

Trunks filled with treasures

Hands-on experience takes history from textbook reading to colorful imagination.

Writing with a real quill pen, petting an animal pelt and testing the flammability of flint and steel allowed students at Chamois Elementary School to step back into the era of Lewis and Clark.

Three local organizations have created trunks filled with such items taken on the 1804-1806 Corps of Discovery military expedition or that were probably commonplace for the day.

"This is good to get them interested in learning," said Principal Dee Luker. "You never know what kids will remember — even from a quill pen or fur.

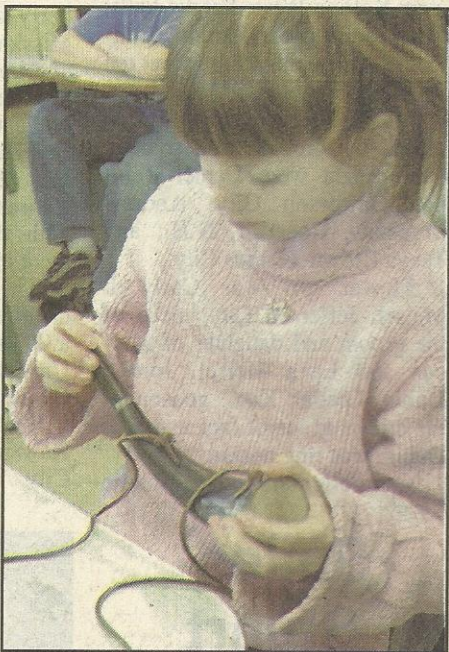
"We are a river town, this is our history," Luker said.

The trunks are available to Mid-Missouri schools and sometimes to adult groups through the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Manitou Bluffs Mid-Missouri Chapter Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., and Jefferson City Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Task Force.

"Teachers don't have time to do this kind of research," said Janise Manchester, who has made dolls in period costume for the latter two organizations' trunks.

"So we put it together for them, to help in the classroom."

The trunks also are filled with powder horns, beaver pelts, trading beads, leather moccasins, peace medals, card games, maps and other period items.



Chamois fourth-grader Addie Mengwasser examines a powder horn.