

Journals of Lewis and Clark

May 20, 1804 St. Louis, Missouri

I, Meriwether Lewis, am preparing to set forth on a journey that is unprecedented by any expedition in the history of mankind. With the 50 others selected to join me in the Corps of Discovery, we will fulfill the journey set in motion two years ago by President Jefferson. The President has been attempting to set this plan into action for years in order to explore the territory recently acquired in the Louisiana Purchase and beyond. I was admittedly a bit skeptical as to the success of this expedition when the President first proposed it to me, but it seems that we have newly acquired information on the territory. President Jefferson's maps of the territory spanning from Nebraska to the Mandan Villages as well as the discovery of the Columbia River from Captain Robert Gray have given us a fair idea of where we are headed. There seems to be a sense of urgency in the President's planning, which I expect is a result of Alexander Mackenzie's recently-published *Voyages from Montreal ... through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans* urging the British to develop a Transcontinental Route and secure fur trading in the West. When we talked about the objectives of the trip, he outlined creating a path for the American fur trade, gaining trust from the Indians over the Spanish and British so as to open up trade with them, and recording careful observations of land and resources in Western territories. So, with these goals in mind, I have selected each of the 50 men to take part in the expedition, appointed a friend of mine from the Army known as William Clark as my second-in-command, and talked extensively to fur traders who have previously traveled the Missouri and secured their maps of these regions. Despite the hours I have spent preparing for our voyage, I have spent many sleepless nights during the last few weeks pondering the enormity of this task. Not only are we hilariously unaware of what lies ahead, but also of who we might encounter. We have little knowledge of the animals that lie to the West and even less of the Natives. Still, we have prepared for months and if we are not ready for our journey by now, we never will be in the future.<sup>1 23</sup>

Excerpt from Clark's letter to Lewis (July 29, 1803): "The enterprise &c. is such as I have long anticipated and am much pleased with, and as my situation in life will admit of my absence the length of time necessary to accomplish such an undertaking I will cheerfully join you in an

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<sup>1</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. U of Nebraska P, n.d. Web. 28 Jan. 2015. <<http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/index.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

'official Charrector' as mentioned in your letter, and partake of the dangers, difficulties, and fatigues, and I anticipate the honors & rewards of the result of such an enterprise... My friend I do assure you that no man lives with whom I would perfur to undertake Such a Trip &c. as yourself."

May 21, 1804

Today is the day we finally departed on our journey and although I feel that I have prepared myself and my crew in every way possible, I cannot help but feel that we are grossly underprepared for what we are about to take part in. However, as I looked out upon my rows of men, glistening with the sweat of their efforts to plunge their paddles forward into the glimmering Missouri River and rip our boat still faster forward, a sense of confidence unknown thus far began to well up inside me. I take in what is around me, the wildflowers dotting the riverbanks, the steady rush of the brown river beneath our boat, and the hint of the coming sunset promising relief from our day's labor. From this point forward, only the members of the crew will experience these images, so I hope to document them in this journal in an effort to bring them home in some form. After our parting words with family, friends, and a nervous but enthused president, we left from the St. Charles River in Missouri from where we cross the Mississippi River before continuing up the Missouri River. Lewis and I have decided upon a goal pace of about 14 to 20 miles traveled each day, although with the potential obstacles we are facing this number could vary widely either way. The "Corps of Discovery," as we have come to be known, is made up of myself and Lewis as well as about 50 other men traveling west on a 55 foot keelboat and 2 pirogues. Our crew is made up of two blacksmiths, a carpenter, a few expert boatmen, a tanner, a slave by the name of York, with whom Clark has been friends since their youth, and others coming from the backwoods of the Ohio River Valley or Army posts or French settlements by the Mississippi. The first day has passed without encounters with Indians or conflict and we can only hope that it will continue this way.<sup>4 5</sup>

August 18, 1804

After much searching, we were finally able to meet not only the Chief of the Oto Tribe, Little Thief, but also the Chief of the Missouri Tribe, Big Horse. It has already been over two weeks since we arrived fully dressed in our uniforms, carrying our weapons, and extremely wary of what might happen when we got there. Upon our arrival, we immediately began to hand out the gifts of tobacco, beads, and paint to the natives we assumed to be high-ranking. At the time the chiefs were away hunting buffalo, so we dispatched a search team to look for them and alert them of our arrival. Discussion of trade and peace began immediately after the chiefs' return, but did not go at all in our favor. I reasoned with the chiefs to end their raids on the neighboring Omaha tribes and try to maintain peace in the Plains, but to no avail. The Oto and Missouri were much more concerned with establishing a reliable, open-trade system than they were with

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<sup>4</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>5</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

negotiating peace. So, we are leaving the tribes today with no success to speak of in the way of negotiations. Truthfully, the Indians did not seem impressed with our gifts so I suspect we are also leaving with little diplomatic success, which won't make the president happy. Another unfortunate lesson from this encounter is that we are gravely unequipped for relations with the Indians. Their culture are vastly different from our own and we underestimated how these differences might affect our abilities to communicate with them.<sup>67</sup>

August 20, 1804

Today marks the gravest encounter thus far of the journey: Sergeant Charles Floyd grew suddenly ill, complaining of abdominal pain, and died. Floyd is the first member of the Corps to be lost, and though I warned myself and those with me that death is a realistic possibility on such a treacherous voyage, I would be lying if I said I am not hoping it will be the last. The men's morale is low tonight and I can only hope we will be met with little conflict in the days ahead. Not one of us was equipped to be met with such hard news so early on in the expedition but we have a job to do and we will do it just the same. The threat of Indians weighs down heavily upon us all. I am optimistic that this mysterious group will seem less foreboding once we have encountered them, but for now my men remain armed and constantly on their guard in case of an attack. The president wishes us to establish friendly relations with them so I can only hope that our encounter will be peaceful.<sup>8</sup>

End of August

Note: animals encountered thus far include elk, deer, buffalo, beaver

September 30, 1804

The past few days have been some of the most stressful we have encountered thus far on our journey. After meeting the Yankton Sioux, who warned us about their Teton neighbors, we traveled North and encountered the Tetons themselves. In my own opinion, the Yankton's warnings were not misguided. The Tetons received our gifts of a medal, a coat, and a cocked

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<sup>6</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>7</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark- Tribes- Oto Indians." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Apr. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/record\\_tribes\\_015\\_2\\_7.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/record_tribes_015_2_7.html)>.

<sup>8</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

hat with extreme hostility and the Chief demanded one of our boats in exchange for safe passage. It seemed for a moment that the natives might attack us out of disappointment with our gifts. The conflict quickly escalated until I drew my sword and Lewis turned the keelboat's swivel gun on the Indians, braced at any moment for violence to break out. Somehow the issue was somewhat resolved before any fighting began and we were able to continue unharmed but very much disappointed with ourselves for failing one of our most important missions from President Jefferson: establishing good relations with the powerful Sioux.<sup>9</sup>

The only thing each tribe seems to share is their tan skin and long, unkempt black hair, which they don't seem to cut. The furs, paints, and beads seem to be different for each tribe with some Indians wearing feathers in their hair, others painting their entire face, and still others strung with intricate beading. Often our only hope of communicating with the Natives comes from Sacagawea or a translator living with the tribes.

Clark describing Yankton Sioux: August 30

"The Souix is a Stout bold looking people, (the young men hand Som) & well made, the greater part of them make use of Bows & arrows Some few fusees I observe among them not with Standing they live by the Bow & arrow... the Warriors are Verry much dekerated with Paint porcupin quils & feathers large leagins & mockersons, all with buffalow roabs of Different Colours. the Squars wore Peticots 7 and a white Buffalow robes with the black haird turned back over their necks & Shoulders."

Clark about the Tetons: "These are the vilest miscreants of the savage race Unless these people are reduced to order, by coercive measures, I am ready to pronounce that the citizens of the United States can never enjoy but partially the advantages which the Missouri presents"

October 1st, 1804

We arrived at the Hidasta and Mandan Tribe territory today at Fort Mandan in North Dakota where we will settle in for the winter before continuing our journey. We saw the first snow a few days ago so we are fortunate to have arrived here before the real beginning of winter. I have already set the men to building a fort to house us during our time here and protect us from both the harsh winter and the violent Sioux. Although I fully trust our hosts, the same cannot be said for the other tribes nearby. So, we will likely establish a guard to be on watch in case of an attack. The natives are adorned in body paint, headdresses of buffalo fur, and willow branches. An Indian known as Crow's Heart wears a necklace made with grizzly bear claws, which symbolize strength, courage, and accomplishment. Another member of the tribe, known as Sacagawea, will join us on our voyage and serve as a translator for other tribes we meet along

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<sup>9</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

the way. Her husband, a fur-trapper known as Toussaint Charbonneau who will also serve as a translator, and son, named Jean Baptiste, will also travel with us on our journey. Because Sacagawea was captured from a tribe in the Rocky Mountains, she will know both the western language and the western land well and seems to be an extremely valuable asset. The Indians have also shared with us valuable information on the Western geography and how to handle the various Indian tribes, especially the Shoshone from whom we hope to acquire horses.<sup>10 11</sup>

April 7, 1805

After a long, bitter winter, it is finally time to venture West into the new territory. The men have grown antsy to leave during our stay at Fort Mandan and I grew extremely tired of their complaints of boredom in the close quarters of the fort. Even my dog, Seaman, has begun to appear impatient, losing interest in hunting and guarding the camp. We sent a keelboat full of maps, letters, reports, and ethnological, zoological, and botanical specimens back home to President Jefferson. I imagine he will be extremely pleased with our progress thus far and the relations we have established with the Hidasta- we have already made the arrangements for our return stay with them. Although I sense the 33 men remaining are anxious for the year or two to come, there is also a buzz of excitement as we load the boats for our journey. After months and months of preparation, it is finally time to venture into the unknown...<sup>12 13</sup>

Quote from Lewis April 7, 1805

"this little fleet, while not quite so respectable as those of Columbus or Capt. Cook were still viewed by us with as much pleasure as those deservedly famed adventurers ever beheld theirs."

Quote from Lewis on April 21, 1805

"We saw immense herds of buffaloe Elk deer & Antelopes. Capt Clark killed a buffaloe and 4 deer in the course of his walk today; and the party with me killed 3 deer, 2 beaver and 4 buffaloe calves. the latter we found very delicious. I think it equal to any veal I ever tasted."

Quote from Lewis on April 18, 1804

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<sup>10</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

<sup>12</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

"I also saw several parcels of buffaloe's hair hanging on the rose bushes, which had been bleached by exposure to the weather and become perfectly white. it every appearance of the wool of the sheep, and tho' much finer and more silkey and soft. I am confident that an excellent cloth may be made of the wool of the Buffaloe."

Quote from Lewis April 26, 1805

"the man I had sent up the river this morning returned... he saw several of the bighorned animals in the couse of his walk; but they were so shy that he could not get a shoot at them; he found a large horn of one of these anamals which he brought with him." \*See page 90 for picture

May 3, 1805

Another frightening encounter today. Some of the tribes we have encountered along the way warned us about the massive grizzly bears that live in this part of the country. I assured the group that we musn't be so frightened because, unlike the Indians, we have rifles that can kill a bear in seconds if it must. So, we continued perhaps not as cautiously as we should have. The bear chased me at least 80 yards before one of our men was able to shoot it. Clark estimated the bear to weigh 500 lbs, but I imagine his prediction to be at least 100 lbs too small. Luckily I am physically intact and able to continue on our journey, but I think the men seem a bit more on edge today than they were yesterday. <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup>

Lewis describing grizzly bear:

"We had no means of weighing the monster; Capt Clark thought he would weigh 500 lbs. for my own part I think the estimate was too small by 100 lbs. he measured 8 Feet 7 ½ inches from the nose to the extremety of the hind feet... & 3 F. 11 I. around the neck... the heart particularly was as large as that of a large Ox. his maw was also ten times the size of a black bear and was filled with flesh and fish... this animal also feeds on roots and almost every species of wild fruit"

May 28, 1805

Today was overall both good and bad with events a bit less dramatic than encounters with Grizzly Bears or Indians. We almost lost a pirogue filled with journals and supplies today to a gust of wind, but luckily Sacagawea was able to save it. She has proven to be an extremely important asset to the group in more ways than one. On a more promising note, I caught the first glimpse of the Rockies today, something the group has been both dreading and

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<sup>14</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>15</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

anticipating. None of us is ready for the day when we will have to cross them, but they were unlike anything we have ever seen before.<sup>16</sup>

Quote from Lewis July 3, 1805

"We all beleive that we are now about to enter on the most perilous and difficult part of our voyage, yet I see no one repining; all appear ready to met those difficulties which wait us with resolution and becoming fortitude"<sup>17</sup>

Quote from Lewis July 19, 1805

"We entered much the most remarkable cliffs that we have yet seen... the river appears to have forced it's way through this immense body of solid rock for the distance of 5 ¾ miles... nor is ther in the 1st 3 miles of this distance a spot except one of a few yards in extent on which a man could rest the soal of his foot."<sup>18</sup>

June, 1805

We are currently crossing through the Great Plains, a region characterized by sweeping miles of flatlands and grass. I feel a bit lonely when I look out over their endless existence because it seems that our small crew is surrounded on all sides by emptiness. This loneliness is very beautiful though and I have grown fond of its views. The work is as trying as ever for the crew with mosquitoes larger than we have ever seen and a constant presence of sores and dysentery among the men. Some of the crew has taken to rubbing themselves with bear grease to keep away the mosquitoes, but we are finding this to make the smell and the sweat unbearable. Still, there is an undeniable, unconquerable optimism among the men that can only be explained by the progress we are making. All we must do to recover from a tough day is remind ourselves that we are venturing into land no American has ever seen before. There is also a sense of freedom about being on the plains. As I look about me, thousands of yards into the distance, I feel the American freedom and need to explore.

July 20, 1805

We came to a fork in the River a few weeks ago and were faced with one of our tougher decisions thus far. There was disagreement as to which path to take amongst the group, so we finally sent members of the parties both ways. I took a group on the Southern route in search of the Great Falls, which, as the Indians told us, would lead us to the Rockies, while Clark took another group on the second branch. I became the first white man to see the Great Falls on

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<sup>16</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>17</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.



June 13 and was filled with “an indescribable awe as to the immensity of the falls” which were not simply one waterfall as the Indians told us, but rather 5 that spanned for at least 12 miles. It was a relief once I finally heard “the agreeable sound of a fall of water” and felt “the spray arise above the plain like a column of smoke.” Similarly to our sighting of the Rockies, the amazement of the Great Falls was clouded with the foreboding knowledge that we would soon be forced to navigate around them, a task which became the hardest physical undertaking we have experienced this far into our expedition. After over a month spent traveling around the falls, we have only the briefest of pauses before embarking on our next challenge: replenishing our stock of horses.<sup>19 20</sup>

August 24, 1805

On August 11, I saw the first Indian since we left the Hidasta tribe in April. It was a Shoshone on horseback- a welcome sight to this group in need of horses. The Shoshone took both myself and Clark to Chief Cameahwait, who happened to be the brother of Sacagawea. She again proved invaluable by getting us horses which allowed us to continue our dream of reaching the Pacific. The price of the horses increased from a knife and shirt to a knife, a pistol, and 100 rounds of ammunition for only one horse (which was in bad condition), but we were still grateful to have acquired any horses at all. The Shoshone also informed us of a trail used by the Nez Perce Indians that led across the Continental Divide. With new horses and a new-found sense of direction, we are headed off once more in search of the Pacific.<sup>21</sup>

October 7, 1805

Quote from Lewis about getting horses July 27, 1805

“we begin to feel considerable anxiety with respect to the Snake Indians. if we do not find them or some other nation who have horses I fear the successful issue of our voyage will be very doubtful or at all events much more difficult in its accomplishment. we are now several hundred miles within the bosom of this wild and mountainous country, where game may rationally be expected shortly to become scarce and subsistence precarious without any information with respect to the country”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>20</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

<sup>21</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

The last month and a half of the journey have rivaled that spent crossing the Great Falls in its difficulty. We crossed the Continental Divide in August where we saw, to our dismay, the first snowfall of the season. Little did we know, this marked only the beginning of the long, arduous struggle to come. Hunting in the mountains proved to be more difficult than it was in the plains, and our food sources had already begun to dwindle. Luckily, we met the Flathead Indians once we crossed over into the Bitterroot Valley, from whom we acquired the horses we needed to traverse the mountain range looming ahead. It took much gesturing and gift-giving to convince the natives not only that we meant no harm, but also that we were in desperate need of horses. The next 11 days spent traveling through the mountains were of the most difficult I have experienced at this point in my life. We were forced to eat 3 of our horses to escape starvation for ourselves and for our remaining horses. Finally, we were greeted by the Nez Perce Indians on the other side of the mountains, who were both friendly and equipped with dried fish and roots. We have spent our remaining days camped alongside the Clearwater River recovering from our mountainous trek and near-starvation. Although I am anxious to continue our journey, I am hesitant to leave the comfort of the Nez Perce for what lies ahead if it will be anything like what we conquered most recently.<sup>23</sup>

Quote from Clark September 14, 1805

"The Mountains which we passed to day much worst than yesterday the last excessively bad & Thickley Strowed with falling timber & Pine Spruc fur Mackmatak & Tamerack, Steep & Stoney our men and horses much fatigued"

Quote from Clark September 16, 1805

"began to Snow about 3 hours before Day and Continud all day the snow in The morning 4 Inches deep on The old Snow, and by night we found it from 6 to 8 Inches deep... I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life, indeed I was at one time fearfull my feet would freeze in the thin mockersons which I wore"

Quote from Lewis September 18, 1805

"We dined & suped on a skant proportion of portable soupe, a few canesters which, a little bears oil and about 20 lbs. of candles form our stock of provision, the only resources being our guns & packhorses. the first is but a poor dependance in our present situation where there is nothing upon earth exept ourselves and a few small pheasants, small grey Squirrels, and a bluebird of the vulter kind about the size of a turtle dove or jay bird."

November, 1805

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<sup>23</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

After much concerted effort, we have finally reached the Pacific Ocean, and what a sight it is. The route we took here involved taking the Clearwater River to the Snake River, then finally to the Columbia River. We found our way through the Cascade Mountains by way of the Columbia River and arrived at what I assumed to be the Pacific on November 7, but was rather the estuary of Columbia a mere 20 miles from the sea. Our progress was further hampered by a savage storm that trapped us where we were for 3 weeks. There were winds like I have never seen before and storms that can only be described as "Pacific". Then, finally, we reached the wondrous cliffs of the West Coast. The ocean here is so distinct from that of the East Coast and I worry there aren't enough sketches in the world that will allow me to convey the expanse of jagged cliffs to those back home. We have been scanning the coastline for a ship to take us home, but to no avail thus far. At this point, it is time to begin preparations for what appears to be a long winter ahead.<sup>25</sup>

Quote from Clark November 7

"Ocian in view! O! the joy."

"Great joy in camp. We are in View of the Ocian, this great Pacific Octean which we been So long anxious to See. and the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distinctly"

December 20, 1805

Life here at Fort Clatsop has become very uneventful over the past month or so. Named for the Clatsop tribe, we built the fort south of the Columbia and have been confined here ever since. Fort life can only be described as monotonous, filled with the same food, jobs, and sights. It rains constantly on the coast and none of us are eating well. We have spent our days making moccasins and clothes, collecting and storing food, and making maps and journals of our experience thus far. Although this time provides us with the opportunity to prepare for what lies ahead and reflect on what lies in the past, the men are growing extremely antsy with the passing days. My eyes remain trained on the horizon in search of the British trade ships that are rumored to have stopped here in the past, hoping to find a fresh food supply or voyage home. Although I will continue to look, I am growing more and more doubtful that a ship will ever appear on that horizon before we begin our journey home.<sup>26</sup>

Lewis eating whale blubber January 5, 1806

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<sup>25</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>26</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

“it was white & not unlike the fat of Poark, tho’ the texture was more spongy and somewhat coarser. I had a part of it cooked and found it very palatable and tender, it resembled the beaver or the dog in flavour it may appear somewhat extraordinary tho’ it is a fact that the flesh of the beaver and dog possess a great affinity in point of flavour”

Clark December 10, 1805

“a Cloudy rainy morning very early I rose and walked on the Shore of the Sea coast and picked up Several Curious Shells. I Saw Indians walking up and down the beach which I did not at first understand the Cause of, one man came to where I was and told me that he was in Search of fish which is frequently thrown up on Shore and left by the tide, and told me [in English] the ‘Sturgeon was very good’ and that the water when it retired left fish which they eat”

March 23, 1806

After much pondering, Clark and I have decided that it is time to begin our journey homeward. It seems to me that the men have been ready for weeks, but the timing of our departure is critical if we wish to be successful in our journey. We must wait until the snow is melted before we can hope to travel over the mountains once more, but we mustn’t wait too long or else the Missouri will be frozen over when we return to the Plains, which would mean another long, harsh winter spent away. We have readied our 3 dugouts, purchased a fourth from the Indians, and made plans to steal another just before we leave. I do not like the thought of stealing from the natives, especially because of the relations we are meant to establish with them, but we cannot afford what we will most certainly need to complete our journey. It is finally time to leave the dreary Fort Clatsop and re-embark on our journey home.<sup>27</sup>

April 28, 1806

The past month has almost made me nostalgic for the dull days of life at Fort Clatsop. Things began badly when the Indians coming downriver spoke to us of a harsh winter ahead- our men were already hungry and the salmon migration had not yet begun. We decided to stop for six days across the Sandy River to hunt and dry enough elk meat to sustain us until we arrived at the Nez Perce villages. We have resisted harassment upon harassment from the Chinookan Indians, who stole our supplies and almost provoked a number of hostilities between our men and theirs. Luckily, we were able to resist violence and take on our next challenge: the Great Falls. Proving to be equally as challenging on the return as they were the first time we encountered them, the Falls forced us to take drastic measures. After a month of difficulty on the water, we finally abandoned our canoes and decided to continue to the mountains on horses we acquired from the Walla Walla tribe. We have also experienced more theft by the Indians than expected, one tribe even making off with my dog. I chased the natives, prepared to kill

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<sup>27</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

them for this particular crime, but was unable to catch them. I find both myself and my crew to be increasingly restless and on edge with the natives. We have become disillusioned with the idea of understanding these people as our impatience with their differences grows stronger. Our homeward journey is already extremely difficult and I can only hope that we will meet less hardship in the months to come. The thought that pushes me, and, I expect, the rest of the men, is that this time we are heading towards the comfort and familiarity of home rather than away from it.<sup>28 29</sup>

June 9, 1806

We have again found ourselves trapped by the weather, this time in the company of the Nez Perce Indians in the Bitterroot Mountains. We arrived once again almost out of food and have since survived on dried fish and roots, with the occasional bit of elk, deer, horse, or dog. As we drew closer to the Nez Perce, the overall treatment from the natives began to improve, shifting from stealing and over-charging for goods to returning items we had lost. Now that we are settled in here, I have been working on my ethnography and nature study and Clark has been doing his best to treat some of the sick Indians. The Nez Perce have given us a great supply of mostly healthy horses and we have given what little treasures we have left to them in return. As we began making preparations to return home, the Nez Perce strongly advised against it, saying that we would struggle to make it across the mountains before July. However, with a new supply of horses and a detailed plan, Clark and I feel that we are ready to continue our journey.

<sup>30</sup>

Lewis on May 17, 1806 about river rising (which meant snow was melting)

“that icy barrier which separates me from my friends and Country, from all which makes life esteemable.- patience, patience”<sup>31</sup>

June 30, 1806

For a while we were unsure if we had made the correct decision in deciding to leave the Nez Perce so soon. We were traveling through 10 ft of snow packed so hard that it carried the weight of the horses without sinking through. We were unable to navigate in these conditions and had to return to the Nez Perce to find Indian guides who could take us back up the mountains. Finally we have arrived at Traveler’s Rest to find just that before we begin the next

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<sup>28</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

<sup>29</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>30</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>31</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

leg of our trip. In order to cover as much ground as possible, Clark and I have decided to split the group into two and head in separate directions. I will take 9 men north to explore the Marias River while Clark takes the rest of the group south to the Yellowstone River. We have made plans to reconvene soon and continue the journey as one.<sup>32</sup>

July 26, 1806

Our most recent Indian encounter has not been quite as prosperous as the last few. We encountered 8 Blackfoot Indians and, perceiving them to be friendly, set up camp with the natives. I set up the usual overnight guard system, but the Blackfoot still tried to take two rifles in the morning, resulting in a fight that killed 2 Indians. Our group then traveled 120 miles for 24 hours to avoid being chased down and further harassed by the Blackfoot. I can only hope that Clark's group is experiencing less trouble with the natives in their territory.

Lewis describing Blackfoot Indians

"who rove through this quarter of the country and as they are a vicious lawless and reather an abandoned set of wretches I wish to avoid an interview with them if possible"<sup>33</sup>

August 11, 1806

Today we reunited with Clark's group, although not by positive means. While we were exploring our territory, one of Clark's men took a shot at what he assumed to be an elk, but what turned out to be myself. Luckily the shot hit me in the thigh and will therefore not be fatal if we can prevent infection. Although not fatal, the shot is extremely painful and I worry about how my condition will affect our return trip. Still, now that we are reunited, we can continue on the Missouri River as a group, which will hopefully provide a smooth trip home. Clark also informed me that they too had a bitter run-in with the Indians. According to him, on July 21, his group<sup>34</sup> was in the territory of the Crow Indians, a tribe known as being the horse thieves of the Plains. They did their best to set up an effective guard system overnight, knowing that the Crow were nearby. Still, when they woke up the next morning they were somehow missing half of our horses even though they neither saw nor heard a single Crow Indian.

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<sup>32</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>33</sup> Schmidt, Thomas, and Jeremy Schmidt. *The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West*. New York: DK, 1999. Print.

<sup>34</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>35</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*.

August 30, 1806

We have once again escaped a near-violent experience with the Indians. After leaving Sacagawea and other expedition members at Fort Mandan and taking some time to heal my leg, we left once again for the East, but were met by a group of hostile Sioux. As we came down the Missouri, we looked up to find 100 Teton Sioux staring down on us with weapons in their hands and anger in their eyes. With little else to do, we simply stayed as close as we could to the middle of the river and continued our path forward. Although the Sioux hurled taunts and threats down upon us, we escaped an attack from an outnumbered and out-armed enemy and hopefully left behind the last negative encounter with the Indians that we will have.<sup>36</sup>

September 23, 1806

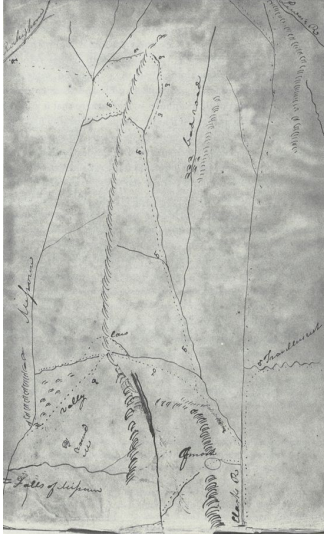
After 2 years, 4 months, and 10 days of battling weather, Indians, and animals, we have finally arrived back at St. Louis to end our journey. We were greeted by over 1000 people and a gunfire salute, plus an enthusiastic welcome from the President himself. With the end of our expedition in sight, we traveled home at a pace of 80 miles each day, growing more excited as the idea of home drew nearer. Along the way we encountered traders who told us that we had been presumed dead for a while by people who had given up on our return. Now that we are home, everyone wants to hear from us about what it is like in West and we are happy to tell anyone who will listen. But most importantly we are happy to have a reliable supply of food and water and safety from some of the dangers we left behind.<sup>37</sup>

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N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>36</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.

<sup>37</sup> "National Geographic: Lewis & Clark—The Journey Begins." *National Geographic*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_1.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_1.html)>.



[http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?\\_xmlsrc=img\\_1806-04-04.01.xml&\\_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl](http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?_xmlsrc=img_1806-04-04.01.xml&_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl)

Columbian, missouri, yellowstone rivers



White Salmon Trout

[http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?\\_xmlsrc=lc.img.corpus.01.xml&\\_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl](http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?_xmlsrc=lc.img.corpus.01.xml&_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl)

Head of a Vulture



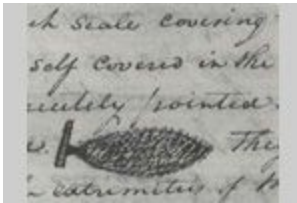
[http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?\\_xmlsrc=lc.img.corpus.01.xml&\\_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl](http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?_xmlsrc=lc.img.corpus.01.xml&_xslsrc=LCstyles.xsl)



Evergreen Shrub Leaf



Fir Cone



Canoe with Carved Images



Flounder (starry flounder, *Platichthys stellatus*)



Great Rapids (Cascades) of the Columbia River, Washington and Oregon, October 30–November 2, 1805, Voorhis No. 4



Ibex (bighorn sheep, *Ovis canadensis*), May 25, 1805, Voorhis no. 1





Head of Cock of the Plains  
(sage grouse, *Centrocercus urophasianus*),  
March 2, 1806, Codex J, p. 107



Shoshone Smoking-pipe, August 13, 1805, Codex F, p. 99



Battle Ax, February 5, 1805, Codex C, p. 165

## Research Paper Topics

### Lewis and Clark Expedition:

The Lewis and Clark Expedition fascinates me for numerous reasons. I find it truly unbelievable that these two men were courageous enough to venture into a new and unknown realm of the United States for the pure satisfaction of discovery. With no certainty of survival and no knowledge of what lay ahead, they embarked upon what I consider to be the most important journey in American History. In addition, they were some of the few Americans of their time to

establish a benevolent relationship with Native Americans as equals. These relationships say something important about human nature and the ability to coexist with even the most different people when government and pride do not interfere. Although I have read briefly about this expedition, it has never been explored in depth in one of my history classes, so I would like to take this opportunity to learn about such a fascinating but mysterious subject. Through this research project, I plan to investigate the nature of this expedition and gain a better comprehension of both the suffering and agony of such a treacherous journey as well as the amazement of so much discovery. The firsthand journal entries of Meriwether Lewis also provide the unique opportunity to understand on some level what Lewis and Clark would have experienced as they witnessed the unbelievable landscape of the Western United States, which would have been, to them, unprecedented by anything they knew before.

Sources:

Lewis, Meriwether, Clark, William, et al. September 4, 1806. The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Ed. Gary Moulton. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 2002. The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. 2005. U of Nebraska Press / U of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries-Electronic Text Center. 5 Oct. 2005 .

The journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition offer me insight into this topic that is extremely unique to any other kind of source. Reading the words written by the explorers themselves as they traversed the country allows me to better understand their experience as it is told straight from the people who were carrying out the journey. The information found in these journals ranges from detailed descriptions of the day's weather to encounters with new animals, environments, and topographical discoveries.

Perry, Douglas. "Lewis & Clark Expedition." *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2014.

\*(also contains primary sources- receipts of purchases and letters)

Douglas Perry offers a contrasting perspective on the Lewis and Clark Expedition from the journals themselves because it summarizes the key points in the expedition from an outsider's perspective. Not only does the document give the general importance and meaning to the expedition more easily than the vast collection of unconnected journal entries, but it also offers links to the documents that were integral to the origination of the journey.

"National Geographic: Lewis & ClarkThe Journey Begins." *National Geographic: Lewis & ClarkThe Journey Begins*. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 Dec. 2014.

This source offers yet another perspective to experience the Lewis and Clark Expedition by placing you in the journey itself. The site takes you through each leg of the journey with maps, pictures, journal entries, and timelines. This allows a full understanding of the expedition from every possible angle in addition to offering a new way to look at the journey from a visual perspective.