

Arti *Facts*

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Archaeologists Follow Trail Back to 1806 Lewis-Clark Camp

Courtesy of the Associated Press

HELLS CANYON, Idaho (AP) -- Archeologists have uncovered a Nez Perce Indian village believed to be the site where three members of the Lewis and Clark expedition spent time on an ill-fated fishing trip.

Historians have speculated for years about the route that Sgt. John Ordway and Pvts. Robert Frazer and Peter Weise took when they were sent to fetch salmon for the expedition in the spring of 1806.

The rest of the expedition was camped along the Clearwater River waiting for mountain snows to melt when the three men descended into the lower Salmon River gorge and Hells Canyon. Based on Ordway's journal, historians have suspected the men left Long Camp near Kamiah and climbed a steep ridge to the Camas Prairie before reaching the Nez Perce village on the Salmon River.

The men arrived ahead of the spring salmon run, so they headed for another site on the Snake River, guided by Chief Twisted Hair. The men stayed there a few days, trading for salmon at the new site before making the three-day journey back to the main camp. But for some reason, they forgot to cook the fish before making the return trip, and the meat spoiled before they got back.

Steve Russell, a now-retired electrical engineering professor from the University of Iowa and an expert on historic trails, started searching for the route taken by the men several years ago. He realized that the topography along Wapshilla and Cottonwood creeks and the Big Cougar Bar match that described by Ordway in his journal.

This year, a team of archeologists led by Ken Reid of the Idaho Historical Preservation Office began excavating the site. They found clues that a longhouse - as described by Ordway - did stand there, during the same period that Ordway would have been in the vicinity.

"The dimensions match what Ordway described and the context fits what he said about it," Reid said. "All circumstantial evidence points to it."

So far, a handful of artifacts have been found at the site, including a small bead like those Lewis and Clark used as trade currency with the Indians. They found the head of a tack that early explorers used to decorate their tools and weapons. And they found the lid of a tea canister, dated roughly 18 years after Ordway's presumed visit. The canister lid shows that the longhouse likely persisted - and was visited by white people - until about 1863, when the tribe signed its second treaty with the federal government and most Indians were moved to the reservation at Lapwai.

"The first 20 years after Ordway would have been the height of the fur trade and a lot of people came through here," said Skip Miller, an archaeologist with the U.S. Forest Service.

Nothing found at the site can be directly linked to Ordway, however. The three explorers are believed to have spent two nights and one day there, and the men were likely wearing deerskin pants and tunics at the time, Reid said.

"There were no uniform pieces or buttons to lose," he said.

The archeologists used special equipment to detect where the ground had been disturbed, where the soil had been heated from fire, and where the earth had been piled. The data allowed them to produce maps that showed the outline of the longhouse and where some artifacts were hidden.

"We've been able to keep our excavation very low and disturb as little as possible," said Travis Pitkin, an archaeologist with the historic preservation office.

Historic Structures Lost During Devastating 2007 Fire Season

By Susie Osgood

Boise National Forest, IAS President, Intermountain Chapter Member



Knox circa 1914.

This year Idaho experienced another terrible fire season. Over two million acres burned in the state. As of October, Forest Service archeologists are still evaluating the fires' effects on archaeological resources. On the Boise National Forest close to 400,000 acres burned – the Cascade Complex alone scorched 320,000 acres. This year's fires had the worst impact on archaeological resources since the Trail Creek Fire of 2001, which damaged or destroyed over one-hundred archaeological sites in the Atlanta Historic Mining District.

The Cascade Complex took the most devastating toll on archaeological resources. Several important buildings were lost at Knox Ranch, a historic town site located just north of Warm Lake. Knox was a way station for miners traveling to Thunder Mountain. Hailed as Idaho's last gold rush, Thunder Mountain is located in the Salmon River Mountains east of Yellow Pine. In 1902 the Idaho State Legislature built a wagon road to Roosevelt, the mining camp at Thunder Mountain. Two years later, Charles C. Randall advertised Knox as the largest, most comfortable, and best supplied way station en route to the camp. The town had a hotel, post office, phone service, and a store that sold mining equipment, groceries, dry goods, and other supplies. It was even said that Knox had a brothel!



Knox Lodge, built circa 1935, it replaced earlier lodges that burned.

The gold rush was short-lived, and collapsed in 1909 when a large mudslide inundated Roosevelt. Randall eventually sold Knox, which was transformed by subsequent owners into a resort lodge and outfitter and guiding business. In 1979 the Forest Service acquired the property.

The fire destroyed the main lodge and several outbuildings. Despite the fact that a sprinkler system was turned on the buildings and a fully equipped fire camp was stationed at Knox, fire crews were unable to save the structures. A crown fire

with severe winds ripped through the town site, creating extremely dangerous conditions for the crews.

Other sites were also lost or damaged. Snowshoe Cabin was destroyed, even though the building was fire wrapped. The cabin was an early Forest Service guard station, and more recently a popular spot with backcountry enthusiasts. Again, winds ripped the wrap right off. The same thing happened at Meadow Creek Lookout, built in the 1930s. There, an outhouse was lost even though it had been wrapped.

Although historic structures were destroyed, it was not for lack of protection efforts. Fire crews worked tirelessly to protect these buildings, and because of their efforts, treasures such as Landmark Ranger Station and Stolle Guard Station were saved.



View of Knox Lodge after 2007 fire.

Hopi Basketry

By Jan Summers Duffy

OJ Smith Museum Curator & Archaeologist, College of Idaho

The OJ Smith Museum of Natural History's Archaeology/Ethnography Dept. has just installed a Native American HOPI basketry display in the Boone Hall case.

The items are from the Gates-Lewis Anthropological collection of the museum and include Kachina-inspired baskets and woven plaques, plus other beautiful artifacts, complete with informational text. The women of the Hopi, a Southwest tribe, fabricated flat Kachina-inspired basketry plaques as ceremonial gifts and still weave baskets today. The Hopi also produce colorful textiles and pottery.

The display, completed by the museum's Curator & Archaeologist, Jan Summers Duffy, was inspired by a joint effort of the college course entitled, Spirit In Art & Culture, and the museum using artifacts held in its collection. The Archaeology/Ethnographic collections of the OJ Smith Museum consists off numerous artifacts and information from all areas of the world, fully accessible by students and the community for viewing, research and study. Please stop by for a look. Visits can be arranged through Jan via email (jduffy@albertson.edu)



Above and left: Hopi baskets from the OJ Smith Museum collection.

**IDAHO
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY CHAPTER
INFORMATION**

Salmon River Chapter

Jeff Parnett - President
Call for Meeting Information
208-637-2202

Great Basin Chapter

Kathy Hamlett - President
Call for Meeting Information
208-466-8407

Snake River Chapter

Karen Quinton - President
Call for Meeting Information
208-655-4251

Intermountain Chapter

Marc Munch - President
Call for Meeting Information
208-334-8449

**North Idaho Chapter
(Formation in Progress)**

Contact Susie Osgood
For Information
208-373-4242

New IAS Officers Elected

IAS held its general membership meeting on September 30th 2006 after the annual conference. The purpose of this meeting was to elect IAS officers and discuss the 2007 conference.

The officers are:

President: Susie Osgood **Professional Advisor:** Mary Anne Davis
Vice President: Kevin Schroeder **Editor, *Idaho Archaeologist*:** Mark Plew
Secretary: Julie Rodman
Treasurer: Lorraine Keaveney

REMEMBER THE IAS WEBSITE!

The website can be accessed at <http://anthro.boisestate.edu> then clicking the IAS link!

Thanks to Susie Osgood and Jan Summers Duffy for their contributions to this issue of ARTIFACTS.

MEMBERSHIP NOTE

**Your Recorded Expiration Date is on
Your Mailing Label!**

If you are viewing this electronically, please contact the editor to obtain your current membership status! It is time for all of us to renew our 2007-2008 membership. Please take this time to fill out and send in the membership form in this issue, with your payment. Your support will help the IAS continue to bring you information and events about Idaho's heritage.

From the Editor

All IAS members and chapters are encouraged to submit news, articles, and any items of interest for publication. Without active contribution of IAS chapters and their members, ARTIFACTS would not be possible. Please feel free to submit any news of upcoming projects, excavations, lectures, workshops, and classes, as well as feature-length articles.

With your help, ARTIFACTS will continue to be a vital forum for news and commentary that deals with archaeology in Idaho and elsewhere.

We need your contributions if all IAS chapters are to be represented fairly and equitably.

Please send your contributions for publication to the following:

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