



Lewis and Clark Bicentennial to be Launched at Monticello

The nation will turn to Monticello in January to commemorate an epic journey, recognize its far-sighted patron, and salute the spirit of adventure, capacity to endure, and desire for knowledge that are so integral to the American character.

The national observance of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition will officially begin Saturday, Jan. 18, 2003, at the home of Thomas Jefferson, who conceived and commissioned the daring and arduous trek across the continent.

“The Lewis and Clark Expedition was a manifestation of Jefferson’s vision, and we are excited by the opportunity to play a major role in observing the bicentennial and educating the public about its lasting importance,” said Daniel P. Jordan, president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. “There is much about this many-faceted story that remains relevant to our lives today.”

The Commencement of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration at Monticello will mark the 200th anniversary of President Jefferson’s confidential message to Congress requesting \$2,500 to fund an exploratory expedition up the Missouri River and on to the Pacific. It will be

Native American objects will be featured in the re-creation of Jefferson’s “Indian Hall” at Monticello.

TJF/Edward Owen

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MONTICELLO



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the first of 15 Signature Events designated by the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial to be held across the country through the fall of 2006.

Officials representing the federal government, state governments, public agencies, private organizations, and American Indian tribes, nations, and confederations will be in attendance for the public ceremony on Monticello's West Lawn.

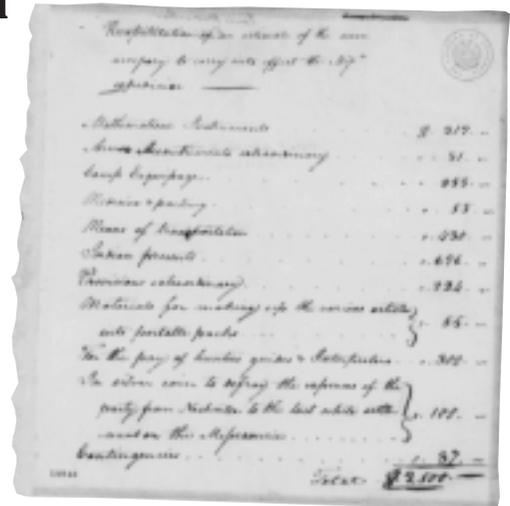
Preceding the commencement event, Monticello's bicentennial exhibition, *Framing the West at Monticello: Thomas Jefferson and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, will open Jan. 16, and the Foundation will host *Jefferson's West: A Lewis and Clark Exposition* Jan. 14-19 at Monticello, the University of Virginia, and other venues in the Charlottesville area.

"Lewis and Clark are naturally associated with the areas beyond the Mississippi through which they passed in 1804-06, but it is by no means a stretch to say that the expedition really began here," said Kat Imhoff, Monticello's chief operating officer and coordinator of its Lewis and Clark programs. "Jefferson himself never traveled beyond the Allegheny Mountains, but he had a lifelong fascination with the West, his imagination stretched across North America, and he was the driving force behind the expedition.

"At a time when two-thirds of all Americans lived within 50 miles of the Atlantic coast and most of the continent was claimed or controlled by European powers, Jefferson envisioned 'a rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land ... advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye.' By authorizing the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jefferson took a bold step to make that possible."

In addition to commemorating the significance of the expedition and Jefferson's stewardship of it, Monticello's bicentennial observance will recognize the vital role American Indians played in the Lewis and Clark saga.

"If it weren't for the assistance provided by Indians, the expedition would never have made it to the Pacific and back," Imhoff said. "That is something that cannot and will not be overlooked."



Library of Congress

Jefferson's budget for Lewis and Clark.



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The Jan. 18 inaugural event will begin at 11 a.m. with music performed by the Charlottesville Municipal Band, the Lewis and Clark Youth Fife and Drum Corps from St. Charles, Mo., the 3rd U.S. Infantry Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps from Fort Myer, Va., and a group of Native American singers, drummers, and dancers.

The formal program will begin at noon. The invocation will be delivered by Kenneth Branham, chief of the Monacan Nation of Virginia, and an honor song will be performed by Daniel Redelk Gear, a member of the Monacan Nation.

Among those scheduled to deliver remarks are Tex G. Hall, president of the National Congress of American Indians; Robert Archibald, president of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial; and Larry Epstein, president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Inc.

The Commencement of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration at Monticello will be open to the public, but advance tickets will be required. Free tickets will be distributed through a lottery system, the specifics of which will be announced in late November.



COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org