



PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners

Vol. 8, No. 5

Kalispell, Montana

June 14, 2021

Richard A. Hull, Ye Editor, e-mail: richardahull@charter.net

JUNE MEETING

Monday, June 21, 2021

Topic: "Lewis & Clark: On to the Pacific, 1805-1806"

Presenter: Hal Stearns of Missoula, Montana

Where: The Red Lion, 20 North Main, Kalispell, Montana. (east end of the Kalispell Center Mall)

Time: 5:15 pm Grab 'n' Greet
6:00 pm - Dinner (includes the presentation)
7:00 pm - Presentation

Dinner: Until further notice, buffet services are being discontinued. A limited number of dinner plates will be offered to include side dishes, beverages and dessert. Plates will be ordered directly from the wait staff.

Dinner Reservations: Call (406) 752-9642 (leave message with names and phone number); or send email to kbrittonrn@gmail.com with the same information.

Reservation Deadline: Wednesday, June 16, at 9:00 pm

Posse members may join the program through Zoom by contacting tim.chris@yahoo.com for registration and instructions.

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION



Lewis & Clark's push to the Pacific started from Lolo Pass southwest of Missoula and down the Lochsa River on present-day Hwy. 12. Photo by Rick Hull

(This program is Part 3 of a multiple part series on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.)

On September 9, 1805, the Corps of Discovery arrives at the junction of Lolo Creek and the Bitterroot River, later to be known as "Travelers Rest." Swooping Eagle, fondly called Old Toby, will guide the Corps over the Bitterroots, the unknown formidable snow-clad mountains.

After 11 days of awful conditions, the Corps arrives on the Weippe Prairie and the next amazing adventure. The Nez Perce, friendly canoe builders who will be the Corps' horse keepers, and the very lucky meeting with Watkuweis will add to the drama of meeting tribes and their villages along the Columbia. Some are friendly, others testy at best.

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Lewis & Clark on Lolo Creek in 1805 by Edward Paxon
Courtesy of Missoula Art Museum

Finally the ocean! Hunting, fishing, exploring, voting on a campsite, building a fort.

A long, never-ending winter, resigned acceptance and exasperation. No ships to meet them. Clark works on his maps, Lewis and others journal about the new species, like the 26 varieties of trees, the ocean, the beached whale, and visits to nearby tribes. Finally as spring breaks in 1806, they head back home.

This event is supported in part by Humanities Montana.

Hal Stearns, Phd., has had a distinguished career as an educator, researcher, Western historian, writer, lecturer, tour guide, and military officer.

As an educator he has taught at the high school and graduate levels and has been honored as Montana's Teacher of the Year and Montana's Outstanding History Teacher.



He is a current member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Board and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission in Montana. He has served his country as a Brigadier General in the Montana Army National Guard.

We wish to thank Posse member **Doc Harkins** who contributed to the live-streaming equipment fund.

FROM THE SHERIFF'S SADDLEBAG



Our June Posse meeting will kickoff our summer season in Northwest Montana, so break out the picnic gear, make your campsite reservations, including your ticket reservation into GNP, and tend your new garden.

Our programs are set for the remainder of the year and many are selected for 2022. For those that missed our announcement, we will no longer serve meals buffet style but rather shifting to a small, select order form style where the entree is ordered directly from the Red Lion wait staff.

The Posse membership has steadily increased during our earlier decline in retention from 2020. Hopefully, those former members will rejoin our ranks. We are still struggling with our technology learning curve with the live-streaming via the Zoom program and our interfacing with the Red Lion's systems. We have expanded our Zoom outreach to the Montana Veterans Home in Columbia Falls and to the Buffalo Terrace complex in Kalispell so they can participate in our programs.

We are especially gratified for the financial support from our members. We could not have done it otherwise. For the record, the Equipment Fund is reserved for the purchase and maintenance of equipment only.

We will continue in our spirit of having fun, so historical or hysterical attire will be promoted at each meeting. Period attire is not mandatory and is entirely optional, of course, but greatly encouraged. Raffle items and history themed book signings will be available during the Grab 'n' Greet session. Hope to see each of you at our June meeting on the 21st. **Please bring a friend/neighbor, an explorer, an Indian guide, a canoe builder,or one of each.**

FROM YE EDITOR'S DESK

By Rick Hull



Visitors can tour this replica of Fort Clatsop built by the National Park Service. Photo by Rick Hull

A visit to the Oregon coast provides an opportunity to follow the footsteps of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Lewis and Clark originally camped on the northwest tip of the Columbia River in hopes of sighting a visiting ship. But an uneasy relationship with the local tribe and the lack of game animals led them to move to the Oregon side.

Their new location was not on the ocean, but on the freshwater side of the peninsula that separates the Columbia River from the Pacific. Lewis picked a small bluff, about three miles up a river now known as Lewis and Clark River. There was a spring nearby, and trees for construction. And most importantly, game was plentiful in the area.

Expedition hunters killed 131 elk that winter, resulting in a steady diet of boiled elk, elk jerky, and – if the elk was killed close to camp – roast elk. Lewis wrote that he began to welcome dog as a break to the monotonous elk diet. Clark disagreed.

The resulting fortification was named after a local tribe who were generally helpful and friendly.

You can visit a replica of Fort Clatsop, off U.S.

101 southwest of Astoria. It is the second built on the site, after the first was destroyed by fire in 2005. The National Park Service runs the historical park, and the replica is thought to be with a few feet of the 1805 original.



This breakwater separates the Columbia River from the ocean in nearby Fort Stevens. Photo by Rick Hull

While in the area, be sure to visit adjoining Fort Stevens State Park. Covering nearly six square miles, the park sits on the mouth of the Columbia. A breakwater divides river and ocean into two realms. On the ocean side are sand beaches, thundering waves, and the remains of a shipwreck. On the river side are vast tidal flats and marshes occupied by thousands of waterfowl.

Nearby is Astoria, with its own historic fort. A soaring bridge crosses the Columbia River at Astoria, and leads to Cape Disappointment State Park. The park is not only the site of Lewis and Clarks' first camp, but it has 27 miles of ocean beach. The beach is billed as the longest in the United States.



The dramatic bridge across the Columbia River at Astoria. Photo by Rick Hull

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FUTURE PROGRAMS

July: Monday, July 19, 2021
"Early Flyers and Aviation History
in Montana" (Part 2 of a Series)

August: Monday, Aug. 16, 2021
"History of the Smoke Jumpers"
(Part 1 of a Series)

September: Monday, Sept. 20, 2021
"Glacier Lake Missoula"
(Part 3 of a Series)

October: Monday, Oct. 18, 2021
"Hungry Horse Dam"
(Part 1 of a Series)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Members aware of events not listed here are encouraged to contact Ye Editor with the particulars at richardahull@charter.net

- **August 15:** Historical movie, "Red Skies Over Montana" at the Flathead Electric Cooperative' Community Room. 6:30 p.m. Free admission.
- **October 8 & 9:** Westerners' International Third Annual Gather and 75th Los Angeles Corral in Los Angeles. Details coming.

TRIVIA QUESTION

Barbara Boorman, Tim Christenson and **Nancy Souder** had the correct answer to last month's trivia question about the famed Montana senator who had a cabin on Glacier National Park's Lake McDonald.

Burton K. Wheeler (1882-1975) had a major role in local and federal Indian policy, and later became an opponent of President Franklin Roosevelt's policies.

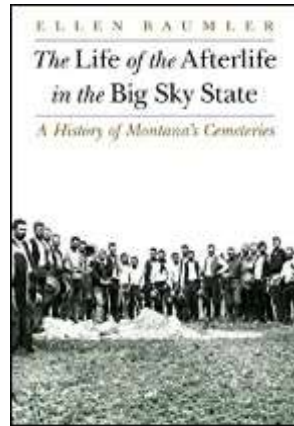
This Month's Question

(Answer in next month's newsletter.)

In an effort to trip up readers, here is an obscure question. Lewis and Clark met the Chinook tribe at the mouth of the Columbia. What custom did members of this tribe practice that would have its mark on northwest Montana geography?

Submit your answer to Ye Editor at richardahull@charter.net and we will print the names of all who submit an answer with special notice for those who get it right.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF



Ellen Baumlér, a speaker at past Posse presentations, has released her latest book, *The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky*. It offers a unique perspective on the evolution of burial customs in Montana. She starts with tribal interments in rock

ledges, under cairns, in trees and on open-air scaffolds and then explores the burial practices at trading posts and early missions. Finally pioneer graveyards then were replaced by architecturally planned cemeteries to honor the dead.

Baumler is not new to the subject of death, having previously published *Ghosts of the Last Best Place* and *Haunted Helena*.

Paperback, \$19.95. 207 pages.

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GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

NMPW's meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month, except the months of December and January, at the Red Lion, 20 North Main, Kalispell, Mt. (East end of the Kalispell Center Mall).

All meetings begin with a Grab 'n' Greet for a chance to get acquainted, followed by the evening meal, and a presentation pertaining to Western history.

Evening meals are open to both members and non-members. Dinners require advance reservations. Pay for the meals at the door upon arrival.

Walk-in seating will be available free to all Posse members and youths 16 and under and \$5 each for all non-members.

There will be our usual raffle for door prizes. Local history authors will sign books.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have recently joined the Posse:

Lori Van Dell of Whitefish, MT

Ron Van Dell of Whitefish, MT

Teri Iwersen of Kalispell, MT
(reinstated)

Gerry Souhrada of Kalispell, MT

Hi and Mary Gibson of Kalispell, MT
(reinstated)

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The Search for the Welsh Indians

By Rick Hull

Lewis and Clark first met the Flathead Indians on Sept. 4, 1805, in Ross's Hole, south of of present-day Darby, Montana. The band of four hundred were friendly and generous, and furnished the horses the expedition so desperately needed at a fair price.

A dramatic painting by Charlie Russell captures the meeting. Measuring nearly 25 by 12 feet, the oil painting is the backdrop for the House of Representatives in the Montana Capitol building.

But as the two groups struggled with communications through a young Shoshone translator, Meriwether Lewis took careful notes. Could this guttural language have Welsh roots? And had he finally found the Welsh Indians that haunted American history for centuries?

In organizing the expedition, President Thomas Jefferson gave Lewis several additional goals. One was to look for elephants. After all, mastodon bones been found for years in the U.S.

Another goal was to find the Welsh Indians.

The story had its roots seven hundred years before, when Wales was still an independent county. It revolved around Madoc, the son of famed Welsh king Owain Gwynedd. According to the myth, a succession fight broke out after Gwynedd's death. Discouraged by the family strife, Madoc organized an expedition to explore the Atlantic.

Supposedly in 1170 he discovered North America and about 100 men, women and children were left to found a colony. Madoc returned to Wales to recruit more settlers. The second expedition supposedly headed west, only to vanish into history.

Madoc's story originally survived only in folklore and brief mentions in poems. But when Columbus actually discovered the New World, the tale suddenly took off. Published accounts in the late 1500s used the tale to support claims the English had beaten the Spanish to America.

Soon the story evolved into speculation that the Welsh settlers had intermarried with local tribes, and their remnants still existed somewhere in North America. The search soon rivaled the lost Roanoke Colony as part of American folklore.

In 1608 an English expedition was convinced it had found Welsh-speaking Indians in the James River in Virginia. And there was the story of Reverend Morgan Jones, who swore he had been captured by a tribe in North Carolina in 1669 and saved himself by conversing in Welsh.

A rock formation along the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky, was rumored to be the site of a fortress built by Madoc. There is a similar story about a rock formation on Fort Mountain in northwest Georgia, while Alabama has its Welsh caves in DeSoto State Park.

A prime candidate for Welsh ancestry were the Mandan Indians. The light-skinned tribe live in North Dakota. German explorer Prince Maximilian prepared a comparison of Welsh and Mandan words in the 1830s in search of a connection. Famed frontier painter George Catlin also supported a Welsh heritage for the tribe.

As tribe after tribe were eliminated, the story faded. But it has never really gone away.

In 1953 the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a plaque in Mobile Bay, Alabama, in memory of Madoc who landed there in 1170. The plaque was removed, but there is talk of bringing it back.

Whitefish-born author Anna Lee Waldo tried followed up her blockbuster success of the novel *Sacajawea with Circle of Stone* (1999) and *Circle of Stars* (2001) about a Welsh prince in pre-Columbian America.

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c/o Clerk of the Posse, P. O. Box 10811, Kalispell, MT 59904.

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Notice to Contributors

Copy intended for this newsletter should be sent to the Editor at the e-mail address below. Copy must be in the Editor's in-box on or before the first of the month in order to make that month's issue. Copy received after that date will be held over until the subsequent issue.

For submissions to the Posse Dispatch, contact the Editor by e-mail first for submission requirements.

The next issue of Pony Tracks will be issued July 12, 2021 (or thereabouts)

richardahull@charter.net