



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Lewis & Clark Explored Eastern Kansas in 1804 200 Years Later Four Communities Plan to Commemorate the Bicentennial**

When Lewis and Clark spent 16 days in what is now Kansas, little did they know what an impact they would have on future travelers following in their footprints 200 years later. As the nation prepares to commemorate the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery's trek to the Pacific Ocean, four eastern Kansas communities along the Missouri River will recognize this historic expedition.

Kansas City, Kansas, Leavenworth/Fort Leavenworth, Atchison, and White Cloud will offer a series of events from June 26 to July 11, 2004, including a National Signature event in Leavenworth/Fort Leavenworth and Atchison on July 4, 2004. The events are part of the Heart of America commemoration "A Journey Fourth," a bi-state, multi-city salute to the famed expedition that traveled through the area 200 years ago.

Lewis and Clark's impressions of 1804 Kansas were of a land with beautiful hills and valleys, abundant wildlife, and magnificent vistas opening on to the Missouri River. That landscape is fairly unchanged as it sweeps across eastern Kansas today. From Kaw Point where the Kansas River meets the mighty Missouri at Kansas City, Kansas, to the four-state lookout at White Cloud, the 123 miles of Missouri River landscape that Lewis and Clark traveled remains dotted with thick groves of trees, verdant hills, and fertile valleys.

### **Kansas City, Kansas**

*Then* -- The expedition arrived in what is now Kansas on June 26, 1804, and camped three days at the mouth of the Kansas River, which today is the riverfront area of Kansas City, Kansas. Their stay allowed the men to spend some time away from their normal routine of navigating: airing out supplies, repairing boats, and hunting. While camped there, the expedition members built a temporary fort of brush and logs "to defend ourselves against the Indians, fearing that they might make an attack on us in the Night." This three-day camp was the longest period of time the expedition camped in one spot in the Kansas City region. While at camp, a court



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martial was held for privates John Collins and Hugh Hall, who were charged with getting drunk on duty. Their sentence of 100 lashes for Collins and 50 for Hall marked the first recorded court martial west of the St. Louis area. The Corps broke camp on June 28 and headed up river to the foot of Diamond Island, near present-day Interstate-435, where they camped on June 30. Clark commented that he saw deer, fowl, bears, and wolves in the area.

*Now --* On June 26-27, 2004, Kansas City, Kansas, will commemorate the Corps of Discovery's stay in the area with a variety of activities including opening ceremonies and the arrival of a full-scale keelboat with members of the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, Missouri. They also will honor the original campsite with the dedication of the Lewis and Clark Historic Park at Kaw Point, where the expedition camped in 1804. The festivities will focus on the themes of discovery and independence, and will include reenactments, interpretive talks, a display at the Wyandotte County Museum, and tours of local historic sites, including field trips to the Huron Indian Cemetery (downtown) to hear the story of the displaced Wyandot tribe.

## **Leavenworth/Fort Leavenworth**

*Then --* For the next several days Lewis and Clark journeyed north and explored both banks of the Missouri River, including present-day Leavenworth, Atchison, and Doniphan counties in Kansas. Just south of modern-day Leavenworth/Fort Leavenworth, the Corps camped on the Field Islands (Isle de Parques) on July 1, 1804, and on their return trip on September 14, 1806. The French, who named the islands, had a fort in the area (Fort de Cavagnial, 1744-1764) and kept their cattle and horses on the islands. The next day, the Corps camped on the Missouri side of the river near the site where the "village of the Kanzas" stood. On July 3, 1804, the Corps continued north to the present-day border of Leavenworth and Atchison counties, where they found an old gray horse near a deserted French trading post. On their return trip two years later, the expedition camped on one of the Isle de Parque Islands on September 14, 1806. That same day, Capt. Lewis collected the expedition's last plant specimen – a raccoon grape leaf - near the point where Three Mile Creek empties into the Missouri River.

*Now* -- On July 1-3, 2004, Leavenworth will host a number of events including the arrival of the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles (Missouri) keelboat, which will be welcomed with greetings by descendants of the original Kanza tribe encountered by the expedition in 1804. The community will feature a riverfront festival, a chautauqua program, living history exhibits, a French encampment, and cannon demonstrations by 19th century dragoon reenactors. A new sculpture of Lewis, the botanist for the expedition, will be dedicated at the riverfront Leavenworth Landing Park. The community activities will culminate with spectacular fireworks over the Missouri River on July 4. The year 2004 is also the 150th anniversary of the founding of Leavenworth, which will be marked with a citywide celebration.

Fort Leavenworth, the oldest continuously operated military fort west of the Mississippi River, will host a weekend open house and feature exhibits that focus

on the military roots of the expedition, including reenactments by the Frontier Army Museum's authentically-outfitted Corps of Discovery. To mark the

200th anniversary of the Corps, the fort will dedicate the new Lewis and Clark Hall, and military officers will provide an official "Salute to the Nation" on July 3.

### **Atchison**

*Then* -- On July 4, 1804, the Corps of Discovery landed near present-day Atchison and were impressed with the countryside describing it as "One of the most butifull Plains, I ever Saw..." A significant event occurred at Atchison when the expedition observed the first Independence Day celebration in the

American West. It marked the 28th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Corps marked the day by firing their cannon twice, once in the morning and then again in the evening, and giving their men an extra ration of whiskey. The explorers named two creeks in the area as tribute to the nation's birthday. The creeks, Fourth of July 1804 Creek and Independence Creek, still flow through Atchison today. While exploring south of Atchison, expedition member Joseph Fields was bitten by a snake. Meriwether Lewis, who was trained in medical practices for the journey, treated the wound with a poultice of bark and gunpowder and Fields soon recovered. They made camp the night of July 4, 1804, near an uninhabited village of the Kanza Indians before continuing upriver.

*Now* -- On July 3-4, 2004, Atchison will host the nation's salute to the Corps of Discovery with events commemorating the first Fourth of July in the American West. The programs and activities in Atchison will emphasize the

concepts of independence, freedom, and democracy in America. A reenactment of the "First Fourth" at Independence Creek will be broadcast throughout the region. The community will host a parade, a citywide display of American flags, a Lewis and Clark exhibit at the Atchison County Historical Society Museum, living history presentations, wilderness challenge competition, a "dined on corn" ceremony, and 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic. Guided tours of Lewis and Clark sites in the area will be offered as well. On July 4, the public will enjoy a performance of patriotic military music and a spectacular fireworks display (choreographed to music and staged) over the Missouri River.

In anticipation of the bicentennial, Atchison is completing a \$3 million riverfront revitalization project. A new 10-mile bike and hike trail will provide the opportunity to follow the Lewis and Clark Trail from downtown Atchison to Independence Creek with continuing spurs to the historic town site of Doniphan and to Benedictine Bottoms. The Bottoms, located two miles northeast of Atchison, is part of a Corps of Engineers restoration project to return 2,100-acres of prior farmland along the Missouri River to a wetlands and riparian habitat. The year 2004 is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Atchison, which will be celebrated throughout the city.

### **White Cloud**

*Then* -- Lewis and Clark pushed north along the Missouri River from July 5-9, 1804, exploring both banks of present-day Kansas and Missouri. They camped in Doniphan County, Kansas on July 6-7, where Capt. Lewis shot at a wolf thought to be crazed. During that time, several of their men became sick with headaches and boils, and were treated by Capt. Lewis. On July 10, 1804, they made camp across the river from White Cloud, Kansas, their last stop in the state until their return trip in September 1806. They departed Kansas on July 11, 1804, and "proceeded on" in their quest to reach the Pacific Ocean.

*Now* -- On July 11, 2004, White Cloud in Doniphan County will host a presentation of Native American cultures and will cap off the 16-day "A Journey Fourth" commemoration event with the official closing ceremonies and culminating Heart of America tribute to the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Nearby

Highland, Kansas, will offer exhibits at the Native American Heritage Museum, with displays on the woodland tribes of northeast Kansas. Today, Doniphan County is the headquarters of two emigrant tribes – the Iowa

Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas.

*For more information on Lewis and Clark in Kansas, call 1-800-2-KANSAS to request a Kansas Getaway Guide and Lewis & Clark Travel Kit or visit us on the web at [www.travelKS.com](http://www.travelKS.com).*