

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 26, 2013

**CONTACT:** Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,  
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

### **Lewis & Clark's Ordway "visiting" April history book club meeting**

PIERRE, S.D. -- A major contributor to the Lewis and Clark Expedition's success will come to life at the April meeting of the History and Heritage Book Club.

Sgt. John Ordway will be portrayed by Arch Ellwein when the book club meets at 7 p.m. CDT on Monday, April 8, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The free event is sponsored by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the South Dakota State Historical Society Press and the Encounters on the Prairie – Central South Dakota Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Everyone is welcome to attend.

"Ordway was one of the few well-educated men recruited for the 1804-1806 expedition. He was the only member of the expedition to record a journal entry for every single day, and his well-written, vivid descriptions have provided important details about the expedition," said Michael Lewis, SDHSF president. The foundation is the non-profit, fundraising partner of the SDSHS.

Ellwein is making a return appearance to the History and Heritage Book Club. His portrayal of riverboat captain Grant Marsh in 2011 was well-received by book club members.

"We're pleased that Ellwein is returning to Pierre to give us insight into the expedition and its aftermath," Lewis said.

The program is made possible by a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

"This program is a first-person portrayal of the stalwart sergeant and gives a perspective often overlooked," said Ellwein, an actor, director, playwright and historian from Sidney, Mont. "The program is set in 1813, after the expedition. John Ordway is a successful farmer in the Tywappity bottom of Missouri Territory reminiscing about 'the greatest adventure of my life.'"

Artifacts such as beaver pelts, a Jefferson Peace Medal and a grizzly claw will be incorporated into Ellwein's presentation.

Ordway penned one of the expedition's most quoted documents when he wrote his parents, "I am now on an expedition to the westward, with Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clark, who are appointed by the President of the united States to go ... through the interior parts of North America. We are to ascend the Missouri River with a boat as far as it is

navigable and then go by land, to the western ocean, if nothing prevents ... This party consists of 25 picked Men of the army & country and I am So happy as to be one of them pick'd Men."

Ordway was born about 1775 in New Hampshire. He was a member of the U.S. Army when he was recruited to join the expedition that traveled from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean and back. As a sergeant, Ordway was responsible for one of the expedition's three squads. His responsibilities included issuing provisions, appointing guard duties, keeping all registers and records, and commanding the group during absences of Lewis and Clark.

After the expedition, Ordway sold his journal to Lewis and Clark for \$300 and left the army. He returned to New Hampshire, married and moved to Missouri to farm the land he was awarded for his service in the expedition. Most accounts state that Ordway and his wife died before 1817, leaving no children.

Book club selections are *The Men of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* by Charles G. Clarke and *The Lewis and Clark Journals* edited by Gary E. Moulton. These books, along with others about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, are available in the Heritage Stores at the Cultural Heritage Center and the Capitol.

For more information, call (605) 773-6006.

-30-

*The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota's history and heritage for future generations.*

*The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit [www.history.sd.gov](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*