



▲ French Colonial Possessions



▲ Napoleon Bonaparte

## QUICK FACT

## THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

- The Louisiana Purchase did not include Washington and the Pacific Northwest. These lands were not owned by any European or American power. Jefferson instructed Lewis and Clark to journey to the Pacific Ocean so that America could stake a claim to the region.

## THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

Captain Gray's discovery of the Columbia River was important to the United States. However, the most important United States expedition was conducted by **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark**. This was the first major overland expedition into the Pacific Northwest. The **Lewis and Clark Expedition** was conducted from 1804 to 1806. To understand the reasons for this expedition it is necessary to explain why President **Thomas Jefferson** purchased the **Louisiana Territory**, also called the **Louisiana Purchase**, from the French in 1803.

## French Revolution

Shortly after the United States achieved its independence from Great Britain, the **French Revolution** occurred. In 1789, the people of France revolted against King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette. Both were executed in 1793. During the following bloodbath, called the Reign of Terror (1790-1793), France's political and social upheaval was extremely violent. France was in a state of anarchy and civil war.

**Napoleon Bonaparte** soon rose to power in France. In 1799, Napoleon gained total control of the French government. In 1801, he was proclaimed Emperor of the First French Republic. Napoleon set out to restore the power and prestige of France. His aggressive territorial expansion resulted in the **Napoleonic Wars** in Europe.

Napoleon also wanted to re-establish a French colony in the central section of North America. In 1801, France gained the Louisiana Territory from Spain, thereby controlling the vast region between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.

## New Orleans

The French acquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain. This shift in control changed the policies of the United States. When Spain controlled the mouth of the Mississippi River and the lands west of the river, the United States was not concerned. Then France acquired the lands west of the Mississippi River and gained the port of **New Orleans**. This became a serious issue for the United States.

France could now blockade the Mississippi. By doing so, France could prevent goods from being shipped down-river to the port of New Orleans. President Jefferson knew how important the port was to the interior of the United States. So, he sent a team of three men to Paris to purchase West Florida and New Orleans from Napoleon.

## FOCUS ON

## The Louisiana Purchase ...

Americans remember the Louisiana Purchase as one of the great land purchases in history. But from the French perspective the sale made sense. With the Americans in the east and the British in Canada, France had no way of protecting the Louisiana territory. The French figured it was only a matter of time before either the British or Americans took the land by force and they had no desire to defend it through war. Napoleon viewed the sale of the territory as a victory because France received a large sum of money for lands that they could not keep anyway.

## CONNECTING TO AMERICAN HISTORY

## Thomas Jefferson ...

Most Americans know Thomas Jefferson as the third President of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence. But Jefferson was more than a politician. He was a scientist, architect, farmer, inventor, and eternal student. Jefferson is widely regarded as one of the most intelligent individuals to have ever lived. His wide-ranging interests are reflected in the instructions given to Lewis and Clark. The Lewis and Clark expedition was not just a journey of exploration, but also one of science and learning.



▲ The Corps of Discovery at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River.

## The Louisiana Purchase

Much to the surprise of Jefferson's team, Napoleon offered to sell the entire territory for only 15 million dollars. President Jefferson quickly agreed to the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. President Jefferson organized an overland expedition to the nation's new land. The group was to discover, chart, and map the new territory.

## Expedition Goals

President Jefferson chose Meriwether Lewis to lead an overland expedition. Lewis was President Jefferson's personal secretary. President Jefferson

called the expedition the **Corps of Discovery**. Lewis then chose a close friend, William Clark, to co-lead the expedition west. Their travels would take them across the Louisiana Territory to the Pacific Ocean.

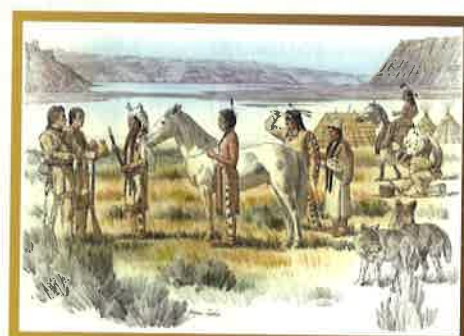
Lewis and Clark were ordered to collect information on the plants and animals along their journey. They were to map major features and rivers. They were to find the source of the Missouri and Columbia rivers. Many people believed these two rivers' headwaters were close together. They were also to establish good relations with the Indians. Finally, Lewis and Clark were to strengthen the United States' claim to the West and the Pacific Northwest.



▲ Routes of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806.



Meeting with Plateau Indians



Trading for Horses



Rapids on the Columbia River

AIDING THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

The Nez Percé ...



The Nez Percé Indians are a Plateau tribe whose traditional homelands laid in southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and western Idaho. Unlike many other Plateau and Plains tribes, the Nez Percé were not hostile to the arrival of white explorers and fur trappers. They welcomed the opportunity to trade with the whites and obtain foreign goods.

Even though the Nez Percé had a peaceful reputation, they were respected throughout the region as great warriors. In part, this reputation was based on their superior horsemanship. The Nez Percé obtained the horse sometime in the 1700s. The horse changed their culture. It allowed them to hunt new game such as the buffalo and to travel longer distances. The Nez Percé even bred their own horse breed, the Appaloosa. The Appaloosa horse were quite valued by Indians and whites alike for their stamina and unique appearance. Lewis and Clark considered the Nez Percé and their horse key allies during their journey.

The Chinook ...



The Chinook Indians lived along the banks of the Columbia River from the Dalles to the Pacific Ocean. Throughout the Pacific Northwest, the Chinook Indians gained a reputation as prolific traders. They were middlemen, carrying goods from the Coastal tribes inland to the Plateau tribes and back again. The Chinook were so noted for trade that their language became the basis for communication between traders in the Pacific Northwest.

The Chinook Indians adapted to the arrival of whites and made them trading partners. Chinook Indians maintained good relations with European and American explorers and traders. When Lewis and Clark arrived the Chinook Indians welcomed them. A local band of the Chinook, the Clatsop, allowed Lewis and Clark to build a fort on their land during the winter of 1805-1806 before the expedition returned home.

York ...



York was the first black man to travel across the United States overland to the Pacific Ocean. York was the slave of William Clark. He was the same age as Clark. The two men were raised together since childhood and were very close. York was a critical member of the expedition performing the same tasks as his free white companions. In addition, York was given the right to vote in all democratic decisions on the journey, making him the first black man in America to have his vote count.

Along the journey York was a curiosity amongst the Indians, as many had never seen a black man before. After the conclusion of the expedition, York asked for his freedom, but was denied by Clark. Even after this setback, York continued his petition to be freed, but it is unknown if Clark ever granted the request.

Sacajawea ...

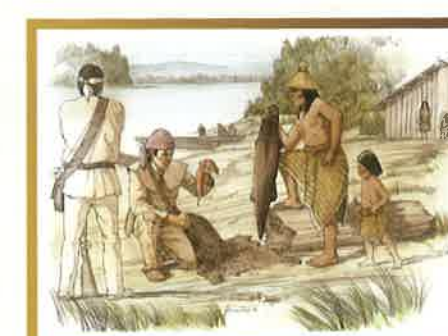


Sacajawea was a young Shoshone woman who accompanied the Lewis and Clark Expedition and served as an interpreter. Sacajawea was born in Idaho, but was captured by Hidatsa warriors and brought to their homelands as a slave in present day South Dakota. There, she married Toussaint Charbonneau and bore him a son shortly before the expedition began in earnest.

As the lone woman and mother on the expedition, life was difficult for Sacajawea. But she performed her duties well and earned the respect of the entire crew. Her knowledge of local languages and cultures was a valuable asset to the expedition. Lewis and Clark even gave her the right to vote on issues put before the expedition members. Thus, Sacajawea is both one of the first women and Indians to have the right to vote in America. Unfortunately, little is known about her life after the expedition. Historians do not even know when or where she died.



Arriving at Station Camp



Trading with the Chinook Indians



Voting on where to spend the winter

# Lewis & Clark

The Corps of Discovery's Scientific Research



Meriwether Lewis

Meriwether Lewis was not a scientist. He was a former army man who was comfortable in the wildernesses of the eastern United States. Lewis received most of his formal education from President Jefferson himself while serving as his secretary. While under Jefferson's wing, Lewis learned about all the subjects of interest to the President. In the weeks before the expedition, Jefferson sent Lewis to Philadelphia to learn from experts about map making, botany, zoology, medicine, and engineering.



Cataloguing the Journey

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was truly a scientific journey. They were under strict orders from President Jefferson to carefully record all of their observations. Thus, after every exhausting day of hiking, canoeing, and climbing, Lewis and Clark sat by candlelight writing and drawing in their journals.



Leaf of a tree  
William Clark's Journal

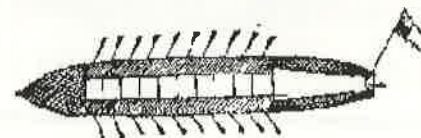


William Clark

Like Lewis, William Clark had little formal education. He had served as a captain in a militia. There he learned surveying techniques, basic map making skills, outdoor survival, and minor engineering techniques. However, what Clark lacked in training he made up for in discipline and work ethic. Clark knew how to lead men and inspire them to overcome hardship. It was for these skills, Lewis asked him to co-lead the expedition.



Douglas fir Leaf  
Meriwether Lewis's Journal  
February 9, 1806



Keelboat Discovery

White Salmon Trout  
Meriwether Lewis's Journal  
March 16, 1806



Indian Canoe  
Meriwether Lewis's Journal  
February 1, 1806

Head of a Brant  
Meriwether Lewis's Journal  
March 15, 1806

Shoshone Smoking-pipe  
Meriwether Lewis's Journal  
August 13, 1805



President  
Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson was a man of great scientific curiosity. But he had many more questions about the lands of the Louisiana Purchase than one expedition could answer. As a result, his instructions to Lewis and Clark were a compromise. He wanted them to discover all that would be useful to the United States. These included descriptions of Indians, Indian culture, animals, plants, soils, rivers, water bodies, and more. He wanted to know these things so he could decide how best to use the land for the United States.



William Clark's Journal  
Map of Great Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, October 22-23, 1805

The lands west of the Mississippi until the Pacific were virtually unknown to Europeans and Americans. When the Corps of Discovery embarked on their journey, no maps existed of the area. With no documents to guide them, map making became a major priority of both Lewis and Clark. Both men made dozens of maps during the expedition. Their work gave Americans their first glimpse into the western half of North America.

## QUICK FACTS

## INDIANS OF THE WEST

- Before departing, many members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition believed hostile Indians would be their greatest danger. However, relations between the expedition members and Indians were very peaceful. In fact, Indian aid was essential to the survival and success of the expedition.

## WILLIAM CLARK'S RANK

- History remembers Lewis and Clark as co-leaders and captains of the Corps of Discovery. In fact, Lewis officially outranked Clark and was a captain, while Clark was a lieutenant. However, none in the expedition knew this fact and Lewis never treated Clark as if he had a lower rank.

## POMPEY'S PILLAR

- Lewis and Clark carefully documented their journey with maps, enabling modern scholars to recreate their trail. However, no artifacts of the journey have ever been discovered along the route. The only exception is on a cliff overlooking the Yellowstone River in Montana, where Clark carved an inscription in the rock that still exists. It is the only physical evidence of the journey along the entire trail.



## CREATING SALT

- The members of the Lewis and Clark expedition spent much time during the winter of 1805 and 1806 making salt. They traveled from their winter home at Fort Clatsop to the ocean to gather saltwater from which they extracted salt. The salt was essential for preserving food on the journey back home.

## Journey to the Pacific

Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and 29 other men began their journey to the Pacific Ocean on May 14, 1804. The Corps of Discovery left **St. Louis** and traveled by keelboat up the Missouri River to **Fort Mandan**, North Dakota.

During the winter of 1804-1805, they built a trading post. Their group lived with the **Mandan** Indians during that bitter cold winter. In the spring of 1805, the Corps left the Mandan and followed the Missouri River. They followed the river west to its headwaters near Three Forks, Montana.

## Missouri River

Their journey was difficult and dangerous. The men frequently had to carry boats and supplies around rapids and waterfalls. They made their way through extremely dense vegetation and challenging terrain. Finally, they reached the confluence, or joining, of three nearly equal-sized rivers. These were the Madison, Gallatin, and Jefferson rivers. They determined this to be the headwaters of the Missouri River.

## Rocky Mountains

Abandoning their canoes, the Corps of Discovery had to cross the rugged Rocky Mountains. They knew it was important to do so before the beginning of winter. As winter set in, things became desperate. The men were on foot without horses.

Earlier, at Fort Mandan, Lewis and Clark had hired two guides, a Frenchman named **Toussaint Charbonneau** and his young Shoshone wife, **Sacajawea**. They were essential to the team. Without Sacajawea, the expedition might have failed. One of her most important contributions came when she convinced her brother, a Shoshone chief, to give Lewis and Clark nine horses. Without the horses, the expedition would have never crossed the Rocky Mountains before winter.

The expedition had another lucky break when they met the friendly **Nez Percé** Indians. The Nez Percé gave them an additional 29 horses. More importantly though, the Nez Percé described the easiest route to their final goal, the Pacific Ocean.

As Lewis and Clark were reaching the Pacific Ocean, they were also developing valuable relationships with the local Indians. So far their expedition had been very successful.

## Fort Clatsop

Following the Nez Percé's directions, the Corps of Discovery traveled the Clearwater River to where it joined the Snake River. Then they canoed down the Snake River to where it joined the Columbia River. The remainder of the journey was much easier. They moved quickly downstream, stopping only to portage around rapids and waterfalls, following the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean.

Lewis and Clark planned to build their winter shelter on the north bank of the Columbia. However, upon the advice of the local **Chinook** Indians, they crossed the Columbia and built **Fort Clatsop** near present-day Astoria, Oregon. The winter at Fort Clatsop proved to be as difficult as the winter at Fort Mandan. The men were tired, wet, and cold. They were anxious to get on their way back to Missouri.

## The Return Trip

Lewis and Clark had successfully completed the first leg of their round trip. They spent the winter of 1805-1806 at Fort Clatsop. Early in the spring of 1806, they left Fort Clatsop for St. Louis. The return journey was similar to their route to the Pacific, except William Clark explored the Yellowstone River. The Corps of Discovery returned to St. Louis on September 23, 1806.

## The Legacy of Lewis and Clark

The expedition of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery marked a turning point in the history of the Pacific Northwest and the United States. Until the Louisiana Purchase, few Americans had aspirations for expanding into the lands west of the Mississippi River. To most American citizens, these lands were a mysterious and unknown wilderness. Lewis and Clark took the mystery out of the region.

Through careful scientific observation and the collection of specimens that were sent back to President Jefferson, the American public became acquainted with the rest of the North American continent.

Aside from observation and collection, Lewis and Clark made the first detailed maps of the region. Their maps became the road maps for fur traders, missionaries, and pioneers who later ventured into the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, and the West Coast. Without the maps created by Lewis and Clark, the migration into the western United States might never have happened.

For the history of the Pacific Northwest, the expedition of Lewis and Clark was of preeminent importance. The Louisiana Purchase did not include the current states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. As far as Europeans and Americans were concerned these lands were free for the taking.

By being the first whites to name, chart, and map these areas, Lewis and Clark strengthened the American claim to the region. The impact of their expedition would be felt in the decades to come as more and more Americans traveled to and settled in the Pacific Northwest.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

Exploration of the Pacific Northwest took place between the 16th and 19th centuries. European and American explorers came by sea and overland. Spain, Great Britain, and the United States sought control of the Pacific Northwest region.

Explorers such as Juan Perez, James Cook, John Meares, George Vancouver, and Robert Gray came by ship. They explored Vancouver Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, Inland Passage, Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and the mouth of the Columbia River.

Numerous overland explorers crossed the North American continent during this period. The most successful overland explorers were William Clark and Meriwether Lewis. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was America's most significant exploration.

Exploration, either by land or sea, initiated a great change in the history of the region. After the initial period of exploration, more and more white Europeans and Americans came to the region. This brought about the first significant cultural change between Europeans, Americans, and the Indians of the Pacific Northwest. For the first time in the history of the Pacific Northwest, whites and Indians interacted with one another. The subsequent decades of history in Washington would be defined by this interaction.