

Lewis & Clark Career Profiles

Ed Hamilton, Sculptor

Louisville, KY

Exactly what is your job?

I create sculptures ranging in size from 6 inches to heroic scale, which can be from 8 feet to 12 feet or larger, depending on the job.

What training did you have/need to prepare for this career?

I studied for four years at the Art Center School, 1965-1969. In 1973 I met the late sculptor Barney Bright and began to study and apprentice with him for over 6 years.

Where do you work?

My studio is in the Phoenix Hill neighborhood of downtown Louisville. It is there that I do all of my sculpting of various art pieces. I do public monuments, design awards, portrait relief work for plaques that are placed inside public buildings, for example our State Capitol in Frankfort.

Describe the hero figure of York that you have created for the Louisville riverfront.

I would describe my figure of York to be a strong black man, who carried his own weight while being a part of the Lewis and Clark expedition. He will be standing on a cliff setting overlooking the Ohio River as he looks west over a vast land unknown to most explorers of that time, carrying his rifle and holding some ducks that he just captured for the group to eat. He also was a great hunter.

How did you become involved in this project?

My involvement was through my friend, Jim Holmberg, author and historian for the Filson Historical Society of Louisville. It was Jim who asked me to design a York memorial for our City.

What kind of research did you do to get ready for this project?

My research involves quite a lot of reading about my subjects. I knew from the period, what type of clothing that they would have worn in the early 1800s, so I had to find all of the things that they would have used, like the knives and canteens, and the type of rifle that they would have used. Once I know enough about my subject, I begin making sketches on paper, and then I start to create small models in clay before I begin the larger version in clay.

How did you decide how to physically portray York?

I wanted him to stand tall and be strong physically, because the Native Americans called him "Big Medicine," so I decided to shed his hat and shirt sleeves to show the power in his arms.

Briefly describe the media and the process involved in creating this sculpture.

The first concept images start on paper as sketches, then I take a lump of clay and create a small working model. Once the model is approved by a committee, I go right into the large scale version of the sculpture. That means I create a support structure that will hold the clay that I will put on the armature—sometimes that can be 1000 to 2000 lbs. of clay. Once the large clay

sculpture is finished, I then will make molds over the entire large clay structure and then the foundry takes over to start to prepare him to be cast in bronze.

How have public sculptures become a part of the Lewis & Clark legacy?

They have become important to the legacy of the Corps of Discovery, by allowing the general public to get up close and personal with the figures. You are able to picture how they would have looked back then. You can read about these great events, but to be able to see something in the round and be able to touch it, you feel like you are touching the past.

If a student wanted to get a feel for what it's like to be an artist working with historical subjects, how could they get started?

You first need to do the research and to study the subject. That means going to the library and to museums, to see the items that belonged to another century. Talk to historians that know about your particular subject. That's what I do when I take on a new commissioned work. It's important to know what you are going to do, and how to tell the story in clay and finally in Bronze.

To learn more about Ed Hamilton's work, visit:

www.edhamiltonworks.com

Julie Parke, Historic Site Administrator

Louisville, Kentucky

Exactly what is your job?

As the executive director I am responsible for the care and preservation of Historic Locust Grove, the property, buildings and the historic collections. I work closely with the other staff members who have important responsibilities for education programs, gardens and grounds care and visitor services activities. Fundraising is an important aspect of my position, as there are costs involved with operating the site that can not be met through admissions. I conduct research to enhance our knowledge of the history of Locust Grove and related subjects. I work closely with Louisville Metro Government, the owner of the site. I also cooperate with directors from other museums and historic sites on collaborative marketing and planning activities.

What training did you have/need to prepare for this career?

I have a Bachelors degree in history and a Masters degree in History and Historic Preservation. I also have attended numerous professional development programs such as the Seminar for Historical Administration sponsored by Colonial Williamsburg in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Where is Locust Grove?

Locust Grove is a 55-acre site six miles up the Ohio River from downtown Louisville.

Why is Locust Grove an important historic site?

Locust Grove is a National Historic Landmark. This is the highest designation an historic site can receive. Locust Grove was established by William and Lucy Clark Croghan in 1790. Revolutionary War figure and Louisville's founder George Rogers Clark lived at Locust Grove from 1809 until his death in 1818. The farm also was home to numerous enslaved Africans and hosted US Presidents, Monroe, Jackson and Taylor, as well as Aaron Burr, John James Audubon and famed abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay.

How does the story of Locust Grove tie into the story of Lewis & Clark?

Locust Grove is the only structure that still exists west of the Appalachian Mountains that is known to be a stopping point for explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. It is a certified site on the National Lewis and Clark Trail. Lucy Clark Croghan, William's sister, lived at Locust Grove with her husband and their children. On November 8, 1806, the Croghans entertained Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and brother, Jonathan Clark. It was during that dinner that the Clark and Croghan families would have heard one of the earliest reports of the explorers' adventures.

How will you commemorate the Bicentennial of the Expedition at Locust Grove?

Locust Grove is a partner in the Falls of the Ohio Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee's commemoration planning. Locust Grove will participate in riverfront activities from October 14-19 and will present, with other agencies, the panel discussion: "*Lewis and Clark – and York: Slavery and the First American West*" on October 21 at Central High Magnet Career Academy. The site will host the *Taste of Lewis and Clark and Shawnee Beast Feast* on October 23, 2003. Locust Grove will offer tours throughout the bicentennial period, through 2006, that highlight Lewis and Clark and the theme of Western Expansion. In November 2006 Locust Grove will be the location for a finale event commemorating the November 8, 1806 dinner for the explorers.

Why is it important to preserve and interpret places like Locust Grove?

Historic sites such as Locust Grove help us learn about our past first hand. We can see, feel, smell, taste and hear what life on an early farm might have been like. Experiencing history by walking where people from the past walked, or learning to cook the way pioneers did, or smelling plants from the Lewis and Clark Expedition give depth and richness to the history we learn from books, films and television. Historic sites are essential to ensuring we learn from the past as we make decision about our future.

What is most exciting or interesting about your job?

The most rewarding thing about my job is connecting with visitors. I work behind the scenes most of the time, so when I have the opportunity to lead a tour, talk to students or answer questions in the exhibit gallery, I realize how excited people are to learn about the past through the story of Locust Grove, George Rogers Clark and the other people whose lives touch the site.

If a student wanted to get a feel for what it's like to be the director of an historic site, how could they get started?

Learning about careers in museums and history can begin at the local level. Students can make an appointment to interview a staff member of an historic site for information on the types of jobs in the field. I also recommend volunteering at an historic site. On the Web, visit the American Association of State and Local History at www.aaslh.org or the American Association of Museums at www.aam-us.org.

How can I learn more about the Locust Grove connections to Lewis & Clark?

Visit the museum or the web at www.locustgrove.org. The Internet is a good place to start, but it does not replace the experience of a visit to Locust Grove. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am till 4:30 pm and Sunday 1:30 pm till 4:30 pm. The last tour each day is at 3:30 pm. For more information call 502-897-9845.

Jim Holmberg, Historian & Author

Louisville, Kentucky

Exactly what is your job?

As Curator of Special Collections at The Filson Historical Society I am in charge of the department that maintains, catalogs, and services the original papers, diaries, archival records, ephemera, and other material. Also included in the collection are photographs, prints, and architectural drawings. My staff and I answer research questions from people locally, nationally, and abroad and retrieve material for researchers when they visit. We also engage in projects regarding writing, publishing, and speaking concerning Filson collections and history.

What training did you have/need to prepare for this career?

A background in history is important for this career. It is essential that you are familiar with history, especially Kentucky history, so that the material being cataloged or serviced for researchers can be properly accessed. The actual archival work can be learned on the job. Reading and mentoring from present staff enables new department personnel to become trained in The Filson's procedures and policies regarding manuscript and archival processing.

Where do you work?

I work at The Filson Historical Society's headquarters in Old Louisville. The Special Collections department is on the third floor. I also am occasionally at The Filson on Main location (626 W. Main St.) where our *Lewis and Clark: The Exploration of the American West* exhibit was recently opened. In addition, appointments, talks, meetings, and other duties result in travel in Louisville, Kentucky, and sometimes around the country.

How did you first become involved with the story of Lewis & Clark?

I have been interested in history, including Lewis and Clark since I was a child. I remember looking at a photograph book about the Lewis and Clark Trail before I could even read. Family vacations in the West often followed part of the Trail and visited L&C sites. In addition, I read books about Lewis and Clark, both historical and fictional treatments. Once on staff at The Filson, with its nationally significant L&C collection, my personal interest merged with professional responsibilities and opportunities and have resulted in a major career focus.

You were involved in the earliest plans to commemorate the L&C Bicentennial here in Kentucky. Tell us about that.

Due to my personal and professional interest in Lewis and Clark I became involved in national groups, speaking at and attending meetings and serving on boards of directors of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. In 1997, as interest increased in L&C and the approaching bicentennial local groups and individuals requested that I help lead efforts to organize and promote L&C in the Kentuckiana area. From that beginning as chair of an informal group came the incorporated non-profit Falls of the Ohio Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee for which I served as founding president. I also assisted with the establishment of the Ohio River Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and in 2002 I was appointed chair of the newly created Kentucky Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission.

Describe your major Lewis & Clark projects at the Filson.

Given The Filson's nationally significant Lewis and Clark collection and my focus on the expedition and its history, The Filson has been a leader in Kentuckiana, the state, and regionally regarding Lewis and Clark initiatives. The Filson has a ten point Lewis and Clark Bicentennial plan and will actually exceed that number of projects as new opportunities present themselves. Lectures, symposium, exhibits, reading and discussion groups, and publications encompass the broad range of The Filson's projects. During the Lewis and Clark National Signature Event here in Louisville and Clarksville in October 2003, The Filson will have a Lewis and Clark symposium, a lecture by a nationally known L&C author, and hold several talks and receptions at our Lewis and Clark exhibit on Main Street. The Filson is also working with other organizations and institutions in partnering on other L&C activities, programs, and projects during this and coming years as well as during the Signature Event.

How do you research events that happened so long ago?

First you read about the event using books and articles already written about them. The more you read, the better prepared you are to do the research. You have to know what you are looking for and looking at. Very important information could be overlooked or trivial data could waste your time if you don't know your topic. Once you have done that you can research the events using the appropriate level of sources – secondary and/or primary. Such research involves time and often travel. Research can often be a time consuming and tedious process but the results can be exciting and make an important contribution to our knowledge of the past.

Why are old letters so important to this story?

You cannot write or learn about history without the sources created by the people who lived it. Old letters are a very important source because they relate the events and feelings of the people who lived in those times. They are windows to those events and to the people of that time. Whether the letters (and other sources like diaries) describe a battle, a trip, or day to day life what the people write provide the information from which we learn about their lives and times. The letters and journals written by the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition are a perfect example. Without them we would know very little about their experience and accomplishments. The Expedition would be almost a blank space in our history, knowing only that they went to the Pacific and came back.

What is most exciting or interesting about your job?

One of the most exciting and interesting aspects of my job is discovering and/or acquiring historical material like letters, diaries, or photographs that shed light on historical events. The events may be famous, like the Lewis and Clark Expedition, or they may be routine, like life on a

19th century Kentucky farm, but they teach us about those times and the people's experience that wrote them. Being able to share that information with others, be it through talks, articles, books, or even one on one with researchers is very satisfying.

If a student wanted to get a feel for what it's like to be an historian, how could they get started?

The best way for a student to get a feel for what it's like to be a historian would be to read a selection of books written using - and citing - historical material. By doing that the reader can see how the information from the primary sources is put together to create a history or biography or other subject area. Another way would be to do some research themselves - which they have undoubtedly done in some form already. Writing a paper or report for school using sources from books to the Internet is doing research. From that the student could progress to using the primary sources like letters, diaries, and such themselves; then put this material together in some type of report or paper. With this actual hands-on experience, the student will truly get a feel for what being a historian is like.

To learn more, visit:

www.filsonhistorical.org

Joe McGee, Professional Artist and Information Officer III

Louisville, Kentucky

Exactly what is your job?

I actually have two jobs. My career as a professional artist comes first. My work ranges from making cast concrete sculptures for commissions (a person or company asking me to make something specific for them) to selling paintings or sculptures in art shows. I try to do at least one solo show each year.

Like most professional artists, I have a second career to help pay the bills. I'm in charge of the Sign Shop at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center (KFEC). Our shop designs and makes most signage for the Fairgrounds. There are a lot of signs!

My dream would be to make enough money as an artist that I could focus on that alone, but if you are interested in art, it's important for you to be realistic!

How does the subject of Lewis & Clark fit into your work?

In the Sign Shop, we also make displays for the Kentucky State Fair each year. Because I am a painter, too, I was asked to create an image of the Lewis and Clark Expedition leaving the Falls of the Ohio. No one had created pictures to tell the Kentucky parts of the Lewis & Clark story, and the exhibit curator wanted an image for the State Fair exhibit poster. The same picture will also be scanned and printed in a huge size, for a mural in the exhibit, *Lewis & Clark +200*.

What training did you have/need to prepare for these careers?

I have a Fine Arts degree (BFA) in Sculpture and have now been a practicing artist for over 25 years. The art studies have helped me in the Sign Shop, too, along with on-the-job experience.

Where do you work?

The Sign Shop is on the edge of the Fairgrounds property. As a professional artist, I am lucky to have a big studio where I can do my art right behind my house. Every artist needs a dedicated space (big or small) to do their art.

Briefly describe the three artworks (called a “trilogy”) that you have created to tell the story of Lewis & Clark at the Falls of the Ohio.

What started as one image turned into three as I became interested in the story of Lewis and Clark here at the Falls of the Ohio. I’ve been going to the Falls for 20 years, because I like water and it reminds me of the ocean. It’s a spiritual place for me, but I also like it because the place has a great sense of history—so much of the Falls has been there for such a long time.

The place really inspired my paintings. After I did the first one for the Fair, I wanted to tell the rest of the Kentucky Lewis & Clark story, too. The first in the series shows the arrival of Lewis on the Louisville side, the second shows the boats shooting the Falls the next day, and the last image has the Corps of Discovery leaving from Clarksville. These events happened here from October 14-26, 1803.

What kind of research did you do to get ready to do these pieces?

I did a bunch of research for this project, which has taken over six months. I started by taking photographs at the Falls. In all the years of going there, I had never been to the place where they have recently rebuilt the Clark cabin. That was the setting for one of my paintings. At the University of Louisville libraries, I found books about 1803 army uniforms and clothing. The staff at the Kentucky Historical Society and Filson Historical Society gave me resources, too. I went online and found hundreds of Lewis & Clark sites that had pictures by other artists and photos of reenactors (people who recreate Lewis & Clark events in period dress). I had to learn what the boats and flags looked like to get the details right.

It's hard to know what something looked like 200 years ago. Historians can’t even agree about what hats they wore! Only three of the men that I was drawing had been painted during their lifetime (Captains Lewis & Clark and General George Rogers Clark), so I knew what they looked like. There were a few descriptions recorded about some of the other men, for example, I knew that George Shannon was the youngest and he was an upper-classed Irish-American. I knew that York was dark-skinned, tall, and broad. William Bratton was tall, square in build, and maybe red-headed. I had no idea how some of the men looked. I found books about a French artist named Charles B. J. F. Saint-Mémin who painted portraits of people around 1800. His works taught me about the hairstyles and the appearance of men at this time. I did several sketches, and the curator of the exhibit helped me select a face for each of the men.

The easy part was going to both sides of the river at the Falls and getting the landscape figured out. What a beautiful river we have here! I found an old postcard of the Falls before the tall buildings, power plant, and walls changed the view. I like painting dramatic skies, but I tried to make the skies reflect the accurate time of day and the weather on those days in October 1803, too. Artists need to make changes sometimes, in order to create a good composition. One of the “artistic liberties” that I took was condensing the landscape—leaving out some things and

making some distances narrower—so the landscape would fit the format of the picture. I used trees to frame the scene, but they were not trees that were actually growing in those places. In one work, I added an eagle flying West, both to balance the figures on the other side of the picture and to symbolize the importance of this event in history.

Tell about the media and the process involved in creating the works.

All three pieces are multimedia, meaning that I used a combination of materials. The drawings started as pure line art done with fine point markers. Once I had the composition right, I had them copied and enlarged onto art paper. At that point I colored them with soft pastels, colored pencils, and markers. The drawings also were sprayed with a fixative as I worked, to keep them from smearing. You can get a nice layering effect by working this way. Sometimes it's good to work with tracing paper or cut-and-paste parts of one picture into another. It's also okay to use the copy machine to enlarge or reduce elements of your drawing. When you do the drawing on the finished piece, you end up erasing a lot, trying to get it right. Erasing can mess up the paper. Student artists shouldn't be afraid to try these techniques.

Your work on the posters & murals wasn't your only L&C project. Tell us about the other, rather funny one.

When I started this project I never dreamed that the KFEC Sign Shop would be asked to design a bed for the Kentucky Derby Festival's Bedlam Race. The theme for the bed race was "The Spirit of Adventure," so we chose to make a Lewis & Clark keelboat bed for the Kentucky Fair & Expo Center's entry. Sometimes we get to make fun things here!

If a student wanted to get a feel for what it's like to be an artist painting historical subjects, how could they get started?

I have always liked art and history. As a child I would draw Civil War battles, Medieval knights, or any other historical topic that interested me at the time. This was fun for me, a way to imagine other times and places. Do something because you enjoy it. Later on in my life I decided to go to college and really learn about art, but I still do art because I enjoy it.

Where can I go to learn more?

You can read a little more about Charles B. J. F. Saint-Mémin, the profile artist who inspired my portraits of the men, on this Lewis & Clark Web site:

www.lewis-clark.org/clark_port-memin.htm

You can read a *Courier-Journal* article about one of my public sculpture commissions, a horse named "Woodford," online at: www.louisvillecene.com/arts/visual/2002/v20020616view.html