



*Meriwether
Lewis*

**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
and the
LEWIS AND CLARK
BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION**



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**“LEWIS AND CLARK CORPS OF DISCOVERY BICENTENNIAL
COMMEMORATION”
PITTSBURGH, PA
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Background: In 2000, the National Council for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial decided to highlight some of the more nationally significant festivals and events and call them “Signature Events”. These events were to be those of nationwide historical significance, have the potential of high visitation, and be multicultural in nature. Pittsburgh was not designated as a Signature Event, but was promoted as a “significant regional event”. Co-hosted by the Heinz History Center and Pittsburgh District, US Army Corps of Engineers, primary events and lectures by noted scholars were held Point State Park, at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers.

Action: The Corps was involved in 3 separate venues during this commemorative event – The Tent of Many Voices; COE Exhibit barge; and a living history display in partnership with the U.S. Army Reserve’s 99th Readiness Command . Each of these is addressed below.

Tent of Many Voices (TOMV) – This is a venue associated with Corps 2 (same portable generator provides electricity for heat and lighting for both) but separate from it. TOMV has a small stage for presentations and seating capacity of 100. Ken Wilk (NWK) and Tim Bischoff (MVS) assisted Mr. Steve Allie, Director of the Frontier Army Museum at Ft. Leavenworth, KS with interpretive talks during the Event. The talk focused on the uniforms and equipment of the men of the expedition.

COE Exhibit Barge: The Corps exhibit barge was a partnership of the Corps of Engineers (LRD) and the navigation industry. The Navigation Industry provided a tow boat and spud barge. The spud barge was provided so that access would be readily available at the many river towns that the tow configuration would stop at on the Ohio River. The Corps designed and implemented a 26’X80’ (exhibit space) barge into a floating exhibit on Lewis and Clark. The exhibits included replicas of a Mandan bullboat, the iron frame boat on loan from the National Park Service at Harper’s Ferry and a scale model of the keelboat prow. This proved to be an exceptional display with kids of all ages who loved getting on the keelboat and putting on the military hat and coat to get their pictures taken. Other exhibits included working lock and wicket lock models and static displays explaining Lewis and Clark and Clark and the modern navigation system. Corps personnel (two rangers and one lock operator) staffed the exhibits and

provided a great deal of information about the Corps of Engineers, the River, and Lewis and Clark to the visiting public. 2,250 visitors came to the COE exhibit barge. The barge was open on Sunday and moved down river with the keelboat reenactment on Monday. The barge will travel the Ohio River to Cairo, IL, docking at various communities and providing information at those locations.

Living History Display: The Corps of Engineers was asked to provide some historic equipment, uniforms, and reenactors to provide the “then” of the 99th’s outdoor display: “Lewis and Clark and the Army – Then and Now”. The 99th set up modern Army equipment and manned the display with soldiers from that command to demonstrate how the Army would conduct such as exploration as Lewis and Clark if called on to do it in 2003. Members of the Frontier Army Living History Association (FALHA) from the Frontier Army Museum at Ft. Leavenworth, KS with Ken Wilk (NWK) and Tim Bischoff (MVS) provided a look at the Army of Lewis and Clark with equipment and uniforms of that period. Approximately 1,700 people visited our display on Sunday. The display was scheduled to be open on Monday but was canceled due to extensive rain in the area.

Lessons learned

1. The Corps of Engineers was front and center at this event, especially because of the exhibit barge. However, we made a very impressive showing with the living history display and the speaker’s role at TOMV.
2. NPS was complaining about the attendance at TOMV. However, it was learned that they did no preliminary media promotions and did not publish the speaker’s schedule.
3. There was evidently some problems among the organizers of this event. To the point that one side published lengthy articles that were picked up by the national media. The Corps of Engineers did a good job of distancing ourselves from this fracas although we were involved in planning of the whole event. Internal politics cannot be aired to the public. It was a detriment to this event but we were not associated with the problems so our support came out as positive.

Future outcome: The next Signature Event will be October 14-26, 2003 at the Falls of the Ohio in Louisville, KY/Clarksville, IN. The Corps and Army will have a sizeable presence at this event based on the discussions that have already taken place with the Falls Organizing Committee.

Final thoughts: There was considerable discussion prior to this Signature Event whether the Corps would gain enough benefit from paying for the FALHA representatives (travel and per diem) to attend. With the large number of positive comments that we received from teachers, students, and others interested in the proper look to the Army uniform of the time period and the relationship with the Corps of Engineers, the expense was well worth it. In addition, the support of the historic Army uniformed volunteers was a great tie in with the COE L&C exhibit backdrop that was used that blends historic and modern Army and Corps.