Clark Interpretive and Educational Centers across the nation

Masons in Maury County

Tony Turnbow

Minutes of the Maury County, Tennessee, County Court provide answers to two questions related to Meriwether Lewis's death. In 1905, the Court adopted a resolution in response to an effort of an Oregon group to move Lewis's body from Tennessee.

The minutes reflect that Masons primarily from Maury County conducted Masonic rites for Lewis and took charge of burying his bones in 1848. Lewis's grave had been opened by a state commission charged with erecting a monument over the grave. The

commission wanted to make certain it had made proper identification of Lewis's remains. The minutes refer to the service as a "funeral" but they do not mention the presence of anyone other than the Masons. Presumably members of the state commission discharged their duties by witnessing the burial of the body.

During preparations for last year's commemoration of Lewis's life, a search was made for information as to whether a memorial service had ever been conducted for Lewis. It was clear he had never been honored with a public memorial service that was national in scope; however, no one could provide any information as to whether a funeral of any type had been conducted for the explorer.

The second significant question relates to an inquest. The minutes state that an inquest had been held "over the body" of Meriwether Lewis in Maury County at the time Lewis's death. Tennessee law in 1809 provided that an inquest was to be held in the view of the body of a person who had died under suspicious circumstances. The local Justice of the Peace was to convene a jury of seven men to view the body, interview witnesses and make a determination of whether to refer the matter to the county coroner.

Grinder's Tavern was located what was then the southwest corner of Maury County. Coroner's inquest records were not required to be filed in Maury County in 1809. Writers have often theorized that Maury County as too undeveloped at the time to conduct a coroner's inquest. However, the County contained about 9,000 residents and it had elected a sheriff, a coroner and justices of the peace. The local lore has often been dismissed because no mention of an inquest has been found in the county records. That is no longer the case.

Local lore and family traditions hold that Samuel Whiteside, who lived in the judicial

district as Grinder's Tavern, was notified of Lewis's death and rode his mule seven miles to Grinder's house to conduct an inquest. Legend also holds that Whiteside kept his own records of the proceeding in a pocket journal. The pocket journal was given to Whiteside's grandson Griff, who lived in Samuel's house. When Griff died in the early 1900's, the journal disappeared. Newspaper accounts claim that Maury County historian Frank Smith had read the journal; however, he made no mention of it in his county history.

The argument will no doubt be offered that second or third generation accounts are unreliable. The county court would not have adopted the assertions about the burial or the inquest unless both were common public knowledge. The county court likely contained members who were Masons familiar with the accounts of Lewis's death and reburial. Robert Cooper, who wrote that he helped make the nails for Lewis's coffin in 1809 and that he helped identify Lewis's grave in 1848, was one of the county leaders who helped organize the effort to create Lewis County, Tennessee from a portion of Maury County. Cooper was also one of the founders of the Meriwether Lewis Lodge in Hampshire, Tennessee about seven miles from Lewis's grave. Cooper may have organized the Maury County Masons to participate in the reburial. The state Grand Master Edmund Dillahunt served on the Monument Committee and likely played a role in the reburial.

The writer of a previous letter to WPO notes that most discussions of Lewis's death amount to a rehashing of the same facts reconfigured to fit a particular theory. A thorough review of early source material will begin to answer lingering questions about the circumstances surrounding Lewis's death.

Source: *We Proceeded On*, November 2010