

# Washington State Chapter, LCTHF



## Worthy of Notice

September 2002 Newsletter

Vol. 3, Issue 4

### President's Message:

Those of you who came to Stevenson June 29 were treated to a morning of informative speakers and an afternoon on a Columbia River sternwheeler. The weather couldn't have been better; it was so good that I got a sunburn on my nose! Sternwheeler Days in Cascade Locks was a great event, too. Lots of food, crafts, and an historic encampment. Thanks to Doc, Jay, Sharon and everyone else who worked on planning that meeting.

You may have noticed that our last few meetings have been joint ventures with the Oregon Chapter. We have asked the Idaho Chapter to join us, too, at the meeting in Richland on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Our three states have much in common besides the trail. I've enjoyed getting to know members from both our neighboring states' chapters. Our mutual cooperation will be important in the upcoming bicentennial celebrations. Watch this newsletter for updates on events in all three states that you can take part in.

If you only make one trip this summer to the sunrise side of the Cascades, make it to Richland on September 7<sup>th</sup>! With any luck, it will have cooled off a little by then, and Gary Lentz has an outstanding program planned for us, including a couple of excursion trips into rattlesnake country. But DON'T worry, Gary is a real herpetologist, and by the time you're heading home, you will have a new appreciation – I won't go so far as to say an "affection" – for snakes. Oh, and if we are lucky, we might get a peek at Mt. Hood from the site in *Washington* where Captain Clark may have spied it. Keep your fingers crossed for clear skies and no wildfires!

As I write this, it is the eve of the Foundation's national meeting in Louisville, KY. I know that only a handful of our members are making the long trek east, and I wish I were going, too. However, I am really looking forward to 2005 at Ft. Clatsop, where we will help the Oregon Chapter celebrate the ultimate fulfillment of the expedition's goal. We have been asked to assist in the planning of this national meeting. Anyone, who is interested, please contact me.

Thanks again to everyone who makes the effort to come to our meetings. We are a spread-out state, and the trail is not conveniently located for everyone. I hope that you will look at the schedule of future meetings and plan to join us if you haven't yet. You will learn a lot, have fun and meet some great fellow Lewis-and-Clarkers.

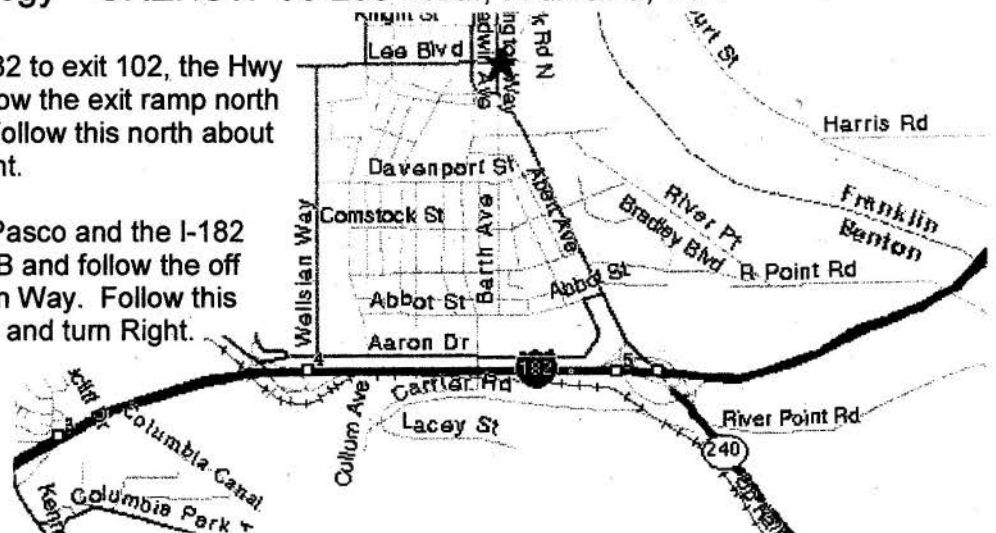
See you in September!

Cheryl Essary

## September 7, 2002 Joint Chapter meeting at the Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science & Technology – CREHST. 95 Lee Blvd., Richland, WA

From the West: Follow Interstate 82 to exit 102, the Hwy 182 exit. Drive to exit 5B and follow the exit ramp north onto George Washington Way. Follow this north about 1.2 mile to Lee Blvd and turn Right.

Form the east: Follow US 395 to Pasco and the I-182 interchange. Take I-182 to exit 5B and follow the off ramp north to George Washington Way. Follow this north for about 1 mile to Lee Blvd and turn Right.



## Joint Meeting at the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center, Stevenson, WA

(Submitted by Rob Heacock)

Harmonious with its surroundings, the Columbia George Interpretive Center was the site of our June 29, 2002 Chapter meeting. Situated between the flat, dry eastern zone, and the temperate rain forest of the coastal zone, such a location was very suitable for this group, and the spectacular Columbia Gorge and its ever-changing views and moods only added to the atmosphere.

Another standing room only crowd enjoyed a Chapter activity, this time an informative presentation by Mr. Keith McCoy on Captain Clark. Our own Bill Lauman provided an insightful discussion on The Leadership Qualities of Lewis & Clark, and Doc Wesselius concluded the morning with The Corp leaving the George. In addition to the presentations, we viewed the museum exhibits, including a 1917 Curtiss Jenny JN4 Bi-plane, a 1921 Mack Log truck, a monstrous 1885 Corliss steam engine, and a McCord fish ladder.

The afternoon was enjoyed by all, as the meeting coincided with Stern Wheeler Days in the town of Cascade Locks, OR, where we took in the fur trapper encampment, and were able to locate from our cruise boat the Corps' portage locations, and campsite of Oct. 30-31, 1805. We also were able to get a good view of the giant landslide circa 1500 AD that caused the Columbia River to flood the area, and give rise to the legend. Combined with the descriptions of the cascades at that location, and imagining the efforts by the corps to traverse the falls made for an exciting day. Thank you to Oregon and Washington Chapter members for their research, particularly Glen Kirkpatrick and Doc Wesselius.

Trivia question for the day: What change was made to The Bridge of the Gods after the construction of Bonneville Dam? Answer: It was raised 30 feet to make way for river traffic. Now that is a balancing act!

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### **VP Steps Down:**

Sadly, as the last WON was being mailed to you, we learned that our chapter Vice President, Richard Vigesaa, was stepping down because of family concerns. On behalf of the Officers, Board Members and Chapter members, I want to thank Richard for all of his time and effort given to the Chapter, and extend all our best to Richard in his future endeavors. We hope we will see him often at future events.

Again, "thanks" as we proceed on. (Ed.)

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### **House Approves Expansion of Fort Clatsop Memorial:**

Washington (AP) – The House, in July, approved a bill to expand Oregon's Fort Clatsop National Memorial, where Lewis and Clark spent three months after reaching the Pacific Ocean.

The bill, sponsored by Reps. David Wu, D-Ore., and Brian Baird, D-Wash., would expand the Fort Clatsop Memorial from 130 to 1500 acres. It also would authorize a study of whether land in southwest Washington should be included in the National Park System for its role in the expedition.

The bill, approved 331-18, now goes to the Senate. If signed into law, the study would focus on land near McGowan, WA where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark camped [before moving to the Oregon side of the river], as well as the Megler Rest area and Ft. Canby State Park.

The Park Service expects that at least a million visitors will come to the Northwest to trace Lewis and Clark's journey to the Pacific.

Wu and Baird cited the bill's potential economic benefit, saying it would help ensure that both Oregon and southwest Washington benefit from the economic development that comes with tourist dollars.

Recently, President Bush began a national celebration of Lewis and Clark's journey and declared 2003 to 2006 the "Lewis and Clark Bicentennial."

The Senate has already approved similar legislation sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., but Wu and Baird said it is likely that the Senate will adopt the House language to avoid having a conference committee meet.

(The Chronicle, July, 2002. Edited for WON)

## September 7, 2002 Weekend Joint Meeting

### Eastern Washington Meeting

This will be a joint meeting with the Oregon and Idaho Chapters to be held at the Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science & Technology (CREHST) Museum. (See directions on the front page.) A full day of lectures and a motor tour is planned for Saturday. An optional motor tour is also planned for Sunday morning for those who would like to stay and see another portion of the trail that is seldom seen. Plan to spend the weekend and enjoy the fun!

#### Saturday schedule:

9:00 - Registration at CREHST and visitors may wander around the museum.

9:30 - Chapter business meeting.

11:00 - "Mountain of Mystery" lecture by Gary Lentz.

Noon - Lunch break

1:30 - Meet at CREHST parking lot for motor tour, guided by Gary Lentz

2:15 - Arrive at Wallula Hills. From this point, we can view the Snake - Columbia River confluence, and, weather permitting, view Mt Hood.

3:30 - Arrive at Madame Dorion Park where we can view the Walla Walla - Columbia River confluence. We will also take time to discuss the "Overland Trail" route that the Corps began from this vicinity.

4:30 - Arrive at Sacajawea State Park. Here, Gary will give a "hands on" lesson on measuring the width of a river - without having to get wet! (If this weather holds, we may wish to swim the end of the tape to the other side just to stay cool.)

6:30 - Return to CREHST parking lot. Disperse to a local watering hole for more camaraderie.

#### Sunday schedule:

This is a motor trip to "Ship Rock" (Monumental Rock) along the Snake River for those who wish to see this interesting volcanic plug. It really does look like the bow of a sailing ship from the right perspective.

9:30 - Meet at Hood Park - Directions will be given Saturday at the meeting.

The trip will be about 50 miles long with a ¾-mile hike to the rock - level ground. You should bring a lunch and water, camera, journals, your interest, and wear hiking shoes.

Mark your calendars and plan on attending these great events on The Trail.

For more information, contact:

Doc Wesselius

Program Chairman - WA ST Chapter

H: 360-736-6106

e-mail: [docndeb@localaccess.com](mailto:docndeb@localaccess.com)

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### **Alert: Unwanted Hitchhiker**

***Please read and pass the info on!***

PORTLAND—Federal biologists are worried that boaters following the Lewis and Clark trail during the bicentennial could unwittingly bring destructive Zebra Mussels to the PNW, thus destroying the native ecosystems.

The mussels, no more than 2 inches long, were introduced from Europe in 1988 and have since infested waterways as far west as the Missouri River, clogging sewers, and water facilities and killing off native mussel species.

The zebra mussel - so called because of its alternating dark and light stripes - are voracious feeders and prolific breeders, to the point of starving other creatures to death. They travel from waterway to waterway by attaching themselves to boat hulls, or laying eggs - millions! - in engine cooling systems, bilge water or even bait buckets. They could change the ecosystem so drastically that the native salmon populations could suffer if they get to the PNW.

Federal agencies are setting up boat washes to help boaters power wash and disinfect their boats so they won't spread this menace. If you take to the water trail, please familiarize yourself with this menace to keep it out of Northwest waters. (Medford Mail Tribune, June 2002. Edited for WON.)



*"Ocian In View"*  
*Cultural and Historic Enrichment Weekend*  
*November 8-11, 2002*

Featured speakers will be Amy Mossett and Peter Onuf

Long Beach, WA – Just two months prior to the Monticello kick off of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration, "Ocian in View" – a cultural and historic enrichment weekend focusing on the Lewis and Clark Expedition – will be held November 8-11, on the Long Beach Peninsula. History buffs and the general public can partake of lectures and bus tours of historic Lewis and Clark sites around the Columbia River and Pacific Coast. This southwestern area of Washington State is where the Expedition achieved President Jefferson's goal of reaching the Pacific Ocean.

On Friday evening, Peter Onuf, Thomas Jefferson Foundation History Professor at the University of Virginia and author of Jefferson's Empire, will speak on "Jefferson and the West." Onuf will be a featured speaker on Jefferson at the Bicentennial opening at Monticello in January 2003.

On Saturday evening, Amy Mossett will discuss "Sacagawea: Her Life & Legend." Dressed in native wear, Mossett, Co-Chair of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council Circle of Tribal Advisors (COTA), will describe Sacagawea's life among the Hidatsa/Mandan people. Both programs will begin at 7:00p.m. at the Ilwaco Heritage Museum, Ilwaco (on Lake St., one block south of the light, then left to the parking lot.). A \$5 donation is requested.

Coordinating with the "Ocian in View" series, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Ft. Canby will host an open house with refreshments on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday at 3:00 p.m., Gary Lentz, a State Park Ranger, dressed in full gear as the Expedition's Sgt. Patrick Gass, will present a free program on the "Medicine of the Lewis and Clark Expedition" at Ft. Columbia Park Theater. (Ft. Columbia St. Pk, east of Chinook, above the tunnel!)

On Saturday, Sunday and Monday, award winning local Lewis and Clark historian, Rex Ziak, will guide bus educational tours to sites in the area. The cost is \$20, and advanced reservations are strongly advised. Make checks payable to Pacific County Friends of Lewis and Clark (PCFL&C), note a preferred date and mail to P.O. Box 562, Long Beach, WA 98631. Please include a telephone number for confirmation.

For information on the program or available lodging, call the Long Beach Peninsula Visitors Bureau at 1-800-451-2542 or access the Peninsula's website at [www.funbeach.com](http://www.funbeach.com). Lewis and Clark information is available at [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org). Or you may contact:

Carol Zahorsky		Carolyn Glen
Pub. Rel. for Long Beach	or	PCFL&C
360-704-3020 (Olympia)		360-642-2805

Come and enjoy the fun on the beach!

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***Chapter Souvenir Contest***

Don't forget the contest for a historically accurate item that best depicts the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the PNW. The target audience is Lewis and Clark aficionados, collectors, Chapter Corporate members and, more importantly, visitors to our region who desire a keepsake souvenir.

Items must be historically accurate and exhibit the atmosphere or flavor of the expedition as they traveled and stayed in our area. Supporting documentation of accuracy should be provided.

Items should be submitted for final judging and selection by the Chapter at the September meeting in Richland. The final product must be available at the February meeting in Tacoma. The winning item(s) must be able to be massed-produced at reasonable cost for distribution to local retailers.

These items are meant to be a fundraiser for the chapter and the winner will assign rights to the chapter. Recognition will be given to the developer.

Submit your entry to Chapter President Cheryl Essary, 886 S Hwy 17, Othello, WA 99344-9799 no later than September 1, 2002 for consideration. (See p. 5 of June WON for complete info.)

# Quicksand (Sandy) River, Eruption of Mt. Hood, and the Corps of Discovery

By Glen Kirkpatrick

## Naming of the River

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1805, the party proceeded on from their camp at the western side of Rooster Rock. Traveling down the Columbia on their westward journey to the Pacific, Clark is walking along the Oregon shore opposite the canoes as they pass along when he comes upon a river "which appeared to Scatter over a Sand bar, the bottom of which I could See quite across and did not appear to be 4 inches deep in any part; I attempted to wade this Stream and to my astonishment found the bottom a quick Sand and impassable."<sup>1</sup>

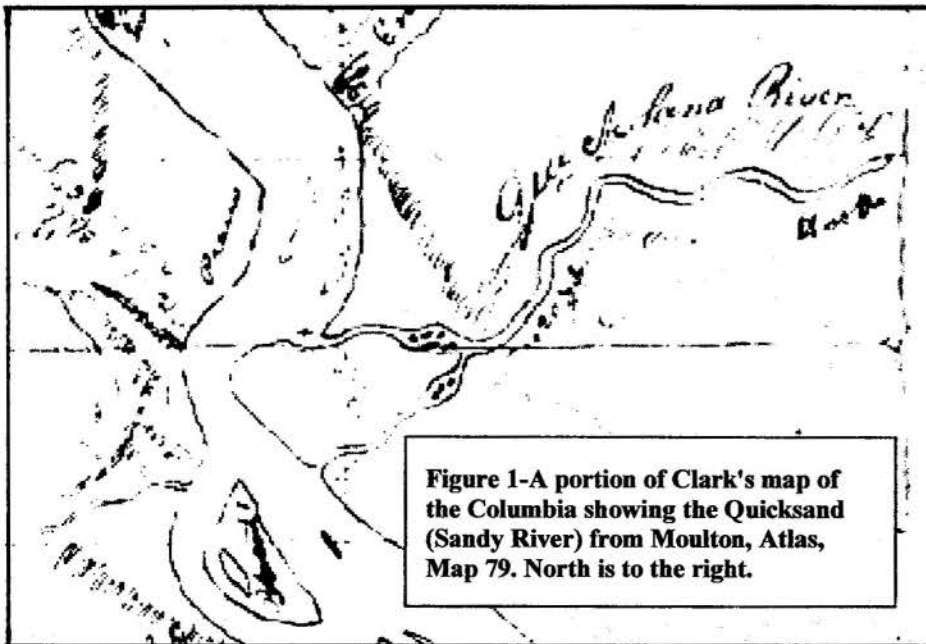


Figure 1-A portion of Clark's map of the Columbia showing the Quicksand (Sandy River) from Moulton, Atlas, Map 79. North is to the right.

Clark called for the canoes to put ashore, and they landed above the mouth. He and Captain Lewis walked up the river for 1.5 miles to examine the river and found it to be a considerable stream discharging itself into the Columbia through two large channels. The easterly channel that Lewis and Clark explored was dammed in the 1930s in an effort to help the annual smelt runs. Although the channel does not flow anymore, it is still clearly visible in the field and on topographic maps.

Whitehouse notes on the same day that the "mouth of the [river] was filled with quick Sand So that we could run a pole 6 or 8 feet in it, and it emptyd in at several places thro a verry large Sand bar which lay at the Mo."<sup>2</sup> They name it the Quicksand River.

## Evidence of Missing an Eruption of Mt. Hood

Although the explorers did not realize it, their descriptions of the Quicksand River, today's Sandy River, delta with massive sand bars and soft sand are part of the evidence found in the journals which document that they had arrived a few years after an eruption of Mt. Hood. The vast delta complex formed in a manner similar to the mouth of the Cowlitz River after the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens. Thousands of cubic yards of mud and volcanic debris flowed down the Sandy River depositing the massive delta complex. Clark sums up the evidence "...a Considerable Stream Discharging its waters through two channels which forms an Island of about three miles in length on the [Columbia] river and 1 ½ miles wide composed of Coarse Sand which is thrown out of this quick Sand river compressing the waters of the Columbia and throwing the whole current of its waters against the Northern banks."<sup>3</sup> Lewis later provides further documentation of the Quicksand River to that of Labishes River, today's Hood River, when he writes on the return trip on April 14, 1806 "the bed [of the Columbia] is principally rock except at the entrance of Labuish's (Hood) River which heads in Mount hood and like the quicksand

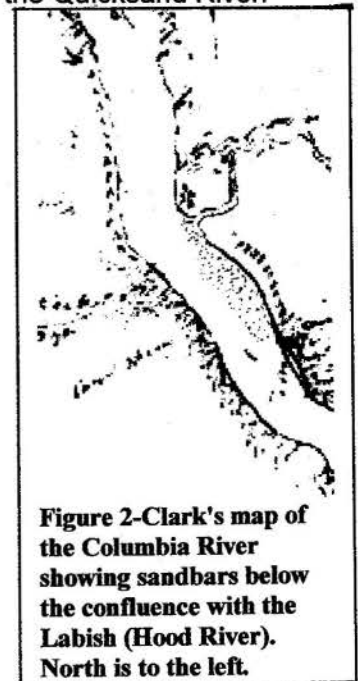


Figure 2-Clark's map of the Columbia River showing sandbars below the confluence with the Labish (Hood) River. North is to the left.

<sup>1</sup> Moulton, Gary E. The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Vol. 6, p 12. Hereafter referred to as "Moulton." with volume and page.

<sup>2</sup> Moulton, Vol. 11, p 382.

<sup>3</sup> Moulton. Vol. 6, p 12.

river brings down from thence vast bodies of sand.”<sup>4</sup> A final piece of corroborating evidence is found in Clark’s detailed maps of the Columbia that show massive sand bars that are first observed at the mouth of the Labish River and further downstream in the Columbia. (See fig. 2 – an insert of Clark’s map from the Atlas, plate 78.)

### Mistaking the Quicksand for the Multnomah (Willamette) River

Standing at the confluence of the Quicksand and the Columbia Rivers, the explorers were convinced that the Quicksand was the major river draining the valley to the south. If you travel to the mouth of the Sandy and look in a southerly direction, it is easy to understand how the explorers made this assumption. The terrain is very flat and the impressive appearance of the Quicksand left no doubt in their minds.

Numerous publications indicate the mouth of the Multnomah, known today as the Willamette, was obscured by Image Canoe Island (today’s Hayden Island) as they paddled by on the Washington side of the river. Historical nautical charts of the Columbia and Multnomah rivers, however, show that there were islands around the mouth of the Multnomah, but that these islands did not obscure the river.<sup>5</sup> My interpretation is that the Quicksand River impressed Lewis and Clark so much that they missed the major river to the south simply because they were not looking for it, believing the Quicksand was the major river. With the gentle currents and the wide Columbia, they simply paddled by the mouth *traveling in both directions*.

The Indians repeatedly told Lewis and Clark that the Quicksand was not the major river to the south, and that there was another river further to the west. Finally, on April 1, 1806, Sergeant Pryor and two companions were dispatched in a small canoe from Provision Camp on Cottonwood Beach (opposite the east branch of the Quicksand River) to explore the Quicksand as far as they could go, and return in one day.

### Pryor’s Exploration

When Pryor returned, he indicated the Indians were correct. He reported traveling 6 miles up the river but gave courses and bearings indicating he traveled 7 miles up the river. He further indicated the river, before it divided in the delta, was 300 yards wide, but that upstream, the river was only 50 yards wide, and it appeared to head from Mt. Hood. Pryor described the waters of the river as turbid and the current rapid. Lewis surmised that there must be a large stream joining the Quicksand from the SW. The next day, Clark and a detachment of men were dispatched down the Columbia to find the river the Indians called the Multnomah.

### Determining where Sergeant Pryor turned around on the Quicksand River

In determining where Pryor traveled on the Quicksand, the evidence is contradictory and not sufficient to pinpoint the turnaround point conclusively. However, an analysis of the information he provides does give clues to speculate on his travels that day. Plotted on Figure 3 is a summary of the course and distance information as well as descriptive information provided by Sergeant Pryor. Also plotted is the possible (best fit?) location of his maximum penetration of the Quicksand River. Pryor reported the following information:

S 10 W, 1 Mile to a point on the Left bank passing a large island on the right

S 24 E, 2 Miles to a point on the Left bank passing a large island on the right

S 33 E, 4 Miles to a point on the right bank passing several islands on the left bank and passing a 50-yard wide creek on the right bank at 1½ miles. Looking up the river from this point, it appeared to bend to the east.

### Compass Bearings

When utilizing compass bearings from the journals, it is important to remember that all the readings are simply magnetic compass bearings with no correction for declination (the difference between magnetic North and True Geographic North – what we call the North Pole. Ed.). Also, declination changes with time, and an 1805-1806 approximation of the declination should be used. For this study, I used the declination of 22 degrees east as provided on the 1888 nautical chart of the

<sup>4</sup> Moulton. Vol. 7, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> 1888 Nautical Chart of the Columbia River, Sheet 6, Fales Landing to Potland.



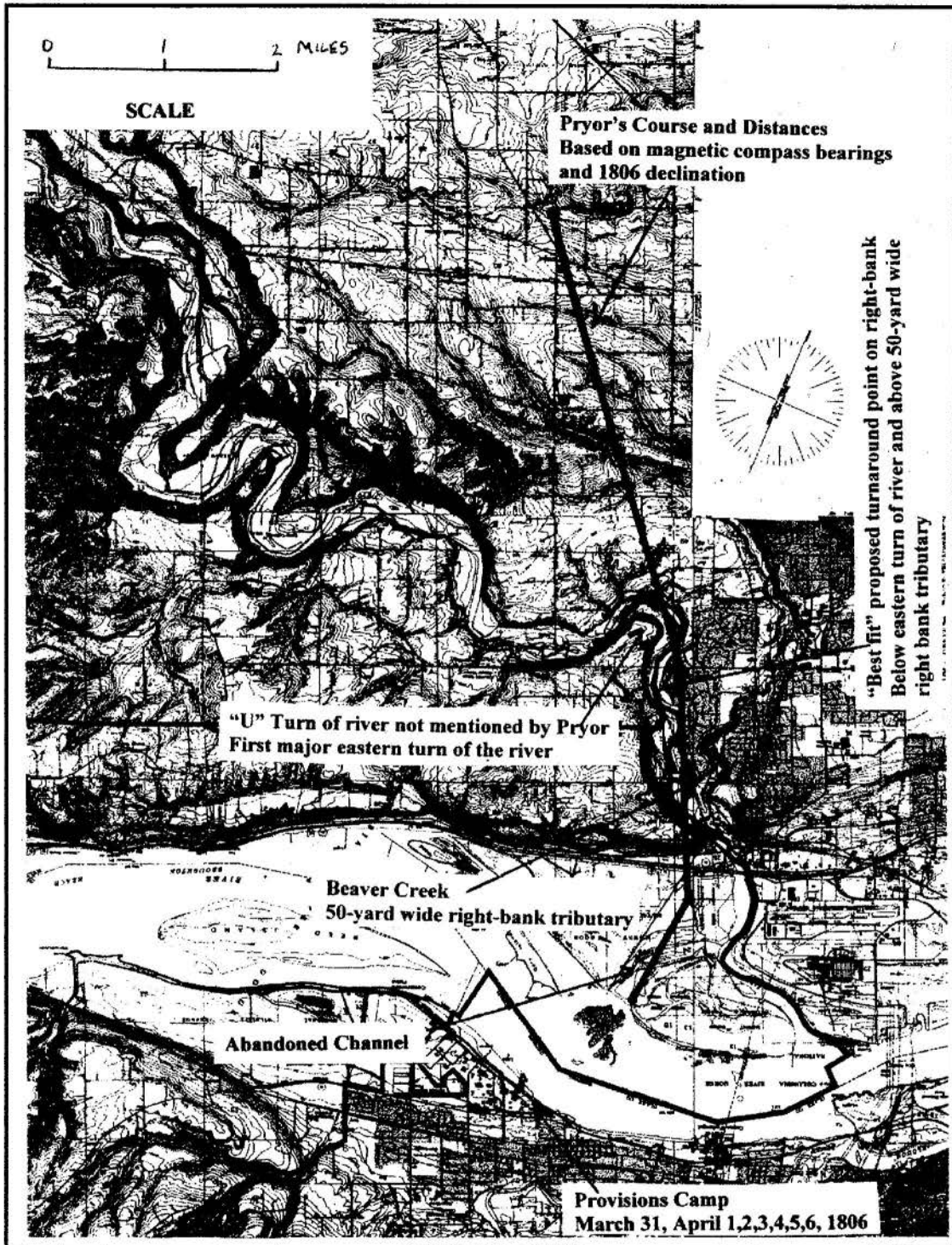


Figure 3-Modern topographic map of the lower Quicksand (Sandy River) showing the course and distance bearings reported by Sargent Pryor.

Columbia River, Fales Landing to Portland. After taking all this into consideration and carefully plotting the courses and distances of Pryor, it is evident they make little sense. These courses and distances are plotted on a modern map in Fig. 3, and show three southerly bearings, which do not follow the course of the river. Was he taking the readings too close to his hatchet or rifle? Was the compass not working? Was he not holding it level? We just do not know why they do not work.

### The 50-Yard wide creek on the Right Bank

Sergeant Pryor describes a creek entering the Quicksand River on the right side a little over two miles short of his turnaround. Beaver Creek is the only creek of sufficient size that meets the description on the lower Quicksand River. This would place the turnaround two+ miles above this creek (see Fig. 3).

### What Pryor did not mention

Sometimes noting a geographic feature that is not mapped or mentioned can provide clues as to where the explorers did or did not travel. About six miles up the Quicksand River, it takes an eastward meander almost forming a "U" turn in its direction. Since all his compass bearings are in a southerly direction and his descriptions do not indicate any "U" turn in the river, it is likely he never made it that far up the river.

### Analysis

Although the compass bearings do not closely fit the river, they do show a consistent southerly direction. Since Beaver Creek is the only creek that comes close to fitting the description of a 50-yard wide creek, it suggests that this stretch of river must be the third leg of Pryor's courses and distances. Lastly, since Pryor did not give any hint of the U-turn in the river, he likely never made it to this turn, although it could be the turn he saw in the distance. All this would suggest that Pryor was a terrible judge of distance or, perhaps, he just wanted to impress the captains with how far he went, and overestimated his mileage.

If we recalibrate Pryor's estimates by dividing the actual distance upriver to Beaver Creek (2 miles) by Pryor's estimate of 4.5 miles reported, we would shorten his distance estimates by 44%. Applying this percentage would mean he actually traveled about 2.5 to 3 miles up the Quicksand putting Beaver Creek on his third leg of course and distance measurements.

There is a point plotted on Fig. 3 on the right-bank of the river, downstream from the "U" turn where the river would appear to bend to the east. Perhaps this point, above the 50-yard wide creek on the right-bank and below the first serious turn to the east, is the location of maximum penetration of the Quicksand River by Sergeant Pryor and his two companions. However, the data is inconsistent and we will probably never know the exact location with certainty.

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Jay Rasmussen for helpful comments and editing of this article. (And I would like to thank Glen for his interesting research and analysis. Edited for WON.)

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### **OCTA Convention, Vancouver, WA 2004**

The Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) will hold its annual national convention in Vancouver, WA from August 8-14, 2004. The 2004 convention will feature the Lewis and Clark Expedition as the forerunner of the emigration that followed almost 40 years later. The common element is the Columbia River, a water trail used by both the Expedition and some of the emigrants from the mouth of Walla Walla River to the site of Fort Vancouver.

The convention features two days of meetings, two days of bus tours and various social events. We expect to conduct a Lewis and Clark tour from Vancouver to the Pacific, to include Fort Clatsop and Station Camp. Another tour from the vicinity of The Dalles to Fort Vancouver is also planned, and papers will be solicited.

At this time, OCTA would like to extend an invitation to Lewis and Clark enthusiasts to join our convention planning. We would be very pleased if knowledgeable persons would help design and lead tours. Membership in OCTA is not required, although we welcome all to join.

Those interested should contact Dave Welch, convention chair, at 253-584-0332 or [djwelch@csi.com](mailto:djwelch@csi.com) for additional information and to volunteer.



## Along the Trail...

### **Wintering-In Harvest Festival:**

Portland, OR – The Oregon Historical Society is hosting their annual harvest festival, Wintering-In, on September 21-22, 2002. The festival will be held at Howell Territorial Park on Sauvie (Wapato) Island and will include family activities that include tours of the historic Bybee House historic properties, traditional folk music, craft demonstrations and harvest exhibits. The festival draws 5,000-6,000 visitors each year. Plan on joining in on the fun. Call Rachael at the OHS at 509-306-5226 for more information.

### **Fort Clatsop Archaeology:**

Ft. Clatsop, OR – A group of archaeology students from Portland State Univ. have been excavating two homesteads in the Ft. Clatsop Nat. Mem. site. For the past two summers, they have been trying to locate the sites of the Shane cabin on the east side of the present replica fort, and the Smith cabin, which was located on the west side of the fort. Both homesteaders had written in their own journals that they had a view of the fort from their respective front porches.

Carlos Shane was a farmer who built his cabin in 1851, and stated that he found "two rows of cabins, one with a big stump in it that was used as a table, that were in bad shape." The site was grown up with saplings and brush. These were the remains of the fort. Because he was a farmer, he wanted to burn the debris in order to farm. The cabin was approximately 100' east of the forts' back gate.

The Smith cabin was approximately 75' SW of the front gate of the fort, built around 1852. The Smiths supposedly took the "last good log" of the old fort for the foundation of their own cabin. The Smiths had set up a pottery plant, having found a source of clay near the picnic area and parking lot of today. The family later moved to Portland after their cabin burned down, setting up a brick factory that supplied most of Portland with bricks in the late 1800s.

The discovery of these cabins has greatly narrowed the search area for the exact location of the fort. Some have stated that the fort replica is on the "footprint" of the original fort. Though it is highly doubtful, it may be closer than originally thought. In digging an excavation pit, they found the porcelain head of a doll, presumably one belonging to the Smith's daughter. They are trying to locate the latrine that the Corps used that would give a better idea of just where the fort might have been located. Though they have not found it yet, they are very excited about their progress, and are looking forward to next year's digging season.



↑ The Shane cabin excavation pits beyond the back gate of the fort. The Smith cabin excavation pit → where the porcelain doll head was found.

This is the second installment of Dr. Ravenholt's paper "Underlying Cause Of Death Of Meriwether Lewis." Part one was printed in the June issue of WON. Again, I want to thank Dr. Ravenholt for sharing his views with us.

### **A Night with Venus; A Lifetime with Mercury**

Because it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for Lewis to have refused the sexual hospitalities offered by the Shoshones while seeking to ingratiate himself with Chief Cameawait and the tribe, and bargaining for horses, I read succeeding diary entries with particular care. I was looking for statements and signs relevant to syphilis according to known incubation periods for each disease manifestation.

August 19, 1805 (Shoshone village,, Lemhi River, ID)

"The chastity of their women is not held in high estimation, and the husband will for a trifle barter the companion of his bed for a night or longer if he conceives the reward adequate; tho' they are not so importunate that we caress their women as the sioux were. And some of these women appear to be held more sacred then in any nation we have seen. I requested the men to give them no cause for jealousy by having connection with their women without their knowledge, which with them, strange as it may seem, is considered as disgraceful to the husband, as clandestine connections of a similar kind are among civilized nations. To prevent this mutual exchange of good offices altogether I know it impossible to effect, particularly on the part of our young men whom some months abstanence have made them very polite to these fawney damsels...

I was anxious to learn whether these people had the venereal, and made inquiry through the interpreter and his wife [Sacagawea]; the information was that they sometimes had it but I could not learn their remedy; they most usually die with it's effects. This seems a strong proof that these disorders bothe gonaroeah and Louis Venerae are native disorders of America. Tho' these people have suffered much by the smallpox which is known to have been imported and perhaps those disorders might have been contracted from other Indian tribes who by a round of communications might have obtained from the Europeans since it was introduced into that quarter of the globe, but so much detached on the other hand from all communication with the whites that I think it most probable that these disorders are original with them." -- Lewis

Whether Lewis' "anxious" concern for the STD status of the Shoshone tribe – stated just a few days after his purported sexual exposure with them – was triggered by the onset of STD symptoms in himself or a companion, or was simply due to apprehensive introspection, we cannot know. Gonococcal urethritis may become rapidly apparent a day or two after infectious exposure, but a syphilitic chancre – the primary genital sore – would not appear until at least 10 days had elapsed from the time of sexual exposure. Although Lewis became ill with a disabling illness a month or so after his purported sexual exposure, which afflicted him mightily during subsequent months and years, he wrote no description thereof, except, perhaps on September 19<sup>th</sup> -- before he understood the full implications of what he was writing:

September 19, 1805 (Lolo Trail)

"several of the men are unwell of the dysentery. Brakings out, or eruptions of the skin, have been common with us for some time." – Lewis

After the primary chancre, the chief secondary manifestations of syphilis are cutaneous and mucosal lesions that ordinarily begin appearing about a month after infection with syphilis. Hence, this mention of unusual skin eruptions a little more than a month after they encountered the Shoshones on August 13-15, is supportive of the view that Lewis and companions probably acquired syphilis on about that date. It is significant that Lewis wrote "...have been common with us for some time." Probably the beginning of his secondary stage syphilis and four years of darkening despair.

Lewis' diary entry on September 22<sup>nd</sup> was his last entry until November 29<sup>th</sup>, but Clark documented his illness during the subsequent two weeks:



September 23, 1805: "Capt Lewis Scercely able to ride on a jentle horse which was furnished by the chief..." September 24: "Capt Lewis verry sick." September 26: "Capt Lewis sick." September 27: "Captain Lewis very sick nearly all the men are sick." October 1: "Capt Lewis getting much better than for several days past." October 4: "Capt Lewis still sick but able to walk a little." October 5: "Capt Lewis not so well today as yesterday." October 9: "Capt Lewis recovering fast."

But not until January 1, 1806, when established at Ft. Clatsop, did Lewis resume making regular diary entries – indicating he suffered severe disabling illness during several months. Significantly, the nature of his illness and the reason for the long hiatus in his diary entries was not recorded. The severity of his illness is also indicated by the fact that the writing tasks devolved upon Clark, even when he was very ill himself: October 1: "I feel myself verry unwell. I continu verry unwell but obliged to attend to every thing." – Clark

During the months at Ft. Clatsop, the Corps was sometimes besieged by Chinook women offering their sexual services, which were generally, though not always, refused because of fear of venereal disease, and the unattractiveness of the women. While there, Lewis reported treating at least three Corps members with mercury for syphilis (Goodrich, Gibson and McNeal), and may well have treated others, including himself.

On the homeward trail, Lewis treated a number of unwell men, including Goodrich and McNeal, with mercury during the pause at Great Falls; made a near catastrophic exploratory trip along Marias River to the north, battling eight Blackfeet, and killing two; then proceeding down the Missouri by boat to rendezvous with Clark beyond the Yellowstone confluence, proceeding together to the Mandan villages and on to St. Louis, arriving September 23, 1806.

### **Evidence That Meriwether Lewis Suffered From Neurosyphilis**

The fabric of evidence that syphilis acquired during the explorative trip to the Pacific Coast was the underlying cause of Lewis' death include these threads:

- Lewis was in excellent health when he set forth up the Missouri River on April 7, 1804, and until he reached the headwaters of the Columbia River.
- A half dozen Indian tribes suffering from syphilis were encountered on the expedition. Sexual intercourse with women of these tribes by Corps members was often urged by the Indians, and was commonplace; and probably at least a half dozen Corps members did develop syphilis.
- When encountering the Shoshone women by the Lehmi River on the West Side of the Continental Divide, Lewis had both a propitious opportunity and a compelling need for sexual intercourse. In the line of duty, he really did have to establish friendly relations with Chief Cameawait to get the horses needed for the long and rough mountain passage.
- During the week after his purported intercourse with the Shoshone woman, August 13-15, 1805, his diary entries mention his "anxious" inquiries concerning the venereal disease experience of the tribe, and his findings that the Shoshones did sometimes have venereal disease and "...most usually die from the effects."
- On September 19<sup>th</sup>, five weeks after his purported sexual exposure – a usual interval for secondary phase skin eruptions of syphilis to appear – Lewis wrote that "...brakings out or eruptions of the skin have been common with us for some time." He then developed a more general, severe but poorly described illness that incapacitated him during several months.
- Returning to St. Louis, Lewis and the Corps remained there for five weeks rather than hurrying on to President Jefferson and the U.S. Congress in Washington during good October weather. Their lengthy pause in St. Louis was likely occasioned by the need for Lewis and other Corps members with syphilis to undergo a month-long treatment with mercury, etc., under the care of Dr. Antoine Saugrain, a French physician friend of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson while at the Court of Versailles in the 1780s, and friend to Lewis and Clark since 1803. Surely being one of the most capable "syphilologists in America, he was a medical practitioner employed by the U.S. Army at St. Louis in 1806.
- Soon after reaching Washington, D.C., while living with President Jefferson at the White House, Lewis manifested an incapacitating illness and several instances of lessened good judgment.



- Upon moving to Philadelphia in March of 1807, Lewis lived an active social life during three months, but was unable to advance his priority task, that is, the preparation of an account of the expedition for publication.
- In the latter half of July, he delivered his receipts and records of the expedition to Mr. Simmons in the War Department in Washington before continuing on to his mother and family at Locust Hill near Ivy in Albermarle County, Virginia. In August, he visited with President Jefferson at Monticello. Afterward, he generally receded from public view during some months – perhaps undergoing treatment with mercury, etc., under the care of his mother, Lucy Marks, and his physician brother, Reubin, until well enough to proceed to St. Louis on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1808, to assume his job as Governor of Louisiana Territory.
- During the following year, while working administratively, his relationship with Lieutenant Governor Frederick Bates degenerated into frank animosity, and his last months in St. Louis in 1809 was plagued by progressive illness characteristic of paresis.
- From St. Louis by riverboat in September, en route to New Orleans, he suffered from febrile illness, became deranged and twice attempted suicide before arriving at Ft. Pickering (Memphis) on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Upon arrival, Lewis was still deranged and received supportive care for his “indisposition” from his friend, fort commander Captain Gilbert Russell, for two weeks.
- Feeling fairly well by September 29<sup>th</sup>, Lewis left Ft. Pickering with Major James Neelly by horse, but soon resumed drinking and was deranged again during two days’ stay at the Chickasaw reservation.
- Arriving at Grinder’s Stand on the Natchez Trace on October 10<sup>th</sup>, Lewis behaved peculiarly – pacing about the yard, talking angrily to himself, and obviously deeply disturbed. During the night, he shot himself twice, lived until dawn, spoke with his servant, Pernia, and died. Major Neelly arrived some hours later, interviewed Mrs. Grinder and the servants, buried the body and, from Nashville, wrote to President Jefferson informing him of Lewis’ death by suicide. (The cause of death was soon confirmed by a local coroner’s jury, and readily accepted by the family and closest friends.)

Some will dislike the thought that Meriwether Lewis died of neurosyphilis, but others will mourn anew with greater understanding, admiration and compassion this truly heroic leader who, I believe, died an agonizing death from an infection acquired in the line of duty while on a dangerous mission for his President and country.

Lewis’ agonizing fall from the peak of his life’s achievement – because of a relentless neurosyphilitic infection – was matched by that of Lord Randolph Churchill almost a century later. *“As his brain and spinal cord rotted, he became subject to unexpected attacks, facial tremors, tremors of the lip and tongue, abrupt changes in the pupils of his eyes, impaired vision, splitting headaches, lapses of memory, delusions, depressions and dementia.”*<sup>6</sup> And, according to his son, Winston, *“During the winter of ’92, symptoms of vertigo, palpitation, and numbness of the hands made themselves felt, and his condition was already a cause of deepest anxiety to his friends.... It seemed incredible that this man... could be the same brilliant audacious leader who in the flush of exultant youth had marched irresistibly to power through the stormy days of 1886.... What experience can be more painful than for a man who enjoys the fullest intellectual vigor, and whose blood is quite unchilled by age, to feel the whole apparatus of expression slipping insensibly from him.”*<sup>7</sup>

Our thanks to Dr. Ravenholt for sharing this information with us. I’m sure there will be many on both sides of the argument, based on how you feel about the subject. However, until a “final” answer can be agreed upon, we will have to rely upon the findings of those willing to spend their time trying to unravel any of the myriad questions that pertain to the expedition two hundred years hence.

(Dr. Rie Ravenholt Ms. Edited for WON.)

<sup>6</sup> Manchester, W. *The Last Lion: Visions of Glory, 1874 – 1932*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Churchill, W.S. *Lord Randolph Churchill*. London: Macmillan, 1906.

## *Potty Stop!*

Article by Sherry Devlin of the *Missoulian*

Lolo, MT – Lewis and Clark made a pit stop here. And now, nearly 200 years after the explorers' history-making layover, archaeologists may well have found the pit.

In a never-tilled meadow beside Lolo Creek, scientists dug a 1-by-1 meter square, looking for the latrine used by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the camp they called "Travelers' Rest." Every 10 centimeters, the archaeologists stopped to test the soil for mercury, the presence of which is considered proof of the Corps of Discovery's presence.

Whenever they felt poorly, soldiers on the 1804-1806 expedition took laxatives known as "Dr. Rush's Thunder Clappers." The pills were 60% mercury, so induced immediate and lasting diarrhea, which Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush believed would cleanse the body of all infirmities. "It didn't matter what you had," said Dan Hall, an historical archaeologist for Western Culture in Missoula. "Syphilis, constipation, a wound. If you were in need of medical care, they fed you Dr. Rush's pills."

And in their journals, expedition leaders Meriwether Lewis and William Clark noted that three soldiers were sick during the expedition's encampment along Lolo Creek on June 30-July 3, 1806 – on their return from the Pacific. "So we know that for three days, three guys were sitting on the latrine," Hall said. "And that if this was the latrine, there should be mercury in the soil and we should be able to find it."

Twenty centimeters into the recent dig, the archaeologists saw the hoped-for change in the soil. Where the upper layer had undoubtedly been Lolo Creek gravel – rounded, unsorted cobbles of brown and gold – the new layer was a dark gray soil rich in organic material and cobble-free. But when they tested for mercury, the samples came up empty – 38 times! So they kept digging.

At 48 centimeters, the organic layer began to give way to another creek-bottom deposit. They kept digging and sampling and testing. On the last sample of the day on Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, at about 50 centimeters, they hit pay dirt – literally. Consultant Natalie Morrow saw the reading on her mercury vapor analyzer and started dancing: 0.004 milligrams of mercury per cubic meter of soil, a statistically significant spike. And just where you'd expect to find it: at the bottom of the latrine.

"Mercury is a heavy inert element," said Hall. "It does not decompose. Water has a hard time moving it. So it would settle at the bottom, right where we found it. We were all screaming and dancing," he said.

Hall did another little jig the next morning when Morrow arrived with the next bit of good news. The soil sample she took to the lab showed 0.0145 milligrams of mercury per cubic meter of soil, "another hit" from the same bottom-of-the-trench level. "Now we have ruled out equipment error or operator error," Hall said.

On Friday, the crew began excavation of another test pit looking to repeat the discovery. They'll do three excavations along the suspected trench. Then they will collect soil samples from across the cottonwood bottomland, for purposes of comparison. If the suspected latrine is the only site with hits of mercury, they'll know – for certain – that they found THE latrine.

Archaeologists used a similar mercury vaporizer analysis at Fort Clatsop, where the expedition spent the winter of 1805-1806, to verify the location of that campsite. The results there were "robust," Hall said, as the soldiers spent so many months in the same place and built an actual privy. This same sort of analysis may eventually be used to verify the location of the expedition's portage around the Great Falls of the Missouri.

At Traveler's Rest, the documentation is particularly significant because the encampment is a National Historic Landmark – and has been for many years. But the national listing shows the camp at the confluence of Lolo Creek and the Bitterroot River, about 1½ miles from the actual upstream location. In order to get the landmark expanded, or otherwise relocated to include the actual campsite, Hall and company need substantial documentation. Proof Positive!

"A National Historic Landmark designation is a recognition that not all sites are equal, that some are more important than others," Hall said. "So they must have a high degree of integrity. We don't change a landmarks' location on a whim."

This summer's archaeological work, which will also include excavation of a possible hearth, "will help us put a square on the map and say this is the place," he said. "That we know for certain."

Remote-sensing work in recent years has repeatedly zeroed in on the grassy bench and cottonwood bottomland on the south side of Lolo Creek, land owned for 30 years by Pat and Ernie

Deschamps, and sold last year to the public for management as Traveler's Rest State Park. Historians and archaeologists studying the site knew they were looking for a military-style layout, as all field encampments of that era followed a regimen prescribed by Baron Von Steuben, a Prussian who came to Valley Forge and helped Gen. George Washington establish the Revolutionary Army's encampment. In his guidebook, the baron prescribed the location of a central cook fire, from which all other features were located: the soldiers' tents, the captains' tents, the sentries, the game butchering area, and, at a distance of 300 feet, the latrine.

Earlier tests of electromagnetic conductivity, which show anomalies in the soil, located the likely site of the central cook fire at Traveler's Rest. The suspected latrine is 300 feet away, at the bottom of the bluff.

Pinpointing the campsite's precise location should open more doors for funding and for protection of the area said Beth Berlin, a Missoula County grants administrator assigned to the project. "It really helps with the money," Berlin said.

"It legitimizes all of the efforts being undertaken on this property," said Philip Maechling, Missoula County's historic preservation officer.

"Finding the subsurface trench was serendipity in the first place," said Hall, "because finding evidence of Lewis and Clark in a quickly developing community like Lolo is like looking for a needle in three haystacks."

"To find such strong evidence so quickly, after just two days of excavating, is amazing," said Berlin. "There were skeptics who said we'd never find anything out here, that too much time had passed, that mercury vapor analysis would never show anything. So this is pretty exciting." Added Hall, "it's about as much excitement as you can get standing over a 200 year old latrine."

**Note:** Though the site is managed as a state park, the dig sites are not open to the public for security reasons. Likewise, there are no artifacts to be seen since the excavations are to find subtle changes in the soil as evidence of mercury.

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### *Chinook Plankhouse Project...*

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge north of Vancouver, WA is in the design stages of a full-scale replica of a Chinook plankhouse that would resemble those that used to occupy the local area at the time of Lewis and Clark. This would give local Clark County residents and visitors alike the opportunity to explore the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The site chosen for the structure is the Carty unit of the refuge complex, and has already been surveyed for the actual construction to begin. The construction will be in the authentic Chinookan style using Western Red Cedar logs throughout. This is where you come in.

Though the project has been able to gather funding, there isn't enough to purchase all of the logs needed. If you have access to Cedar logs and would like to help, the project is looking for the dimensional logs listed on the chart that is on the next page. If you can acquire logs or can handle the transportation of logs – or both – your help will be most greatly appreciated. Obviously, this can be a logistical nightmare, but it is a worthwhile project if you wish to help. Plus, you will most likely be able to write your expenses off of your taxes.

If you would like to help in this project, you can get more information by contacting:

Rebecca Young  
Deputy Project Leader  
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
P.O. Box 457  
301 N. Third Ave.  
Ridgefield, WA 98642  
360-887-4106  
360-887-4109 (fax)



**RIDGEFIELD NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
**Replica Chinook Plank House Project**  
**TREE LIST**  
as of 6/18/02, prepared by Art Petersen, CedarTree Architects

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Intended Use	Quantity (# trees needed)	# Acquired	Diameter	Overall Length	"Minimum Log Section" Cut Lengths*
Gable Entry, Ridge Post	1		60"-72"	66'	3 log sections @ 22' each
Corner Posts, Planks	1		24"	70'	2 @ 18' and 2 @ 16' each
Planks	8		24"-36"	48'	8 @ 30' and 8 @ 18' each
Planks	14		24"-36"	40'	10 @ 16' and 18 @ 20' each
Planks	6		24"-36"	34'	6 @ 16', 6 @ 10' and 3 @ 8' each
Planks	7		24"-36"	36'	21 @ 12' each
Wall Posts	1		16"	48'	3 @ 16' each
Ridge Beams	2		12"-14"	48'	2 @ 48' each
Eave Poles, Rafters	4		12"-14"	60'	4 @ 14" dia. x 30' and 4 @ 12" dia. x 30'
Eave Poles, Rafters	4		12"-14"	80'	4 @ 14" dia. x 20' and 8 @ 12" dia. x 30'
Rafters	7		12"	60'	14 @ 30' each
Purlins	20		8"	40'	40 @ 20' each
Purlins	40		8"	32'	80 @ 16' each
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>				<b>246</b>
					<i>*One caution here: When standing trees are felled, they will also need to be cut into the corresponding and proper lengths for their intended use in the Plankhouse as opposed to their optimum length for transport.</i>



## Future Meetings of the Washington St. Chap.

Nov 8-11, 2002 "Ocean in View" takes place in Ilwaco and the Long Beach Peninsula. Guest speakers include Amy Mossett and Peter Onuf. See the historical sites with Rex Zaik on educational bus tours. This should be another interesting weekend "at the beach."

Jan 14-18, 2003 The Bicentennial Kick-off at Monticello. This is the start of the celebration, what we have all been waiting for – and working for. It will finally begin. Watch for more information concerning the festivities or check their website at [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org).

Feb. 8, 2003 The Annual business meeting for the Washington St. Chap to be held in Tacoma at the Wash. St. Historical Society Museum, mezzanine level. Details in the January WON.

**WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER**  
*Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation*  
128 Galaxie Road  
Chehalis, WA 98532



The mission of the LCTHF is to stimulate appreciation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's contribution to America's heritage and to support education, research, development and preservation of the Lewis and Clark experience.

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