



Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton
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Lost Towns of the Pine Barrens at May Meeting

The New Jersey Pinelands is an area dramatically shaped by the natural forces of sand, wind and forest fires, hence the old nickname "The Pine Barrens". However, upon closer inspection, the landscape also reflects a diverse history of human economic ventures. Remains of dams and raceways from early sawmills and gristmills are still scattered throughout the region. Iron furnaces, and forges, papermills, glassworks, and cranberry / blueberry villages are etched into the landscape.

The Historical Society of Riverton will meet on Monday May 12, 2003 at 7:30 pm at the Riverton School for their annual meeting and a program. The program for the evening is entitled *Lost and Forgotten Towns of the New Jersey Pine Barrens* and will be presented by Theodore Gordon.

Theodore Gordon, a specialist in Pine Barrens lectures and tours will present the histories of such enchanting sites as Double Trouble, Calico, Estelville, Friendship, Eagle, Hampton Furnace, Sheep Pen Hill, Wells Mills, Makepeace, Florence at Whitesbog, Sim Place, Bull Town and Tub Mill. The talk will include slides and maps and will be approximately one hour in length.

Ted Gordon is a long-time resident of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, and is recognized statewide as a leading authority on the trails, "forgotten towns", industries, people and the rare and endangered plants and animals of the region. Ted has taught courses on the Pine Barrens at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and for the New Jersey Audubon Society at the Rancocas Nature Center in Mt Holly.

Ted was the immediate past president of the Philadelphia Botanical Club for 12 years, served a four year term on the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and is chairman of the Natural Areas Council. For the past 13 years, he has been an instructor in the Rutgers University Short Course Program, teaching wetland plant species identification in southern New Jersey to professional consultants.

The Riverton School, at Fifth and Howard

Streets, and the School Media Center (library) are handicapped accessible. Attendees should enter the school through the main doors facing Fifth Street. There will be a short refreshment period following the meeting and program.

Board of Directors Election At May Meeting

The following is the slate of candidates for the election of officers to take place at the Annual Meeting on May 12. All are incumbents seeking re-election to the Board:

Agnes Kennedy: Aggie has been in charge of sales the paper goods for the Society (notecards, walking tours, and including videotapes) since joining the board in the last term. She and her husband Bob were instrumental in the success of the Appraisal Fair last Fall.

Priscilla Taylor: Priscilla is our current membership chairperson whose 2 campaigns of recruiting in 2001 / 2002 resulted in many new members joining the Society. She has contributed great ideas to the activities and fundraising of the Society, and is an occasional writer for the *Then and Now* column in the Gaslight News.

Gerald Weaber: Gerald is a past Vice President of the Society for two terms, and was instrumental in writing the grant application which funded the recent cataloging and storage of our archives. He has also written several informative and enjoyable articles for the *Then and Now* column.

Richard Wark: Rick is the longest standing Board member among the candidates. Serving as our Curator, he protected the archives of the Society until the recent transfer to storage at the Riverton Free Library.

All members are urged to attend the Annual Meeting to show your support for these candidates.

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History Wanted Apply at Gaslight News

There must be many old stories of Riverton events, family histories, historical periods or collecting interests that live in the minds, hearts, or closets! of the members of the Historical Society of Riverton. Perhaps you have an old story concerning your house's history, a discovery that you made while renovating, or a newspaper clipping of an local historical event that you have saved these many years.

The Editorial Staff of the Gaslight News is looking for just these types of stories that would interest your friends, the fellow members of the Society, our readers. If you have any such material or idea, and any writing skill at all (we will help with compilation and editing, typing etc.), please consider submitting your story to us for consideration to be used in a future issue of the Gaslight News (address and phone above).

Thanks, we are looking forward to hearing from those who would like to share their interests and memories.

Dan Campbell



Clark



Lewis

Portraits of William Clark and Meriwether Lewis,
By Charles Wilson Peale

Upcoming Events of Interest

In celebration of Historic Preservation Month, the Burlington County Freeholders sponsors a tour of "**Lesser Known Historic Sites in Burlington Co.**" on May 10th. A chartered tour bus will leave the Smithville Mansion in Historic Smithville Park for a daylong trek of reliving local history. The cost is \$20.00 per person which includes an art exhibit at Smithville, and a guided tour with stops at Farmers Hall in Mt Laurel, the Telephone Exchange Building in Vincentown, Riverton Yacht Club, Bethel AME Church in Burlington City, and a special visit to the Iris Festival in Bordentown. Other historic sites on the trip are the Old Penny-packer House in Medford, Willingboro One-room Schoolhouse, Crosswicks Meetinghouse in Chesterfield, Hopkinson House in Bordentown City, Shamong Hotel (White Horse Inn) in Chatsworth and the ruins at Smithville Industrial Village. Tickets are limited, so call 609-265-5068 soon.

Historic Bartram's Garden, the home and arboretum of our nation's first botanist, John Bartram, in southwest Philadelphia, has a **Community Open House** on Sunday June 28 from noon to 6 pm. The Garden will open its doors to all for a day of food, music, and activities at the 45 acre 18th century historical site. For information and directions call 215-729-5281 or visit www.bartramsgarden.org.

From May through September and beyond, more than 10 locations in Philadelphia will open exhibits relating to the **Lewis and Clark** visits to Philadelphia and to their Natural History collections and studies. (see article in the *Then and Now* column) The current list of events may be found on www.lewisandclarkphila.org or call Norma Milner at 856-829-3142 for a copy.

In addition to those events, there will be a visit of the traveling exhibit "**Corps of Discovery II, 200 Years into the Future**", taking place in three tents at the Valley Forge National Historical Park Welcome Center from Friday May 9 through Tuesday May 20. It is open to the public from 9 am to 5 pm seven days a week, admission and parking are free. Schools, families and history fans are invited to a walk through the entire trek in murals wearing earphones (37 minutes) or a with a script (15 minutes). Also visit the performance tent for video and speaker programs about the expedition and Philadelphia's connection to its success, including a daily showing of a 30 minute Ken Burns video at 4:15. For more information call 610-783-1077.

Then and Now . . .

Everyone knows that the Lewis and Clark expedition began in St. Louis, Missouri 200 years ago next year, right? But did you know that the first steps westward for the Lewis and Clark expedition took place not in Missouri, but on the streets of Philadelphia, just 10 miles south of Riverton?

The expedition began with those steps which were the strides of Meriwether Lewis, former personal secretary to President Thomas Jefferson, as he visited Philadelphia professionals, intellectuals, artisans and merchants to be mentored, to learn, and to purchase supplies and the equipment which he and his partner William Clark, and their men would need to survive and excel in the more than two years of their journey across America and back.

This took place after he had departed the president's house in Washington D.C. on March 15, 1803. (this was not yet called the White House until after the British burned it in the War of 1812 and it was painted that color to disguise the damage). He had already proceeded to Harper's Ferry, now in West Virginia, where he instructed metal artisans in how to fabricate the frame of his unique "dismantle-able boat". There he had also ordered guns and tomahawks. He had already, after 4 weeks, proceeded to Lancaster, Pennsylvania where he lived for three weeks with the family of Andrew Ellicott. So that Lewis could take accurate location readings on his journey, the two men had practiced navigational techniques by sighting to distant stars with a sextant and using artificial horizons.

It had actually been twenty years earlier, in December of 1783, that Thomas Jefferson had suggested to George Rogers Clark that he consider leading an exploratory party across the wildernesses to the west of the territories of the United States. It was 10 years after that in January 1793 that Jefferson circulated an agreement amongst his many friends to sign, to agree to fund a exploration by the Frenchman Andre Michaux, to explore the West beginning at the Missouri River. Lastly, early in 1803, Jefferson wrote to five friends, all members of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, asking their help in instructing his trusted friend and secretary, Meriwether Lewis, in various skills.

So it came that the final four weeks of the total sixteen weeks in the "making ready" portion of the expedition took place in what had been our country's capital until 1800 - Philadelphia. The mentors, suppliers and merchants that Lewis needed were spread rather evenly across the bustling city of the early Republic (current status of sites are noted in parentheses).

Mentors assisting Meriwether Lewis were:

Benjamin Rush, noted physician of the day, instructed Lewis in the medical care of his men, and gave Lewis questions needing answers about the health of the Indian tribes that he would meet (4th and Walnut Streets, sign in grass plot). Caspar Wistar greeted Lewis into his home (exists at 4th and Locust Streets) and lectured Lewis on both anatomy and paleontology. Benjamin Smith Barton had written the first textbook on Botany in the nation, taught Lewis how to preserve plants, and loaned him a book about Louisiana (712 Arch Street, now Federal Bureau of Prisons). Rush, Wistar, and Barton were elected early in 1803 as members of America's first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital (exists on Pine Street between 8th and 9th Streets).

A sampling of suppliers and merchants were:

For Clothing: Benjamin Mifflin furnished various coats, stockings, shirts, etc. for fifteen men (22 N. 8th Street, now Gallery Garage). Francis Brown provided 28 yards of fine milled drab cloth plus large and small buttons from which he fashioned 16 coats, total cost \$246.63 (Walnut above 8th now a four story Garage or lot).

For Food and Health: Francois Baillet, a cook, provided almost 200 lbs. of portable soup for \$289.60 (21 N. 9th Street now a parking lot). Gillaspay and Strong, druggists, supplied 42 various medicines, plus canisters, bottles, 2 chests, India ink, and gum elastic (103 S. 2nd Street now Welcome Park). Wm. Chancellor & Co. sold Lewis a trunk full of dry goods (259 Market Street (store with warehouse above). David Jackson supplied 30 gals. strong wine and 6 iron-bound kegs (38 S. 3rd Street now a parking lot).

For Weapons: George Ludlam, a plumber, made 52 lead canisters for powder which when empty could be melted into lead shot (96 S. Second Street now a new roadway). Beck and Harvey sold 176 lbs. of canister powder to Lewis who charged it to the Ordinance Department (11/12/15 S. Water Street now Delaware Ave.). Robt. C. Martin sold 15 rifle pouches with powder horns (5th and Market Streets now KWW News facilities). Nicodemus Lloyd provided \$19.62 worth of tomahawks (6th and Race Streets now WHYY-Ch12 Facilities). Robt. Barnhill provided Lewis with a pair of pocket pistols with secret triggers for \$10.00 (63 N. 2nd Street now an art gallery with studios above).

For Equipment: Thomas Whitney, a mathematical instrument maker, furnished levels, compasses, quadrant, sextant, chain and poles, etc., - all surveying equipment (110 S. Front Street now an empty

lot). Thomas Parker, a clock and watch maker sold the most expensive single item to Lewis, a gold chronometer for \$250.00 (31 S. 3rd Street now a flower shop with apartment above). William Broome furnished a painted chest for carrying the instruments (40 N. 4th Street now Holiday Inn Independence Mall). Harvey and Worth had wire, needles, awls, thimbles, scissors, drawing knives, vises, pliers, chisels, adzes, handsaws, augers, whetstone, brads and steel tapes (62 N. Front Street now a store with apartment above).

For Trading: Jno & Charles J. Wister sold Lewis 22 yds. scarlet cloth, fancy handkerchiefs, and beads (309 Market Street now store with lofts above). Christian H. Denchla was the source for 73.5 dozen colored beads, looking and burning glasses, pin cases, earrings, tapes and ribbons, tassels and small bells (114 N. 3rd Street now a restaurant with apartment above). Sam'l Williamson, gold/silversmith, was the source for 500 broaches and 72 rings (310 Front Street now Sheraton Hotel).

Miscellaneous items: Thomas Leiper sold 130 rolls of pigtail tobacco weighing 63 lbs. Although these and other quantities seem high for fifteen men, the corps ran short of this product long before it returned home, because the final contingent exceeded 15 men (726 Market Street now store with offices above). Richard Wevill supplied linen, sheeting, grommets, hooks & eyes etc. and also fabricated 8 tents and 45 bags from it (167 S. 8th Street). George Lawton sold fishing tackle to Lewis at a cost of \$25.37 (18 Dock Street now Route I-95). Thomas Passmore supplied tin horns, lamps, and canisters (N. 7th Street now Federal Bureau of Prisons).

Other contributions came from:

Isaiah Lukens, a skilled machinist, fashioned the air gun that went to the west coast with the Corps of Discovery. Its silent, smokeless, accurate operation awed the Indians along the route (Market Street near the northeast corner of 4th Street). Israel Whelan, Purveyor of Public Supplies for the Government, supervised purchasing and accumulating Lewis's materiel (4th and Market Streets now First Union Bank). United States Arsenal (Schuylkill), where General William Irvine was Superintendent of Military Stores and whom Lewis knew from the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, was undoubtedly the staging point for loading and dispatching the materiel to Harpers Ferry and then to Pittsburgh (exists at East Gray's Ferry Ave. as PECO Substation).

Finally, on June 10, 1803, a Conestoga wagon, loaded to capacity with 3500 pounds of supplies and equipment destined for the western expedition departed the Schuylkill Arsenal on Gray's Ferry Road, Philadelphia. This location provided the most direct

route west for the drover, on the finest road of the day, making a rate of ten to twelve miles per day past the cities of Lancaster, York, and Gettysburg, on to Harper's Ferry.

The variety and amount of materials that needed to be manufactured and purchased underscores the magnitude of the Lewis and Clark operation, and the coordination and planning that was necessary for it to be successful.

The American Philosophical Society members, at their meeting of October 21, 1803 (exists at 104 S. 5th Street), voted to accept Lewis as a fellow-member while Lewis and his crew rested in Clarksville Indiana along the Ohio River. He was not to know of this honor until after Thomas Jefferson wrote to him on January 22, 1804.

In a similar manner as prior to the expedition, Philadelphia played a major role after the return of Lewis and Clark from the West. After having successfully traversing 98% of the continent from Philadelphia to the west coast, enjoying the accolades of his countrymen, being appointed Governor of Louisiana, and accepting the responsibility for writing and publishing the journals of the expedition, Meriwether Lewis returned to Philadelphia in April 1807 to thank his mentors, commission paintings of waterfalls and birds, leave several of his artifacts, and to return the book to Benjamin Barton.

While here that spring, Lewis had his portrait painted by Charles Wilson Peale, and gave Peale his Shoshone tippet, a gift from Sacagawea's brother Cameahwait. At this time, he attempted to make arrangements for the publishing of the journals.

After Lewis died in 1809, his friend and co-captain of the expedition, William Clark, gathered all of their written journals and came to Philadelphia in 1810 to search for an editor. His visit was successful; Nicholas Biddle agreed to edit them. Peale painted Clark's portrait also. In 1814 the official account of the expedition, based upon the journals of Lewis and Clark, was finally published.

Today, among the Philadelphia institutions holding Lewis and Clark artifacts are the American Philosophical Society, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, The Academy of Natural Sciences, and the Philadelphia Athenaeum.

Information for this article is excerpted from the National Park Service publication *Lewis and Clark in Historic Philadelphia*. For more information contact the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 3206 Disston Street, Philadelphia, PA 19149 or www.lewisandclarkphila.org.

