



We Proceeded On

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

November 2014 Volume 40, No. 4

FORT SOUTHWEST POINT AND THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY



Plus THE REAL JAMES NEELLY



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR TRADE JOURNAL

VOLUME 8 - 2014

William H. Ashley's Newly Discovered 1826 Fur Trade Journal

Describes how the diary was found and eventually made its way into the archives of the Campbell House Museum in St. Louis, Missouri. Includes the complete diary with transcriptions.
By Jay H. Buckley

1836 and 1838: When White Girls Crashed the Party

Conveys thought-provoking observations about the impact the presence of these women had on the rendezvous they attended.
By Jill R. Ottman

Smith, Jackson & Sublette: A Difficult Partnership

A challenge to the accepted viewpoints regarding the business dealings of the three men, providing a particularly critical assessment of Jedediah Smith's contribution to the enterprise.
By John C. Jackson

The Blackfoot Road to Plunder

An explanation of the Blackfoot tribe's migration and trade routes that took them north and south along the Rocky Mountain Range from Alberta, Canada to Santa Fe, New Mexico.
By Paul M. Raczka

Jedediah Smith's Disaster at Defeat River

Looks at clues found in first-hand reports as well as an on-the-ground search for further hints that help pinpoint the site of Smith's camp that was overrun by Kelawatset Indians leaving few survivors.
By James C. Auld

Published by
Sublette County Historical Society &
Museum of the Mountain Man

Full Color Paperback, 8-1/2 x 11
ISSN: 1937-0733

8th annual, open submission, peer review, scholarly
publication from the Museum of the Mountain Man.

To order please visit our website at
www.mmmuseum.com/tradingpost
or call 307-367-4101 or 1-877-686-6266



MUSEUM of the MOUNTAIN MAN

Open Daily
May 1-October 31, 9-5pm



MUSEUM of the
MOUNTAIN MAN

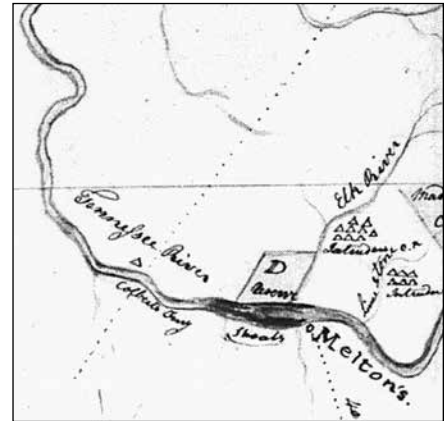
Sublette County Historical Society-A Foundation

P.O. Box 909, 700 E. Hennick St., Pinedale, Wyoming 82941
tel 307-367-4101 fax 307-367-6768
publications@mmmuseum.com

www.mmmuseum.com

Contents

Message from the President	3
L&C Roundup: Idaho Chapter's Lolo Trail work; Jay Buckley at Clark's grave; Annual meeting in Richland, Washington	5
Letters: Carrick on rifles; Guice and suicide; Ionia Volcano location redux	7
The Real James Neelly: Meriwether Lewis's Caretaker By Thomas C. Danisi	9
Fort Southwest Point and the Corps of Discovery By Trent Strickland	27
Review: Pinkham and Evans, <i>Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce</i> , reviewed by Robert Clark	32
Along the Trail: Yankton, South Dakota	inside back cover



Melton's Bluff, Tennessee River, p. 15



Fort Southwest Point blockhouse, p. 28



On the cover:

Reconstructed Fort Southwest Point in eastern Tennessee. Photo by Chuck Chase.



Yankton, South Dakota, Visitor Center,
inside back cover

We Proceeded On welcomes submissions of articles, proposals, inquiries, and letters. Writer's guidelines are available by request and can be found on our website (www.lewisandclark.org). Submissions may be sent to Robert Clark, WSU Press, P.O. Box 645910, Pullman, WA 99164-5910, or by email to robert.clark@wsu.edu.



November 2014 • Volume 40, Number 4

WE PROCEEDED ON is the official publication of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. Its name derives from a phrase that appears repeatedly in the collective journals of the expedition. ©2014

E. G. Chuinard, M.D.,
Founder, We Proceeded On
 ISSN 02275-6706

Editor
 Robert A. Clark
 Washington State University Press

Volunteer Proofreaders
 H. Carl Camp and Jerry Garrett

Publisher
 Washington State University Press
 Pullman, Washington

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

- | | |
|--|---|
| Wendy Raney, Chair
Pullman, WA | Barbara Kubik
Vancouver, WA |
| Jay H. Buckley
Provo, UT | Glen Lindeman
Pullman, WA |
| H. Carl Camp
Omaha, NE | J.I. Merritt
Pennington, NJ |
| Robert C. Carriker
Spokane, WA | Robert Moore, Jr.
St. Louis, MO |
| Carolyn Gilman
Washington, DC | Gary E. Moulton
Lincoln, NE |
| James Holmberg
Louisville, KY | Philippa Newfield
San Francisco, CA |

Membership Information

Membership in the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. is open to the public. Information and applications are available by writing Membership Coordinator, Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403 or on our website.

WE PROCEEDED ON, the quarterly magazine of the Foundation, is mailed to current members in February, May, August, and November. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE.

Annual Membership Categories:

- Student: \$30
- Basic: \$49
- Basic 3-Year: \$133
- Family: \$65
- Heritage: \$100
- Explorer: \$150
- Jefferson: \$250
- Discovery: \$500
- Lifetime:**
 - Steward: \$995
 - Captain: \$2,500
 - President: \$5,000

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation. A portion of your dues may be tax deductible. Donations are fully deductible.

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403
 406-454-1234 / 1-888-701-3434
 Fax: 406-727-3158
 www.lewisandclark.org

Our mission:

As Keepers of the Story ~
 Stewards of the Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. provides national leadership in maintaining the integrity of the Trail and its story through stewardship, scholarship, education, partnership and cultural inclusiveness.

OFFICERS

- President*
Margaret Gorski
 Stevensville, MT
- Vice-President*
Steve Lee
 Clarkston, WA
- Immediate Past-President*
Clay Smith
 Port Townsend, WA
- Secretary*
Philippa Newfield
 San Francisco, CA
- Treasurer*
John Toeny
 Great Falls, MT

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

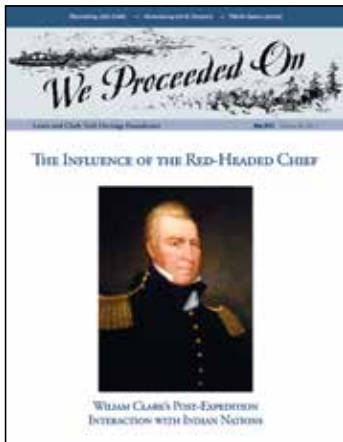
- Della Bauer, Omaha, NE
- Sue Buchel, Garden City, ID
- Lynn Davis, Spirit Lake, IA
- Dick Fichtler, Florence, MT
- Ella Mae Howard, Great Falls, MT
- Barbara Kubik, Vancouver, WA
- Mark Nelezen, Oshkosh, WI
- Kris Townsend, Spokane, WA
- Jerry Wilson, Versailles, IN
- Mark Weekley (ex-officio-NPS), Omaha, NE

STAFF

- Lindy Hatcher, Executive Director
- Don Peterson, Administrative Assistant
- Shelly Kath, Library Assistant

We Proceeded On is published four times a year in February, May, August, and November by the Washington State University Press in Pullman, Washington, for the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 4201 Giant Springs Rd., Great Falls, Montana 59405. Current issue: November 2014, volume 40, No. 4. ISSN 02275-6706

Incorporated in 1969 under Missouri General Not-For-Profit Corporation act. IRS Exemption Certificate No. 501(c)3, Identification No. 510187715.



WE PROCEEDED ON

(Back issues, 1974–current)

All back issues of our quarterly historical journal are available. Some of the older issues are copier reproductions. Orders for a collection of all back issues receive a 30 percent discount. Order your missing issues to complete your set. Call 1-888-701-3434, mail your request to P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403, or order at york@lewisandclark.org.

\$10 originals or cds
 \$4 shipping & handling

A Message from the President



Holding our “Annual Meeting” during the last quarter of our fiscal year is good timing. We have fun with old friends, meet new friends, and learn more about the Corps of Discovery and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. I had a wonderful time in Richland, Washington, this year, and I think the Washington Chapter did a great job. But it is also a time when members hold the board of directors accountable for following through on what we said we would accomplish in the past year.

We take seriously the time allotted for the general “business meeting” portion of our annual gathering to report to you, our members. I hope you took time to study the Annual Meeting Report in the August edition of *We Proceeded On*. A separate copy of that report was distributed to meeting attendees. In it you will find many hidden gems that reveal our financial health and the priority work board members and staff have completed this year. Although we still need to be vigilant in recruiting new members and generating income, our current finan-

cial position is sound and enables us to focus on carrying out our mission.

I have repeatedly expressed my philosophy that people join us because they believe in what we do and enjoy participating in projects that make the mission happen. To name a few successes:

- we helped fund eleven excellent projects across the trail through our Trail Stewardship Endowment;
- past issues of *We Proceeded On* being made word searchable on our new and improved website (visit www.lewisandclark.org);
- we will sponsor two national awards for students participating in National History Day;
- the Lewis and Clark Country marketing project is operating in several trail states (with more to follow);
- and we have launched a project to upload twenty-five of the major Lewis and Clark-themed interpretive centers along the trail onto the “Next Exit History” cell phone app (www.nextexithistory.com).

I am proud of what our board, staff, committees, and active members have accomplished this year. The bar has indeed been raised for next year.

During the keynote address at our annual meeting, historian and author David Nicandri shared his view of why Meriwether Lewis felt inadequate in describing the beauty of the Great Falls of the Missouri in 1805. As David explained, Lewis had succumbed to the “trope of inexpressibility” when he attempted to put on paper the emotions he felt as an explorer. Just as Captain Lewis was overwhelmed at the new scenes that unfolded before him, I am truly humbled by the prospect of

what course, more than two hundred years later, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation should chart into the future.

Although our choices are unlimited, we must thoughtfully choose programs and projects that serve to fulfill our mission in cooperation with other organizations with similar missions. If we take on projects ourselves, they must be adequately funded and sustainable to ensure their long-term success. In addition to our current programs, the board has agreed that it is time to invest some energy in two new areas:

- Finalize plans to commemorate 2018 as the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation’s Fiftieth Anniversary year. I will be asking longtime members and former board members and officers to serve on the fiftieth anniversary committee. It’s not too early to plan our birthday party!
- Develop priorities, guidelines, and evaluation criteria for an educational grant program similar to the Trail Stewardship Endowment Grant Program. Our goal is to have a system in place so chapters and other organizations know the kinds of projects that can be funded through this educational program. It will also serve to highlight the benefit of making donations to the Dar Burroughs Educational Fund, and what kind of projects you help to fund.

One additional fun item: I hope to settle our long-standing discussion about an alternate name for our “Annual Meeting.” I have personally attended fifteen “Annual Meetings” and it seems that every year someone comments that the name “annual

President's Message

meeting" is boring and may discourage people from attending. Then what should it be? As required by the bylaws we must have an annual business meeting of the members. However, nothing in the bylaws says it has to be titled "Annual Meeting." So let's have some fun with it. The Gathering? The Rendezvous? Conference? Symposium? Send me your ideas!

Of course none of this is possible without dedicated people to help govern the organization and work on its behalf. I am grateful for the hard work of members whose terms on the board are concluding this year. A heartfelt "thank you" goes to Larry Epstein, our secretary and former president; Dan Sturdevant, past president; Ron Laycock, board member and former president; and Ken Jutzi, board member and invaluable contributor to improving our office data management systems. All are longtime friends and supporters of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and will be missed on the board. I hope we continue to see you at our annual meetings and along the trail.

I have agreed (and the board has accepted my offer) to continue as your president for another year. Treasurer Clay Smith will move to past president; Philippa Newfield agreed to serve as secretary; and Steve Lee agreed to continue as vice president. I am excited about our 2015 Board of Directors and the incoming new members: Kris Townsend, from Washington, brings us a plethora of digital talents and living history experiences; Ella Mae Howard, from Montana, is an author and founding member of the Portage Route Chapter; Jerry Wilson, from Indiana, brings his knowledge of the Eastern Legacy, his commitment to the Wellness Challenge, and his insights to help plan our 2016 meeting

in Harpers Ferry; and John Toenyas, from Montana, who has been working as our interim book keeper, will resign those duties and serve as our treasurer. To fill out the board Barb Kubik, long-standing supporter and former president from Washington, was reelected to another three-year term; Della Bauer, Nebraska; Mark Nelezen, Wisconsin; Sue Buchel, Idaho; Lynn Davis, Iowa; and Dick Fichtler, Montana, will continue their service. It is a strong board of directors and I look forward to working with everyone in 2015.

Lastly, it is the time of year when we start thinking of year-end gift giving and remembrances. Your ongoing generosity enables us to accomplish more than would be possible with only

membership dues. Extra donations are not only tax deductible, but give the organization additional capacity. Our year-end appeal is usually directed to help our general operating fund, but you can also designate your contribution to any of our program funds. We have a diversity of named funds to match your interest, from education and trail stewardship to supporting the library and *We Proceeded On*. Whatever you can spare will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your friendship and continuing support of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. I hope to see you all along the trail in 2015.

Margaret Gorski

Advertise your L&C products and services in *WPO*!

RESERVATION DEADLINES

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Reservation Date</i>	<i>Ad Due</i>
February (Winter)	November 10	January 1
May (Spring)	February 15	April 1
August (Summer)	May 15	June 25
November (Fall)	August 15	October 1

AD RATES

FULL PAGE (7¼" x 9½"): \$400 b&w/\$500 color
 2/3 page vertical (4¼" x 9½"): \$300 b&w/\$400 color
 1/2 horizontal (7¼" x 4"): \$250 b&w/\$300 color
 1/3 vertical (2¼" x 9½"): \$150 b&w/\$300 color
 1/3 square (4¾" x 4¾"): \$150 b&w/\$300 color
 1/6 vertical (2¼" x 4¾"): \$75 b&w/\$100 color
 Inside back cover (7½" x 9½"): \$500
 Inside front cover (7½" x 9½"): \$500
 Double spread, inside: \$800

To reserve ad space, contact york@lewisandclark.org

Email your 300-dpi jpeg or high-resolution pdf with embedded images and fonts by the due date for that issue to *WPO* editor Robert Clark, robert.clark@wsu.edu.

ADDITIONAL DISCOUNTS

Foundation members receive a 15% discount
 Repeat advertisers receive a 10% discount

If you pay in advance, we can offer additional discounts as long as the following conditions are met:

Advertiser must place a minimum of at least 2 ads within 12 months in the same calendar year or at least 2 consecutive ads if the ads fall in different calendar years. Payment must be received 30 days in advance of the ad deadline for the first scheduled ad. Multiple ads must be paid for 30 days in advance of the deadline for first advertisement. Payment must be in cash, check, or money order.
 NO CREDIT CARDS accepted.

Discounts

2 ads earn an additional 2% discount
 3 ads earn an additional 3% discount
 4 ads earn an additional 4% discount
 5 ads earn an additional 5% discount

For example, a Foundation member who runs ads in the May, August, and November issues of *WPO* would receive an 18% discount on the total bill if paid by cash, check, or money order.

Idaho Chapter's 2014 Lolo Trail Work Week

On July 20, 2014, twenty-two individuals from throughout the West traveled the forest roads and the Lolo Motorway to Noseeum Meadows, site of the group's base camp for work on the Lolo Trail over the next week. The camp, nestled in the heart of the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho, is situated on the Nez Perce and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails. The week's goal was to clear the brush and the downed timber on fifteen to twenty miles of trail.

This is the fifth work party the Idaho Chapter has sponsored to assist the U.S. Forest Service with trail maintenance in this historic corridor.

The typical day started at sunrise as the campfire needed to be built, coffee made, breakfast cooked, and lunch prepared before the 7:15 a.m. briefing and division into work crews. Such locales as Sherman Peak, Willow Ridge, or Noseeum Butte trails all had full-day work commitments. The crews ate lunch on the trail and did not return to camp until late afternoon. The evening schedule included great dinners, a review of the day's accomplishments, and musical talents of four of the participants around the campfire. One afternoon "Dancing Bear," aka Kevin Asker, provided a mountain-man demonstration complete with all the gear, and ended with the firing of a black powder rifle.

Though hiking and working miles of trail at high elevation can be tiring, all the participants expressed interest in returning next year to continue the trail work. As word has spread about the great work experience in the Idaho mountains amid the fields of blooming bear grass and huckleberry bushes, a waiting list of potential attendees continues to grow. Due to camp logis-



STEVE LEE

Day 1 work party: (R to L) Barbara Brock, Kathleen Tetwiler, Chapter President Chuck Raddon, Anne Schorzman, LCTHF President Margaret Gorski, and Mike Tetwiler (kneeling).

tics, the crew is limited to twenty-five attendees, with "alums" allowed the first opportunity to "re-up."



STEVE LEE

Jay Buckley at Clark's Grave



JERRY GARRETT

Dr. Jay Buckley (left), associate professor of history at Brigham Young University and past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, presented a signed copy of his book *William Clark: Indian Diplomat* to the library at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Accepting the book from Dr. Buckley at Clark's grave is Richard Lay, vice president, customer relations for the cemetery.

Annual Meeting in Richland, Washington



Susan Hamilton, Steve Lee, Margaret Gorski, Laurie Brown, Robert O'Bryan, Dee Roche assume the Lewis and Clark pose during boat ride up the Hanford Reach on the Columbia.

Richland hosted the Annual Meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, August 3-6, 2014. One hundred thirty foundation members and friends gathered on the Columbia at the mouth of the Yakima River.

The conference hotels and meeting areas served wonderfully as attendees enjoyed a wide variety of workshops, receptions, speakers, and field trips. A large number of vendors and exhibitors filled two combined rooms, offering information on period weapons, local indigenous foods, future confer-

ences, new publications and out-of-print books, and the latest version of the Meriwether game. Also exhibited was the rare French edition of the Patrick Gass journal.

Speakers Bruce Bjornstad, Dick Scheurman, Mike Carrick, Jack Nisbet, and David Nicandri offered new and entertaining information on a variety of Lewis and Clark topics. Convention attendees spent a day at the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, where director Bobbie Connor welcomed the group and spoke about the

Native American culture and history in the Columbia Basin.

Another full day at Sacajawea State Park was filled with demonstrations and presentations by John Orthmann, John Fisher, and John Caskey. And post-meeting tours on the Columbia and surrounding countryside put the final touches on a remarkable meeting.

The enthusiasm and energy present throughout the conference was the result of wonderful planning by the local planning committee, to whom we all owe thanks.

Dear editor,

The May 2014 issue of *We Proceeded On* is really one of the the best I have seen in quite awhile. I particularly liked Jim Hardee's research on William Clark.

I feel I should comment on the technical accuracy of the romanticized portrait of John Colter shown on page 25. In the portrait, Colter is holding a left-handed percussion-system rifle over his shoulder.

The rifle should have a flintlock ignition system. All of the rifles, pistols, and muskets on the Lewis and Clark expedition were flintlocks. The percussion system did not reach America until the early 1820s, and Colter died in 1812.

Additionally, the rifle is built for a left-handed shooter. I don't know if Colter was left-handed, but early rifles with a lock on the left side are very rare.

Of course, none of this detracts from the extensive genealogical research by the author.

Michael F. Carrick
Turner, Oregon

Dear editor,

Thanks so very much for printing John Guice's very classy and complimentary letter to President Margaret [Gorski], one filled with very legitimate rationale for continuing to discuss the death of Meriwether Lewis. Guice is an accomplished scholar. It is just not true that an examination of the facts prove "everybody knows it was suicide." Personal opinions of the character of Meriwether Lewis, and dismissal of those who disagree, will not put this story to rest. Aren't we history novices taught to look for facts, not personal opinions when reviewing history? True, when facts are few, imaginations can run free, and speculation

should not dominate the printed contributions in *We Proceeded On*.

Some scholars have concluded Lewis's death was a suicide, and they may feel their knowledge of the event and reputations have closed the book on the story. The story, however, is still being written. Though some may want this story dropped in our journal, many solid facts were lost early in this story. Now and then someone comes up with intriguing new finds. For the sake of Meriwether Lewis, who cannot speak for his own character, let's encourage Lewis and Clark buffs to continue researching the data, and post occasional articles in *We Proceeded On*.

Regarding opening a "Big Tent" for Lewis and Clark—a big tent would not exclude articles concerning the death of Meriwether Lewis. So let's keep sleuthing.

Evelyn Orr
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear editor,

I am responding to Mr. J.M. Peterson's letter in the August 2014 *We Proceeded On* regarding the location of the Ionia Volcano. His letter refers to my February 2011 article in this publication titled "'Blue Earth,' 'Clift of White' and 'Burning Bluffs': Lewis and Clark's Extraordinary Mineral Encounters in Northeastern Nebraska," and whether William Clark was referring to the Ionia Volcano when he recorded his oft-quoted description of bluffs "on fire" on August 24, 1804:

"Commencement of a blue Clay Bluff of 180 or 190 feet high on the L.S. Those Bluffs appear to have been laterly on fire, and at this time is too hot for a man to bear his hand in the earth at any debth."

I am presuming that when Mr. Peterson refers to the "traditional site" of the Ionia Volcano, he is speaking of the exposed bluff approximately 3.5 miles northeast of Newcastle, Nebraska, situated just across the road from the Ionia Cemetery, the site with the "Too Hot to the Touch" interpretative sign containing the aforementioned Clark quote. I take no issue with this being the "traditional site" of the so-called Ionia Volcano and I'm not suggesting that its "true site" is elsewhere. What I stated in my article and revisit here is that William Clark's August 24, 1804, description of the bluffs "on fire" has been misapplied to the Ionia Volcano feature. My response to Mr. Peterson in the August 2012 issue of *We Proceeded On* explained that the expedition had simply put too many miles behind them to have the Ionia Volcano feature correlate with Clark's August 24 observations. I would like to offer a bit of further explanation.

The cartographic reconstructions of the expedition's route and campsite locations mapped by Martin Plamondon III, Robert N. Bergantino, and James D. Harlan, clearly show the expedition passed the Ionia Volcano site either late on August 22 or August 23, 1804. On neither of those days did any of the journal keepers record a description of a bluff "on fire." This suggests the Ionia Volcano was not thermally active, was not observed by expedition members to be thermally active, or no one commented on its thermal activity. (This last possibility seems quite unlikely given Thomas Jefferson's specific instructions to note "volcanic appearances.") The only documentation of some kind of thermal activity on August 23, 1804, is found in a brief Meriwether Lewis mineral

collection description of a pyrite specimen (Ft. Mandan mineralogical specimen no. 46) that has no location or course/distance information that can tie it specifically to the Ionia Volcano site. Though an interesting piece of ancillary evidence, caution should be exercised regarding its value as proof the expedition either saw or stood on the Ionia Volcano when no other expedition notations or journal entries mention it.

The main point from my article regarding the Ionia Volcano remains unrefuted. The observation cited above, “Those Bluffs appear to have been laterly on fire,” a quote that is used in multiple Ionia Volcano interpretation signage in this area (as well as in travel and geological guidebooks), was made farther upriver (most likely just east of the present-day Nebraska Route 15 bridge to Vermillion, South Dakota) of the “traditional site” of the Ionia Volcano. In other words, no matter whose cartographic reconstruction is used (Plamondon’s maps 82 and 83 in his Volume 1 of the *Lewis and Clark Trail Maps* or Harlan and Bergantino’s mapping that can be accessed via the new National Park Service interactive Web map of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail), the expedition’s August 24, 1804, route commenced (and proceeded on) farther west and conspicuously upriver of the “traditional” Ionia Volcano. One can easily map the Ionia Volcano site on the interactive Web map and clearly see that it is demonstrably east (i.e., downriver) and past where the expedition awoke on August 24, 1804. Thus, the “Those Bluffs appear to have been laterly on fire” observation made on August 24 was clearly in reference to a different set of burning

bluffs, one far more extensive (about 1.75 miles long by Clark’s estimate) than the Ionia Volcano site. I believe it is these extensive bluffs that Clark indicated on his route map, which has come down to us as Clark-Maximilian Sheet 6 (map 17 of Volume 1 [Atlas] of the Moulton, *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*). It was this finding that I tried to impart in my 2011 article: the Ionia Volcano should not be linked with any August 24, 1804, bluff “on fire” observations because the expedition had passed the Ionia Volcano location at least a day earlier.

I do appreciate Mr. Peterson’s obvious passion for this area and its Lewis and Clark historical importance, and I thoroughly enjoy engaging in such enlightening, friendly debates about the geology of the expedition. How-

ever, we should question any deeply held correlation between a geological or topographic feature and an expedition observation when such a feature would have been encountered one or two days prior to the observation being recorded in the journals. It was not the norm for Lewis or Clark to incorporate descriptions of previously-seen features (if, in fact, they even noted the bluff that is now the Ionia Volcano site) when they were documenting the geomorphology of a daily route and its essential waypoints. I don’t believe they did so on their August 24, 1804, traverse past the “blue Clay Bluff of 180 or 190 feet high on the L.S.” that had “been laterly on fire.”

John W. Jengo
Downingtown, Pennsylvania

Two great ways to explore the Trail!



RIVER DANCE LODGE
IDAHO'S OUTDOOR ADVENTURE RESORT

The ideal location for exploring the Historic Lolo and Nez Perce Trail. Located along US Hwy. 12 on the Clearwater River 2 1/2 hours west of Missoula, Montana. The resort offers 8 hand-crafted log cabins with private hot tubs and spectacular views. Enjoy fine dining and a superb wine list at the Syringa Café. Bring your family or friends to explore the Trail or go on one of our whitewater rafting or gentle float trips. There's also hiking, fishing, biking and more!



www.RiverDanceLodge.com

MISSOURI RIVER EXPEDITIONS



Grab a paddle and board one of ROW's 34' Canoes to travel the waters that Lewis & Clark paddled nearly 200 years ago, hiking and exploring along the way.

Trips Depart Every Sunday, June Thru Mid-September

ROW provides all equipment, professional guides, gourmet dining and a luxury camping experience.

Over 1200 people, ages 5 to 87 have enjoyed this trip!



"The expert help of ROW's strong young canoeists who prepared our camps and doubled as cooks extraordinaire made the trip as enjoyable as it was easy."

-Gary Moulton, Editor, Lewis & Clark Journals, University of Nebraska Press.

www.ROWadventures.com



PO Box 579-WP, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816 • E-mail: info@ROWadventures.com

For a free brochure about River Dance Lodge, Missouri River trips, ROW's whitewater rafting trips, as well as international adventures including history-oriented yacht cruises in Croatia, Turkey or Greece, barging in France and more, call **800-451-6034**.

THE REAL JAMES NEELLY

Meriwether Lewis's Caretaker

BY THOMAS C. DANISI

James Neelly is an obscure figure in American history. If he had never met Meriwether Lewis, if he had not accompanied Lewis during the final journey of the explorer's life, if he had not written (or dictated) two accounts of Lewis's death, we would almost certainly not be reading about him today.¹ As a task for a historian, tracking down just who James Neelly was, and why he was traveling with Meriwether Lewis in the autumn of 1809, is difficult.

Tony Turnbow's article "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," (*We Proceeded On*, May 2012) attempted to solve the mystery of James Neelly's identification.² But historical research is very technical and sometimes difficult, requiring great persistence. In this case, further research into the life of James Neelly on my part revealed that Mr. Turnbow, in fact, identified the wrong person as the Chickasaw Agent who escorted Meriwether Lewis across the Tennessee wilderness in the last two weeks of his life. So if James Neelly was previously misidentified in the pages of this journal, who was the *real* James Neelly, and what can the historical record tell us about him?

When researching or reading a complex topic, I have often wondered how the author knows when the research has been completed. For myself, the answer is straightforward: I have to be convinced I have exhausted all of the sources. Finding the original Meriwether Lewis Court Martial transcript of 1795 is but one example of this type of quest, one that consumed eighteen months of my life.³ When I read Mr. Turnbow's May 2012 article, I was astounded by how much information he had uncovered about James Neelly. His research propelled me into another multi-month project—first, to validate his endnotes, and then to travel beyond his sphere of research, if warranted.

In doing research for *Uncovering The Truth About Meriwether Lewis*, I confirmed that in 1809 there were four different men named James Neelly living in Franklin, Tennessee, the place of residence of the Chickasaw Agent.⁴ We know from the historical record the man we are seeking was the federal agent appointed to oversee the Chickasaw Indian Nation during the time Neelly accompanied Meriwether Lewis. In his article, Mr. Turnbow also confirmed "there were three adult men and one minor named James Neelly living in Williamson County in October 1809."⁵ (Franklin, Tennessee is within the limits of Williamson County.) The four men I found had accounts at Hardeman's merchant store in Franklin: Maj. James Neelly, James Neelly Sr., James Neelly Jr., and James Neelly, Esquire.⁶ Mr. Turnbow's confirmation of three adult men named James Neelly living in the county should have been the impetus to conduct further research providing identification for each of these men in genealogical and probate sources. Instead, Turnbow relied solely upon a Davidson County marriage bond to attempt to sort out how one of the men named James Neelly was related to the bride, Sophia Neelly, a young woman slated to marry Isaac Lennard. A witness, William Neelly, attested to the bond at the time of the marriage and Turnbow concluded this William Neelly was James's father and that Sophia was James's cousin.⁷

Turnbow believed that James Neelly and Meriwether Lewis were about the same age, stating "both men were thirty-five years old and Virginians at birth." It is true that Turnbow's James Neelly was born on December 24, 1773, and Meriwether Lewis on August 18, 1774; however, Turnbow did not provide any documentation to support why he believed the James Neelly born in 1773 was the Chickasaw Agent.⁸ In fact, there

is a real problem here: Sophia Neelly's father was also named James, not William, and when examining the Neelly family genealogy, Sophia had a younger brother named James, too. So why was the James Neelly who was William Neelly's son more fit for the role as Chickasaw Agent than the other men named James Neelly?

In order to push this investigation further I contacted several Neelly descendants who sent me genealogical data, providing a wealth of detail.⁹ I also examined Williamson County probate records to confirm that data.¹⁰ This information revealed William Neelly had three brothers: James, John, and Robert. James was born in Virginia in 1741, married Catherine Evans in 1770, and moved to Tennessee in 1800. James and Catherine had eleven children, including Sophia, born in 1776, and James S., born in 1782. William Neelly was born in 1749, married Mary Friend, and had two children. Their son James was born in 1773. John Neelly had married Catherine Evans's sister, Susannah, and of their eight children, there was one boy named James, born in 1775. The final brother, Robert Neelly, had two or three daughters, but no sons.¹¹

Tony Turnbow described several court cases in which James Neelly was the administrator for Isaac Lennard's estate, but he missed one that contained a tremendous amount of pertinent testimony. On June 16, 1809, a judgment was rendered against the Lennard estate and James Neelly, "immediately after which your petitioner being then appointed Indian Agent for the Chickasaw Nation felt it his duty to set out to the nation in a charge of his duty without delay which he accordingly done."¹² The case was continued into 1813 and 1814, when Neelly offered additional information about himself, and the reason for the court actions in which he was involved, stating that "some time in the Spring of the year 1807, Isaac Leonard his son in law died in Cocke County."¹³ What this means is Sophia Neelly was the Chickasaw Agent's *daughter*. This testimony revealed the James Neelly in question, the man who was the Chickasaw Agent and the man who accompanied Meriwether Lewis on his final journey, was the James Neelly born in 1741, the one who married Catherine Evans and had a daughter named Sophia. In July 1809, when this James Neelly was appointed federal agent to the Chickasaw Nation, he was sixty-eight years old, not thirty-five.

Mr. Turnbow's article is therefore fundamentally flawed and cannot be relied on, especially when he has characterized Neelly as a cheat and a liar without supplying any primary source documentation for those charges. For this reason, it is important to revisit the events that led to James Neelly's association with Meriwether Lewis, his position as Chickasaw Indian Agent, as well as his role as the administrator of Isaac Lennard's estate.¹⁴

GENEALOGY, GEOGRAPHY, AND GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT

James and Jane Grimes Neelly, the parents of the four Neelly brothers described above, were married in Philadelphia in May 1740 and moved to Augusta County, Virginia, that same year. They eventually had six children, including James, the oldest, born in 1741, and Sarah, the youngest, in 1751. The elder James Neelly was a justice in the community, served as a militia officer, collected taxes, and amassed much Virginia acreage. In 1769 a part of Augusta County was subdivided and named Botetourt County in honor of Lord Botetourt of England, recently appointed Governor of Virginia. A year later James Neelly's oldest son, also named James and the subject of this inquiry, married Catherine Evans, and over the next twenty-one years they reared eleven children.¹⁵

The Neelly/Evans family moved to Burke County, North Carolina. By 1790 that state ceded the territory of Tennessee to the United States. In May Congress passed a bill for the formation of a new government called "The Territory of the United States South of the Ohio River." Five years later more than sixty thousand people lived in that territory, the minimum population required for statehood. A convention met in Knoxville in January 1796 and future president Andrew Jackson suggested the state be called Tennessee. Congress approved its admission in June as the sixteenth state of the Union. Some of the Neelly clan, one of those families who seemed always to be moving westward during that era, migrated to Davidson County, Tennessee, by 1796; this county was subdivided in 1799 when Williamson County was carved from it. In 1800 the Neelly/Evans family settled in the town of Franklin.¹⁶

James Neelly's story was uneventful up until the time he was selected as the Chickasaw Agent. We

know from the record the Chickasaw Chiefs recommended him by name as their preferred candidate for agent. How they became aware of him we do not know, but when reviewing the Tennessee General Assembly records we find that James Neely was one of three commissioners ordered to open a road from the town of Franklin to Alabama, cutting through Chickasaw territory. Dated July 28, 1806, the resolution stated “that Captain John Hawkins, James Neely, senior [sic], and Joseph B. Porter...are hereby appointed commissioners to mark, lay off, and survey a road from the neighborhood of Franklin, to the settlement on the Tombigby, which shall cross the Tennessee at or near the Muscle Shoals, agreeably to the provisions of the before mentioned treaty.”¹⁷ On December 4, 1807, the General Assembly of Tennessee paid the three commissioners “the sum of four hundred and forty dollars for surveying and laying out a road from Franklin, to the lower end of the Muscle-Shoals.”¹⁸

The death in September 1808 of the previous Chickasaw Agent, Thomas Wright, was the catalyst for Neely to be recommended as his successor. General James Robertson and Tennessee Senator Daniel Smith had written to the Secretary of War endorsing David Hogg, the factor at Chickasaw Bluffs.¹⁹ In February 1809 the Chickasaw Chiefs appealed to the Secretary of War regarding whom *they* wanted to serve as their agent:

Father if you would be so good as to indulge us, we could recommend an old Gentleman of our acquaintance that is not so fond of Speculation, as our former agents have been, his name is Major James Neely but perhaps it may be too forward in us to recommend any person to Government – therefore we will leave it to your superior judgment to send us a good man...we would prefer an Elderly man as an agent as young men in the heat of youth may abuse their Authority...we conceive that an Old is more suitable to do business with red people than a young man.²⁰

The hierarchy of the Chickasaw Indians, as with most American Indian tribes, placed a great deal of trust in their tribal elders, which may in part have been the reason they favored an older, wiser, and less self-seeking man. In a newly discovered letter, Robertson, a well-known figure in Tennessee history, wrote to Congressman John Sevier agreeing with the Chickasaw Chiefs. “I was acquainted with Major James Neely in the ’74

Shawny Expedition and since in this country all ways very friendly & recommended him to the Secretary of war.”²¹ In August 1809, Robertson personally handed Neely his commission as Chickasaw Agent, which ran for a term of three years, ending on June 4, 1812.²²

When Neely took his commission, his tenure as agent commenced, which included a salary of \$1,000 a year with an extra \$365 for subsistence. When the previous Chickasaw Agent Thomas Wright was appointed in 1806, he was given an advance of \$450, which equaled the agent’s first quarter salary. James Neely was also able to draw upon his salary for advance funds, but the records do not show when he did so. Neely departed Franklin, Tennessee, in mid-August for the Chickasaw Agency and wrote his first report to the Secretary of War on August 27 describing the decrepit condition of the agency house. He bought a government horse on August 30 for \$125 and then started for Fort Pickering.²³

On July 21, the Secretary of War notified the Chickasaw Chiefs of Neely’s appointment and apprised them that Neely would personally deliver their long-delayed annuities for 1808 and 1809. When the Chickasaw Treaty was signed with the United States in July 1794, which surrendered a large portion of Chickasaw lands to American settlement, the Chickasaws were granted compensation in the form of \$3,000 worth of goods to be delivered to them each year in perpetuity and known as an annuity.²⁴ Neely’s primary duty as the new Chickasaw agent was to travel to Fort Pickering, pack the items, carry them overland, and distribute them at a predetermined location in the Chickasaw Nation. Thomas Wright had failed in this task prior to his sudden death in 1808, and during the time it took to choose a new agent nearly another year rolled by without delivery of the promised goods.²⁵ Mr. Turnbow minimized the size of the shipment, stating that one trunk “had been packed for the Chickasaw Nation.”²⁶ In fact, the Chickasaw annuities were heavy and voluminous and required freight wagons to carry them overland. A typical year’s worth of goods comprised 200 lbs. of rifle powder, 500 lbs. of lead, 1,000 gun flints, 40 blankets, 100 shirts, 10 rifles, 30 axes, 36 hoes, 12 black silk handkerchiefs, 28 yards of calico, pulicats (a type of cloth manufactured in southern India and traded by the Dutch), stroud (a coarse

woolen cloth, originally manufactured in Gloucestershire, England), 2 dozen scalping knives, 50 gallons of whiskey, 5 kegs of whiskey, 200 pounds of tobacco, 22 yards of grey coating, and 47 yards of striped cloth.²⁷ It should be remembered that Neely was delivering two years' worth of annuities. On October 20 he confirmed the delivery, stating that the Chickasaw "are verry well pleased with their annuity this year the only objection that they could have was in place of some fine Callicoes they would rather have stroud."²⁸

As he began his mission to deliver these goods, Neely arrived at Fort Pickering on September 18, three days after Governor Lewis's appearance there. Neely arrived at a crucial moment, for in letters to President James Madison and Captain Amos Stoddard, Lewis stated he had changed his mind about the direction of his travel arrangements: instead of going by boat to New Orleans, he would ride horseback through Tennessee. This change of mind was a monumental shift in Lewis's thinking and may have come about by talking with James Neely, who agreed to escort Lewis through the Tennessee wilderness. There was no one else at the fort who could have guided Lewis as ably to Nashville. Neely's willingness to take on the obviously ill and perhaps troubled Lewis at this point reveals a level of compassion and altruism consistent with a responsible caretaker rather than an inconsiderate man who would abandon Lewis in his time of need.

There has been a great deal of misinformation produced in past accounts about how much money Lewis and Neely possessed at the time of their departure from Fort Pickering. All of that information stems from Captain Gilbert Russell, commandant at the fort, who later reported to Jefferson that within a day of their departure Lewis borrowed money from Russell, and according to Russell upon Lewis's death, that amount had disappeared from Lewis's possessions at Grinder's Inn. When Lewis's servant Pearnly left Nashville after his master's death, Neely gave him \$15 and a horse to travel to Monticello.²⁹ This caused Gilbert Russell to accuse Neely of stealing Lewis's money, claiming "This Neely also says he lent the Govr. Money which cannot be so for he had none himself..."³⁰

This statement is demonstrably untrue. We have already seen that Neely drew an advance on his salary in August, and when at Fort Pickering he drew more.

Why did Russell report otherwise? The simple answer is that Russell did not know Neely's financial situation, principally because he had no access to the records of Neely's transactions with David Hogg, the factor at Fort Pickering. On September 24, Neely wrote a draft to Hogg for \$100 and was paid in cash.³¹ Russell incorrectly reported Neely's financial resources because he did not know of Hogg's business affairs with Neely, since Hogg and Russell were not on speaking terms. The cause of their enmity is revealed in a letter Hogg wrote to the Secretary of War, William Eustis, on September 10, 1809, complaining that Russell ignored Benjamin Allen, one of the fort's interpreters, who was "a lawless, troublesome Fellow whose practice was to sell liquor to and cheat the Indians."³² Hogg admonished Russell several times over the course of a few weeks to arrest the interpreter. On or about September 8 they became engaged in a furious argument over the matter, which resulted in Hogg proffering formal charges against Russell in his letter of September 10.³³ A year later a court of inquiry was held to look into Russell's conduct and the assistant agent at Fort Pickering was summoned to testify.³⁴ An awareness of this backdrop of infighting at Fort Pickering helps us understand that Russell knew little of Hogg's affairs at the crucial time of Meriwether Lewis and James Neely's stay at the fort. When Neely cashed in a draft to Hogg, Russell did not know of it, and was either guessing or misinformed when he stated Neely had no money.

THE CHICKASAW ANNUITIES

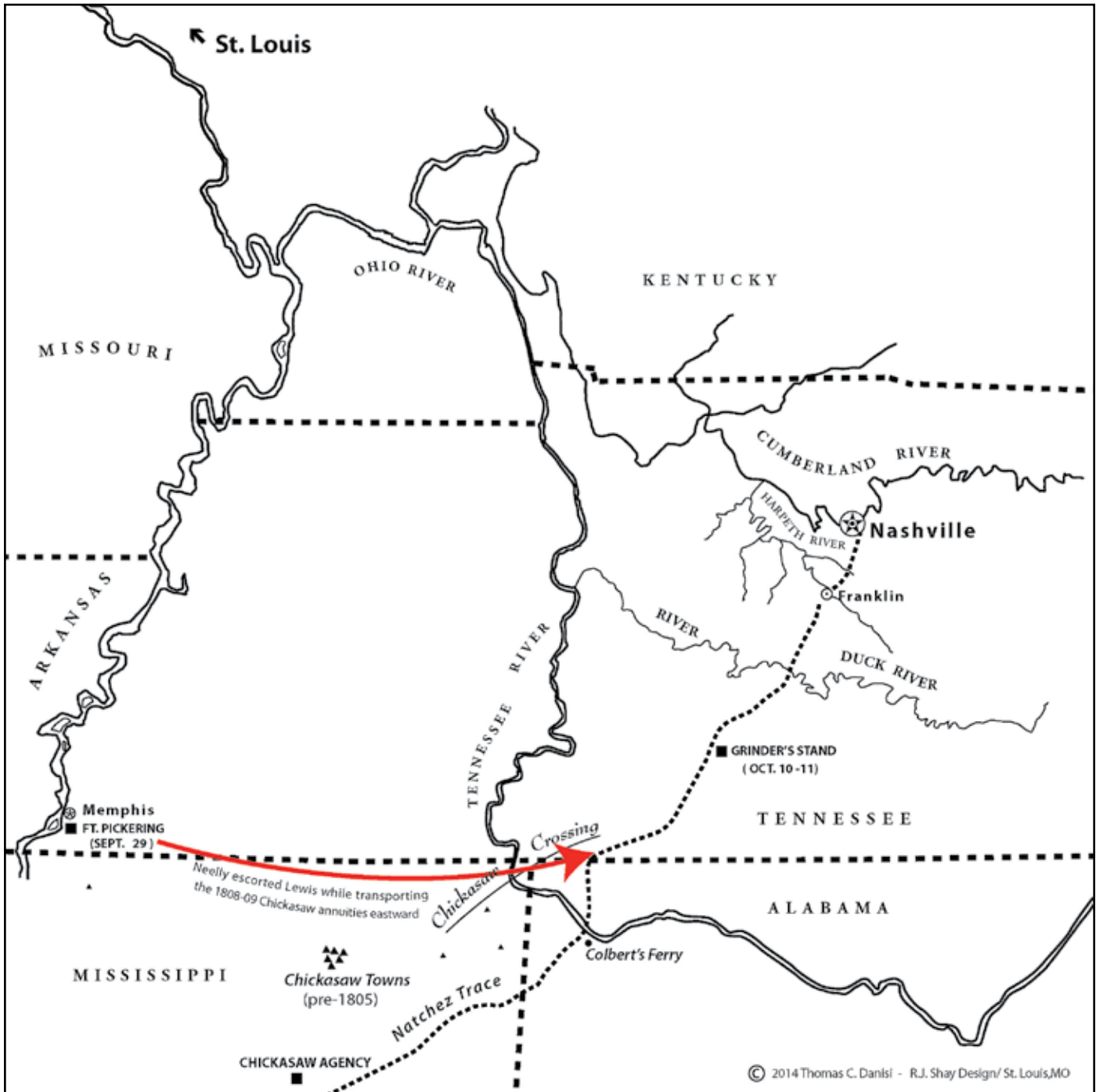
On September 29 the entourage led by James Neely and accompanied by Meriwether Lewis departed Fort Pickering with a number of wagons filled with the Chickasaw annuities. There has been tremendous speculation regarding the route Neely took after leaving Fort Pickering. To date, no one has been able to calculate correctly how long it would take to arrive at the Chickasaw Nation because the entourage did not consist of a few men on horseback, as others have believed, but also included a wagon train loaded with two years' worth of tribal annuities.³⁵

Part of the speculation on the route and time it took can be resolved by the writings of a man with the unlikely name of Dr. Rush Nutt, who in 1805 traveled from Virginia to Mississippi and spent a few months

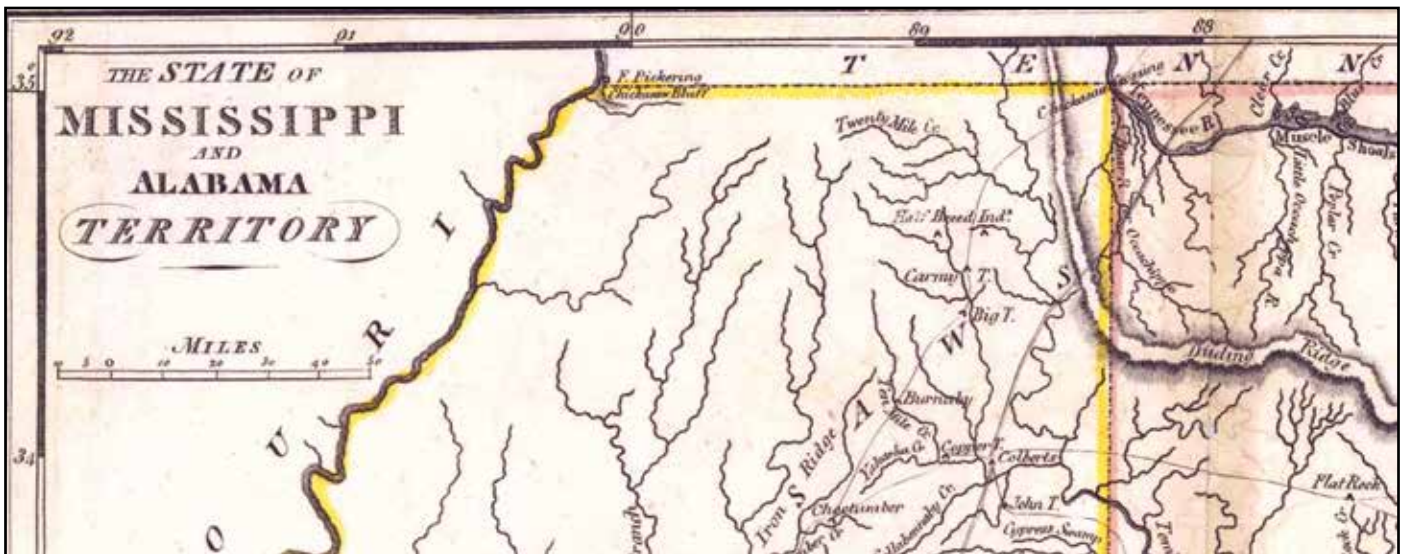
with the Chickasaws.³⁶ Another factor in determining the logistics revolves around the true locations of the Chickasaw towns, the Chickasaw Agency, and the Chickasaw Crossing at the Tennessee River. An excellent new source for that information is the recent thesis by Wendy Cegielski of the University of Mississippi,

which geo-locates the Chickasaw settlement in Northeast Mississippi.

Dr. Nutt observed that by 1805 the Chickasaws had left the “village system,” which can be defined as an area that supported fortified towns or villages, while Cegielski reported the Chickasaws had abandoned



Major Neely, ordered to deliver the 1808 and 1809 annuities to the Chickasaw Nation, arrived at Fort Pickering on September 18, 1809. Neely had to check inventory and pack the goods into freight wagons. When the Neely/Lewis party departed the fort on September 29, historians maintain that they traveled south to the Chickasaw Agency, but this was too far out of their way. The time factor is important; due to travel on horseback, their course must have been eastward and not south; to travel to the Agency and double back along the Natchez Trace would have taken longer than the thirteen days between Fort Pickering on September 29 and Grinder's Stand on October 11. It would have taken about a week with the heavy wagons to arrive at the distribution point, which was probably near the Chickasaw Crossing, a narrow section of the Tennessee River close to where the majority of Chickasaw had their farms.



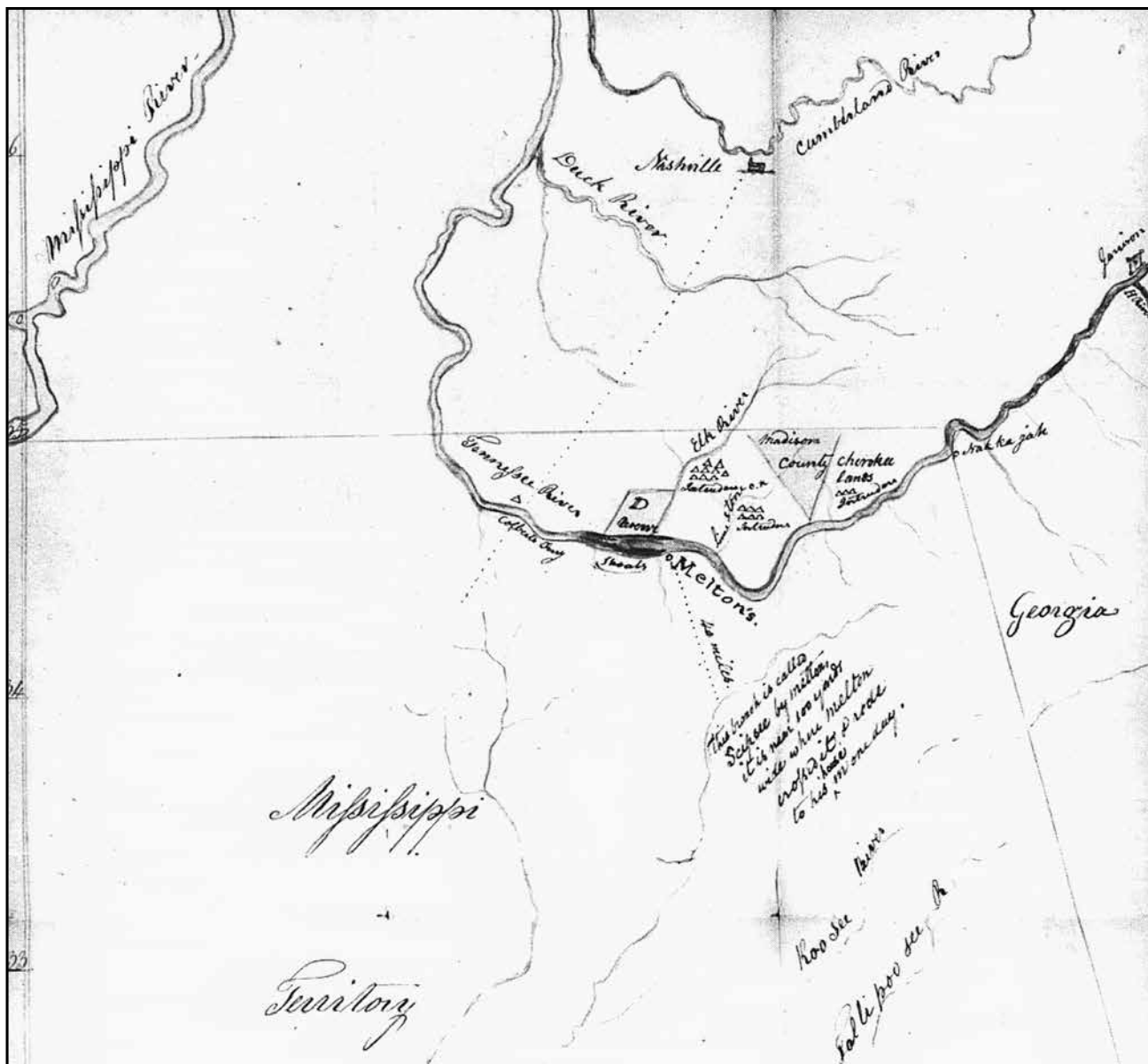
This territorial map was published in 1804 and 1812, and updated in 1817. The map clearly shows that the Tennessee River was constricted at the Chickasaw Crossing, while at other locations, like Colbert's Ferry and Muscle Shoals, the river was a mile wide. In earlier maps, the Chickasaw Crossing was noted as Chickasaw Landing. The road cutting through the Chickasaw Crossing was the Old Natchez Trace or the Old Chickasaw Trace. *The state of Mississippi and Alabama territory, Samuel Lewis Atlas, 1817*; <http://www.loc.gov/resource/g3980.ct001911>. Accessed 9/15/2014.

congregated villages and moved onto “dispersed free-range cattle farms.” This system led to the Chickasaw land being “divided informally into four districts—Long Town, Big Town, Tchichtala, and Pontotoc.” The towns overlaid each other, being “13 or 14 miles long by about 4 broad.” Cegielski points out that “many of the settlements run the entire length of ridgelines, making it hard to distinguish between individual villages.” Derived from historic archaeological data, there were many Chickasaw settlements after 1805: Belden, Big Town East, Big Town West, Extended Upper Coonewah, Long Town North, Long Town South, Lower, Middle, and Upper Coonewah, Upper Kings Creek, and Yaneka.³⁷

When distributing the annuities, Neelly could not easily travel to each of these spread-out villages. Instead, based on the practices of the time when exchanging goods, he went to a predetermined location along the Tennessee River—likely a distribution point where all the Chickasaws could gather. When viewing the geography of the area, the only logical point for such a rendezvous was a narrow stretch of the river called the “Chickasaw Crossing.”³⁸ It was just above this point that the river broke up into various streams that flowed down from the surrounding hills where the Chickasaw had their farmsteads and villages.³⁹ Various histories of the area mention, “the remains of numerous town sites along the Tennes-

see River and also where the Blue Water Creek enters the Tennessee was the location of a large Indian town site.”⁴⁰ In 1810 Neelly counted 2,546 Chickasaws in the four districts.⁴¹ Turnbow claimed Neelly and Lewis arrived at the Chickasaw Agency to distribute the goods, but the documentary source he relied upon is fictitious, which was explained by me in the February 2013 issue of *We Proceeded On*.⁴²

In his writings, Dr. Nutt provided pertinent information to define the Neelly/Lewis route. Nutt interviewed William Colbert, one of the Chickasaw chiefs, who said the distance from Fort Pickering to the Agency House was 120 miles and that it took him seven days to travel from the fort to his house, which was within twenty miles of the Agency House. Nutt also departed the Agency House for Franklin, Tennessee, in August 1805 and stated in his diary that the trip took seven days. This confirms, once and for all, that Neelly did not take Lewis to the Agency House. The most logical explanation for disbursing the goods was a central meeting place. This would also allow Lewis time to rest. Neelly and Lewis then crossed the Tennessee River and made their way to the encampment where during the night some of the horses strayed. “The Governor proposed to the Major to remain behind and find the horses, & that he would proceed on his Journey and wait for him at the first house from there inhabited by white people to which the Major agreed & the Governor



The Secretary of War had ordered Return J. Meigs, the Cherokee Indian agent, to suggest sites at Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River to locate a military garrison. On June 27, 1810, Meigs recommended that the best site for the post would be at the top of the largest bluff. He also stated that a John Melton lived there (later called Melton's Bluff) with his Cherokee wife and family and that the Tennessee River was a mile wide by the bluffs. RG107, M221, M147, roll 38, frames 5220-23, NARA

proceeded on with his Servant & Majr Neelly—to the house of a Mr. Grinder.”⁴³

According to Turnbow, Neelly did not arrive at Grinder’s Inn as he stated in his letter to Jefferson and instead was in a Franklin, Tennessee, courtroom on October 11, 1809, the day Lewis died.⁴⁴ The legal action in which Neelly was then involved and its accompanying history have been discussed in detail in my book *Uncovering the Truth about Meriwether Lewis*. Neelly did not have to be in court on October 11, because he had hired an attorney who repre-

sented him and was present on that day.⁴⁵ New research now proves he had retained an attorney: “And at rules holden in the clerk’s office on the fourth day of February in the year 1809 came the said defendant by Jenkin Whiteside his attorney.”⁴⁶

The act of distributing the Chickasaw annuities raises some new and interesting questions. First, is it possible that Neelly did not accompany Meriwether Lewis past the distribution site because he was obliged to stay longer to attend ceremonies of thanks, and that Lewis, impatient, wished to forge ahead? Knowing

Indian politics of the time, it seems unlikely Neelly could just dump off the annuity goods without being feted by the Indians for a time; and leaving such fetes prematurely would be an insult to the Chickasaws. Second, and probably the most fascinating question: would it not also be geographically and physically impossible for Neelly to be in Franklin on October 11 if he dropped off the Chickasaw annuities, which was more than 125 miles south just a couple of days earlier?

A SOURCE OF DISAGREEMENT—THE ISAAC LENNARD ESTATE TRIALS

All of the foregoing information was uncovered in an attempt to get at the truth involving a court case heard in Franklin, Tennessee, at the time Lewis died. Did this case involve the same James Neelly who was Chickasaw Agent and who accompanied Meriwether Lewis in the closing days of his life? Does the evidence included within the court case reveal that Neelly could not have been with Lewis at the crucial time when he was needed, or, as has been insinuated, that Neelly had something to do with Lewis's death?

First of all, I was able to verify that the man involved in the trial was the same James Neelly who was the Chickasaw Indian Agent. Secondly, the case in question revolved around the troubled estate of Neelly's son-in-law, Isaac Lennard, mentioned earlier in this article as being wedded to Neelly's daughter Sophia. My research uncovered the fact that Tony Turnbow, in writing his *We Proceeded On* article, was not aware of a great deal of documentation associated with the Isaac Lennard estate trial. Turnbow relied upon various microfilmed documents that contained the court minutes of lawsuits, brief summaries rather than genuine court transcripts, as we know by reading his endnotes.⁴⁷

In *Hugh Young and William Young v. Neelly* the minutes showed a verdict: "It is therefore considered by the court that the plaintiffs recover their damages...to be levied of the goods and chattels of the said decedent." And in *Preston v. Neelly*, "the judgment entered...is considered by the Court here that the plaintiff recover against the said defendant the debt in the declaration."⁴⁸ Turnbow reported different findings: "Although Neelly had a fiduciary duty to safeguard Lennard's assets, he spent the estate funds." Or "Neelly could have pled either that the case had no funds or that there were

inadequate funds to pay the debt. He never pled either defense; therefore, he must have found sufficient property in the estate and failed to pay the creditors."⁴⁹ The court minutes did not detail Neelly's actions, which gave Turnbow license to make his own assessment.

Court transcripts, however, give us specific and detailed information of what transpired in the court, the judge's decision, and most importantly, testimony by the plaintiffs and defendants. In addition to court records, we might expect to find a great deal of documentation in the probate file of Lennard's estate; however, in 1876 the Cocke County Courthouse burned to the ground and with it, an extraordinary amount of genealogical data was forever lost.⁵⁰

James Neelly was unexpectedly swept up in several complex court cases involving huge debts incurred by his son-in-law. We will see from the transcript information that Neelly had no idea of the extent of Lennard's business dealings, nor was there any real way of assessing the accompanying debts or how they would be paid. Furthermore, probate law in 1809 upheld an archaic statute that created unfair and unfortunate consequences, by which the executor or administrator of an estate, in this case James Neelly, who was administering to the debts of the deceased, was personally liable for those debts in the event that the estate could not cover them.⁵¹ Neelly stated that "your orrator does not believe that so much can be collected from the debts due to the estate of said Lennard as will replace the sums which he has advanced out of his own pocket."⁵² In the suit of *Hugh Young and William Young v. James Neelly* administrator of Isaac Leonard [sic] deceased, the court made this ruling:

It is therefore considered by the court that the plaintiffs recover their damages...to be levied of the goods and chattels of the said decedent...that said defendant hath in his hands to be administered but if not then the costs to be levied...of the said defendant.⁵³

In 1809, Tennessee probate law stipulated the spouse (executor or executrix) or next closest kin or relative (administrator) manage the affairs of an estate, which would have fallen to Sophia Neelly Lennard, the wife of Isaac, but Neelly explains that he stepped up to take on the role of administrator:

Your orrator James Neelly a citizen of the state of Tennessee, [states] that some time in the spring of the year 1807

Isaac Lennard his son in law died in Cocke County, and his wife declining to undertake the administration, your orrator some time in the same year obtained letters of administration on said Lennard's estate from the Court of Pleas & Q of Cocke County.⁵⁴

It is not known why Neelly became the administrator; perhaps it was out of a spirit of loyalty and need to support his daughter. When Lennard suddenly died, it is likely he left his wife and four children penniless. James Neelly stepped in, knowing that his daughter would, under the law, be liable for the debts.⁵⁵ Perhaps Lennard was even indebted to Neelly, or Sophia, who lived two hundred miles from her father and needed assistance selling Lennard's property.⁵⁶ As the administrator of Lennard's estate, James Neelly was required by law to advertise at the Cocke County Courthouse and other public places in that county so any person who had an account with Lennard could find relief.⁵⁷ Being the administrator set in motion a series of events between 1808 and 1814 that made Neelly the unwitting target of several high-dollar, severely distressed suits in which his son-in-law had been entangled.⁵⁸ At the beginning of 1809, Neelly hired Jenkin Whiteside, a well-known Nashville attorney, who represented him in court on all the cases in which he was a defendant and a plaintiff.⁵⁹

Not much is known about Isaac Lennard, the man whose death put Neelly in such an uncomfortable position. He was born in Virginia in 1772 and found his way to Davidson County, Tennessee, where he married Sophia Neelly in 1800. They lived in Cocke County, two hundred miles east of James Neelly's home in Franklin. Isaac Lennard was the proprietor of a mercantile business and had borrowed money or goods from persons in Maryland, Tennessee, and Virginia. Lennard died in the Spring of 1807, and in that same year the Cocke County Probate court approved James Neelly as the administrator of Lennard's estate. In 1808 he began receiving creditor statements and suits levied against the estate.

The court transcripts offer a wide range of information regarding James Neelly as an administrator, and reveal that neither James Neelly nor the Lennard estate had enough money to satisfy the debts. To make matters worse, some of the judgments required a surety, which meant Neelly had to put up money, like a bond, to satisfy the demand. In two cases Neelly borrowed

money from friends and relatives, believing the Lennard estate would eventually pay out, and then was sued for non-repayment of his own debt.⁶⁰ Neelly stated that after he had settled with various plaintiffs in 1809, he then went to the Chickasaw Nation to fulfill his duty as agent. He assumed that when he departed Franklin, Tennessee, in mid-August 1809, the suits had been settled. Upon his return he discovered the Lennard estate had been besieged with more judgments and executions. Due to his absence, the court had decided in favor of the plaintiffs.

Neelly had been a competent Chickasaw Agent, yet because war was imminent with the British, General James Robertson was appointed to the post at the expiration of his term in June 1812. Neelly was disheartened when he heard of his replacement and informed the Secretary of War, "I my self shall be nearly ruined by it unless you will be pleased to appoint me, if there is any vacancy to some other agency under your direction."⁶¹ When Neelly returned to Franklin in the autumn of 1812, he was in dire straits. Since he could not be found in Williamson or Davidson County in 1811, the marshal seized his property to pay the balance of the judgment in one of the suits against the Lennard estate. Neelly tried to halt the progress of one execution and had "used all the means in his power to collect the debts," yet many of them had been lost by the "insolvency of the debtors," or worse, by court delays.

Some of the suits were for very large debts and he was not sure which suit should be paid first. His attorney suggested that Preston came before Schroeder, but Neelly argued that he had been paying the "sums which he has advanced out of his own pocket." Tennessee probate forced Neelly to pay Schroeder even though it would make him insolvent. At the last minute, Neelly filed an injunction to prevent Schroeder from selling his own property, which was a great hardship. A new court order required Neelly to give security within two months. Neelly explained that it was impossible while he was "attending to his agency in the Chickasaw nation could not procure such surety... although he did everything in his power to obtain it." The marshall had seized his property and was about to sell it when Neelly begged the judge that he was "at an advanced period of life...without the means of

having of your petitioner as administrator as ofers and in me
deately after what your petitioner being thus appointed became
agent for the Chickasaw nation fell it his duty to set
out to the nation in discharge of his duty without delay
which he accordingly done, Your petitioner has since been

The *Neely v. Schroeder* suit was heard in the Superior Court of Law and Equity in Nashville, Tennessee, in June 1813, because it involved a large debt. The court transcript provides a wealth of information regarding Major James Neely's role as the court-appointed administrator of the Lennard estate. While administering to that estate, the U.S. Government also appointed Neely, Chickasaw Agent, to a term of three years.

Humbly Complaining sheweth unto your Honor, your
Orator James Neely a citizen of the State of Tennessee, that
some time in the Spring of the year 1807 Isaac Lennard his
son in law died in Cocke County and his Willows deposite

This was a continuation of the *Schroeder* suit heard in Nashville in June 1814. Other facts in the court transcript were disclosed about Neely's absence and the particulars of his role as administrator. He divulged to the court that Isaac Lennard was his son-in-law and Sophia Neely who had married Lennard was Neely's daughter.

acquiring a subsistence, all which delays and doings are contrary to Equity and good conscience and tend to the ruin of your orrator."⁶² The suit was continued for almost six months and finally resolved when Schroeder withdrew the judgment and Neely wound up paying the court costs. Neely then tackled the Tennessee suits and, over time, was able to reach settlements.

THOMAS MASTERSON & CO. v. JAMES NEELY,
OCTOBER 11, 1809

The specific trial in which historians of Lewis's death have an interest concerning the Lennard estate settlement took place on October 11, 1809, the day Lewis died. We know that James Neely, the Chickasaw Agent, was intrinsically linked to the Masterson suit, heard in a Franklin, Tennessee, courtroom on that day, because he signed some of the pre-trial papers. Lennard died in the spring of 1807. Tennessee probate law stipulated that judgments, executions, or lawsuits could not "issue against...administrators until twelve months after the qualification of such...administrator."⁶³ Using this information, we can surmise that Neely's acceptance of the role of administrator of the Lennard estate occurred sometime in June 1807, because the *Masterson* pre-trial papers reveal that on June 28, 1808, Neely paid for an appearance bond.

However, another Neely was also involved in the *Masterson* suit. Thomas Masterson and Company

wished to recover their costs from goods they sold to Isaac Lennard. One of the co-defendants in this suit was George Neely. In the 1814 *Schroeder* suit, George Neely personally appeared before the judge and said:

That he was employed on the business of said Isaac Lennard deceased before his death and also remained in east Tennessee and transacted most of the business of said estate after his death for the complaints and attended to making the settlement in the bill abovementioned with the Court of Cocke County, that he knows most of the Statements in said bill of his own knowledge to be true & that from information and circumstances he believes the residue of the statements in said bill to be true.⁶⁴

George Neely was James Neely's son, Sophia's brother, and Isaac Lennard's brother-in-law. The Masterson suit was the first case issued against the Lennard estate.⁶⁵ Since George Neely appears, by this testimony, to have been intimately involved in the settlement of the Lennard estate, even if he was not the official administrator—who was a sixty-eight-year-old man, busy with his government job as Chickasaw agent many days ride from the court—is it possible that he rather than James was in the courtroom on October 11?

Tony Turnbow claims James Neely was present in court in Franklin, Tennessee, on October 11, 1809: "if Neely had not appeared, the court would have noted his absence in the court minutes and declared a forfeiture of the bond. The absence of such a notation proves that Neely was present."⁶⁶ As a matter of fact, this

is not true. After reading literally thousands of court cases that include the phrase “this day came the parties by their attorneys,” Michael Everman, archivist for the State of Missouri’s Courts Records Project for St. Louis, states that the phrase itself is an ambiguous one. “It can mean either that the attorneys represented the litigant although the litigant was not present, or that both litigant and attorneys were present. We have seen cases where either one or the other was true. We have never seen, in all these thousands of nineteenth century cases, a time when the court minutes noted the absence of a litigant, as long as an attorney was present to represent the interests of that side of the case.”⁶⁷ The same wording held true in Tennessee as well.

As previously stated, the court minutes are a summary of the court proceedings and, where possible, the court transcript should be consulted; however, there is no court transcript for the *Masterson* suit, only the minutes. This is a complete record of the entire minutes of the case, entered on October 11, 1809:

Thomas Masterson & Co. v. James Neelly: Debt \$103.44 Dam \$20. Justices O. Williams, Saml Shelburne, Alex Mebame. This day came the parties by the attor & came a jury of good and lawful men to wit [names of the jurors] who being elected tried and sworn the truth to speak upon the issue joined upon their oaths do say [sic]⁶⁸

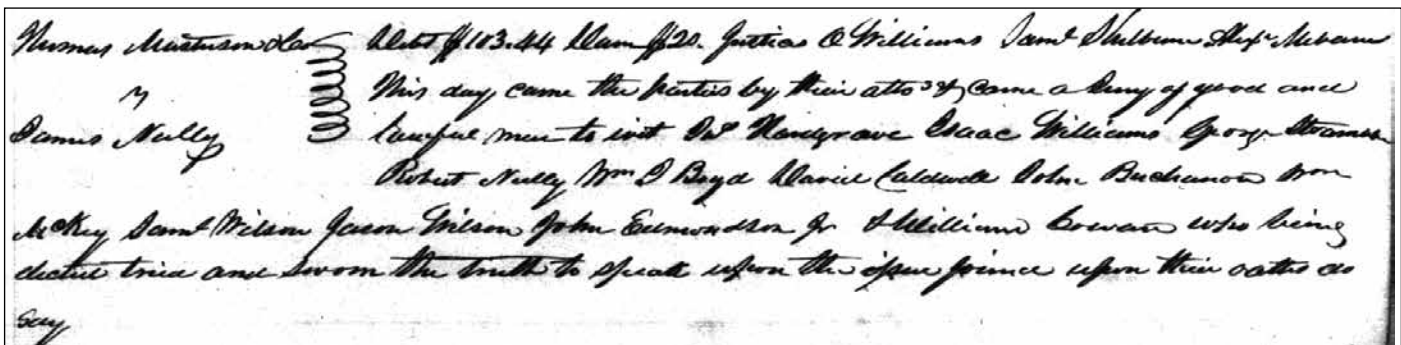
As we can see, the court minutes provide no indication of Neelly’s absence or presence, and no explanation of a bond or a verdict against Neelly. This makes one wonder why Tony Turnbow stated in his article “the jury rendered a verdict against Neelly.”⁶⁹

There are many unknowns regarding the *Masterson v. Neelly* case. We know it was a civil suit tied in with

the Lennard estate for a fairly small sum of money in comparison with the other suits: \$103.44. It was neither a criminal suit nor a criminal trial. Other suits against Neelly as administrator of the Lennard estate initiated by Young, Preston, and Schroeder were for very large amounts of money and heard in the Superior Court of Law and Equity in Nashville. The *Masterson* suit was heard in a local court in Franklin, Tennessee, because the dollar amount was small. The best historical conjecture regarding the court hearing on October 11, 1809 is that as soon as the jurors were sworn in, Neelly’s lawyer informed the judge that he was representing Neelly, who was not in Tennessee, and that he and Masterson had settled the matter out of court. Unfortunately, sometimes imperfect court minutes do not reveal much of anything about an individual case and can require tremendous research to augment and to clarify.⁷⁰

THOSE TROUBLESOME NEELLY MAIL DATES AND HANDWRITING

Before concluding this article on the identity of James Neelly and how he fits into the story of Meriwether Lewis’s death, two more points need consideration. First, there has been much debate regarding Neelly’s mail dates—some letters from the Chickasaw Agency arrived at their destinations sooner than others and this has caused some writers to postulate that Neelly was deceptive in some way. In an October 28, 1809, letter to the Secretary of War, Neelly explained the confusion of the delivery of mail. In 1809 there were two post offices for the mail, one at the Chickasaw Bluffs Factory at Fort Pickering and the other at the Chickasaw



Masterson & Co. v. Neelly, October 11, 1809. These court minutes are the complete record of the case. This case was for a civil suit, not a criminal suit, because it involved a debt. The court minutes provide no indication of Neelly’s absence or presence, and no decision of a verdict whether it was for or against Neelly. The minutes end abruptly, “do say,” because the suit was likely settled outside the courtroom.

Nation, which, although its whereabouts were ambiguous, was located south of Fort Pickering in the Mississippi Territory.

James Allen maintained the Chickasaw Nation Post Office and was paid by Thomas Wright, the Chickasaw Agent “agreeably to contract between said Wright and Allen.” Wright paid Allen \$200 a year, a sum authorized by Henry Dearborn, the Secretary of War who directed the Postmaster to draw the salary on that department for his services. When Wright died in September 1808, Allen continued as the postmaster in the Chickasaw Nation. In the October 28 letter Neelly asked William Eustis to appoint him postmaster of the Chickasaw Agency.

It is a pity that the Post Office business is not attached by some way to the settlement of the Agency...It being at the distance of eight miles from one under the present establishment, I find considerable inconveniences arising there from.

Official postal business was a real difficulty for the agent because of its distant location. On July 1, 1810, Eustis appointed Neelly postmaster of the agency, at which time mail became more consistent and regular.⁷¹

In *Uncovering the Truth about Meriwether Lewis*, I stated the person who wrote Neelly’s letters at the Chickasaw Agency was Malcolm McGee, the Chickasaw interpreter. I also provided samples of what I thought was his handwriting, but new research has now proven McGee did not write any of Neelly’s letters. Moreover, the person who wrote Neelly’s letters varied by location: whether in Franklin, the Chickasaw Agency, or Nashville. These letter writers were as innocuous as the court clerk who penned the Gilbert Russell Statement.⁷² Malcolm McGee, who resided at the Chickasaw Agency, was illiterate. William Simmons, the Accountant of the War Department, wrote to Neelly concerning McGee’s signature: “The genuineness of your drafts in favor of Malcolm McGee was never doubted. The insufficiency of his endorsement (it being an X only without evidence of its having been made by him) was the only reason of suffering them to be protested.”⁷³

When Neelly arrived at Nashville on October 18, 1809, Captain John Brahan wrote Neelly’s letter to Jefferson, which prompted Mr. Turnbow to question if it did not seem strange that Neelly himself would not have written such an important letter.⁷⁴ I did not find

it out of the ordinary because on August 18, 1809, Jeremiah Connor, the St. Louis Sheriff, penned one of the most important letters of Lewis’s career.⁷⁵ Why did Lewis not write this letter? Lewis had a known infirmity and suffered from bouts of malaria, which made holding a pen difficult and writing an almost impossible task. It was only later that I discovered, by accident, why Neelly could not write—he too suffered from a painful ailment, rheumatism, which today is known as arthritis. It is a well-known fact that “Rheumatism may so cripple the fingers and hand of a person that the latter cannot write at all.”⁷⁶ James Neelly described his infirmity in the *Schroeder* suit, explaining why he had been slow in responding to a court order:

But your orrator being confined to his house and a greater part of the time to his bed from some time before he had notice of said order until long after the time for giving said security had expired by a severe rheumatism...⁷⁷

George Neelly, his son, also attested to his father’s illness. “And further made oath that said complainant was on saturday morning last so much affected with a rheumatic affection that he could not travel.”⁷⁸ Finally, we have an understanding that Neelly’s handwriting was probably hard to read and certainly, when he asked Captain Brahan to write to Jefferson, he wanted the writing to reflect clarity of thought.

The Chickasaw interpreter, Malcolm McGee, turned out to be an interesting investigation, not only in the matter of who penned Neelly’s letters, but also in the charges made against Neelly by Tony Turnbow regarding Neelly’s loyalty to his country. Turnbow stated that Neelly was disloyal and failed to “encourage the Chickasaws to properly support the American government at a time of impending war.”⁷⁹ There is plenty of evidence in Neelly’s relations with McGee to refute these charges.

As Neelly worked with the Chickasaws in 1811 on the matter of opening a public road on their lands, he complained to the Secretary of War that McGee was difficult: “my interpreter has become insufferable in his language to me; naming that he will befriend the Chickasaws as he considers himself and is considered by the natives as one of the nation... I assure you sir it will be essentially necessary in order to have the road business brought to a successful issue... I therefore cannot have sufficient confidence in my present interpreter to do the above named business.”⁸⁰

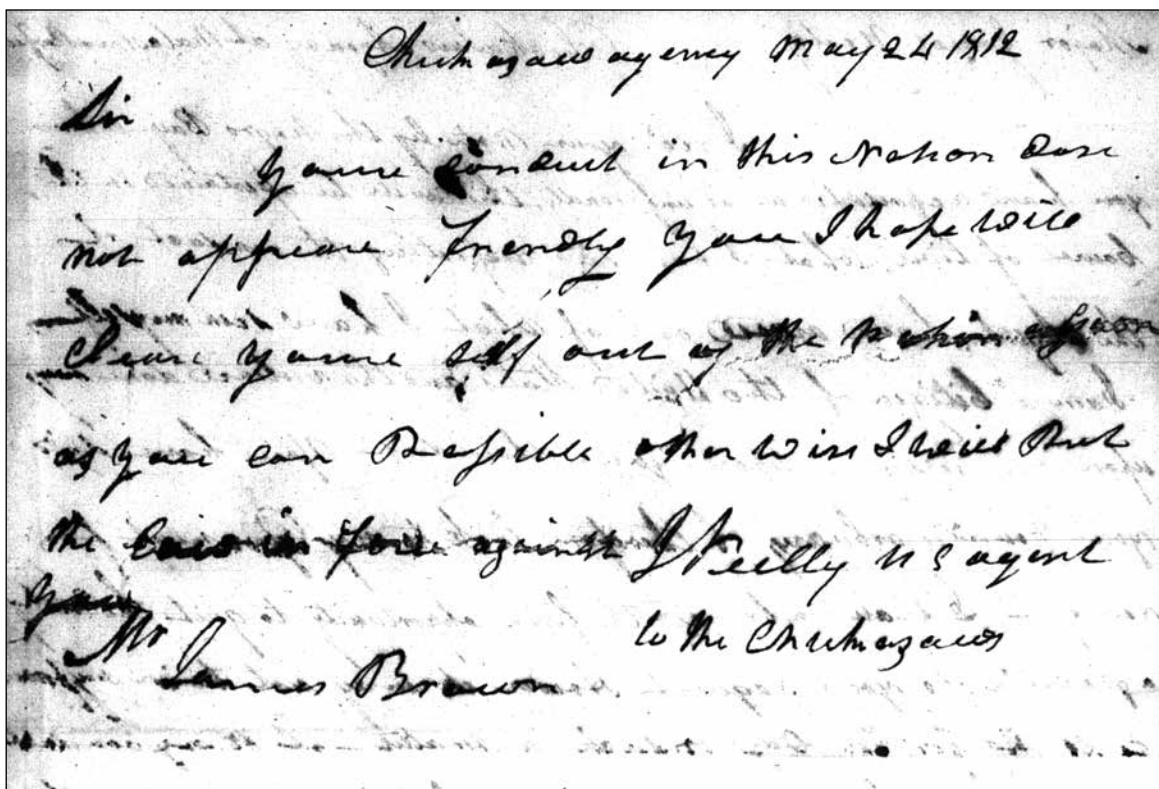
In February 1812 Neelly wrote to Eustis and complained again about McGee who had been “giving proofs of disaffection to the government,” and adversely advising the Chickasaws to oppose what Neelly had been telling them or the wishes of the U.S. Government. He wanted to appoint James Colbert, a Chickasaw Chief, as interpreter, which was accordingly done a couple of months later.⁸¹

In May 1812 Neelly had several heated confrontations with a James Brown who was visiting McGee at the Agency. On June 5 Neelly wrote to the Secretary of War:

“there was a certain man [who] came to this nation by the name of Brown who made use of very insolent & abusive language. I have ordered him out of this Agency. I am fully convinced that he will make use of false & malicious representations to injure my character with Government.”⁸²

When Brown became too aggressive, Neelly’s son, James S. Neelly, and a Thomas McCoy, tossed him out of the Agency and told him to leave the Chickasaw Nation. Brown wrote to the War Department on June 11 and listed many complaints that he identified as “charges” against Neelly. One of the charges stated he “keeps a weaver by the name of Thomas McCoy who writes for Neelly and nothing more.”⁸³ McCoy had been employed as a weaver and an instructor, so his role at the Chickasaw Agency was officially sanctioned by the War Department.⁸⁴

Apparently, Tony Turnbow sided with Brown, listing the other charges in his article as if they had been officially investigated and proven to be true.⁸⁵ There is no evidence Neelly’s service as Chickasaw Agent ended for any reason other than the expiration of his three-year term. Furthermore, Brown’s letter arrived at the War Department on June 24, after Neelly’s term had



James Neelly letter, May 24, 1812.

Since Neelly’s appointment as Chickasaw Indian Agent in 1809, this is the first letter that has surfaced that shows his handwriting. It was a known fact that Neelly’s letters to Thomas Jefferson and the War Department were written by other persons. Research for this article has uncovered that Neelly had a known infirmity and could barely write. In this letter he is writing to James Brown, who manifested an insulting and menacing behavior toward him.

“Sir: Youre conduct in this Nation dose not appear friendly you I hope will clear youre self out of the Nation as soon as you can possible otherwise I will put the cais [case] in for against you”

RG107, M221, B287, roll 42, frame 7909, NARA

Chickamauga Agency
May the 24th 1812

Mr. James Brown, I perceive from your
note in answer to my fathers request that
the violence committed on your person
this morning (you have attached ~~to~~
to my father you are intirely under
a Grand mistake I will assure you
he knew nothing at all of the business
nor in the manner in which the insult
was given until I returned from
Mr. MGees after the action had hapened
& if there was any violence used in the
case you was the man intraduced it
a guilty conscience suggested to you when you
drew your spear that ^{you} had insulted a man
with out any just pravaation & that was
the only resource which gained you
much yours &c James S. Neelly

James Neelly's son's letter, May 24, 1812.

James S. Neelly, the son of Major James Neelly, explained why Brown was expelled from the Agency.

"Mr. James Brown, I perceive from your note in answer to my fathers request that the violence committed on your person this morning you have attached to my father you are entirely [entirely] under a Grand mistake I will assure you he knew nothing at all of the business nor in the manner in which the insult was given until I returned from Mr. MGees after the action had hapened & if there was any violence used in the case you was the man intraduced it a guilty conscience suggested to you when you drew your spear that you had insulted a man without any just pravaation & that was the only resource which gained you much" RG107, M221, B287, roll 42, frame 7909, NARA

already ended, and the letter from Eustis informing Neelly of his successor did not reach him until July 3, 1812.⁸⁶

EPILOGUE

Historians need to exercise care in presenting evidence. Restraint must be used in formulating opinions without evidence, and opinion clearly differentiated from statements of fact that can be backed up with primary source evidence. This investigation began as an attempt to verify a few facts regarding a *We Proceeded On* article, but turned into a fascinating detective story that unveiled the true identity of the man who traveled with Meriwether Lewis on the final journey of his life. It also touched upon the operations of the courts of the period, the physical geography of the Chickasaw Nation in 1809, and the internal workings of the Office of Indian Trade. I can only hope the evidence presented in this article clears the name of a man who, from the majority of primary source accounts, was an honorable and trustworthy government appointee. The people of the Chickasaw Nation certainly trusted him, asking for his appointment to an extremely important position in their tribal relations with the United States. The evidence shows a man who took on the difficult task of administering an estate in deep financial trouble, most likely to relieve his widowed daughter of that responsibility. It also, circumstantially, suggests that Neelly volunteered to be caretaker for a troubled and sick Meriwether Lewis as he tried to make his way eastward to Washington, D.C. No evidence in the primary source record indicates that Neelly was unscrupulous or that he abandoned Meriwether Lewis in his time of need. 🌿

*Thomas C. Danisi, a Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation member, is an independent scholar who lives in St. Louis. Danisi has written extensively on Meriwether Lewis and his latest book, *Uncovering the Truth of Meriwether Lewis*, was published in 2012. This article on Major James Neelly took two years of research and brings fresh insight into Neelly's duties as the Chickasaw Indian Agent and the administrator of the Isaac Lennard estate.*

NOTES

The depth and complexity of this article is owed to several persons who helped me with my research and without their assistance, it would have been impossible to complete. Special thanks to John Neelley of Clinton, Mississippi, for his assistance in sending James Neelly's genealogical records; to Henry Hudson for clarification of the various Post Offices related to the Chickasaw and Fort Pickering business; Jay Richiuso, Assistant Director for Manuscript Services, from the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) who emailed many jpegs of Neelly records, court documents, and pages from Tennessee books I could never have procured in St. Louis; Charles Sherrill, State Librarian and Archivist, at TSLA who helped me to navigate through old Tennessee law books; Nathan Jordan, Archives Specialist, National Archives in Atlanta, who emailed images of Neelly suits from M1213 and M1214; Kelly Sirko, Archives Assistant, Metro Nashville Archives, who dug through many records to find Neelly legal documentation; Elisabeth Brander, Rare Books Librarian from the Bernard Becker Library at Washington University School of Medicine, was able to locate and interlibrary loan RG21, M1212, M1213, M1214, and M1215 microfilms; Richard Zwiercan, Access Resources Manager of the UNLV University Libraries, who graciously allowed interlibrary loan of microfilm RG107, M221, roll 42; Carol Verble, Assistant Librarian at Missouri History Museum; Robert Cruthirds, Librarian/Archivist at Memphis Public Library, who tracked down an obscure document among the Records of the Office of Indian Trade concerning the Chickasaw Bluffs Factory, 1802-1818; Michael Everman, Supervising Archivist, Missouri State Archives-St. Louis; the purchase of TSLA microfilms for a very reasonable fee; LDS microfilm via St. Louis County Library. I also wish to thank Robert Moore, Jr., for his thoughtful suggestions and careful editing.

1. James Neelly to Thomas Jefferson and John Brahan to Thomas Jefferson, October 18, 1809, Thomas C. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth About Meriwether Lewis* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2012), 231-234.
2. Tony Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," *We Proceeded On* 38 (May 2012): 20-31.
3. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 251-269, 412, n.5.
4. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 156, 164.
5. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 27, n.3.
6. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 164.
7. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 28, n. 11; Isaac Lennard to Sophia Neelly, May 2, 1800, Davidson County (County Clerk) Marriages, 1789-1837, roll 469, vol. 1, p. 238, Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA), Nashville, Tennessee.
8. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 23, 28, n.17.
9. Grace Parke Renshaw, *Neelly Narrative* (Memphis: Renshaw, 1976), 8, 11, 17-33; Annilu Bearden Odil, *My People* (Spring Hill: Tennessee, 1940); John W. Neelley, "Descendants of James Neelly," (Clinton, MS: Neelley, 1975); Charles J. Neelly, *A History of the Neellys* (Mullenville, Kansas: 1985); Caroline Clark Crockett Papers, 1800-1959, microfilm Mf. 657, roll 5, 1742-1814, TSLA; Polk Family Papers, Mf. 1242, 1828-1875, TSLA.
10. The Neelly family was well-represented: Robert, George, John, James, Jane, Charles S., to name a few. See volumes 2: 153, 353, 411 and 3: 14, 28, 40, 44, 136, 236, 257-258, 566, 578, 600, 637. Williamson County (Probate Records: County or Chancery Court) Wills, microfilm, roll 87, vol. 1-3, 1800-1825, TSLA; Williamson

County Probate (Loose Records Project) Probate/Family Records (Mo-Ne) microfilm, roll B-98, 1800–1899, TSLA.

11. Renshaw, *Neelly Narrative*, 8, 11, 17-33; Odil, *My People*; Neelley, “Descendants”; Neelly, *A History of the Neellys*; Caroline Clark Crockett Papers, 1800-1959; Polk Family Papers, Mf. 1242, 1828-1875, TSLA.

12. *James Neelly, Complainant v. Henry Schroeder, Defendant*, June Term 1813, Final Record Books of the U.S. Circuit Court for West Tennessee, 1808-1839, and of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, 1839-1865, Final Record Books of the U.S. Circuit Court in Nashville, roll 1, vol. 1: 1808-1812 and vol. 2: 1812-1820, RG21, M1212, 2:98, NARA.

13. *Neelly v. Schroeder*, June Term 1814, M1212, 2:260, NARA.

14. In various court cases, the name Lennard is spelled Leonard; however the marriage certificate shows that Lennard signed his name with two N’s, which is consistent throughout the text.

15. Renshaw, *Neelly Narrative*, 1-8.

16. Dallas Bogan, “State of Franklin Created Before Tennessee Was Carved Out of North Carolina Territory,” <http://www.tngenweb.org/campbell/hist-bogan/franklin.html>; Tennessee, Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee>

17. *Acts Passed at the Second Session of the Sixth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, (Knoxville: J.B. Hood, 1806): Chapter XLII, section 1, 158.

18. *Acts Passed at the First Session of the Seventh General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, (Knoxville: William Moore, 1808): Chapter CIV, section 4, 174.

19. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 156; James Robertson and Daniel Smith to Secretary of War, January 22, 1809, R198, M221, roll 29, frame 9719, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

20. George Colbert to Secretary of War, C469, February 18, 1809, roll 20, frame 6146, NARA.

21. James Robertson to John Sevier, June 29, 1812, document 16DD41, Draper Manuscripts: King’s Mountain Papers, 1756-1887, reel 85, Wisconsin Historical Society. Robertson was referring to the battle at Point Pleasant, considered to be the start of the Revolutionary War.

22. War Office to James Neelly, July 8, 1809, RG75, M15, roll 3, p. 1, frame 0019 and Secretary of War to James Neelly, June 4, 1812, M15, Roll 3, p. 134, NARA.

23. Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Thomas Wright, May 28, 1806, M15, roll 2, p. 230, NARA; Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 159-160.

24. War Office to Chinumba Mingo, George Colbert and O’Koy, July 21, 1809, and War Office to James Neelly, July 21, 1809, M15, roll 3, p. 3, NARA; Letters Received by the Superintendent of Indian Trade, 1806-1824, RG75, T58, roll 1, frame 0102; M15, roll 2, p. 181, NARA.

25. Secretary of War to James Neelly, July 7, 1809 and Secretary of War to David Hogg, July 7, 1809, M15, roll 3, p. 1, frame 0019, NARA.

26. Turnbow, “The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis,” 23. The trunk belonged to Captain House who had asked Lewis to take it with him to New Orleans, but it would remain at Fort Pickering until another boat could deliver it.

27. American State Papers, *Indian Affairs* 1, p. 652. Annuity items varied year to year but the dollar amount of the goods remained at \$3000. Each Indian nation had different requirements that had been worked out by treaty; for instance, the Cherokee annuity in 1809 equaled \$3286 and comprised 200 rifles, 400 lbs of gun powder, 800 lbs of lead, 1000 flints, 200 beaver traps, 100 axes, 100 corn hoes, 50 grubbing [hoes], 200 pr cotton cards, 50 pr wool cards, 50 small ploughs, 1 keel bottom boat. R. J. Meigs to Secretary of War, August 17, M1809, RG107, M222, roll 4, frame 1574, NARA.

28. James Neelly to Secretary of War, October 20, 1809, N102, M221, roll 27, NARA.

29. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 232. This again shows Neelly took care of Lewis and Pearnay, too. Turnbow has given the nod to Kira Gale for discovering the spelling of Pearnay’s last name, which is listed on the Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson website as Pearnay. Examining his signature at the bottom of the letter, nothing can be determined; however, in the middle of the letter, it is spelled Pearnay. John Pearnay to Thomas Jefferson, February 10, 1810, Image 596: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page044.db&recNum=595&itemLink=/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/mtjser1.html&linkText=7&tempFile=/temp/-ammem_uQQf&filecode=mtj&itemnum=1&ndocs=1

30. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 242.

31. James Neelly to Secretary of War, September 24, 1809, N99, M22, roll 4, p. 298, NARA.

32. David Hogg to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, RG75, M16, roll 2, p. 118, NARA.

33. David Hogg to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, September 10, 1809 and February 27, 1810, M16, roll 2, p. 138 and David Hogg to Secretary of War, April 2, 1810, M81, RG107, M221, roll 38, frames 5122-31; Gilbert Russell to Secretary of War, January 2, 1810, R14, M221, roll 39, frame 6095; Gilbert Russell to Secretary of War, January 2, 1810, R14, M22, roll 5, p. 331, NARA.

34. Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Robert Bayly, September 11, 1810, M16, roll 2, p. 204, NARA.

35. As late as 2014, James Holmberg believed that “The route the party is generally believed to have taken was the established road between the Bluffs and the Chickasaw Agency. . . . Although not a direct route, it was certainly better than traveling cross country on unimproved trails, if trails even existed.” Since 1802, the annuity had to be carried eastward to the Chickasaw Nation on an established road that ran along the Tennessee-Mississippi border. James J. Holmberg, “Exploring Meriwether Lewis,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 34 (Summer 2014): 277.

36. Jesse D. Jennings, “Notes and Documents: Nutt’s Trip to the Chickasaw Country,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 9, no.1 (1947): 25-61.

37. Wendy Ciegelski, “A GIS-Based Analysis of Chickasaw Settlement in Northeast Mississippi: 1650-1840” (master’s thesis, University of Mississippi, 2010), 47, 48, 60.

38. Sandra McGrady Sockwell, “The Place Names of Colbert and Lauderdale Counties, Alabama” (PhD dissertation, The University of Alabama, 1985), 146.

39. Although the actual site of the distribution point for the annuity goods is conjectural on the part of the author, it is based on the logic of the area topography, the locations of the Chickasaw farms and villages, and the amount of time Neelly had between his departure from Fort Pickering (Sept. 29) and his arrival at Grinder’s Stand (Oct. 11).

40. Marie Bankhead Owen, *Alabama* (Montgomery: Dixie Book Company, 1938), 339; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama* (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 851-852.
41. James Neelly to the Secretary of War, October 9, 1810, Abstract of Indian Factory Ledger at Chickasaw Bluffs, Shelby County, 1803-1818, p. 124, Abstract (1998) Mary Louise Graham Nator on p. 12, microfilm roll 17, RG75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Selected Documents among the Records of the Office of Indian Trade concerning the Chickasaw Bluffs Factory, History Department, Memphis/Shelby County Public Library and Information Center, 1850 Peabody, Memphis TN 38104.
42. Letter, "Thomas Danisi Responds to Tony Turnbow's 'The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis,'" *We Proceeded On* 39 (February 2013): 5-6.
43. John Brahan to Thomas Jefferson, October 18, 1809, Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 233.
44. Turnbow claimed that Neelly appointed "Robert Grinder to operate the tavern for a period of five years, contingent upon good behavior." If true, Turnbow should have provided a citation. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," p. 30, n. 38. According to Phelps, Grinder's Stand had been a thriving business before Neelly's appointment. Dawson A. Phelps, "Stands and Travel Accommodations on the Natchez Trace," *Journal of Mississippi History* 11 (January 1949), 40.
45. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 154-167.
46. *Henry Schroeder, Plaintiff v. James Neelly administrator of Isaac Leonard deceased, June 16, 1809*, Final Record Books of the U.S. Circuit Court for West Tennessee, 1808-1839, and of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, 1839-1865, M1212, roll 1, 2 volumes, 1: 180, NARA.
47. *Hugh Young and William Young v. James Neelly administrator of Isaac Leonard deceased, June 16, 1809*, Minute Books of the U.S. District Court for West Tennessee, 1797-1939, and of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, 1839-1865, Minute Books of the U.S. District Court in Nashville, 1801-1846, RG21, M1213, 3 volumes, roll 1, 2: 65-66; *Francis Preston v. James Neelly*, Minute Books of the U.S. District Court for West Tennessee, 1803-1839, and of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, 1839-1864, Minute Books of the U.S. Circuit Court in Nashville, Volume 1: 1808-1815, RG21, M1214, volume 1, roll 1, 1: 109; Williamson County Record, (Circuit Court) Minutes, roll 26, Civil and Criminal, vol 1-4, Jan 1810-Feb 1825, TSLA; *Thomas Master-son & Co., v. James Neelly; Joseph Thornberg & others v. James Neelly of Isaac Leonard deceased; John Wright v. James Neelly*, Williamson County Record, County Courthouse Minutes microfilm, roll 45, 1800-1815, 2 volumes, 1: 421, 434, 567, TSLA. Turnbow cited the incorrect microfilm number on page 28: notes 11 and 21 refer to M1313 and M1315, but should be M1213 and M1215. In note 21, *US v. Leanhart* is cited as M1215 when it should be M1213, roll 1, 2:264.
48. *Young v. Neelly* and *Preston v. Neelly*, M1214, roll 1, 1:64-65 and 109, NARA. On page 28, n.11, paragraph 5 of Turnbow's article, the page number is listed as 434 when it should be 567.
49. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 21 and 28, n. 11 concerning *Hugh Young and William Young v. James Neelly, administrator of Isaac Leonard, deceased*.
50. *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, Cocke County: <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=282>
51. John Haywood and Robert L. Cobbs, *The Statute Laws of the State of Tennessee*, 2 vols. (Knoxville: F. S. Heiskell, Printer, 1831), 1:102, section 4.
52. *James Neelly v. Henry Schroeder*, June Term 1814, M1212, roll 1, 2: 262, NARA.
53. *Hugh Young and William Young v. James Neelly administrator of Isaac Lennard deceased*, M1212, roll 1, 1:178, NARA.
53. *James Neelly v. Henry Schroeder*, M1212, 2:260.
55. Neelley, *Descendants of James Neelly*, p. 5. Sophia Neelly later remarried, becoming the third wife of Colonel Ezekiel Polk, who was the grandfather of President James K. Polk. Ezekiel and Sophia had no children.
56. Isaac Lennard owned 117 acres on Big Pigeon River in Cocke County, Tennessee.
57. Haywood and Cobbs, *The Statute Laws of the State of Tennessee*, 1:109, section 5.
58. Neelly's testimony, as the administrator of the Lennard estate, was collected from National Archives microfilm RG21, M1212, specifically the suits of *Young v. Neelly*, *Preston v. Neelly*, and *Schroeder v. Neelly*. M1212, roll 1, 2 volumes: *Hugh Young and William Young v. James Neelly, administrator of Isaac Lennard deceased*, 1:177-178; *Henry Schroeder v. James Neelly administrator of Isaac Lennard deceased*, 1:178-180; *Francis Preston v. James Neelly*, 1:245-246; *Henry Schroeder v. James Neelly*, 1:408-411; *James Neelly v. Henry Schroeder*, 2: 98-100; *James Neelly v. Henry Schroeder*, 2:260-264, NARA.
59. Jenkin Whiteside had been elected a senator by the Tennessee General Assembly on May 26, 1809, and on November 27, 1809, he began his term in the U.S. Senate. Joshua W. Caldwell, *Sketches of the Bench and Bar of Tennessee* (Knoxville: Ogden Brothers & Co., 1898), 52, and *Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation*, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwaclink.html#anchor10>
60. *Benjamin Carter v. James Neelly* and *William Neelly v. James Neelly*, Williamson County Record, County Courthouse Minutes microfilm, roll 45, 1800-1815, 2 vols, 1:397 and 2:22-23, TSLA.
61. Secretary of War to James Neelly, June 4, 1812, M15, roll 3, p. 134; James Neelly to William Eustis, July 3, 1812, N38, M221, roll 47, NARA.
62. *James Neelly v. Henry Schroeder*, M1212, 2:261-263, NARA.
63. Haywood and Cobbs, *The Statute Laws of the State of Tennessee*, 1: 106, section 1, 2nd para.
64. *Neelly v. Schroeder*, M1212, 2:264; Grace Parke Renshaw, *Neelly Narrative*, p. 8.
65. The *Wright v. Neelly* suit cited by Turnbow in the Williamson County Court Minutes, 1: 421 is actually a George Neelly case. See *Elizabeth Wright admin. of John Wright v. George Neelly*, 1:421, 442, and 457. George was also sued by a George Engleman in a protracted litigation, 1: 159, 180, 199, 213, 299 and 2: 434, 495, 587. Williamson County Record, (Circuit Court) Minutes, roll 26, Civil and Criminal, vol 1-4, Jan 1810-Feb 1825, TSLA.
66. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 21.
67. Interview with Michael Everman, Missouri State Archives, February 10, 2014, and Pat Barge, assistant archivist. Law Librarian Erika Cohn at the Saint Louis University School of Law concurs. "That just signifies that the person was represented by an attorney in the matter as opposed to bringing the motion by himself (pro se). The plaintiff

may or may not have been in court as the attorney has the authority to act on his behalf. We still use that language today when we file complaints, motions, etc... Comes now plaintiff, John Doe, by and through his attorney, Jim Smith, and files the following motion..." E-mail, February 10, 2014.

68. Williamson County Record, County Courthouse Minutes microfilm, roll 45, vol. 1, 1800–1815, p. 434, TSLA. On page 24 of Turnbow's article, he stated that the debt was \$153.44; it was actually \$103.44.

69. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 24.

70. For 200 years we relied on a summary, court minutes, of the Meriwether Lewis Court Martial, which encouraged writers to speculate incessantly, and in 2012 we realized how wrong they were. The court minutes of this suit have that same potential.

71. James Neelly to Secretary of War, October 28, 1809, N103, M221, roll 27, NARA; David G. Phillips, ed., *American Stampless Cover Catalog: The Standard Reference Catalog of American Postal History*, 2 vols (N. Miami: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc, 1987), 1: 376; Bruce C. Oakley, *A Postal History Of Mississippi Stampless Period 1798-1850*, 2 vols (Mississippi: Bruce, 1980), 2: 15.

72. Danisi, *Uncovering the Truth*, 166-167, 173-175.

73. William Simmons to James Neelly, December 17, 1810, M15, roll 3, p. 54, NARA.

74. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 31, n.52.

75. Thomas C. Danisi and John C. Jackson, *Meriwether Lewis* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2009), 316. The first page of Lewis's letter was printed as an insert in the middle of this book.

76. William E. Hagan, *A Treatise on Disputed Handwriting and the Determination of Genuine from Forged Signatures* (Albany: Bank & Brothers, 1894), 76.

77. *Neelly v. Schroeder*, M1212, 2:263, NARA.

78. *Neelly v. Schroeder*, M1212, 2:264.

79. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," pp. 26, 30 n.45. The citation that Turnbow provided for this information cannot be found on the microfilm designated MR6: Order from United States War Department to James Neelly, 4 June 1812, National Archives at Atlanta. There is an entry on that date from an entirely different series addressed to James Neelly, Chickasaw Agent, informing him that Robertson will succeed him, but definitely no wording similar or identical to "Order from United States War Department." RG75, M15, roll 3, p. 134, NARA.

80. James Neelly to the Secretary of War, April 16, 1811, M221, N121, roll 39, NARA.

81. Secretary of War to James Neelly, May 25, 1811, M15, roll 3, p. 82; James Neelly to William Eustis, February 28, 1812 and April 24, 1812, N17 and N25, M221, roll 47, NARA.

82. James Neelly to Secretary of War, June 5, 1812, N33, M221, roll 47, NARA.

83. James Brown to the Secretary of War, June 11, 1812, B287, M221, roll 42, frames 7903-7910, NARA.

84. Malcolm McGee to Secretary of War, December 16, 1808, M363, M221, roll 26, frame 8904, NARA.

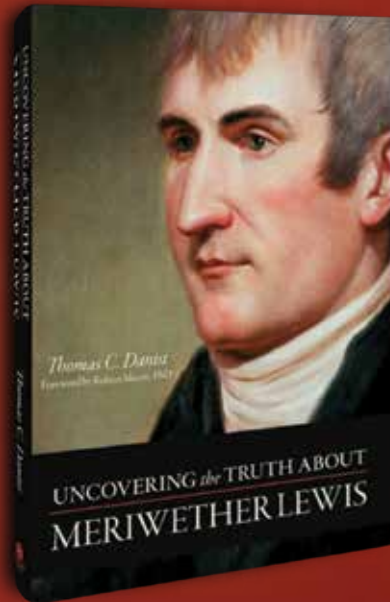
85. Turnbow, "The Man Who Abandoned Meriwether Lewis," 26.

86. James Neelly to Secretary of War, July 3, 1812, N38, M221, roll 47, NARA.

"[A] must-read for anyone interested in the Corps of Discovery and its pivotal role in the exploration of the American West."

—Herman J. Viola

Curator Emeritus, Smithsonian Institution



"[Danisi] has discovered more new sources about the life and times of Meriwether Lewis than any researcher alive. . . . Even readers who think they know Lewis will find surprises in this book."

—Carolyn Gilman

Author of *Lewis and Clark: Across the Divide*

"History buffs will find this book invaluable for its impeccable research, attention to detail, and readability."

—★ Publishers Weekly starred review

"Passionately argued and painstakingly researched. . . . brings new insights into the life of one of America's most misunderstood heroes."

—Landon Jones

Author of *William Clark and the Shaping of the West*

"[A] gem! . . . The scholarship is backed with additional new evidence and supported with never-before published documentation. A must-read. . . ."

—R. Mark Buller, PhD

Professor of virology, Saint Louis University

"Danisi has emerged as the Meriwether Lewis expert of this generation."

—Jay H. Buckley

Author of *William Clark: Indian Diplomat*

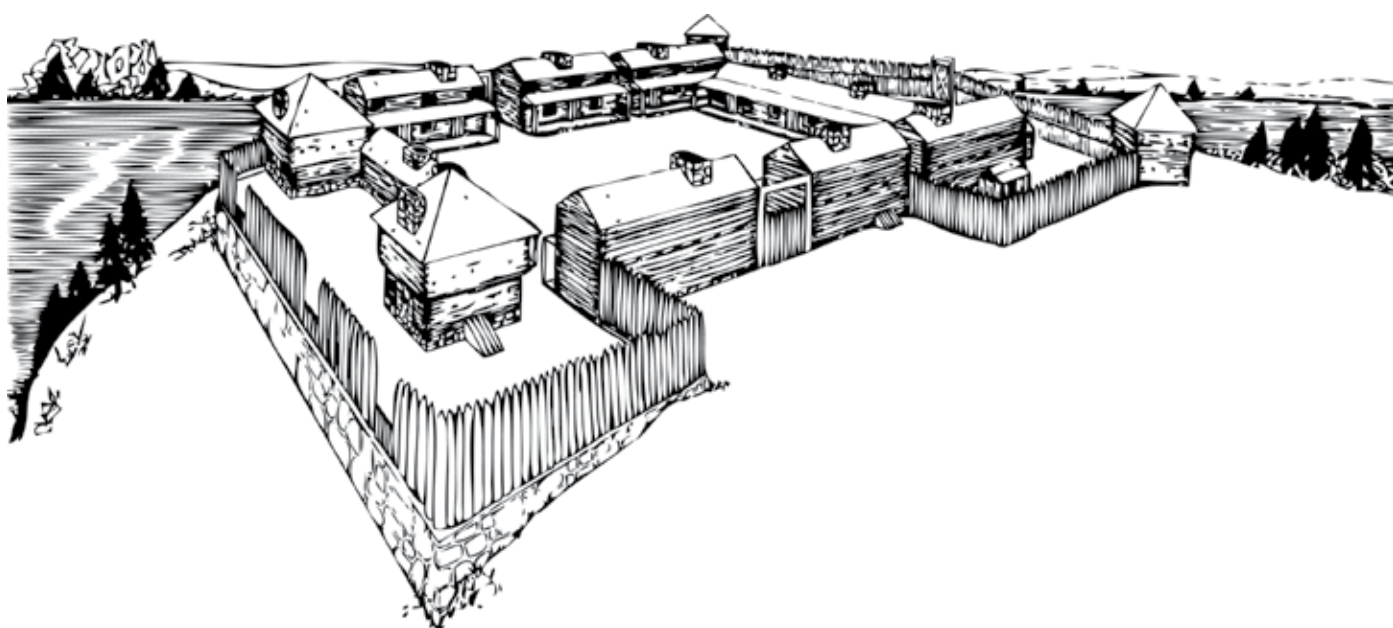


www.prometheusbooks.com

WINNER OF THE 2013 MISSOURI CONFERENCE ON HISTORY BOOK AWARD!

FORT SOUTHWEST POINT AND THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY

BY TRENT STRICKLAND



Fort Southwest Point, a frontier garrison in eastern Tennessee during the late 1790s and early 1800s, played an important role in the planning for and recruitment of soldiers for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Located near the junction of the Clinch and Tennessee Rivers and about thirty-five miles southwest of Knoxville, construction of the fort began in March, 1797. The fort expanded the military presence in the area that first began in 1792 with the construction of a blockhouse located about one-half mile upstream. The blockhouse was constructed on the boundary of the Cherokee Indian Nation and United States territory, and near the North Carolina Road or Avery Trace that continued west to the Nashville area. The block-

house played an important role in military affairs until 1795 when hostilities between the Cherokee Indians and Anglo-American settlers declined.¹

An interesting footnote that provides verification of the establishment of the fort in 1797 comes from the diary of a future king of France, Louis Philippe, who visited the fort on May 4–5 of that year. Louis was a refugee from the French Revolution. With financial help from the American Minister in Paris, Gouverneur Morris, he decided to visit and explore the mysteries of the New World. Of his visit to Southwest Point he noted the fort was being built and had been manned for only two months. With his small party, the future king purchased what little food was available and

proceeded west “through the Wilderness, also called the Desert.”² Louis completed his American tour and eventually returned to England in 1800. Living in Sicily in 1830, Louis Philippe was called to the French throne in the same year and reigned quietly until 1848.³

Two events in 1796 contributed to an increase in the number of troops at Fort Southwest Point. On June 1 Tennessee was admitted to the Union as the sixteenth state. A federal law was passed in the same year to regulate trade with Indian tribes and keep peace on the

frontier. The number of troops at Southwest Point continued to increase over the next three years. The federal law regulating Indian trade also led to a change in the mission of the troops in eastern Tennessee to that of a protector of Indian land rights from the encroachment of white settlers. Previous to this the army’s role had been to protect settlers as they moved west through the Cherokee Nation. From 1797 to 1799 the number of troops stationed at Southwest Point increased to more than four hundred. A decline began the next year and continued for the next seven years, reaching a low of about fifteen by late 1806.⁴

In 1803 the troop strength at Southwest Point was about 124. This was the year officials in Washington, D.C., began to look to the fort for possible assistance in a military operation that was being planned. In the spring of that year the commander of Fort Southwest Point received a letter from Meriwether Lewis. The letter’s message opened up a grand opportunity for selected soldiers at the frontier fort.⁵

PLANNING AND RECRUITING FOR THE EXPEDITION

In 1803, as President Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis were finalizing plans for the launch of the expedi-



Reconstructed Southwest Point blockhouse.

tion, Fort Southwest Point figured prominently in their plans. In late April, writing to the president from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Lewis stated that “Fort Southwest Point must form my first recourse for the selection for my party.” He further shared that he had written Major William MacRae, the fort’s commander, and asked his help in securing volunteers who would meet the qualifications as stated by Lewis. The president was also informed that Lewis had written Dr. William Dickson in Nashville, Tennessee, asking that on Lewis’s behalf the doctor contract for a boat to be constructed, and that he also purchase a large wooden canoe.⁶

In the letter to Major MacRae, Lewis stated he had also written to the commanding officers at Forts Massac, Kaskaskia, and Illinois asking for their help in recruiting men for the expedition. Fort Massac was located on the Illinois bank of the Ohio River near the confluence with the Mississippi, and Fort Kaskaskia’s location was on the Mississippi River north of the mouth of the Ohio. The Illinois Fort Lewis mentioned was not operational. He may have been referring to a fort he thought was located across the Mississippi from St. Louis at Cahokia, Illinois.⁷

Clearly, at this point in the planning, Lewis envisioned traveling to Fort Southwest Point to select and recruit the initial core group of soldiers needed for the expedition. From the fort he would march the selected volunteers west on the Avery Trace to the Nashville area where he would take possession of the previously ordered boats. He would then float down the Cumberland River to the Ohio River, proceed downstream to the junction with the Mississippi, and travel north and past St. Louis to the mouth of the Missouri River. These early plans called for Lewis and his fully manned Corps of Discovery to be in St. Louis by August and to make significant progress up the Missouri River by late 1803 at which point they would make winter camp.⁸

As often happens in complicated endeavors, early plans soon required changes. By the last week in May 1803, Lewis had received discouraging news from Tennessee. In a May 29 letter to the President written from Philadelphia, Lewis noted he had not heard from Dr. Dickson concerning the boats and the reply from the Southwest Point commander, Major MacRae, indicated that out of twenty volunteers only three or four would be suitable recruits for the expedition.⁹ By mid-June, in his famous invitation to William Clark to join the expedition, Lewis indicated he planned to leave by keelboat from Pittsburgh, traveling down the Ohio River, and meet Clark at his Clarksville home on the north bank of the Ohio. He also asked Clark to begin to spread the word to potential recruits in the Louisville and Clarksville areas. More soldiers would be recruited in army posts as the expedition traveled on to St. Louis.¹⁰

Lewis's revised plan required that any recruits from Fort Southwest Point would have to travel overland from the Fort in order to join the expedition. With this change in plans, Lewis received the help of Secretary of War Henry Dearborn. In early July Dearborn wrote Major MacRae directing him to send any recruits "without loss of time" to Fort Massac where they should remain until placed under Lewis's command.¹¹ Assuming Dearborn's letter reached Southwest Point by early August, there was more than enough time for the recruits to reach Fort Massac before Lewis's arrival.

After much delay the keelboat was completed on August 31, and Lewis was soon on his way down a slow-flowing Ohio River. Lewis was certain that the

Fort Southwest Point soldiers would meet the expedition at Fort Massac. In a September 28 letter to Clark, written from Cincinnati, he stated "there are a party of soldiers, 6 or 8 in number, now at Massac waiting my arrival, they were selected (sic) from the troops in the state of Tennessee by Majr(sic) MacRae."¹²

The keelboat reached the Falls of the Ohio and Clark's home at Clarksville, Indiana, on October 15. Clark had earlier enthusiastically replied to Lewis's invitation by stating "My friend I join you with hand and Heart."¹³ This meeting of the captains in Clarksville is considered by many to be the start of the expedition.

Over the next eleven days the captains began enlisting the first members of the expedition.¹⁴ Leaving Clarksville on October 26, Lewis and Clark and their recruits proceeded down the Ohio reaching Fort Massac sixteen days later on November 11.¹⁵ At the fort bad news awaited—the Southwest Point recruits were not present. Lewis soon took steps to locate the recruits and have them join the expedition. For this job a local hunter, George Drouillard, was employed to travel to Southwest Point and accompany the missing soldiers to the winter quarters in the St. Louis area.¹⁶

George Drouillard was obviously highly recommended to the captains as a woodsman and potential interpreter. He later agreed to join the expedition and became a valuable member of the Corps of Discovery. Drouillard's first job for the expedition was completed successfully over a month later when he arrived at Cahokia, Illinois, with eight recruits on December 16. The next day Lewis sent word to Clark that Drouillard had arrived with eight men from Tennessee. He also expressed disappointment that the men were not as qualified as he had expected them to be but did share that two of the men had some valuable skills—one a blacksmith and the other a house-joiner.¹⁷

The potential recruits moved on to the nearby winter camp, Camp Dubois at Wood River, where on December 22 Clark in his journal also expressed disappointment with the men stating "these men are not such as I was told was in readiness in Tennessee for this comd (sic)."¹⁸

During the remainder of the winter and into the spring at Camp Dubois, four of the eight soldiers from Tennessee were found wanting and were not selected for the expedition. The four who were approved by the

captains were Corporal Richard Warfington and Privates Hugh Hall, Thomas P. Howard, and John Potts.¹⁹

THE MEN OF FORT SOUTHWEST POINT

Who were these men and what was their service to the expedition? Where were they born and raised, and how did they come to be serving in eastern Tennessee at Southwest Point in late 1803? Two of the privates were born in Massachusetts and the other in Germany. Imagine German-accented English around the campfire and on the trail! The corporal was the only member of the expedition from North Carolina.²⁰ As with all members of the expedition, much about these men will never be known. But their army records and the journals tell us something about them and their service.

Corporal Richard Warfington

Warfington was born in Louisburg, North Carolina, in 1777 and joined the army in 1799. His army records list him as five feet ten inches tall, with brown hair, fair complexion, and black eyes. In November 1803, he was transferred from Captain John Campbell's company to serve with the expedition. The only corporal in the expedition, he was given responsibilities far beyond his rank. In 1804 he commanded one of the three boats that ascended the Missouri River to the Mandan Indian villages in present-day North Dakota. In August 1804, at the request of the captains, Warfington readily agreed to extend his enlistment and served through a brutal winter on the northern plains. In the spring of 1805 he commanded the keelboat on its return to St. Louis.²¹ Both captains lauded Warfington for his outstanding service. Clark stated that Warfington had carried the responsibilities of a sergeant, stating in a letter that Warfington "acts as a Sergeant."²² Little is known of Warfington after his successful return to St. Louis in May 1805.²³

Private Hugh Hall

Hall was born about 1772 in Massachusetts and joined the army in December 1798.²⁴ Enlistment records show he was five feet eight inches tall, with fair hair and sandy complexion.²⁵ He was serving in Captain John Campbell's company of the Second Infantry when he was detached for duty with Lewis and Clark. In 1804

early in the ascent up the Missouri River, Hall had committed two serious rules infractions. In May he and William Warner were court-martialed for being absent without leave and in June, along with John Collins, Hall faced a court-martial for tapping the official whiskey supply and getting drunk. Found guilty and sentenced to receive lashes for each charge, he was given leniency for the first charge, but received the full fifty lashes for the second.²⁶

Hall had learned his lesson and did not face another court-martial. In fact, in October 1804 he served as a member of the court-martial panel for the trial of John Newman. He was selected to serve as one of the thirty-three members of the permanent party, and on the return journey in 1806 he was a member of Clark's party that explored the Yellowstone River. He was still living in the St. Louis area in 1809, but no more is known about him after that time.²⁷

Private Thomas Proctor Howard

Howard was born in Massachusetts in 1779 and enlisted in the army in 1801. Army records show that he had fair hair and complexion and blue eyes.²⁸ He was detached for service with the expedition from Captain John Campbell's company of the Second Infantry. He was chosen as one of the members of the permanent party and overall gave good service to the captains. However, he did create a problem in February 1805, at Fort Mandan. He was court-martialed for returning late to the fort and climbing over the wall, a bad example to an onlooking Indian who then copied him. Found guilty, he was to receive fifty lashes, but they were forgiven by Lewis upon recommendation from the court. He continued to serve faithfully until the return to St. Louis in 1806. Records indicate that he was continuing to serve in the army in 1808, but no more is known about Private Howard.²⁹

Private John Potts

Potts, born in Germany in 1776, worked as a miller prior to joining the army in 1800. Records show that he had black hair, a fair complexion, and blue eyes.³⁰ He served under Captain Robert Purdy at Fort Southwest Point and was a member of the permanent party. Potts's expedition record was positive, with no serious

disciplinary action ever recorded against him. On the contrary, he was considered responsible enough to serve on two court martial boards. He served as a member of the trial board of Hugh Hall and William Warner in May 1804. A month later he was judge advocate of the trial of Hugh Hall and John Collins.

After the expedition Potts met a sad fate. In 1807 he joined a fur trading party to the upper Missouri and was with another expedition member, John Colter, at the Three Forks of the Missouri River when he was killed in an ambush by Blackfeet Indian.³¹

The records of the expedition show clearly that the men from Fort Southwest Point served ably and made important contributions to the success of the expedition. The three privates were recognized during the expedition by having creeks and lakes named after them: Hall's Strand Lake and Creek in North Dakota, and Potts' Valley Creek and Howard's Creek in Montana.³²

In his post-expedition letter to Henry Dearborn, Lewis included a roster of the men who had accompanied him to the Pacific, along with a request that each receive rewards above their regular pay, or as Lewis put it "a just reward in an ample remuneration (sic)." In the letter accompanying the roster, Lewis asked that Richard Warfington also be rewarded and described in glowing terms his outstanding service to the expedition.³³ The request for the men's rewards was honored. All four Southwest Point men were rewarded. The three privates received double pay and land warrants each of 320 acres. Corporal Warfington also received a land warrant of 320 acres.³⁴ 🌿

Trent Strickland and his wife Clara makes their home in Hamlet, N.C. He has served as president of the Carolina Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation since 2007. He received his bachelor's degree in history from Campbell College and Doctorate of Adult Education from N.C. State University.

NOTES

1. Samuel D. Smith, et. al., *Fort Southwest Point Archaeological Site, Kingston, Tennessee: A Multidisciplinary Interpretation*, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Research Series No. 9 and 100 (Nashville, Tennessee, 1993), 17, 19, 100.

2. Louis Philippe, *Diary of My Travel in America, Louis Philippe, King of France, 1830–1848* (Delacort Press, New York, 1977), 102.

3. Philippe, *Diary*, 8–9.

4. Smith, et. al., *Fort Southwest Point*, 19, 20, 43, 71, 103.

5. Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents: 1783–1854*, 2 volumes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 2:37–41.

6. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 38. Dr. William Dickson was a physician in Nashville, Tennessee, who was active in local and national politics. He served as U.S. Representative for Tennessee from 1801–1807.

7. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 38.

8. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 84.

9. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:53.

10. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:58.

11. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:102.

12. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:125.

13. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:112.

14. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage*, 117–18.

15. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983–2001), 2:85.

16. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage*, 118.

17. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:144.

18. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:139.

19. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:187–88.

20. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:518, 520, 522–23.

21. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:522–23.

22. James J. Holmberg, ed., *Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 84.

23. For more on Richard Warfington see the author's article, "The Corps of Discovery's Forgotten Sergeant" *We Proceeded On* 31 (February 2005).

24. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:518.

25. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:371.

26. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:235–37, 329–30.

27. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 3:170, 8:162.

28. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:371.

29. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:518, 3:290.

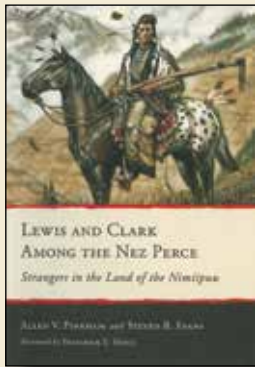
30. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:371.

31. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 2:236, 329–30, 520.

32. Moulton, ed., *Journals*, 6:462–65. Sadly, neither of the three names have been retained. Potts' Valley Creek is now Towhead Gulch or Spokane Creek. Howard's Creek is now Sixteenmile Creek, and Hall's Strand and Lake is now Tobacco Creek.

33. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 1:364–69.

34. Jackson, ed., *Letters*, 2:377–78.



Allen V. Pinkham and Steven R. Evans, *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce: Strangers in the Land of the Nimiipuu* (Washburn, North Dakota: The Dakota Institute Press of the Lewis & Clark Fort Mandan Foundation, 2013). 323 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Distributed by the University of Oklahoma Press. \$29.95 hardcover.

This new book by Alan Pinkham, a noted Nez Perce elder, and Steve Evans, historian with close ties to the Nez Perce, offers a new and much appreciated perspective on the Nez Perce encounter with these unexpected and often demanding visitors from the east.

The historical record tells us that the Corps of Discovery were the first whites to enter the homeland of the Nimiipuu. The journal accounts of these travelers are well known, and from them we gather valuable information about the residents of the Clearwater and Snake River country. But reliance solely on the journals' account of the encounter between two unique peoples limits our understanding of the events. The lens through which we see native peoples is colored by the journalists' culture and expectations.

Opening with Nez Perce origins, traditions, and values, traditional stories and recorded accounts of tribal members introduce us to the Nimiipuu. The appearance of white culture by way of new diseases, the horse,

traded technology, and finally in the persons of the Corps of Discovery is then described.

Interaction between the corps and the Nez Perce is drawn from a wide range of sources, published and unpublished. Tribal oral tradition informs many of the incidents, providing a personal perspective previously unknown to many of us.

My personal understanding of the Lewis and Clark story was challenged throughout the work. For example, the already discounted myth that the corps was guided in large part by Sacagawea, and her importance as a diplomatic emissary finds little support. Rather, the authors highlight the substantial contribution of several Nez Perce in piloting the corps in the Columbia Basin and Bitterroot Mountains, as well introducing the corps to downriver Indians. In this book the Nez Perce are not bystanders who observe the bold explorers, but rather key participants who enabled a successful outcome for the Corps of Discovery.

In many places the corps's journal accounts of specific events are retold from the Nez Perce perspective. For example, the confrontation between Lewis and a Nez Perce over the killing and cooking of a dog on May 5, 1806, is told first from Lewis's entry on that date, then from an account told to Alex Pinkham (father of the coauthor of this book) in 1903. With this parallel account, a more nuanced understanding of the episode is enhanced.

A full chapter is devoted to the Grand Council on May 12, 1806, an event of great importance to the Nez Perce. Another full chapter is devoted to the Ordway Junket of late May and early June 1806 from Camp Chopunnish on the Clearwater over a divide to the middle Snake River region in what today is called "Hell's Canyon."

The final chapter offers a post-1806 survey of both the Nez Perces and Lewis and Clark.

Perhaps most importantly, Pinkham and Evans show us the depth of hos-

pitality and friendship shown by this remarkable people to the Corps of Discovery in the face of many challenges. Some within the Nez Perce argued initially for the killing of the exploration party (p. 35), a task that could easily have been accomplished. That they instead chose to offer assistance and warm hospitality is a reflection of their character and culture.

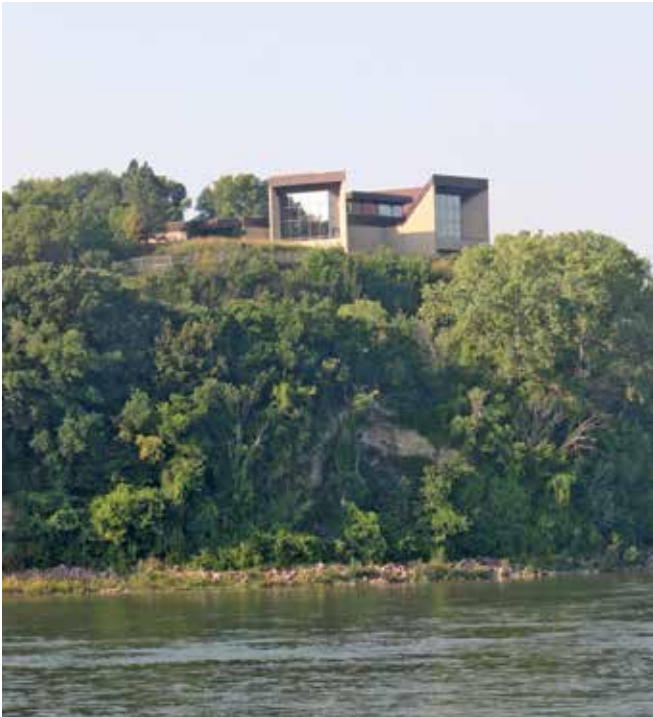
The book contains a number of typographical errors that could have been caught in a thorough copyedit prior to publication. Perhaps this can be corrected in a second printing. The maps are clear and precise. However, their legends include the term "NiMii-puu timpt" in association with villages and gathering sites. I searched in vain for a definition of "timpt," either in the text or the glossary. I believe it refers to the Nez Perce language (given as Nimiipuumtimt in the glossary), a confusing reference in a geographical setting.

Some will discount the book's reliance on oral tradition. Stories passed down through generations infuse the narrative. Cultural bias is evident, as would be expected, but certainly no more than is found in the expeditions' journals and many of its published histories. The cultural and literal devastation visited upon the Nez Perce in the decades after 1806 is well known, and hindsight informs memories. But the generosity and lofty perspective of both the authors and the Nez Perce people shine through in spite of past trials.

Though not a complete counterpoint to the accepted narrative of Lewis and Clark, as succinctly emphasized by Silas C. Whitman in his opening message, *Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce* is a revelation in its iconoclastic presentation of familiar events viewed from an unfamiliar perspective. This important book deserves close attention and a prominent place on our bookshelf.

Robert Clark
Editor, *We Proceeded On*

Yankton, South Dakota, Lewis and Clark Visitor Center



Located on historic Calumet Bluff, the Lewis and Clark Visitor Center in Yankton, South Dakota, is near the site where the Corps of Discovery had a two-day council with the Yankton Sioux. The building overlooks Gavins Point Dam, Lewis and Clark Lake, and a portion of the 59-mile reach of the national park.

During their meeting with the Sioux near this spot, Lewis delivered a speech prepared by Clark and referenced in Clark's field notes and journal. The text of the speech was unknown until March 2003, when an eleven-page manuscript was found among documents donated to the Oklahoma Historical Society by the descendants of Oto Chief Big Ax. It is unknown how it came to be in the possession of the Oto. A photographic copy of the speech is on display at the Lewis and Clark Visitor Center. Visitors can obtain a brochure of the text.

Constructed and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this attractive interpretive center includes a variety of exhibits highlighting early Native American inhabitants, steamboats and early transportation, exploration (which

includes Lewis and Clark), natural history and environment around the Missouri River, and the role the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers has played in the development of the Missouri River. Additional features include Dorian Prairie Garden, a Lewis and Clark Interpretive Walk, Calumet Bluff Theater, and a bookstore.

Nearby attractions include the Gavins Point Dam and Lewis and Clark Lake, Missouri National Recreational River,

Pierre Dorion's Grave Site, Dakota Territorial Museum, Spirit Mound Historic Prairie, and George Shannon Trail.

The center is located on Highway 121, four miles west of Yankton.

Address: 55245 Highway 121
Crofton, NE 68730
phone: 402-667-2546
email: gavinspoint.n29@usace.army.mil
web: www.nwo.usace.army.mil/gavinspoint

Information and photos provided by Karla Zeutenhorst.

