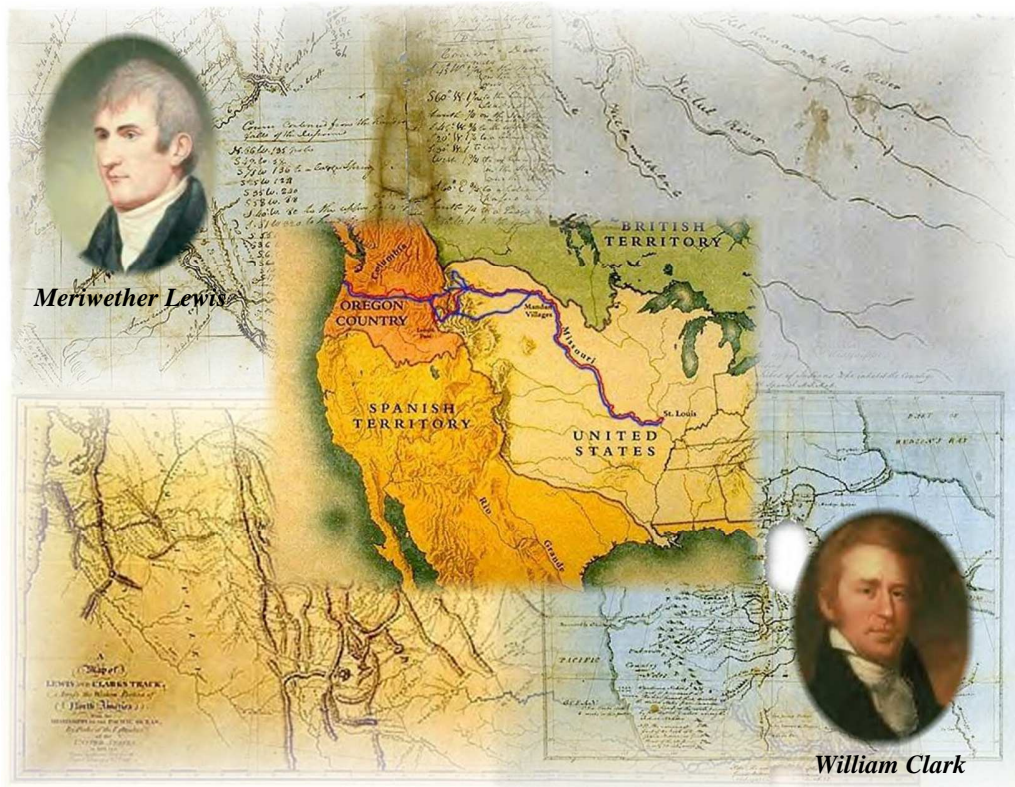


# LEWIS & CLARK

## AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN

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*Top Map: Lewis and Clark's Outbound Route Shown in Red, Inbound in Blue*

Meriwether Lewis, Secretary to President Thomas Jefferson, was chosen by Jefferson to serve as captain to lead the Corps of Discovery on a journey into the unknown to explore the uncharted West. Jefferson believed that there was a passageway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. If so, this would open a world of opportunity for the Americans. There was not a passageway between the two oceans, but the only way to find out was to plan an expedition to explore this land. Because of the lack of detail in maps circa 1803, Lewis had a map collector make a special map that showed North America from the Pacific coast to the Mississippi. This map showed everything that was known up to the Mandan villages. It even showed what the Rockies might look like, but the area that lay between the Mandans west was blank. The only way to fill that blank was to have somebody walk that territory to measure it and describe the people, the rivers and mountains, and plant life, not to mention the commercial and agricultural possibilities of the regions. Jefferson won an approval from Congress for this visionary project on February 28, 1803. This adventurous endeavor would become one of America's greatest stories ever told.

Meriwether Lewis wanted to recruit his good friend William Lewis as his co-captain. Lewis served under Clark when he was captain of the regular army during which time they became very good friends. Lewis wondered if Clark would accept this position for the mission because he didn't want Clark to think he would be serving under him. He wanted him as an equal. He asked Clark to join him by writing him, *"If there is anything ...which would induce you to participate with me in it's fatigues, it's dangers and it's honors, believe me there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasure in sharing them as with yourself."* In Clark's response when accepting the position, he wrote back saying, *"My friend I assure you no man lives with whom I would prefer to undertake such a trip as yourself."* Both were a perfect

choice to lead the Corps of Discovery, which consisted of 34 members, the 34<sup>th</sup> being Captain Lewis' Newfoundland dog named Seaman. Lewis and Clark were both six-footed Virginian army officers who were also experienced outdoorsman.

To prepare for the journey that lied ahead, Lewis was educated for months learning everything from astronomy, botany and navigation to medicine and biology. He also spent a lot of time gathering up all the supplies that the expedition was going to need. With the \$2,500 Congress allocated for the expedition, Lewis accumulated almost two tons of supplies. Some of those supplies consisted of mathematical instruments like surveyor's and hand compasses, quadrants, telescopes, thermometers, sextants, plotting instruments and chronometers. He gathered camping supplies like pliers and chisels, handsaws and hatchets, steels for striking to make fire, cloth to be oiled and sewn into tents and sheets, fishing hooks and lines, writing paper and ink, soap and so on. He also bought presents to give to the Indians. They included pocket mirrors, sewing needles and scissors, sewing thread and silk ribbon, ivory combs and handkerchiefs, yards of bright-colored cloth and colorful beads, etc. He gathered clothing for the members of the corps like coats, socks, flannel shirts and stockings. He stocked up on arms and ammunitions along with medicine and medical supplies. He even made sure they had a traveling library, which consisted of books like Barton's Elements of Botany, a four-volume dictionary, tables for finding longitude and latitude amongst others. He made sure that the corps was prepared for their upcoming journey.

Among the original members recruited for the corps, two were dismissed before they reached Fort Mandan. Private Moses Reed was dismissed being convicted of desertion and Private John Newman was dismissed for being convicted of mutinous acts. Newman was also sentenced to 100 lashes on his bare backs. Both stayed with the group during the winter at Fort

Mandan, named after the Mandan Indians who helped them, but had to perform hard labor as part of their punishment, after which they were sent down river. Two French-Canadian fur traders were recruited as interpreters and to replace Reed and Newman. Their names were Jean Baptiste LePage and Toussaint Charbonneau. Charbonneau brought along his Shoshone Indian wife named Sacagawea, meaning Bird Woman in Hiditsa, and their infant son named Jean Baptiste Charbonneau. Captain Clark nicknamed the infant "Pompy. Pompy was only fifty-five days old when the corps left Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805. Sacagawea, being the only woman of the corps, was an asset to the expedition because she could speak Shoshone and Hiditsa. Along the way they encountered her band of Indians, which was lead by her brother who she hadn't seen in about five years. Because of this, the corps was able to get much needed horses from her people. Her husband, Charbonneau could speak Hidatsa and French. Out of all the members of the corps, those who distinguished themselves based on their contributions to the mission were treated individually as unique members. Of all 33 there were a total of twelve who made no special mark, but Lewis gave praise and thanks to them as well for sticking it out. Clark took with them his slave named York who was treated as an equal to the other members of the corps. York played a big role in the expedition. He hunted, cooked and performed hard labor along with staying faithful to Clark and the expedition. Clark granted York his freedom about ten years after the completion of the expedition. It is reported that he died of cholera sometime before 1832. During this very long journey, Lewis and Clark kept journals that told all the stories of their adventures. The journals told of all the Indian tribes they met along the way and every thing there was to tell about the land they walked. The journals even consisted of drawings of fish and plants and so on.

Lewis and Clark made it through many dangerous obstacles during their mission almost meeting their death on numerous occasions. At the beginning of the trek up the Missouri they stopped at a place called Tavern Cave. At this place sandstone cliffs stood three hundred feet high along the southern side of the river. Lewis and Clark decided to climb to a huge cavern located at the top so that they could engrave their names into a register located in the tavern. Lewis slipped and fell about twenty feet, but saved himself from falling any farther by driving his knife into a crevice of the rock. Another time Lewis poisoned himself by tasting ore they found in a bluff. He saved himself that time by purging himself with salts. During an elk-hunting trip in August of 1806, Lewis was accidentally shot in the thigh by Pierre Cruzatte. At first Lewis thought Blackfeet shot him. Cruzatte admitted his mistake when the corps found no evidence of the Indians. Lewis endured a very painful healing process, but did forgive Cruzatte. Captain Clark was the expedition's cartographer keeping careful compass records, measuring distances and producing detailed strip maps for areas between major landmarks. He kept notes on everything from native botanical and zoological specimens to potential mineral deposits.

At the end of the expedition, Lewis returned home in Albemarle County, Virginia to spend Christmas with his mother. Afterwards, he went to Washington to receive his rewards for successfully completing the expedition. He received \$1,228, a warrant for 1,600 acres of land, and was named Governor of the territory of Upper Louisiana. He then traveled to Philadelphia to find editors and publishers for the journals he and Clark kept. He began to have a drinking problem, which caused problems in his relationship with Jefferson, not to mention it caused him to delay returning to St. Louis to begin his duties as governor. He was a year late. After fleeing St. Louis he mysteriously died on October 10, 1809 from two gunshot wounds, one in the forehead and one in the breast while staying at a roadhouse along the Natchez Trace. With many

robbers coming up and down the river in this area, nobody knows if it was murder or suicide. Today is the 196 anniversary of Lewis' death. In 1846 a monument was erected in his honor next to the tavern where he was buried. Clark's awards for successfully completing the expedition were \$1,228, a warrant for 1,600 acres of land and a double appointment as Brigadier General of Militia and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Upper Louisiana Territory. In 1808, Clark married Julia Hancock. They later had a son and named him Meriwether Lewis Clark in honor of Lewis. After hearing of Lewis' death and going to Washington to visit Lewis' family and President Jefferson, Clark went on to Philadelphia to arrange for the rewriting of the journals they kept of the expedition. Along with Clark's map, they were finally published in 1814. Clark later became Governor of the Missouri Territory before Missouri became a state. Throughout his life he was well respected by Native American, traders and trappers. He died of natural causes on September 1, 1838 in St. Louis.

What a great adventure this must have been. Mapping over 7700 miles of uncharted territory and opening western routes for settlers. Thomas Jefferson formed a treaty between the settlers and the Indians, which was signed by both Lewis and Clark. America grew by about one million square miles.