

Plan Your Expedition to Explore at the Library

Journey to the library for a living history presentation on Saturday, May 7 at 2:00 p.m. Bill Hayes will present the story of the Lewis & Clark expedition through the eyes of its youngest member, George Shannon. In full costume, he shares the experiences that he had on the journey to the Pacific Ocean, and highlights some of the adventures (and misadventures) of the expedition party. At the end of the presentation, Bill steps out of character to give the audience "the rest of the story" about Shannon. This program is sponsored by the Humanities Nebraska.

There are so many interesting facts about the Lewis and Clark expedition that we will be learning about. For instance, did you know that Meriwether Lewis first met Clark after being court-martialed by the army? Apparently, the 21-year-old Lewis challenged his lieutenant to a duel in a drunken dispute. He was found not guilty and transferred to a new commander, who just happened to be William Clark. Did you know that Lewis also served as Thomas Jefferson's secretary? It was Jefferson who sent Lewis to Philadelphia to study medicine, botany, and celestial navigation. Thomas Jefferson instigated the expedition, and he believed that the explorers would encounter mountains of salt, a race of Welsh-speaking Indians, and herds of woolly mammoths and giant sloths!

Did you know that the Spanish sent soldiers to arrest the expedition travelers? The Spanish feared the expedition might lead to the seizure of their gold-rich territories. Luckily for Lewis and Clark, the hostile search parties never found them in the vast frontier.

Did you know that Clark brought his slave on the journey? The Indians revered the tall manservant, thinking he had spiritual powers and called him "Big Medicine". He was a valued member of the expedition, known for his hunting skills. He also assisted in helping to plan their journey. Another fact I did not know about the Lewis and Clark expedition was that their teenaged Shoshone Indian guide and translator, Sacagawea, was reunited with her long-lost brother during their long journey. She had been kidnapped by another tribe a few years earlier and taken away from her family. During the expedition, a band of Shoshone Indians accosted them. When Sacagawea discovered the chief was her brother, the tearful reunion helped facilitate peaceful relations between the two parties.

Despite the treacherous journey, only one member of the group died. One of the worst injuries was suffered by Lewis who was accidentally shot in the buttocks after one of the hunting party mistook him for an elk! He was forced to spend a few miserable weeks lying on his belly in the canoe while the expedition floated down the Missouri River.

After the expedition was over, William Clark took a shine to Sacagawea's son, Jean Baptiste, and offered to adopt him and raise him as his own child. Sacagawea initially declined his offer, but when Jean Baptiste was older, she sent him to Clark for her son's education in St. Louis. When she died, Clark became the legal guardian of both Jean Baptiste and her daughter, Lisette. Jean Baptiste grew up to become a trapper and a wilderness guide.

Bill Hayes is an interesting and knowledgeable speaker and his presentation is worth attending! Make plans to bring your friends and family to this free program. The library will provide delicious treats for you to enjoy that afternoon.

Starting May 21, Saturday at 9:30 a.m. we are beginning a monthly Yoga class for adults with the talented Aude Boucly. Attendees must preregister using the online form or by calling Kelli at 402-562-4214. Funding provided by the Columbus Area United Way Endowment through the Columbus Library Foundation.

A Food for Fines opportunity will be offered the week of May 22- 28. Bring in your overdue books and DVDs to waive your late fees by bringing in at least three cans of food per account. This does not apply to lost and damaged items. Food will be donated to the Platte County Food Pantry.