

Guide to the William Clark Field Notes

WA MSS S-897



by Diana Smith

February 2002

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-897

CREATOR: Clark, William, 1770-1838

TITLE: William Clark field notes

DATES: 1803-1805

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 linear feet (1 box) + 1 broadside folder

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The field notes consist of 69 sheets of paper of varying sizes and shapes on which William Clark wrote journal entries, drew maps, made lists, and calculated distances during the first sixteen months of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The entries date from December 13, 1803 to April 3, 1805, and record activities at Camp Dubois during the winter of 1803/1804, during the voyage up the Missouri from May to November, 1804, and to a lesser degree the winter at the Mandan villages in 1804/1805. Clark used his field notes to create his more formal journals, which were sent back down the river in the spring of 1805 when the expedition resumed its journey. The journal entries through November 1804 were made almost daily; during the winter of 1804/1805, the entries are fewer and farther apart and written on one sheet. Several sheets contain speeches, notes, lists, and descriptions rather than journal entries, including speeches and notes made by Clark at the council with the Oto Indians, and his calculations on the number of men and officers required to protect Indian trade. The

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Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.field>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The field notes were found in the papers of General John H. Hammond in 1953, and given to the Beinecke Library by Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The William Clark Field Notes are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

William Clark Field Notes. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

The entire collection is available in digital form.

Scope and Contents

The William Clark Field Notes consist of 69 sheets of paper of varying sizes and shapes on which William Clark wrote journal entries, drew maps, made lists, and calculated distances during the first sixteen months of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The entries date from December 13, 1803 to April 3, 1805, and record activities at Camp Dubois during the winter of 1803/1804, during the voyage up the Missouri from May to November 1804, and to a lesser degree the winter at the Mandan villages in 1804/1805. Clark used his field notes to create his notebook journals, which have been edited and published by several scholars including Reuben Gold Thwaites and Gary Moulton.

The field notes were found among the papers of General Henry Hammond after his daughter's death in 1953. A facsimile edition of the field notes was produced by Ernest Staples Osgood as *The Field Notes of Captain William Clark 1803-1805* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964). Osgood believes that Clark sent these notes to President Jefferson, and that they were later used by Nicholas Biddle and Paul Allen when they prepared the official account of the expedition, *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, to the Sources of the Missouri* (Philadelphia: Bradford & Inskeep, New York: A.H. Inskeep, 1814). Osgood's introduction describes his unsuccessful attempts to discover the path of the field notes to General Hammond's papers.

The collection is arranged according to Osgood's organization of the field notes into two distinct sections: the "Dubois Journal" and the "River Journal." The Dubois Journal, the notes kept while at Camp Dubois at the mouth of the Missouri River during the winter of 1803/1804, consists of thirteen sheets of paper, two of them previously attached (folder 2). The River Journal, the notes kept while voyaging up the Missouri River and at the Mandan villages for the winter of 1804/1805, consists of 56 sheets of paper, two of them forming one entry in Osgood (folder 12).

Prior to their arrival at the Beinecke Library, the notes were collated in pencil in date order by an unidentified person, with fragments and other undated papers filed at the end. Osgood, however, incorporated the fragments and other undated papers into the chronological run of papers. The pencilled number on the item, therefore, is not always the same as the Osgood number. The box and folder list references both the Osgood number and the pencilled numbers for each item.

The papers taken together present a generally complete, continuous run of entries. Most sheets contain entries for several days, some of them an entry for just one day, and some contain continuations of an entry from another sheet. There are several fragments, which Osgood has attempted to place in their correct location in the chronological run. Clark wrote on paper previously used for various purposes: some of the sheets had been used as envelope covers with the address still visible underneath, some were used for jotting down random notes, figuring sums, drafting orders and letters, receipts, making lists of expedition members, and in one case punishments of members who broke the rules of the expedition (broadside folder 66). Often the journal entries are written over or around maps, drawings, lists, and tables of figures. The notes after the second entry for September 22-23 (folder 57) are different from others in the collection, being fair copies in Clark's hand of his field notes for those dates. Original, "rough" notes for these entries are not in this collection, as discussed by Osgood in his introduction.

The journal entries through November 1804 were made almost daily; during the winter of 1804/1805, the entries are fewer and farther apart and written on one sheet. Many of the entries contain Clark's tables listing the expedition's course, distance, and time travelled. Several sheets contain speeches, notes, lists, and descriptions rather than journal entries. These are a description of the country and a list of the French in the boats (folder 26), speeches and notes made by Clark at the council with the Oto Indians (folder 38), speeches of Indian chiefs (folder 49), list of distances from the mouth of the Missouri (folders 56, 64, and 65), and a list of the number of officers and men required to protect Indian trade (folder 65). Some short notes and calculations on the papers are in the hand of Meriwether Lewis. Each sheet contains a date notation at top in a different hand, which Osgood believes is that of Nicholas Biddle.

Oversize consists of two sheets which are filed in broadside folders.

Collection Contents

Dubois Journal

The Dubois Journal field notes are arranged according to Ernest Staples Osgood's chronology in *The Field Notes of Captain William Clark 1803-1805* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964). The Osgood number is recorded as is the number given each sheet by an unidentified collator before the collection arrived at the Beinecke Library.

b. 1, f. 1	December 13-18, 1803 and sketched plans [unidentified] Osgood 1. Number on item in pencil: 1
b. 1, f. 2	December 19-21, 1803 and map of the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers Osgood 2. Number on item in pencil: 2
b. 1, f. 3	December 22-30, 1803 Osgood 3. Number on item in pencil: 3
b. 1, f. 4	December 31, 1803 - January 3, 1804, map of the region around Camp Dubois, lists of expedition members Osgood 4. Number on item in pencil: 4
b. 1, f. 5	Continuation of January 3 - January 6, 1804 Osgood 5. Number on item in pencil: 5
b. 1, f. 6	Continuation of January 6 - January 17, 1804 Osgood 6. Number on item in pencil: 6
b. 1, f. 7	Continuation of January 17 - January 20, 1804, two drawings of the keelboat Osgood 7. Number on item in pencil: 7
b. 1, f. 8	January 21-31, 1804 Osgood 8. Number on item in pencil: 8
b. 1, f. 9	Continuation of January 31 - March 25, 1804 Osgood 9. Number on item in pencil: 9
b. Broadside, folder 66	March 26 - April 13, 1804, drawing of pirogue, lists of expedition members and punishments Osgood 10. Number on item in pencil: 10
b. 1, f. 10	Continuation of April 13 - April 28, 1804 Osgood 11. Number on item in pencil: 11
b. 1, f. 11	April 29 - May 14, 1804 Osgood 12. Number on item in pencil: 12

River Journal

The River Journal field notes are arranged according to Ernest Staples Osgood's chronology in *The Field Notes of Captain William Clark 1803-1805* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964). The Osgood number is recorded as is the number given each sheet by an unidentified collator before the collection arrived at the Beinecke Library.

b. 1, f. 12	May 14-24, 1804 Includes a rough draft of a form intended for use in listing terms of service and pay for members of the party Osgood 13. Number on item in pencil: 13
b. 1, f. 13	May 23-24, 1804 Osgood 14. Number on item in pencil: 14
b. 1, f. 14	May 25-29, 1804, map Osgood 15. Number on item in pencil: 15
b. 1, f. 15	May 30 - June 2, 1804 Osgood 16. Number on item in pencil: 16
b. 1, f. 16	June 3-4, 1804, map Osgood 17. Number on item in pencil: 17
b. 1, f. 17	June 5, 1804, map Osgood 18. Number on item in pencil: 18
b. 1, f. 18	June 6-9, 1804, small drawing of a painting seen on a rock: a Manitou, buffalo, and an Indian Osgood 19. Number on item in pencil: 19
b. 1, f. 19	June 10-14, 1804 Osgood 20. Number on item in pencil: 20
b. 1, f. 20	June 15-16, 1804 Osgood 21. Number on item in pencil: 21
b. 1, f. 21	June 17-21, 1804 Osgood 22. Number on item in pencil: 22
b. 1, f. 22	June 22-26, 1804 Osgood 23. Number on item in pencil: 23
b. 1, f. 23	Continuation of June 26 - June 29, 1804 Superinscribed on a rough draft of an order for the regulation of the camp Osgood 24. Number on item in pencil: 24
b. 1, f. 24	Continuation of June 29 - July 1, 1804 Osgood 25. Number on item in pencil: 25
b. 1, f. 25	July 2-4, 1804 Osgood 26. Number on item in pencil: 26

- b. 1, f. 26 [July 4, 1804. A description of country, list of French in pirogue, large boat, bow men](#)
Osgood 27. Number on item in pencil: 64
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- b. 1, f. 27 [July 5-6, 1804](#)
Osgood 28. Number on item in pencil: 27
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- b. 1, f. 28 [July 7-8, 1804](#)
Osgood 29. Number on item in pencil: 28
-
- b. 1, f. 29 [July 9-12, 1804](#)
Osgood 30. Number on item in pencil: 29
-
- b. 1, f. 30 [July 13-15, 1804](#)
Osgood 31. Number on item in pencil: 30
-
- b. 1, f. 31 [July 16-19, 1804](#)
Osgood 32. Number on item in pencil: 31
-
- b. 1, f. 32 [Continuation of July 19 - July 20, 1804](#)
Osgood 33. Number on item in pencil: 32
-
- b. 1, f. 33 [July 21-22, 1804](#)
Osgood 34. Number on item in pencil: 33
-
- b. 1, f. 34 [Continuation of July 21-22, 1804. Description of the mouth of the Platte](#)
Osgood 35. Number on item in pencil: 59
-
- b. 1, f. 35 [July 22-26, 1804](#)
Osgood 36. Number on item in pencil: 34
-
- b. 1, f. 36 [July 27-29, 1804](#)
Osgood 37. Number on item in pencil: 35
-
- b. 1, f. 37 [July 30 - August 3, 1804](#)
Osgood 38. Number on item in pencil: 36
-
- b. 1, f. 38 [Speeches and notes made by Clark at the council with the Oto August 3, 1804](#)
Osgood 39. Number on item in pencil: 63
-
- b. 1, f. 39 [Continuation of August 3 - August 7, 1804](#)
Osgood 40. Number on item in pencil: 37
-
- b. 1, f. 40 [August 8-11, 1804](#)
Osgood 41. Number on item in pencil: 38
-
- b. 1, f. 41 [August 12-15, 1804, sketch of a boy's head in profile](#)
Osgood 42. Number on item in pencil: 39
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- b. 1, f. 42 [August 16-24, 1804](#)
Osgood 43. Number on item in pencil: 40
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b. 1, f. 43	Fragment, continuation of August 24 and 25, 1804 Osgood 44. Number on item in pencil: 41
b. 1, f. 44	Fragment, part of August 24, 1804[?] Osgood 45. Number on item in pencil: 65
b. 1, f. 45	Fragment, part of August 25, 1804[?] Osgood 46. Number on item in pencil: 66
b. 1, f. 46	August 25-29, 1804 Osgood 47. Number on item in pencil: 42
b. 1, f. 47	August 30-31, 1804 Osgood 48. Number on item in pencil: 43
b. 1, f. 48	Continuation of August 31, 1804 Osgood 49. Number on item in pencil: 45
b. 1, f. 49	August 31, 1804: speeches of Indian chiefs Osgood 50. Number on item in pencil: 44
b. 1, f. 50	September 1-7, 1804, map of "antient fortification" on the bank of the Missouri Osgood 51. Number on item in pencil: 46
b. 1, f. 51	Continuation of September 7 - September 10, 1804 Osgood 52. Number on item in pencil: 47
b. 1, f. 52	September 10-13, 1804, sketch map of part of the Missouri Osgood 53. Number on item in pencil: 48
b. 1, f. 53	September 14-16, 1804 Osgood 54. Number on item in pencil: 49
b. 1, f. 54	September 17-20, 1804 Osgood 55. Number on item in pencil: 50
b. 1, f. 55	September 20-23, 1804, sketch map of the Big Bend of the Missouri Osgood 56. Number on item in pencil: 51
b. 1, f. 56	List of distances from Dubois to the Big Bend. Fragment. n.d. Osgood 57. Number on item in pencil: 62
b. 1, f. 57	September 22-26, 1804 Osgood 58. Number on item in pencil: 52
b. 1, f. 58	September 27-28, 1804 Osgood 59. Number on item in pencil: 53
b. Broadside, folder 67	September 29 - October 26, 1804 Osgood 60. Number on item in pencil: 53

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- b. 1, f. 59 [October 25-27, 1804](#)
Osgood 61. Number on item in pencil: 55
-
- b. 1, f. 60 [Continuation of October 27 - October 28, 1804](#)
Osgood 62. Number on item in pencil: 56
-
- b. 1, f. 61 [October 29 - November 13, 1804](#)
Osgood 63. Number on item in pencil: 57
-
- b. 1, f. 62 [November 19, 1804 - April 3, 1805, sketch of man in profile smoking a pipe](#)
Osgood 64. Number on item in pencil: 58
-
- b. 1, f. 63 [Supplementary entry for November 30, 1804](#)
Osgood 65. Number on item in pencil: 67
-
- b. 1, f. 64 ["The Distances of the following places as estimated from the mouth of the Missouri, with Lattitude annexed, 1806," manuscript list, map on verso. Fragment](#)
Osgood 66. Number on item in pencil: 60
-
- b. 1, f. 65 ["The Number of Officers & Men for to protect the Indian trade and keep the Savages at peace with the U.S. and each other, 1805 if soldiers act as Boatmen & Soldiers," manuscript list, "To the mouth of the River Que courre S. Side \(rapid\)" manuscript list of distances from Dubois to the Mandans on verso](#)
Osgood 67. Number on item in pencil: 61
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Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Indians of North America -- Commerce -- West (U.S.)
Oto Indians
Overland journeys to the Pacific
Overland journeys to the Pacific -- 1803

Geographic Names

Missouri River
West (U.S.) -- Description and travel

Occupations

Explorers -- United States

Names

Clark, William, 1770-1838
Lewis, Meriwether, 1774-1809

Corporate Body

Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806)