

THE THREAT ON KAW¹ POINT--- REDOUBT AT THE KANSAS RIVER

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On June 27, 1804, the men of the Lewis and Clark expedition built a “redoubt,” a long, temporary barrier of trees and bushes, six feet high, at the confluence of the Kansas River and Missouri River. This article challenges the historical perspective that the Lewis and Clark expedition faced no significant threat of armed conflict at their camp on the Kansas River in June 1804 to justify the redoubt. The article also attempts to depict what the captains knew and assumed about the disposition of the Native American tribes in the area, attempting to recreate the captains’ mindset in ordering the building of a defensive barricade.

As the expedition labored up the powerful, unrelenting, life-giving, life-threatening Missouri River and set up camp after every day’s journey, the issue of defense of the camp recurred. The early part of the trip in 1804 was well-traveled and likely safe--but with a more or less vulnerable camp position due to fresh landscape. Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark planned for “opposition² from roving parties of Bad Indians which it is probable may be on the R[iver].”³

LET’S GO!

“The winter of 1803-04 at Camp Dubois [Illinois] was more than a time to fit an odd lot of soldiers and frontiersmen to the discipline Lewis and Clark believed essential for the expedition’s success. [That winter] interlude allowed explorers time to gather and evaluate . . . a vast store of knowledge and lore about the natives . . . [from] traders, merchants, government officers, and rough-handed engagés.”⁴ The captains knew and learned that most Native Americans wanted to trade for items such as copper kettles and firearms and blue glass beads; that many Native Americans were mostly peaceful; some Native Americans were river-toll-charging⁵ and in many ways trouble⁶ and some Native Americans venerated the Euro-Americans,⁷ at least for a time. (Later during the expedition, one tribe “gaped at York’s blackness and the ‘segassity of Capt. Lewis’ dog.”⁸) The captains found out “virtually everything that was known to white men of the Missouri country as far as the Mandan villages [of present-day North Dakota].”⁹ What worried the captains was what they didn’t know.

Those chosen for the party faced uncertainty as well.¹⁰ From young John Ordway’s letter of April 8, 1804:

“Honored Parente.

I am now on an expedition. . . with Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clark, . . . to . . . ascend the Missouri River . . . and then to go by land, to the western ocean, if nothing prevents . . . I am So happy as to be one of them pick’d Men For fear of exidants [accidents] . . . I left 200 dollars in cash, at Kaskaskia [Illinois]. . . and if I Should not live to return, my heirs can git that”¹¹

On June 26, 1804, the Corps of Discovery reached the confluence of the Missouri River with the Kansas River¹² (now frequently called the “Kaw” River). John Ordway recorded in his journal: “At Sunset, we arrived at the Kansas River . . . we camped on the fork between the Two Rivers. . . Several nations of Indians up this River.”¹³ The captains decided to make repairs, take celestial observations to affix latitude and longitude, look around (“the Countrey about the mouth of this river is verry fine on each side as well as the North of the Missouri’s”¹⁴) at this major river confluence and rest three or four days from the arduous fight against the Missouri’s current.¹⁵ The expedition stayed the nights of June 26, 27 and 28, leaving Kaw Point camp on the 29th, after “inflicting a little punishment to two men.”¹⁶ But that is getting ahead of the story. Two years later on the return trip, Captain Clark would write regarding the Kansa Indians’ habit of seizing Euro-American trading pirogues and that he would certainly order firing on the Kansa. But that is even further ahead of the story.

KAW POINT

As the Kaw flows into the Missouri River¹⁷, the north bank on the Kaw comes to a point of land meeting the west bank of the Missouri. The photograph on the cover of this manuscript shows an October 2002 view from on a bridge above the Kansas River, looking to the northeast, with the Kaw in the foreground, Kaw Point in the middle, the convergence of the two rivers¹⁸ with a oft-perceptible swell, the Missouri River flowing from left to right on the other side of the point of land, the trees on the eastern bank of the Missouri and vaguely perceptible Kansas City Downtown Airport buildings and other structures in the distance.

In the figure below, the author’s dotted line estimates where the redoubt may have been erected across Kaw Point in June 1804.

ARRIVING AT KAW POINT

As the expedition moved westward, starting from St. Charles on May 14, 1804 up the Missouri, “repeated contacts were made with the Missouri River tribes and with boatloads of fur traders, coming down the Missouri to St. Louis laden with the winter pelts gathered in the lucrative Indian trade. The captains sought information whenever such contacts occurred, but many references in the daily journals suggest that seldom could (or would) either Indians or fur traders supply useful or valuable knowledge.”¹⁹

On June 5, 1804, the expedition met two Frenchmen coming down the Missouri on a raft made of two canoes tied together. “Two french men, from 80 leagues up the Kansias R. where they wintered, and Cought a great quantity of Beaver . . . those men inform that the Kansas Nation are now out in the plains hunting Buffalow.”²⁰

The captains could not be sure when the Kansa would return from hunting buffalo, or if the tribe or a group of the braves might be hostile and come to Kaw Point. Concerns regarding other Native Americans came to specifics as the expedition struggled upstream on the Missouri. On May 31, a boatman who had traveled from the Osage tribe came by chance upon the expedition, relaying “disturbing news. The French trader camped for the night with the Corps of Discovery and told Lewis and Clark that some Osages had burned a letter sent by the Chouteaus informing them of the territory’s transfer to the United States. The captains could only wonder what reception they would receive when they finally met Indians in tribal force.”²¹ On June 17, Clark wrote that expedition found a horse and “this horse has been in the Prarie a long time and is fat, I suppose he has been left by Some war party against the Osage, This is a Crossing place for the war [parties] against that nation from the Saukees, Aiaouez & Souix.”²² Since the Native Americans had their rivalries and fights, the captains must have perceived that a traveling war party could happen upon the Americans and decide to fight.

The expedition came to at the confluence of the Missouri and Kaw rivers on June 26, 1804 and set up camp. The men slept the night of June 26 on Kaw Point. No mention is made of any alarm the night of June 26 to give reason to build a fortification the next day.

The next morning, combining all the information they had, and not knowing if any hostile threat existed in the area, the captains decided to erect a redoubt, according to the understanding of Private Whitehouse on June 27, “to defend ourselves against the Indians, fearing that they might make an attack on us in the Night. The Captains were inform’d by one of the Canadians²³ who were with us, and who had traded up that [Kansas] River, that 300 Warriors lives at a Village up the said River, about 50 Leagues.”²⁴ Professor Gary Moulton puts the Kansa village as “on the Blue River, near [present day] Manhattan, Kansas,”²⁵ which is about 117 miles west of Kaw Point.

Missouri historian Ann Rogers: “Although the only Indians seen since the expedition left St. Charles were those Clark had arranged to meet and the small party seen by one of the hunters, Lewis ordered the men to build a six-foot-high redoubt of logs and bushes between the two rivers, giving them a protected point of land on which to camp.”²⁶

THE REDOUBT IN THE JOURNALS

June 27, 1804 writings from the journals of expedition members at “Camp mouth of the Kanseis”²⁷ read:

Captain Clark: “Unloaded one perogue, and turned her up to Dry with a view of repairing her after completing a strong redoubt or brest work from one river to the other, of logs and bushes six feet high.”²⁸ (Captain Clark had army training as an “engineer of fortifications.”²⁹)

Patrick Gass: “We pitched our tents and built bowers in front of them.”³⁰

John Ordway: "All the party out early this morning cutting the Timber off a cross [across] the point and made a Hadge [hedge] a cross [across] of the timber and bushes to answer as defense and made room for Cap to take obser [observations of the stars]." ³¹

Joseph Whitehouse: "In the morning all hands were employed in clearing the point of said River from Trees. we then form'd a temporary breast work with pickets." ³²

The other journal writers were Captain Lewis and Sergeant Floyd. The Captain recorded sextant and chronometer readings in his journal, but wrote nothing on the redoubt. Floyd wrote nothing regarding the redoubt.

Captain Clark wrote a summary journal entry for June 26, 27, 28 & 29 that: "Allarm post or order of Battle arms to be Situated & the Duty &c." ³³ The major river confluence brought heightened security concerns.

DEFENDING CAMPS--ALERT STATUS

The building of the redoubt on the June 27 exemplifies the continuous vigilance required by the captains. ³⁴ Building a fortification was one thing, another level up was the command to prepare for action, which was made at least twice in the general area of the Kansas River confluence: 1) The sentinel, watching and listening into the darkness of the night, called a warning, reported in William Clark's journal dated July 1, when "all prepared for action," ³⁵ for naught; 2) From a writing on July 9: "Saw a fire on the S. S. [Starboard Side]. . . Sent a perogue . . . they returned & informed, that when they approached the fire, it was put out, which caused them to return, this report causd. us to look out Supposeing a pty. of Soux going to war . . . everey thing in readiness for Defence." ³⁶ It turned out that the hunting wing of the expedition, on the other side of the River, had doused their fire and fallen asleep, without seeing the main party's signals.

DEFENDING KAW POINT CAMP JUNE 1804---THE NATIVE AMERICAN THREAT

The redoubt blocked easy access of any hostiles to the camp, ³⁷ as it extended across the point of land. The length of the redoubt is an unknown, but 35 yards may be a good guess. ³⁸

Concerns for defense increased as the expedition left central Missouri, where the Osage were the prevailing tribe. The closer to Kaw Point, where the closest Native Americans were the Kansa, who could be troublesome, the more the concern, especially given the variety of river-traveling troublesome Sioux, Iowa, and others.

James Ronda writes that the best estimate upon leaving St. Louis was that the first meetings with the Native Americans would be in the area of the Platte River, ³⁹ well north of the Kansas River. However, "For Lewis and Clark, every strange Indian tribe encountered had to be considered belligerent until it proved otherwise. The Indians, they hoped, would be willing to talk and trade, but it would be the Indians' choice. . . The last thing Lewis wanted was an Indian fight . . . The best way to avoid a fight was . . . in the first instance . . . making certain that the expedition was never caught by surprise." ⁴⁰

The question became the extent of military defense of the camp for the stay at the Kansas River confluence. Given that by every nightfall, the new camp on the river's bank could be more or less exposed to attack, there is no indication that any redoubt or substantial defensive works was built to protect any camp since leaving St. Charles. In their thought processes, the captains likely anticipated an attack.⁴¹

One factor in the defense of a camp was the size of the expedition and the firepower it could deliver. The Corps of Discovery was more formidable than anything the Native Americans had previously seen at this time, as the party contained about 45 men,⁴² armed with smooth bored muskets and rifles. The Euro-American traders who had been attacked by the Native Americans usually had been vulnerable because of their smaller numbers.

Another defense factor was the extent to which the natural lay of the land and water would give defense to the camp, such as the camp's separation from the tree line, with open ground to give a sentry a line of sight to spot advancing attackers. As the trip proceeded, it became clear that riverbank camps were avoided, if there was an issue. "To add to nighttime security, the expedition camped on islands [sandbars in the river] whenever feasible."⁴³

Information had come from various sources, including President Jefferson's November 1803 letter with enclosure⁴⁴ (dated 1795, noting the Kansa Indians as peaceful traders), from St. Louis trader/explorers such as James Mackay and from "men of the river perhaps less literate but with more immediate experience among Indians."⁴⁵ In the captains' analysis on June 26th and the early morning of the 27th, as to how to defend Kaw Point camp, the captains' "vast" information about the length of the Missouri River to the Mandans and its Native Americans likely contained some information specific to the Kansas River confluence.

SOME RECORDED NATIVE AMERICAN--EURO-AMERICAN CONFLICTS IN KAW POINT AREA

Surviving writings establish some Euro-American/Indian fights on the lower Missouri and the Kaw Point area around this time, but surely other events occurred that we cannot now chronicle or this author has not uncovered. Since St. Louis thrived on news of trading, profit and mishaps, Lewis and Clark likely obtained information by May 1804 about the following events and others not noted here. Also shown are events after the building of the Kaw Point redoubt, included here under the theory that post-redoubt events are relevant to show conflicts that might have been anticipated in June 1804:

1. In describing his fear of a kind of "anarchy"⁴⁶ among the Native Americans generally along the Missouri River, white trading agent Mackay in 1795 tells of a Ponca Indian group, up river on the Missouri, regularly stealing from white traders' canoes. As to Mackay, we know that he went to Camp Dubois in 1804; and during the trip, the journals contain references to Mackay's experiences and his knowledge.

2. In 1795, Benito and Quenache de Rouin, in two boats with at least another two men, after successfully trading with the Kansa Indians, came east, down the Kaw toward the confluence of the Kaw and the Missouri. The Rouin group was attacked by

160 Iowa Indians, the Iowas continuing their war with the Kansa and in the process chancing upon the Rouin party. The Iowas pillaged the canoes, beat the Rouin individuals, and left Benito and Quenache at Kaw Point without arms, food, or clothing in the middle of winter; the fate of these two men not being further noted. The Iowas took two other individuals of the Rouin party up the Missouri River to their tribe, where the British (probably having instigated/influenced the Iowas to attack the Kansa), trading with the Iowas, ransomed the two men, clothed them and sent them back to St. Louis where these two arrived “after the greatest misery in the world.”⁴⁷

(A “mystery man of the redoubt” exists. This is the French Canadian, written about but not named by Whitehouse’s journal entry on June 27; this is the person who warned the captains of the possibility of a night attack by Indians--thus, persuasive in the erection of the redoubt. Could it be “Rouin”? ⁴⁸ -- of the 1795 events above, who joined the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804 as an engagé, coming back to Kaw Point, this time with a large group of expert rifle-men?)

3. In 1797, Missouri Company white traders reported that, “a group within the [Kansa] tribe would threaten to kill the traders and a contending factions would then offer protection in exchange for merchandise at a price they themselves would dictate. Variations of this scheme were used throughout the trading season.”⁴⁹

4. In 1802, Perrin du Lac reported that trade with the Kansa nations was carried on without danger, but his traders (about 10 in his group) had trouble at the mouth of the Kaw with the Sioux: “When we reached the river of the Kanzas, and were occupied in taking on board the furs that we had [previously] deposited there, we saw a party of the Sioux approaching; we therefore immediately reembarked, leaving some of the least valuable furs behind. We had hardly gained the opposite shore when we were saluted with a discharge of musquetry; but night coming on, the savages abandoned their pursuit. This was the only act of hostility that we experienced”⁵⁰

5. In 1802, one James Purcel (or Pursley) had “a desperate little knife-and-rifle fight with the Kansas Indians on the Osage River.”⁵¹

6. In October 1805, an American party, charged with returning an Arikara chief to his nation up river on the Missouri, was forced to “retreat to St. Louis” ⁵² without returning the chief. The American force had come upon “a Body of Canzes [Kansa] Indians, about twenty leagues below the mouth of the River of that name” Not satisfied with turning back the said party, “This body of Canzes after their first, very rude and unfriendly interview . . . marched up the River and took Post at a difficult and narrow pass, where they decoyed two American hunters on shore who were descending the River, one of whom they killed, and the other after shooting an Indian made his escape, but unfortunately fell in with our Camp in the night, and not answering the challenge was fired upon and mortally wounded--” ⁵³ by the American camp sentry.

7. On Captains Lewis and Clark’s return trip to the area of Kaw Point in September 1806, many upriver traders crossed paths with the expedition.⁵⁴ Above the Kansas confluence on September 14, 1806, probably close to present-day Leavenworth, Kansas, Captain Clark wrote: “this being the part of the Missouri the Kansas nation

resort to at this Season of the year for the purpose of robbing the pirogues passing up to the other nations above, we have every reason to expect to meet with them, and agreeable to their Common Custom of examining every thing in the pirogues and taking what they want out of them, it is probable they may wish to take those liberties with us, which we are deturmined not to allow of and for the Smallest insult we Shall fire on them . . . we met three large [Euro-American] boats bound [upriver] to the Yanktons and Mahars . . . those young men received us with great friendship . . . those men were much affraid of meeting with the Kansas [Indians].”⁵⁵

The convergence of major waterways in 1804 made the Kaw Point area open to conflict at any time, especially given the “roving parties of Bad Indians” who Captain Clark feared. Add the concern of the captains written down by Private Whitehouse of a “night” attack--possibly very bothersome, given that expert riflemen were of less value if the enemy could not be seen until a few feet away--and Kaw Point camp probably required a defensive fortification, apart from general military precaution.

THE SPANISH FACTOR

We have Private Whitehouse’s understanding as to why the redoubt was built: Indian attack. Captain Lewis, however, did not write on his reasoning. A scenario can be developed that another threat, in Captain Lewis’ analysis, on June 27, 1804 at the Kansas confluence, came from the Spanish.

The Spanish protected their North American possessions, with rancheros and mines. Enter Meriwether Lewis who wrote on October 3, 1803 to President Jefferson: “I have concluded to make a tour this winter on horseback . . . it may be up the Canceze [Kansas] River and towards Santafee.”⁵⁶ Jefferson responded in his next communication to Captain Lewis to avoid, “all danger of Spanish opposition. . . . You must not undertake the winter excursion which you propose Such an excursion will be more dangerous than the main expedition up the Missouri.”⁵⁷

President Jefferson’s response to Captain Lewis may have been founded on Jefferson’s personal communication with the Spanish minister Martinez in Washington, in December 1802, when the Spaniard refused a passport to Captain Lewis for travel in the Spanish-administered Louisiana Territory. However, given the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the Spanish representative’s participation in the formal transfer ceremony to the Americans in March 1804 in St. Louis, it seemed unlikely that the Spanish would contest Captain Lewis’s expedition up the Missouri in the summer of 1804.

That is exactly what they did.

American (double agent) General James Wilkinson in March 1804, wrote for the “guidance of Spanish officials . . . : ‘An express ought immediately to be sent to the governor of Santa Fe . . . [for] a sufficient body of chasseurs to intercept Captain Lewis and his party, who are on the Missouri River, and force them to retire or take them prisoners.”⁵⁸ The Spanish governor “dispatched at least four parties from Santa Fe between 1804 and 1806 to search for Lewis and Clark.”⁵⁹ The first Spanish party sent to intercept Captains Lewis and Clark was led by Pedro Vial, “a French explorer and trader . . . [who] left Santa Fe with a detachment of soldiers, in search of news about

Lewis and Clark, on 1 August 1804, and spent a month traveling to the Pawnee villages in central Nebraska. By this time Lewis and Clark were near the Nebraska-South Dakota border and well out of danger.”⁶⁰ None of other Spanish parties had any luck. (Although the Spanish troops sent in 1806 to intercept another American expedition, the Freeman-Custis group, found and turned back these Americans in Eastern Oklahoma.) As the Lewis and Clark expedition returned home in September 1806, pleased upriver trader McClellan noted, in Sergeant Ordway’s words, that “the people in general in the united States were concerned about us as they had heard that we were all killed then again they heard that the Spanyard had us in the [Spanish] mines.”⁶¹

Spanish history further exemplifies the Spanish commitment to protecting their land interests in the middle of the North American continent. In 1720, Spain had sent an expedition from Santa Fe: “Pedro de Villasur led a small group of experienced New Mexico soldiers in search of the Frenchmen believed to be living among the Pawnees. . . . Villasur led the group, which numbered forty-five Spaniards and sixty Pueblo Indian auxiliaries, to the Pawnee country in today’s Nebraska. At the confluence of the Platte and Loup rivers, as the Spanish party broke camp in tall grass early one morning, Pawnees and Otos surprised them. Eleven Pueblos and thirty-two Spaniards died, including Villasur”⁶²

(ADD IN MAY 2017: FOR OUR PURPOSES REGARDING KAW POINT, ...) The question becomes Captain Lewis’ knowledge or suspicion in June 1804 of these Spanish designs, as an additional reason in building the redoubt at Kaw Point. As the President’s secretary and proposed holder of a passport, Captain Lewis would have known of the passport refusal by the Spanish one and one-half years before. Either in Washington or in the preparatory winter in St. Louis, Captain Lewis would have likely picked up information: 1. As to the concept of the territorial boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase, the Spanish “regarded Louisiana as encompassing little more than . . . present-day Louisiana, eastern Arkansas and *eastern Missouri*.”⁶³ Hence, Captain Lewis could have perceived that the Spanish concept was that it would have been “legal” for the Spanish to come against the Americans at Kaw Point (which is at the western edge of present-day Missouri); 2. The talk in St. Louis which Captain Lewis would have heard, may have been similar to that which St. Louis Spanish Governor of Upper Louisiana Delassus (“Year 1804--The Devil may take all.”⁶⁴--referring to the Upper Louisiana Territory) reported to his government, that the Americans “are already calculating the profit which they will obtain from the [Spanish] mines” Delassus in the same letter opines: “within a short time, one will see descending the Missouri, instead of furs, silver from the Mexican mines [which will] arrive in this post in abundance. It is also said that the voyage of Captain Lewis (of which I have informed Your Excellency at the time) is directing itself towards New Mexico; that his plan to discover the Pacific Ocean was no more than a pretext.”⁶⁵

An analysis of geography known to Captain Lewis in 1804 could have pointed Captain Lewis toward the defense of Kaw Point against the Spanish. The distance to Santa Fe from anywhere on the Missouri River increases as one travels any significant distance on the Missouri River north of Kaw Point, because the river turns north at Kaw Point, away from Santa Fe. This makes the Kaw Point area (such as Westport, Independence, Leavenworth or St. Joseph, later in the century) a likely American outfit

point for the trip to Santa Fe. The Spanish likely had this known geography. Pedro Vial, the same person who led the first Spanish expedition against Lewis and Clark in 1804, years earlier was “sent by the Santa Fe commandant for the express purpose of reopening the route, left Taos and arrived at the Illinois in 1795 by way of the Kansa village, the Kaw River and present (MAY 2017 THERE WAS NO PRESENT KANSAS CITY SO THIS QUOTE MUST BE MISTAKEN OR IS THIS QUOTE 66 OR WHAT??) Kansas City” avoiding the “loss of everything he had with him at the hands of obstreperous Kansa braves.”⁶⁶ The Spanish should also have had the Mackay-Evans map of the Missouri River to the Mandans, and we know that Mackay shared information with the captains.

However, the source of the Missouri River, westward from the Mandans (to the Northwest Passage!) was not known in 1804. So as to Spanish speculation-geography as to the source of the Missouri River, the river might have eventually turned south towards Santa Fe, so the Spanish fear that “Captain Merry Weather and his party . . . cannot help but pass through the nations neighboring New Mexico, its presidios or rancherias.”⁶⁷

If we assume that Captain Lewis was thinking of Spanish attack as a possible factor, but that he did not mention this to Captain Clark, or if Clark chose not to write it in his journal, a link appears which, together with the Native American threat, amplifies why Captain Lewis could have ordered the building of the redoubt at Kaw Point.

MUCH ADO

No contact occurred from the Native Americans during the three-night stay at Kaw Point in June 1804,⁶⁸ nor from the Spanish. After the men built a long barrier six feet tall on the 27th, Captain Clark wrote with apparently new information on June 28th of the Kansa Indians: “I am told they are a fierce and warlike people, being badly Supplied with firearms, become easily conquered by the Aiauway [lowas] and Saukees who are better furnished with those materials of war. . . This [Kansa] nation is now out in the plains hunting the Buffalow.”⁶⁹ It appears that as far as Captain Clark knew, the only threat was the Native American threat, as he further notes that the men were resting comfortably.

MARCHING TOWARDS PROHIBITION

The captains enforced solemn duties on their men, especially sentries who should be on the watch for a night attack. What did occur at Kansas River of a military nature involved Americans punishing Americans. Sentry John Collins drank on the job; and the June 29 court martial charge asserted against Collins: “getting drunk on his post this morning out of whiskey put under his Charge as a Sentinal and for Suffering Hugh Hall to draw whiskey out of the Said Barrel intended for the [whole expedition] party . . .” and Collins’ penalty was “100 lashes on his bear Back.”⁷⁰ Collins’ fellow inebriate, Hugh Hall, received 50 lashes for unauthorized drinking.

DENOUEMENT

There is no record of another river-to-river six-foot-high *(may 2017 “redoubt” or)* barrier⁷¹ on the expedition. By the September 1804 encounter with the Teton Sioux, the best defense was clearly the powerful river current and the distance

from the riverbank, as Captain Clark recorded: “we . . . anchored [the keelboat] out off a willow Island . . . fastened the Perogues to the boat, I call this Island bad humered Island as we were in a bad humer.”⁷²

Later, for wintertime, forts would be built at Mandan and Clatsop.

On the return trip, no Native Americans were seen in the area of the Missouri-Kansas confluence in September 1806.

The afternoon of June 29, 1804, after the trial and the punishment of drinkers Collins and Hall, the group continued up the river. Coming down river, the journal writers note passing the Kansas confluence on September 15, 1806, but they do not comment on the redoubt which was built 27 months earlier --- whether it existed or not. The redoubt was likely swept⁷³ into the river, eventually. But the expedition had been safe those days in June 1804. The captains and the men came away a little wiser and human beings can be noted for their streaks of intelligence.

Thanks to reviewers/advisors: my brother Steve Sturdevant, Kyle Carroll, Jake Jacobs and Wyandotte County, Kansas preeminent historian Loren L. Taylor.

Footnotes

¹ “The explorers and early mapmakers called the tribe and the river Cans, Causa, Kansa, Kances, Kanza, Konza, Quans, etc. Eventually the stream was named the Kansas River, though it is commonly called the Kaw.” Floyd Benjamin Streeter, *The Kaw, The Heart of a Nation* (New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), p. 4.

² The originality of the quotations, as to spelling, grammar and punctuation is not normally disturbed in this article.

³ Ernest S. Osgood, ed., *The Field Notes of Captain William Clark, 1803-1805* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1964), p. 21.

⁴ James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p.10.

⁵ Some Native Americans extracted a toll by taking from the Euro-Americans' canoes, in exchange for passage. The Native Americans could reason that the river and the land, which by occupation over time coalesced certain rights, was not subject to any Euro-American treaty, especially to which the Native Americans were not a party. The Native Americans could have felt they would choose or bargain for the circumstances they would deal with the pronouncement—by Lewis or any Euro-American—of sovereignty over them.

⁶ “The Omahas, Arikaras and some of the Sioux bands had already made life miserable for traders bound upriver.” Ronda, p.12.

⁷ *Before Lewis and Clark, 1785-1804*, A. P. Nasatir, ed., Bison Book Edition, 2 volumes (University of Nebraska Press, 1990) Vol. 2, p. 382. Journal of M. Truteau, 1796 includes: “All the savage peoples . . . which dwell on the west of the Missouri [as opposed to ‘all the savage nations situated on the east . . . of the Mississippi’] are the mildest and most humane toward us of all the people of the universe. They have a great respect and a great veneration for all white men in general, whom they put in the rank of divinity, and all that which comes from them is regarded by these same people as miraculous. . . . Trade is carried on with them very peaceably.”

⁸ Ronda, p. 147.

⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage, Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) p. 125.

¹⁰ “Do they burn or torture their prisoners? Do they eat the flesh of their prisoners?” wrote William Clark, from a list of subjects/questions prepared for Captain Lewis before he left the East Coast. These were two of many questions, regarding the habits of Indians of Louisiana, to be answered in the journey of the Corps of Discovery. This “eat the flesh” question was probably more designed for the upper undiscovered Missouri River territory, rather than the area of the Kansas confluence. See 101. Clark’s List of Questions, 1804, Donald Jackson, ed., *The Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, second edition, 2 Volumes, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 160.

¹¹ 113. John Ordway to His Parents, April 8, 1804, *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 176, 177.

¹² Clark wrote: “the waters of the Kansas is verry disigreeably tasted to me.” Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 13 volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001), Vol. 2, p. 327. (Clark). **Hereafter cited as JLCE, with the appropriate journal keeper’s name.**

However, present day Kansans may emphasize that the specific gravity of the Missouri River was higher, thus muddier. So one may ask, “What do you want, muddy and tasty or clear and rancid?”

¹³ Sergeant Ordway’s Journal, John Ordway, June 26, 1804, Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Journals of Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway, Kept on the Expedition of Western Exploration* (The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Second Printing August, 1964, Peter J. Coleman, Editor, Reprinted 1994 by the National Historical Society, Harrisburg, PA 17112), p. 61.

¹⁴ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 325 (Clark).

¹⁵ Captain Clark estimated 6 ½ to 7 miles per hour for the stretch of the river below the Kansas confluence with the Missouri. *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 401 (Clark).

¹⁶ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 329 (Clark).

¹⁷ According to a representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in 2001, the full bank approximate channel width of each river at the confluence: Missouri River, 1,000 feet; Kansas River, 600 feet. (October 2002 Personal conference with Mr. Matt Walker, Federal Office Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.) In 1804, Captain Clark had estimated the then width of the rivers at the confluence and we do not know if the rivers were at full banks: Missouri River, 1,500 feet; Kansas River, 691feet.

¹⁸ Where was Kaw Point in 1804? Authoritative sources tells us the confluence of the two rivers has changed since 1804. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has reliable information back to about 1878, but prior to that time is may be difficult to pinpoint the confluence, with various river floods, etc. According to Martin Plamondon II in *Lewis and Clark Trail Maps*, (Pullman Washington, Washington State University Press, 2000) Vol. 1, p. 65, the 1804 Kaw Point is today possibly one-quarter mile north of the 2002 Kaw Point (in errata reportedly to be published by Mr. Plamondon), on Kansas land on the west side of the Missouri River. Mr. James D. Harlan of the Geographic Resources Center, University of Missouri-Columbia (see the campsites of the expedition on an excellent website: www.geog.missouri.edu) in October, 2002 writes that “our data has it [the 1804 confluence] as 251 meters (little more than 1/8th of a mile) above the center of the mouth of the Kansas River. That places it directly in front of those big grain bins over in KC, Kansas.” Plamandon and Harlan’s comments place a location which is consistent with Grant W. Harrington, writing in 1935 that the point above the Kansas river, where Lewis and Clark camped, on June 26, 1804, “is now a part of the Levee in Kansas City, Kansas and the site of the proposed Terminal Elevator through which it is intended the Kansas Wheat will find its way, by boats, to the markets of the world.” Grant W. Harrington, *Historic Sites or Mile-Stones in the progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas* (Merriam, Kansas, The Mission Press, 1935), p. 10.

¹⁹ John Logan Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 186.

²⁰ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 279 (Clark).

²¹ Ann Rogers, *Lewis and Clark in Missouri*, 3d edition (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 36.

²² *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 306 (Clark).

²³ Usually now described as “engagés” or “French voyagers;” these individuals may have been about 8 or 10 in number; they went as far as the Mandans. They were not members of the American military Corps of Discovery. *JLCE*, Vol. 2, P. 347 (Clark).

²⁴ *JLCE*, Vol. 11 p. 32 (Whitehouse).

Please recall that Ordway had written of “several” villages of Native Americans up the Kansas River. Captain Clark referred to “two villages one about twenty leagues and the other about 40 leagues up [the Kansas river].” *JLCE*, Vol.2. p. 327. So between three writers, the Native American tribes up river on the Kansas from Kaw Point vary from one (Whitehouse) to two, (Clark) to several (Ordway). Possibly Ordway’s comment could have intended to include Pawnees, who were located in present-day Nebraska, on or close to a tributary of the Kansas River.

²⁵ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 281, footnote 6.

²⁶ Ann Rogers, *Lewis and Clark in Missouri*, 3d edition (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 53.

²⁷ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 329 (Clark on June 29, 1804).

²⁸ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 325 (Clark).

²⁹ Plamondon, Vol. 1, p. 4.

³⁰ *The Journals of Patrick Gass*, June 27, 1804, Carol Lynn MacGregor, ed., *The Journals of Patrick Gass, Member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1997), p. 45.

³¹ *The Journals of Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway, Kept on the Expedition of Western Exploration*, p. 61 (Ordway).

³² *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 332 (Clark).

³³ *JLCE*, Vol. 11, p. 32 (Whitehouse).

³⁴ Ronda, p. 253: For contrast, by 1806: “So long have our men been accustomed to a friendly intercourse with the natives, that we find it difficult to impress on their minds the necessity of always being on guard with respect to them.”

³⁵ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 336. (Clark).

³⁶ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 362. (Clark).

³⁷ The purpose of the redoubt was written in one journal as defense against attack. In addition, latitude and longitude readings could become more practical when trees were cut down. Trees could provide good cover for hostiles, so defense was enhanced when trees came down. Also, the captains may have wanted to refocus military discipline by giving the men a “project.” Finally, it is possible Meriwether Lewis thought of a Spanish attack at Kaw Point.

³⁸ Space enough for: 1. “tents” pitched for about 45 men; 2. about 4 campfires; 3. repairing one or more canoes.

³⁹ James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 16, 17.

⁴⁰ Ambrose, p. 145. Ambrose also offers: “The expedition’s arsenal was by far the biggest ever brought to the Missouri country, and any tribe able to take possession of it would dominate the region -----no matter what the Louisiana Purchase said -----for a long time to come.”

⁴¹ It is unlikely the Native Americans in the area would have assaulted such a defensive position and a frontal assault was not a regular Indian military tactic. Ignoring that, but recognizing that Lewis and Clark had to expect the unexpected, several assault scenes are possible. Native Americans could have attacked from one or both river banks, after floating down either the Missouri on the west bank or the Kansas on its north bank.

The land based attack scene against the redoubt might have developed along these lines:

1. Corps’ sentry spots armed natives advancing from the cover of the trees, possibly 50 yards distant;
2. Corps of Discovery men, about 45 (assuming no hunting/exploration trips were occurring at that moment), including voyagers, to positions using the protection of the redoubt;
3. Native Americans run from one tree/brush to another towards the barrier, shooting arrows, firing a few firearms and using other weapons;
4. Corps delivers fire from about forty-five firearms; reloading time was likely a serious delay;
5. Attackers, hurt, decide whether to rush the breastworks or retreat.

⁴² *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 347 (Clark). Of the party’s size, Captain Clark wrote “46 men [including engagés] 4 horses & a dog” on July 4, 1804. However, Professor Moulton notes other “inconsistencies” in confirming this number in his Vol. 2 on page 349, footnote 9. One issue is whether Clark counted one of the men twice.

However, early Kansas historian William Connelley wrote that the captains “seem to have recruited some additional men [at Kaw Point], but they may have only waited for some absent members of their force to come up.” See William E. Connelley, *Kansas and Kansans*, (Chicago, Lewis Publishing Company, 1918) p. 50.

The eminent Donald Jackson estimated that “by departure time [from St. Louis], the number . . . probably numbered forty-seven.” Donald Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson and the Stony Mountains* (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1981) p. 155.

⁴³ Ambrose, p. 145.

⁴⁴ 94. Jefferson to Lewis, Nov. 16, 1803 Donald Jackson, ed., *The Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, second edition, 2 Volumes, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 139. An enclosure, the extracts of trader M. Truteau’s journal. Truteau had written that the “Kansas [Indians furnish[ed] the various traders with] 7. to 8000 fine deer skins and take 4. to 5. M pcs. Des Mes” in barter exchange.

⁴⁵ James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p.11.

⁴⁶ In *Before Lewis and Clark*, Vol. 1, p. 352, Missouri Company trading agent Mackay Journal 1795-1796.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 316. Spanish lieutenant governor Trudeau’s letter to one Valle, 1795.

⁴⁸ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 347 (Clark).

The name of the redoubt’s “mystery man,” who Whitehouse wrote was Canadian, is not ascertainable at this point. The man should be shown as one of the engagés, in *JLCE*, Vol. 2 under: a)

Clark's entries on May 26, 1804 (p. 255 and 256) and July 4, 1804 (p. 347) or b) Editor Moulton's Volume 2 Appendix (p. 525 and following) Could "Rouin" be the "Roie" written in Clark's journal? So could Benito de Rouin or Quenache de Rouin of the "great misery in the world" 1795 event have been on the expedition? Clark lists a "Roie" ("misspelled by Clark from "Rouin"?) engagée in his July 4, 1804 diary entry. However, a French-Canadian would not likely have the first name "Benito," which is a Spanish name, the French form of the name would likely be "Benoit;" plus, Clark's May 26 Journal entry gives the "Roie" spelling a twist to "Roi" and adds the first name, so "Peter Roi," but it's possible "Peter" is a nickname. Professor Moulton in his Volume 2, Appendix, page 529 writes the limited amount that he knows of Clark's "Roi."

If we could determine this mystery man, maybe we could determine the experience/hearsay that included the fear of a night Indian attack.

⁴⁹ William E. Unrau, *The Kansas Indians* (Norman Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971) p. 78.

⁵⁰ *Before Lewis and Clark*, Vol. 2, p. 708. "The Kanses are tall, handsome, vigorous and brave. They are active and good hunters. . . . Among the questions which this people put to me was the following: "Are the people of your country slaves to their wives like the [other] Whites with whom we trade?" Being fearful of losing my credit if I did not appear superior to the other Whites, I replied that they loved their wives without being their slaves; and that they [the white men] abandoned them [the white women] when they were deficient in their duty."

⁵¹ John Bakeless, *Lewis and Clark Partners in Discovery* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1996: republication of 1947 original which was published by William Morrow and Company, New York) p. 88.

⁵² Unrau, p. 82.

⁵³ Governor Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, December 10, 1805, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Volume XIII, The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri (Washington, United States Government Printing Office) 1948, p. 298.

⁵⁴ From the journals:

- a. September 12, 1806, Gass noted two "periogues" going up to trade, then an hour later, a large boat with twelve men, going up to trade with the Mahas. JLCE, Vol. 10, p. 278.
- b. September 14, 1806, Gass mentioned meeting 3 boats heading upriver;
- c. September 16, 1806, Ordway wrote: "we met a keel Boat and 2 canoes the Keel Boat loaded with marchandize and bound for the Kansas Nation of Indians. [A separate group consisted of] 2 canoes were going up trapping and hunting their was about 20 frenchman in Company . . . we then . . . passd a hunting Camp of two Frenchman . . . they informed us that an American Boat was on their way coming up Some distance below this." JLCE, Vol. 9, p. 363.

⁵⁵ JLCE, Vol. 8, p. 360 (Clark).

⁵⁶ Donald Jackson, ed., *The Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854*, second edition, 2 Volumes, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 131.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 137.

⁵⁸ Donald Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson and the Stony Mountains* (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1981) p. 153. Jackson cites Wilkinson's "Reflections on Louisiana," originally attributed to Vicente Folch, governor of West Florida, in James Alexander Robertson, *Louisiana under the Rule of the Spanish, French and the United States* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1911) Vol. 2:323-47.

⁵⁹ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992) p. 294.

⁶⁰ Donald Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson and the Stony Mountains* (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1981) p. 154.

⁶¹ Sergeant Ordway's Journal, John Ordway, June 26, 1804, Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Journals of Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway, Kept on the Expedition of Western Exploration* (The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Second Printing August, 1964, Peter J. Coleman, Editor, Reprinted 1994 by the National Historical Society, Harrisburg, PA 17112), p. 370.

⁶² David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992) p. 170, 171. Mr. Weber establishes the confluence of the said two rivers as the location of the fight, but other historians argue that the site of the battle was likely farther west on the Platte, maybe close to the present-day Colorado state line.

⁶³ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992) p. 292.

⁶⁴ Delassus, in his closing entry on the Spanish administration of the Upper Louisiana Territory. Taken from the research of Charles Hoffhaus in his *Chez Les Canses, Three Centuries at Kawsmouth*, (Kansas City, Lowell Press, 1984) p. 116.

⁶⁵ *Before Lewis and Clark*, Vol. 2, p. 743, 745.

⁶⁶ Hoffhaus, p. 119.

The following is the author's thought, not associated with Mr. Hoffhaus's quote: From his time in St. Louis, Lewis would have known that James Mackay and John Evans, while in the employ of the Missouri Company, a Spanish-authorized trading company, made an accurate map of the Missouri up to the Mandans and that this Mackay-Evans map was known by the Spaniards. Still, Governor Delassus' apparent geographic misconception (or maybe the problem was his fear of losing the silver mines) may be understandable, since Vial's knowledge had to do mostly with the way west, to Santa Fe, and Mackay-Evans map had to do with the way north, to the Mandans.

⁶⁷ *Before Lewis and Clark*, Vol. 2, p. 731; 729-735. Salcedo to Cevallos, 8 May 1804, enclosing Casa Calvo and Salcedo to Cevallos, 5 March 1804.

⁶⁸ If the Native Americans had been in the vicinity of the confluence, a parlay could have occurred. Further upriver, the most frequent encounter was a mild meeting; the tendency of the Native Americans was to plead their needs to the Americans, as a trading offer, as a request for gifts or as a river-toll. The morning of August 19, 1804, this American-Indian council: "Clark was astonished when one of the chiefs, Big Horse, showed up naked, to emphasize his poverty." Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage, Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) p.159.

For a refreshing perspective, Charles Hoffhaus in his *Chez Les Canses, Three Centuries at Kawsmouth*, (Kansas City, Lowell Press, 1984) p.133, perceives the pro-French, but heretical Lewis and Clark analysis when Mr. Hoffhaus notes that the expedition stayed three nights in June 1804 and:

"It must not be assumed that the region was deserted, in spite of the lack of reports of permanent settlement. There may well have been French squatters at that early date at Randolph Bluffs, three miles below present Kansas City, and on the north bank of the river opposite present River Quay, and in the old French Bottoms in what is now the Kansas City Central Industrial District. There are several reliable later references to these early farmers, but it would be useless to speculate on why Lewis and Clark did not mention them. An indigenous population is somewhat an embarrassment to "trailblazers." The expedition met as many as one trader a day on the lower Missouri, including one coming from up the Kansas River with his furs on a raft made of two canoes lashed together."

⁶⁹ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p. 327 (Clark).

⁷⁰ *JLCE*, Vol. 2, p 329 (Clark).

⁷¹ *JLCE*, Vol. 7, p. 255, 256 (Lewis). On May 14, 1806, before the planned several day stay in this camp, Camp Chopunnish, east of the Rockies among the Nez Perce: "We . . . selected . . . our permanent camp. This was a very eligible spot for defence it had been an ancient habitation of the Native Americans; was sunk about 4 feet in the ground and raised around its outer edge about three ½ feet with a good wall of earth. the whole was a circle of about 30 feet in diameter, around this we formed our tents of sticks and grass facing outwards and deposited our baggage within the sunken space under a shelter which we constructed for the purpose. our situation was within 40 paces of the river. . . as we are compelled to reside a while in this neighbourhood I feel perfectly satisfied with our position."

⁷² *JLCE*; Vol. 3, p. 114 (Clark).

⁷³ As to other washed-away sites on the Missouri River:

a. Martin Plamondon notes the Missouri/Mississippi Rivers have changed course some years after Camp Dubois and that the actual soil of Camp Dubois has washed downstream. (*Lewis and Clark Trail Maps*, p. 4.) He also states that, "by 1883, the entire [Fort Mandan] encampment had been washed away." (*Ibid.*, p.12).

b. Fort Manual Lisa, located in South Dakota but now gone, was the subject of a search by Dr. Ken Karsmizki in the 2002 Discovery Channel cable television production, "The Search for Lewis and Clark" from an archeological perspective. Karsmizki believes that 17 feet have washed from this site. Karsmizki's search has not found the remains of the fort.

Finally, in an extraordinary circumstance, it is possible to recover a boat sunk in the river, many years later. About five miles upriver on the Missouri from Kaw Point, the Arabia Steamboat, sunk in 1856, was recovered in 1988. The river changed course many years after 1856, and the boat was excavated from about 60 feet under a farmer's field. The recovery is the subject of a museum in Kansas City, Missouri.

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