



*Meriwether
Lewis*

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



William Clark

**“JEFFERSON’S WEST – A LEWIS AND CLARK EXPOSITION”
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
January 14-19, 2003**

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. Charlottesville/Monticello was designated as the first of these Signature Events. Co-hosted by the Monticello Foundation, and the University of Virginia, primary events and lectures by noted scholars were held at Monticello, the Monticello Visitor Center, and the UVA campus, with several smaller events held at local shopping malls and tourism offices.

Action: The Corps was involved in 4 separate venues during this commemorative event – Corps of Discovery 2; the Tent of Many Voices; COE Exhibit; and school programs. Each of these is addressed below.

Corps of Discovery 2 – 200 Years to the Future (aka: Corps 2) – The formal dedication of Corps 2 took place in the Tent of Many Voices at the Monticello Visitor Center on January 14. Jean Nauss (NWD) participated in the opening ceremony during the presentation of gifts to the tribal elders. (These elders had given a blessing for the success of the exhibit earlier in the ceremony). The Corps 2 exhibit itself consists of approximately 32 panels with an associated audiotape headset that discuss Jefferson’s vision; Lewis, Clark, and the members of the expedition; with the remainder depicting the natural resources and the Native American influences on the expedition. During the remainder of the Signature Event, COE park rangers Carol Ryan (NWO), Ken Wilk (NWK), Pat Kline (LRP), Julie Ziino (MVS), and Rick Magee (NAE) worked in their park ranger uniform to greet and provide information to dignitaries and members of the public visiting the exhibit.

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 150. Rick Magee (NAE) and Craig Rockwell (NWW) gave interpretive talks during the Signature Event. Mr. Magee’s talk was about recruitment for the expedition with a discussion of the skills and values needed for the completion of the mission. Mr. Rockwell did a portrayal of Capt. William

Clark and discussed the expedition, his relationship with the men of the expedition and his work journaling and drawing maps.

COE Exhibit: The Corps exhibit was part of a large contingent of agencies and communities sponsoring a booth/exhibit at Newcomb Hall at UVA. The Corps exhibit had three parts - a display of the Discovery Box; artifacts from the 1800-1810 timeframe (although not the exact items used by the expedition, the artifacts were from that time period and were known to have been taken by the expedition); and an information table. The information table contained a variety of COE brochures including the Eastern Legacy, the Lower Missouri River Map Mo River L&C Journal, Mo River boater Information Guide, the Columbia: Great River of the West, the COE involvement in the L&C Bicentennial Commemoration, the brochure “The U.S. Army and the Lewis and Clark Expedition” recently published by the Center of Military History, the interagency brochure “Discovering the Legacy of Lewis and Clark” and a 22-minute video “Lewis and Clark: The Eastern Legacy – down the Ohio to the Western Wilderness” produced by LRD. Greg Miller, Kim Penner, John Skelton (all NWK); Charles Brinkley (NAO); Paige Cruz (LRD); and Susie Kline (LRP) all took turns in manning the Corps booth. In addition, volunteers from the Frontier Army Living History Association (FALHA), dressed in replicas of 1803 Army uniforms, assisted in manning the booth. Roughly 3,500-5,000 visitors came to the COE exhibit booth area. Most of these visitors were attendees from the Signature Event although there were some UVA students, faculty, and some of the general public.

School Programs: On January 14-17, the Corps and volunteers from FALHA presented interpretive programs at four host schools in the Charlottesville, VA area. Several additional schools visited the host schools during the presentations. These programs, the only educational outreach of the signature event, generated 6,560 significant interpretive contacts in four days. The presentation topics included the use of Indian sign language, the trio of pests of the expedition; food of the expedition, the need for a carpenter, and a variety of other similar topics. Tim Bischoff (MVS), Rick Magee (NAE), Carol Ryan (NWO) and Jean Nauss (NWD) along with some uniformed reenactors from FALHA took part in giving the educational programs. These programs were extremely successful and garnered the participants many thanks from both students and teachers.

Lessons learned

1. The NPS has the lead for Corps 2. However, because everyone in the Park Service is issued a uniform, it was expected that all workers from other agencies also be in uniform. This created some problems in that less than half of the Corps personnel attending the Signature Event were rangers with uniforms. Discussions need to take place with NPS so they understand that any COE representative can work the Corps 2 exhibit booth.
2. The video recording accompanying visitors to Corps 2 was entirely too long (37 minutes). Most visitors turned them off after 5 stations.
3. Because of the nature of this Signature Event, the Army/Corps had very little noted participation. This was reflected in TOMV where the Corps had only 2 speakers for the entire week whereas other agencies had as many as 7 speakers. In the exhibit hall as well, the Corps was relegated to a back corner outside of the main exhibit hall. However, the Corps participation is going to be dictated by the specific event

organizers. There are some Signature Events where the Corps and Army have a significant presence and there may be others where Corps and Army participation is very limited.

4. The Corps received numerous kudos as we had one of the very few exhibit booths in Newcomb Hall that was truly oriented to discussing the Lewis and Clark expedition and did not have increasing tourism as its primary objective.
5. When planning the school talks, teachers need to be told up front that the interpreters need sessions of at least 15 minutes in length with no more than 20 students per interpreter, and the speakers need a definite break for lunch. The school sessions the first day were only 5 minutes in length, and ran continuously from 9am until 3:10pm with no breaks!

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.