



RED RIVER BRIGADE

The Trace

January 2014

***From The
Booshway:***



Howdy Brothers!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and got to spend time with loved ones and close friends.

My wife Patty and I had some time together, although she had to work both Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

I hope the men in your camps are faring well and you have fresh meat and your trap lines have been full of prime fur!

We have our annual Red River Brigade Winter camp set for the 3rd week in February. The booshway will be Eddie Reese and he has help from several other men in the brigade. It sounds like we will have several colleges and a camp feed one night. We would like to have a good turnout and it will be good to get together with brothers for our first camp of the New Year.

Brother Lucky Messmer is always looking for something to fill the pages of our newsletter *The Trace*, so please write something up and send it in. Thanks to those that have already done so, we appreciate your contribution!

Yr. Svt.
Kraig



From the Editor:

Brothers,

Not to cause a panic, but I thought it was important to bring this up to folks so they can prepare or re-check their lead supplies.

The current administration has worked up EPA standards that forced the last lead smelter in the United States to close on 31 Dec of this past year; Doe Run, Co. They will maintain some capacity for recycling.

While no one can be sure what will happen to lead supplies as there are plenty of car batteries to be had and Doe Run will maintain some recycle capacity, one can rest assured that the price of lead and modern bullets will most likely go up. Battery lead and other non-pure sources will be available, but pure lead that some folks prefer for making shot, will definitely increase substantially in cost as it will have to be imported. 100% of modern bullets will have to be imported as well raising costs.

I have found that most areas have scrap yards and currently the market price is \$1 per pound. Once Doe Run closes that price is sure to go up, if for no other reason than "vulture capitalism" as we have seen during the days of the rush for ammunition supplies. After the rush for ammunition calmed down, prices remained high, just like gasoline.

Here is a rough chart on balls per pound based on caliber to help you plan your lead requirements for round ball.

32 caliber: (.310) 048g---approx 146 balls/pound
36 caliber: (.360) 071g----approx 98 balls/pound
40 caliber: (.395) 092g----approx 76 balls/pound
45 caliber: (.445) 133g----approx 52 balls/pound
50 caliber: (.498) 180g----approx 38 balls/pound
54 caliber: (.535) 220g----approx 32 balls/pound
58 caliber: (.560) 280g----approx 25 balls/pound
62 caliber: (.610) 341g----approx 20 balls/pound
69 caliber: (.678) 468g----approx 15 balls/pound
75 caliber: (.715) 545g----approx 13 balls/pound

If for no other reason, you may want to buy to avoid future high prices.

Keep yer powder dry!

Yer most humble servant,

Lucky



Bent's Fort

Bent, St. Vrain & Company

By Kraig Fallwell

On 6 December 2013, Friday, my trail partner and friend Catahoula Bill Vannoy and I arrived at Bent's Fort. It was a long journey across the plains. When we got there we could see a very large impressive adobe structure. We were met by a man

known as Jose and later John Carson, reported to be related to scout Kit Carson. As we got closer, we unloaded my red mule and found a suitable camp site in the Cottonwood trees near the Purgatorie River, which had ice floating in it. It was a cold day and the temperature was measured at 9 degrees with a fairly good wind.

This made us not hesitate in our efforts. We pitched our tarps together and closed off both ends, this way, we were able to build a small fire inside.

Not long afterward, a couple more men join us in camp, Joe Silhan and "Neighbor" from the Mo.Iowa. Kan. brigade. Then Missouri Jim and Denny Leonard, also Tim Austin and Bruce Day. Camp is starting to shape up. Bill and I decide to go over to the fort and have a look around.



Photo by D.R. Leonard

We enter through a large gate and into the courtyard. Men are working and there fires burning for them. Bill and I go inside and warm ourselves at a fireplace in one room.



As we look around, we see some men that we know and speak to them. Bill Bailey welcomes us. The rest of the day, is spent exploring the many shops and activities that are here.



We are told that later in the evening will be a dinner for us and we gladly accept. We are fed with a fine hot stew and corn bread with tortillas. As night comes, we find ourselves in the billiards room and some men are there playing checkers, pool and cards. There is a large billiards table in this room and it is reported that the room was built around it. We stay here for a while, and then make our way back to our camp by the river. We start a fire and stretch out on our bedrolls.

It is a clear and very cold night; we pull our buffalo robes over us and go to sleep.



7 Dec. 13, Saturday I awake early to answer nature's call, I build up our small fire and Bill and set a kettle on to boil some hot coffee. It is reported the low was around ± 2 degrees last night. We begin to prepare our breakfast which consists of bacon, some potatoes, onions, and a few peppers wrapped in a tortilla. After we finish eating a few men come to visit and we sit at the fire and talk. The camp has grown and there are about ten men here now. Bradley Bailey has come in. We go up to the fort again to see what is going on there today. There are some travelers passing by and they stop for supplies.

The day is quite cold and men are bringing in much firewood for a holiday celebration tonight. We are once again invited to dine with the people here and we have chili, corn bread, tortillas and there are several pies. Also there is a large kettle of hot coffee.

Night again finds us visiting and playing games of chance. There is much drinking and merriment, and Oh the storytelling! Bill Vannoy and Vic Barkin regale us with bear stories from their adventures.

Later, Catahoula Bill and I have been invited to spend the night inside in the Trappers Quarters. As we must be on our way early in the morning, this sounds like a good idea, not to mention the thick walls and the fireplace. We agree that it would be rude not to accept this generous offer from Messers, Bent & St. Vrain. There are two other men sharing our





accommodations, James Sebastian and Vic Barkin of Colorado.

8 Dec. 13, Sunday

Catahoula wakes up to add wood to the fire and I go outside to see if it is getting light. It is almost daybreak and there is a light snow falling, with temps around 2 degrees. We roll up our bedding, grab our weapons and shot pouches to make ready for the trail. We bid our friends farewell. It has been a grand time spending the Holiday Celebration here on the high plains at Bent, St. Vrain & Co.





Traveling the Uneven Ground

By Ken Krueger #2012

*Lonesome trails,
New paths found.
Our moccasins tread
The uneven ground.*

*Ever in awe
Of Nature's wonder.
At ease I am
With rain and thunder.*

*A simple life
Along the trail
Makes modern days
Seem weak and pale.*

*A friendly camp
A crackling fire.
A way of life
We never tire.*

*Old ways learned
Good friends abound.
As brothers we travel
The uneven ground.*



Indian Sign Language,
(Then, Now, and the Future)

By
Alvis L. Hobbs

Forward

The style of documentation used in this paper is the Chicago Manual of Style, or as it is more commonly known, Turabian. Readers who are not familiar with this style of documentation may need to be aware of a few peculiarities thereto.

Sources/references can be located in the "works cited" section at the end of this paper. Throughout this paper the reader will find superscript numbers following a word, phrase, or sentence. This is the manner in which sources are cited in the documentation style used. To ascertain which source is being referenced, turn to the "notes" section and locate the number in question. There the reader will find the source cited as well as any additional comments the author may have.

In the "notes" section one will find the acronym "*ibid*". According to the Turabian style of documentation, this means that reference is being made to the exact previous source.

Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian is the style of documentation used by professional historians.

(1)

At the time Europeans set foot on this continent the indigenous people they encountered had been using a form of communication that has endured even unto the present. That form of communication is called, in the terminology of today, Indian Sign Language.

Almost at ^e Once one will inevitably ponder how difficult the language would be to learn. This would bring about at least the five following questions: Are there any serious differences (dialects) as to how the signs are made/used? Would there be any variations as to why different names might have been applied to things in nature? Are there any serious misconceptions concerning Indian Sign Language? Is there any difficulty in learning the signs? How does Indian Sign Language compare to American Sign Language?

Perhaps a final question here would be; what is the status of Indian Sign Language in today's world?

The origins of Indian Sign Language are obscured in the mists of time. In other words, no one alive today can say beyond speculation anything as to the origins. To this end, many authors have offered such speculation that is at least worthy of consideration.

In his work, "The Indian Sign Language" Clark offers some interesting insight as to the origins of the subject. He suggests that, "vocal signs were not at first as rapidly developed as gestures, but though of slower growth, they finally crowded out, and in a measure took the place of facial expressions and bodily movements"¹ From this we can ascertain that, in all probability, some form of sign language was in use at or before the time vocal languages were.

Clark further speculates that Indian Sign Language was developed out of necessity. Indians "Plains [out of] necessity for intercommunication between tribes having different vocal

(2)

speech developed gesture speech.”² “The necessity for intercommunication between tribes, the vocal languages were different, and it is only reasonable to suppose that gestures were used.”³ Here Clark would be making reference to a time when tribal interactions would have been taking place in earnest as civilization developed.

Yet Clark offers further speculation as to the origins of Indian Sign Language in the form of a quote from Chief Iron Hawk of the Sioux Nation.



“The whites have had the power given to them by the Great Spirit to read and write, and convey information in this way. He gave us the power to talk with our hands and arms, and send information with the mirrow, blanket, and pony far away, and when we meet with other Indians who have a different spoken language from ours, we can talk to them in signs”⁴

Thusfar we have seen much speculation as to the circumstances surrounding the advent and development of Indian Sign Language. Speculation, albeit learned and highly probable, is still speculation. As such we will probably never know the actual origins of Indian Sign Language.

As variations in most all vocal languages exist, it is arguable that they also exist in non-vocal forms of communication. These differences in vocal language are often referred to as dialects. As such, we could reasonably refer to differences in Indian Sign Language as *such*.

In this context we can conclude that dialects do exist within Indian Sign Language for, as Clark expresses, “I discovered that to have the Indian first make the gestures was absolutely necessary, because if one makes a sign to an Indian in a certain way, the chances are ten to one he will return it in the same way, even though he may never have seen it before.”⁵

(3)

As an example of this consider the sign for "Indian" in the Tomkins text,  Indian Sign Language."⁶ Accordingly, all four fingers of the right hand are used. Let us compare this to a sign used by a Native American visitor to the Museum of the Great Plains⁷ This individual performed the sign in almost the same manner, except that he used only the first two fingers of the right hand. 

Another example of dialect variation would be the sign Tomkins uses for snake,⁸ to what another Native American museum visitor used.⁹ Whereas Tomkins extends but the index finger, the visitor used the first two fingers. This same individual also used these two fingers to make the sign for "indian"¹⁰ whereas Tomkins uses all four.¹¹

We have seen that variations do exist as to how signs are made. Dialect variations are of little significance as long as one can convey one's thoughts.

Along with dialect differences there are other differences one will encounter in the study of Indian Sign Language. Perhaps the two most mind-boggling examples here are the naming of the months and, at times, the naming of geographical locations.

Tomkins cites the twelve months (moons) by the most common name for each whereas Clark cites many more examples.¹³ By reading what both authors have written, one will formulate the notion that Native Americans were highly attuned to the habits of animals and natural occurrences. Perhaps a good explanation here comes in the form of a scenario as used by the Living History Department at the Museum of the Great Plains. "The Indians would name the moons after a significant occurrence or observation. In other words, a moon or month would be named after something that all in the group could relate to and something that happened with predictability."¹⁴

Another difference exists in the way names were applied to some geographical locations.

“In the days of old, Indians would name a location usually based on something that they experienced and that all within the group could relate to. For example, if one tribe traveled into a river valley and saw more beavers than they thought existed, then it is conceivable that they may have referred to that river as the Beaver River. Then, at a later time, another tribe traveled to the same location and saw no beavers. Instead, the wind blew to such a degree that many of their lodges were blown over. This second group might rightly refer to the same river as the Wind River. As we can see in this instance, we have two different tribes calling the same river by two different names.¹⁵

Differences, as cited above, can and often do lead to what might be referred as selective interpretation. This, in turn, can lead to some serious misconceptions. On that thought, three such misconceptions tend to surface. The first would be that sign language is as articulate as vocal speech. This assumption is as misinformed as it is false for the Tomkins text contains a little over 870 signs¹⁶ whereas the Williamson text has thousands upon thousands of words that form the vocal language of the Dakota people.¹⁷ As such, the sheer volume of words versus the number of signs clearly implies that the Dakota language is far more articulate than is Indian Sign Language.

Another misconception is that Indian Sign Language is solely a trade language. This is true to some degree. As Tomkins points out it had other applications as well. “Sign language may be used to advantage at a distance, which the eye can reach but not the ear, and still more frequently when silence or secrecy is desired.”¹⁸ While one may refer to Indian Sign Language as being a trade language, one should bear in mind that it is also more.

Perhaps a less obvious misconception about Indian Sign Language involves the procedure by which one tribe might apply a name to another tribe. As an example, Tomkins refers to the Apache Tribe as the "elk horn fiddle players"¹⁹ A museum visitor and member of the Apache Nation pointed out that many Apaches (himself included) did not care to be referred to in that manner. Instead, he said that his people refer to themselves as either the "Mountain People" or simple the "People". This same person offered the comment that what one tribe might call another is not necessarily what the other tribe likes.²⁰ The logic here is that if two people do not care for each other then it is reasonable that they would not have nice things to say about each other.

Misconceptions can lead to confusion. However, in the study of Indian Sign Language, misconceptions are not the only source of confusion. As with nearly any spoken language some words sound so much alike that they can be confusing. It naturally follows that some signs would be similar enough as to being mistaken for each other. Perhaps the following are examples of this as taken from the Tomkins text.²¹ The hand positions used to make the signs for "night" are similar to those used to make the sign for "forget". Another example here is the signs used for "beaver" and "hide", for "by itself" and "close", for "another" and "beyond", and finally "end" and "all gone". If one were to make all ten of the aforementioned signs in rapid succession, then one would truly understand just how confusing this can become.

If this were not confusing enough, then consider the following. In his text, Clark compares Indian Sign Language with American Sign Language by offering the American

sign for each Indian sign he describes.²² Let us take this a step further to see if any such similarities exist between these two languages.

As an example, one sign that comes to mind that is done the same way and means the same thing in both languages. That would be the sign for “same”.²³ Another example might be the same sign but meaning different things in each language. Compare Tomkins’ sign for “peace” with Flodins’ sign for “marriage”.²⁴ Yet another example would be the Tomkins sign for “soldier” as opposed to the Flodin sign for “diploma”.²⁵ Then there are signs that are made almost in the same manner and mean the same thing in both languages. An example of this would be the sign for “end”.²⁶

While no one can substantiate an argument that American Sign Language has made any intrusions into Indian Sign Language, there certainly are some modern intrusions. The first example here would be the sign for “coffee”.²⁷ The hand motions simulate the use of a small coffee grinder. Clark offers some insight as to how coffee was signed before the coffee grinder became widely used.²⁸ Tomkins uses the same sign.²⁹

Another such modern intrusion that appears in both the Tomkins and Clark texts is the sign for “telegraph”.³⁰ Then other modern marvels of technology made their way into Indian Sign Language between the time Clark compiled his work in 1884 and the time Tomkins published his original book in 1931. In that forty-seven year gap signs for “automobile”, “airplane”, and “motion picture” were added to Indian Sign Language.³¹

As is evident in the preceding section, Indian Sign Language has evolved over the years. As such, we are left to ponder its status in today’s world.

(7)

It is still being used but not to the degree it once was. To illustrate this Mr. Bulfrano Mendez of the Pamaque Nation whole-heartedly agreed with the general concensus that Indian Sign Language is still being used by some. He also agreed that sign language is used mostly by the younger generation who are actively involved in tribal functions, activities, and ceremonies.³²

Ms. Lamora Bird of the Lakota and Cherokee Nations uses sign language in story telling.³³

A note of curiosity here is that Ms. Bird incorporates some signs that are clearly of American origin. Again we can see modernization and evolution.

There are some organizations that use Indian Sign Language namely the Boy Scouts of America and the American Mountain Men. Within the Boy Scouts Indian Sign Language is listed among optional requirements to qualify for a merit badge in Indian Lore.³⁴ Within the American Mountain Men organization Indian Sign Language is optional for advancement to the first level and required for advancement to the second level.³⁵

Frank Kuntz, a local Scout leader, confirmed that Indian Sign Language is not actually required for a merit badge in Indian Lore. He also said that it is not used as much as it once was.³⁶

A scout seeking a merit badge in Indian Lore (should he opt to use sign language) would have to know at least 25 signs. Among these would have to be how to ask for water and food and to ask where a trail might lead them.³⁷

Within the American Mountain Men organization, to meet the sign language requirement, one,

(8)

“must be able converse using Plains Indian hand talk. The 200 words on page 64 of the Tomkins book “Indian Sign Language” will be used as a basis for conversation. To complete this requirement, you must demonstrate your ability to read the signs for 50 words, as well as to give the signs for 50 words”.³⁸

Perhaps the best insight into the status of Indian Sign Language comes from another Native American museum visitor and member of the Kiowa Nation. He offered the following comment, “The younger folks don’t seem to care for sign language or their own native spoken language. These days they have computers, cell phones, I-pods, and all that other electronic [explicative] to occupy their time.”³⁹

We have seen that, while we know much about Indian Sign Language, there are somethings we will never know. We have seen that there are differences in dialects, names are applied differently to occurrences in nature and geographical locations, there are some popular misconceptions, It can be confusing to learn, and there are more than a few similarities to American Sign Language. As to the future of this form of communication we have seen that Indian Sign Language is still being used by some tribal members, particularly the young involved in tribal activities and by some elders. Additionally, it is still used by some organizations. Quite sadly, we have seen that modern technology is more to the liking of a growing number of the younger generation than this once widely used form of communication.

Works Cited

American Mountain Men, "By laws, Article II, section 2, item 14)

Bird, Lamora, "Interview with a member of the Lakota and Cherokee Nations", (Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton Oklahoma; 17-AUG-13)

Boy Scouts of America, "Official web page—requirements for Indian Lore merit badge" (Lawton, Oklahoma; 28-AUG-13)

Clark, William P., (The Indian Sign Language", (University of Nebraska Press; 1982)

Flodin, Mickey, "Signing Illustrated", (Penguin Group, NY; 2004)

Kuntz, Frank, "Interview with a Scout Leader", (Lawton, Oklahoma; 27-AUG-13)

Mendez, Bulfrano, "Interview with the director of the Pamaque Clan", (Lawton, Oklahoma; 17-Aug-13)

The author, "Collection of oral comments, questions, and concerns" (Collected from Native American visitors to the Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton, Oklahoma; 2009-2013)

Tomkins, William, "Indian Sign Language" (Dover Publications; 1969)

Williamson, John P., "An English-Dakota Dictionary" (Minnesota Historical Society Press; 1992)

Notes

1. Clark, William P., "The Indian Sign Language", (University of Nebraska Press; 1982.) p. 10. This source is hereafter cited as "Clark".
2. *Ibid*, p.11
3. *ibid*, p.13
4. *Ibid*, p.12 5.
5. *Ibid*, p.6
6. Tomkins, William, "Indian Sign Language", (Dover Publications; 1969) This source is hereafter cited as "Tomkins".
7. The Author, "Collection of oral comments, questions, and concerns", (Collected from Native American visitors to the Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton, Oklahoma; 2009-2013)
8. Tomkins, p.53
9. Interviews
10. *Ibid*,
11. Tomkins, p.35
12. *Ibid*, p.62,
13. Clark, p.260-261, Tomkins, p.62
14. This scenario is of the authors own devise. As such it constitutes what is called a proprietary document and does not require further documentation.
15. *Ibid* → 16. Tomkins, (the entire text)
17. Williamson, John P., "An English-Dakota Dictionary", (Minnesota Historical Society Press; 1992)
18. Tomkins, p.9
19. *Ibid*, p. 13
20. Interviews
21. Tomkins, "night" p. 43, "forget" p. 29, "beaver" p.15, "hide" p.33, "by itself" p.19, "close" p.21, "another" p.13, "beyond" p.15, "end" p.27, and "all gone" p.11. To truly appreciate what is going on here, the reader should obtain a copy of the text in question and actually perform these signs.
22. Clark
23. Flodin, Mickey, "Signing Illustrated", (Penguin Group, NY; 2004). This source is hereafter cited as Flodin". Tomkins, p.53.
24. Tomkins, p.45, Flodin, p.29
25. Tomkins, p.53, Flodin, p.179
26. Tomkins, p.27, Flodin, p.70
27. Clark, p.117

P.261

28. *Ibid*
29. Tomkins, p.21
30. Clark, p.371, Tomkins, p.57
31. Tomkins, pp. 13, 11, 41, respectively
32. Mendez, Bulfrano, "Interview with the director of the Pamaque Clan"
(Lawton, Oklahoma; 17-AUG-13)
33. Bird, Lamora, "Interview with a member of the Lakota and Cherokee Nations", (Lawton, Oklahoma; 17-Aug-13
34. Boy Scouts of America, Official web page, "Requirements for merit badge in Indian Lore" This source is hereafter cited as "Scouts".
35. American Mountain Men, "By laws, Article II, Section 2, Item 14." This source is hereafter cited as AMM By Laws.
36. Kuntz, Frank, "Interview with a Scout Leader", (Lawton, Oklahoma; 27-AUG-13)
37. Scouts, web page
38. AMM By Laws
39. Interviews from Native American visitors to the Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma; 2009-2013)

Great Links:

www.redriverbrigade.com - Our awesome website under construction.

<http://user.xmission.com/~drudy/amm/moreamm.html> - you should recognize this site.

www.turkeyfootllc.com - They have great dried food and other wares of high quality. I have ordered from them in the past and been very impressed with their products and service.

www.powderhornsandmore.com - I have bought many powder horns from here to do scrimshaw work and final finishing for many folks. John is a class act, sends beautiful horns and his customer service is excellent. He won't send a product he doesn't want hanging from his shoulder.

http://woodtrekker.blogspot.com/2013/09/living-off-land-delusions-and.html#disqus_thread — This site lists caloric needs from a hunter-gatherer standpoint for long-term survival in the woods, and lists them for specific animals and specific plants. It might be of good use for folks doing their 3-days-hungry. It is very useful data.

<http://www.historicproperties.com/> - We are your online resource for buying and selling historic real estate. From projects to completed renovations, residential to commercial, west coast to east coast and now even outside the U.S.A., Federal to Eclectic; you can search our database of properties for sale. If you have a property to sell, you can list it for sale using the List a Home form and view it online within three business days.

<http://www.oldlogcabins.com/> - **Old Log Cabins** is dedicated to preserving the spirit of the American pioneer by offering original antique hand-hewn log cabins, structures and materials to our customers. We specialize in locating, documenting, and restoring these historic log cabins, barns and outbuildings. These uniquely American buildings were hand crafted by our ancestors in the 18th and 19th centuries, and their original integrity and character cannot be duplicated.

<http://www.smilingfoxforgellc.com/index.asp> - We at Smiling Fox Forge strive to bring you the highest quality 18th century reproductions you can buy. Therefore they are neither inexpensive nor cheap! We have all discovered "**Real Quality**" must be paid for.

Upcoming Events

Red River Brigade Winter Camp 2014

Location: Sterling, Oklahoma

Date: 21-23 February 2014

Amenities: Water available from a good well. There is a one-holer, no need for digging a hole.

Colleges: Sign language, Friction fire-the bow drill and hand drill and other colleges to be announced.

Directions: Sterling, Oklahoma is located near the intersection of highways 65 & 17. Approaching H.E. Bailey from the south, exit 36-A marked "Duncan", and proceed to SH 65. Approaching on the H.E. Bailey Turnpike (I-44), **from the north**, exit onto Whitfield Road at EXIT 62, proceed south to the intersection of SH 65 & 17. (You CAN NOT EXIT HERE COMING FROM THE SOUTH!)

Approaching from Lawton: take highway 7 (Lee Blvd within Lawton City limits) to SH 65.

Approaching from Duncan: take highway 81 to highway 7, proceed west to SH 65; north on 65 to highway 17.

Approaching from Chickasha: Proceed south on highway 81 to Rush Springs intersection of highway 17, proceed west.

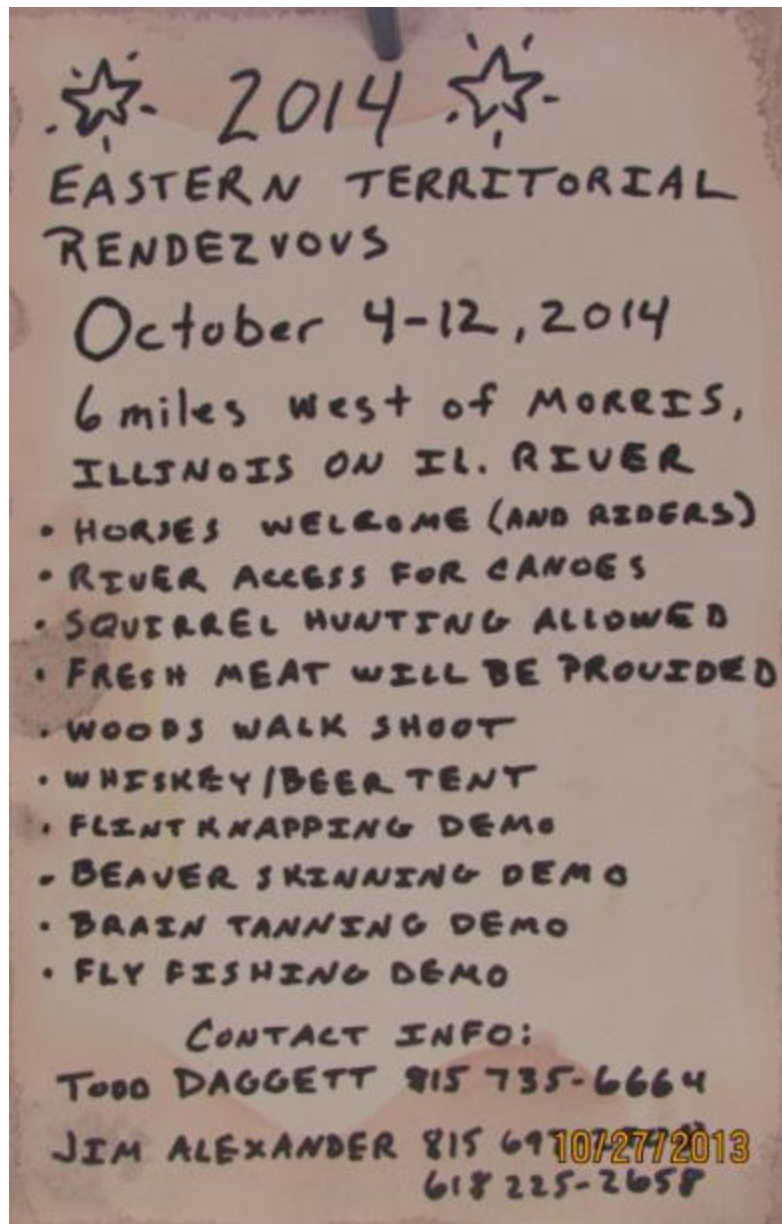
Approaching from the south on 65: Proceed north approximately 13 miles to the intersection of highway 17.

FROM THE INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAYS 65 & 17 proceed east thru Sterling to 195th St North on 195th to Welch Rd (approximately 1 mile) East on Welch approximately 3/4 mile, look for signs near an entrance on the south side of the road, near an aluminum gate.

Once thru the gate, take a sharp left, & follow the road (it is sand, not yellow brick) to the parking area. There will be a sign in the parking area directing people to the camping area.

This site affords a parking area secluded from the camping area, yet not greatly distant. It also affords a well and an outhouse, but both are conveniently distanced from where we intend to pitch camp.

Upcoming Events



Todd Daggett: 815-735-6664

Jim Alexander: 815-697-2708 or 618-225-2658