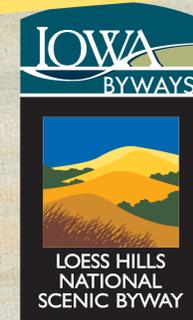


Lewis and Clark Expedition Visiting Blackbird's Grave

Significance of the Flag

Its pure white expanse respectfully acknowledged that Chief Blackbird had been a peace-loving leader, while its tricolored edging discreetly stated that his grave, and the homeland of his people, were now on American soil. (www.lewis-clark.org)

On August 11, 1804, Clark wrote: "...a hard wind accompanied with rain from the S.E. after the rain was over Capt. Lewis myself & 10 men ascended the Hill on the L.S. (larboard side) under which there was Some fine Springs to the top of a high point where the 'Mahars King Black Bird' was buried 4 years ago. A mound of earth about 12 (ft.) Diameter at the base & 6 feet high is raised over him turfed, and a pole 8 feet high in the center on this pole we fixed a white flag bound with red Blue & white." Legend is that Chief Blackbird was buried sitting erect on his horse so as to be able to see the traders as they ascended the Missouri River. After descending to the river and proceeding upstream, they "passed a creek in a Deep bend to the L.S. called by the Mahars 'Wau can di Peeche' (Great Spirit is bad) on this creek & Hills near it about 400 of the Mahar Died with the Small pox..." The expedition camped that night after traveling 17 miles, on the north side of the river (near the NE corner of present day Badger Lake).



The Loess Hills National Scenic Byway™ is a 220 mile paved route through the Loess Hills. The 16 excursion loops make up an additional 185 miles (some gravel) for the more adventuresome!



Blackbird's Grave, a Back View, Prairies Enameled with Flowers.
Oil on canvas by George Catlin, 1832. Smithsonian American Art Museum.



www.iowabyways.org
www.visitloesshills.org

This project was made possible by a funding award from
the National Park Service and Outdoor Foundation.

Coordinated by Golden Hills RC&D.
www.goldenhillsrcd.org

Additional funding provided by MidAmerican Energy
and the Parks to People Loess Hills Missouri River Region.