



1803
President Thomas Jefferson (right) picks Meriwether Lewis to lead an expedition through the Northwest and gives him the following instructions:

The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by it's course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce.

Spring/Summer

Fall/Winter

Lewis invites William Clark to join the expedition and share the command. The news of the Louisiana Purchase is announced. A large keelboat ordered by Lewis is constructed in the Pittsburgh area. Lewis meets Clark at the Falls of the Ohio.

Capt. Meriwether Lewis
US Army officer
Born August 18, 1774

Capt. William Clark
US Army officer
Born August 1, 1770

They Journeyed On

The Lewis and Clark expedition is the most universally known event of American exploration. Because of its unparalleled success and the seeming ease with which it was carried out, we tend to overlook or to underrate the hardships and dangers that confronted the Corps of Discovery. The explorers met these circumstances with determination and good sense. Neither foolhardy nor timid, Lewis and Clark were deliberate and quick-witted, and as inventive and creative as situations demanded.

For 28 months the Corps of Discovery faced many challenges. There were dramatic incidents with Indians, notably a face-down with Teton Sioux and a bloody encounter with Piegan Blackfeet. At times, circumstances taxed

May 14, 1804

August 3

Expedition begins and "proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missouri."

Corps holds first official council between US representatives and Otoe-Missouria Indians near present-day Fort Atkinson State Park, NE.

July 4
Expedition marks first 4th of July west of the Mississippi by firing the keelboat's cannon, and naming Independence Creek near present-day Atchison, KS.



the face of such hardships accounts for much of the success of the expedition. Probably the challenges that Lewis and Clark faced were not entirely new to them. Both had met like challenges during their years of military service. Leading men on dangerous missions in wilderness settings against potentially hostile Indians was, after all, a task of most young officers of that era. But crossing a continent challenged them in ways that earlier experiences had not entirely prepared them for. The expedition called for them to

August 7

September 7

Near present-day Sioux City, IA, Sgt. Charles Floyd dies of probable burst appendix. Captains name the hilltop where he is buried "Floyd's Bluff" and a nearby stream "Floyd's River."

The men successfully flush a prairie dog out of its hole for shipment back to Jefferson.

August 30
Friendly council held with Yankton Sioux.



Meriwether Lewis began preparing for the military expedition in March 1803. He ordered custom-made weapons from the US armory in Harpers Ferry. He also supervised construction of a collapsible iron boat frame, designed to be covered with animal skins, that he thought might prove useful. In Pittsburgh he ordered a keelboat and got a Newfoundland dog he named Seaman. In Philadelphia he took crash courses in medicine, natural history, and the use of scientific instruments. He also bought clothing, trade goods, paper, medicines, and other supplies. In Lancaster he learned to use celestial navigation tools.

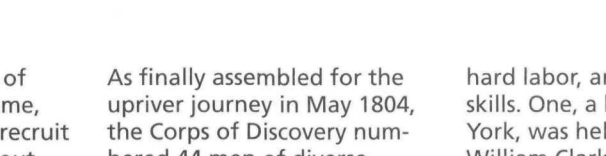
October 24

November 4

Expedition encounters earthlodge villages of Mandan and Hidatsa Indians. The captains decide to build Fort Mandan across the river from the main village.

Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian fur trapper living with the Hidatsas, is hired as an interpreter. His wife Sacagawea, a Shoshone, is instrumental in a translator and in obtaining horses from the Shoshones.

February 11, 1805
Sacagawea gives birth to a boy, Jean Baptiste, who travels the entire length of the expedition.



As finally assembled for the upriver journey in May 1804, the Corps of Discovery numbered 44 men of diverse backgrounds. Most were US Army enlisted men. Others were backwoodsmen. A few were French boatmen who were hired to pilot the keelboat up the Missouri and who also knew how to handle the smaller boats called pirogues. Most Corps members were young, single, accustomed to

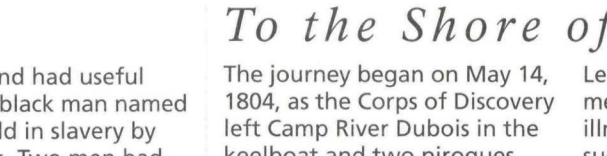
December 24

April 7

Fort Mandan is completed and the expedition moves in. Mandans provide food and other sustenance during brutally cold winter.

Lewis and Clark send the keelboat and 12 men back downriver with maps, reports, Indian artifacts, and scientific specimens for Jefferson. The permanent party of 33 heads west.

May 29–30
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One of the most valuable members, George Drouillard, an outstanding scout, hunter, and interpreter, spoke several Indian languages. A total of 33 were designated the "permanent party" and intended to make the entire journey. The remainder, the "return party," were to be sent back down the Missouri midway through the voyage, with maps, notes, and specimens of plants, animals, and minerals they had so far collected.

April 29

June 3

Lewis and another hunter kill a large grizzly bear, a species previously unknown to western science.

The expedition reaches a fork in the river. Most of the men believe the north fork, now the Marias River, to be the continuation of the Missouri. The captains choose the south fork. Lewis later writes that, while the men are not convinced that he and Clark have made the right choice, "they were ready to follow us any wher we thought proper to direct."

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The journey began on May 14, 1804, as the Corps of Discovery left Camp River Dubois in the keelboat and two pirogues, crossed the Mississippi River, and headed up the Missouri. Over the next 28 months they would traverse 8,000 miles of land and water, about which they knew next to nothing, in search of a fabled Northwest passage that had eluded explorers for hundreds of years.

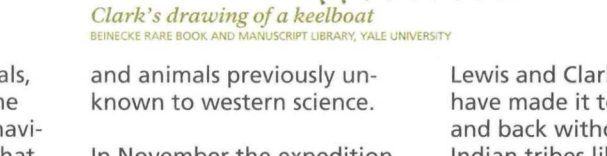
June 13

July

Scouting ahead of the rest of the expedition, Lewis reaches the Great Falls of the Missouri. He also discovers four more waterfalls farther upstream. The expedition's 18-mile portage around the falls takes nearly a month.

Lewis assembles his iron-frame boat above the Great Falls, but it sinks and is abandoned. The expedition reaches the three forks of the Missouri River, and names them after Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin, Secretary of State James Madison, and President Thomas Jefferson. The expedition continues to the southwest, up the Jefferson.

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Both captains kept journals, meticulously recording the distances they traveled, navigational measurements that would later form the basis for maps of the journey, and observations of topography, ethnography, mineral resources, and hundreds of plants

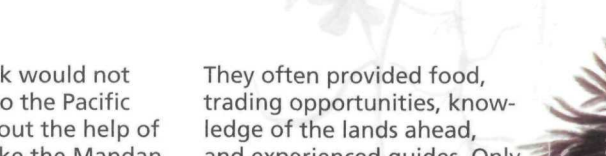
August 8

August 12

Sacagawea recognizes Beaverhead Rock and says they are nearing the homeland of her people, the Shoshones. Lewis and three others scout ahead.

Lewis crosses Lemhi Pass expecting to find the direct water route to the Pacific that he and Jefferson were seeking but discovers only more and more mountains ahead, creating what he called a "snowey barrier" to the Pacific.

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In November the expedition set up winter quarters near the junction of the Knife and Missouri rivers, in present-day North Dakota, 1,609 miles from Camp River Dubois. They built Fort Mandan near the five villages of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes, who provided valuable knowledge of the country west to the Rocky Mountains. Here Lewis and Clark recruited as interpreters Toussaint Charbonneau, a 44-year-old French-Canadian trapper, and his 16-year-old Shoshone wife Sacagawea. In February 1805 Sacagawea gave birth to a boy she and her husband named Jean Baptiste. Her presence, along with the baby's and that of a black man, was a curiosity to the tribes.

August 15–17

September 11

Shoshones lead Lewis to their village, where he negotiates for horses. After Clark and the rest of the expedition arrive, Sacagawea meets her brother, Cameahwait, one of the Shoshone leaders. Camp Fortunate is established. On August 20, an elderly Shoshone agrees to lead the expedition across the Bitterroots to the headwaters of the Columbia.

After breaking camp south of present-day Missoula, MT, the expedition ascends into the Bitterroot Mountains, which Sergeant Patrick Gass calls "the most terrible mountains I ever beheld." A week later, with food running out, the men are forced to eat three colts and a stray horse. Clark names a nearby stream "Hungry Creek" to describe their condition.

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They often provided food, trading opportunities, knowledge of the lands ahead, and experienced guides. Only once, in July 1806 with a party of Piegan Blackfeet, did the expedition have an encounter that led to violence.

September 22

October 31

Nearing starvation, the expedition emerges from the Bitterroots near today's Weippe, ID, where their lives are spared by a Nez Perce woman, Watkuweis. They are fed and cared for by the Nez Perce.

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ward past the mouth of the Yellowstone River and into what is now Montana, then on to the Great Falls. The falls portage took three weeks.

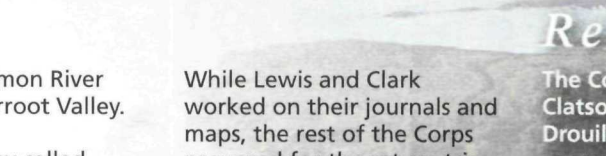
November 24

December 8

Members of the expedition, including York and Sacagawea, vote to set up winter quarters on the south side of the Columbia River where Clatsop Indians told them they would find plenty of elk for food and clothing.

Construction of Fort Clatsop as winter quarters begins. The fort, says Clark, is built of the "straightest and most butifullest logs." The fort is named after the local Indians.

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At the mouth of the Columbia they built Fort Clatsop, named after a local Indian tribe, and settled into winter quarters. Rainy weather, tainted food, and insects plagued the expedition all winter.

January 5, 1806

May–June

A saltmang camp is established 15 miles southwest of Fort Clatsop. An essential dietary supplement, salt is also needed to preserve meat on the return trip.

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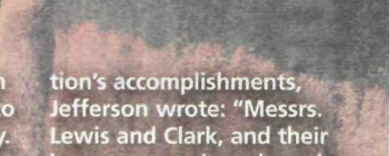
July 3

July 25

Recovering some horses from the Nez Perce and buying more, the expedition successfully crosses the Bitterroots, thanks to Nez Perce guides. Once across the mountains the Corps breaks into smaller groups to explore more of the Louisiana Territory. Clark and his group travel down the Yellowstone River, while Lewis and his group take the shortcut to the Great Falls, and then head north along the Marias River.

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Fall 1806

Upon their return to Washington, Lewis and Clark are treated as heroes. The men receive double pay and 320 acres of land as a reward; the captains get 1,600 acres. Lewis is named governor of the new Louisiana Territory. Clark is made Indian agent for the West and brigadier general of the territory's militia.

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September 23

After two years and four months, Lewis and Clark reach St. Louis where, according to Lewis, they "received the heartiest and most hospitable welcome from the whole village."

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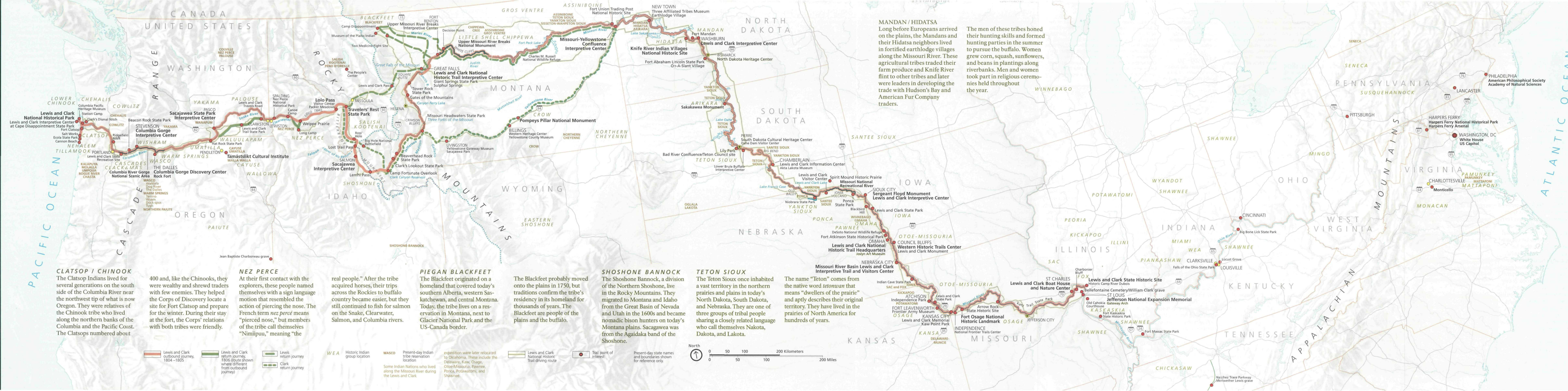
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Along the Lewis and Clark Trail



CLATSOP / CHINOOK
The Clatsop Indians lived for several generations on the south side of the Columbia River near the northwest tip of what is now Oregon. They were relatives of the Chinook tribe who lived along the northern banks of the Columbia and the Pacific Coast. The Clatsops numbered about 400 and, like the Chinooks, they were wealthy and shrewd traders with few enemies. They helped the Corps of Discovery locate a site for Fort Clatsop and prepare for the winter. During their stay at the fort, the Corps' relations with both tribes were friendly.

NEZ PERCE
At their first contact with the explorers, these people named themselves with a sign language motion that resembled the action of piercing the nose. The French term *nez percé* means "pierced nose," but members of the tribe call themselves "Nimiipuu," meaning "the

real people." After the tribe acquired horses, their trips across the Rockies to buffalo country became easier, but they still continued to fish for salmon on the Snake, Clearwater, Salmon, and Columbia rivers.

PIEGAN BLACKFEET
The Blackfeet originated on a homeland that covered today's southern Alberta, western Saskatchewan, and central Montana. Today, the tribe lives on a reservation in Montana, next to Glacier National Park and the US-Canada border.

SHOSHONE BANNOCK
The Shoshone Bannock, a division of the Northern Shoshone, live in the Rocky Mountains. They migrated to Montana and Idaho from the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah in the 1600s and became nomadic bison hunters on today's Montana plains. Sacagawea was from the Agaidak band of the Shoshone.

TETON SIOUX
The Teton Sioux once inhabited a vast territory in the northern prairies and plains in today's North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. They are one of three groups of tribal people sharing a closely related language who call themselves Nakota, Dakota, and Lakota.

The name "Teton" comes from the native word *tetonwan* that means "dwellers of the prairie" and aptly describes their original territory. They have lived in the prairies of North America for hundreds of years.

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MANDAN / HIDATSA
Long before Europeans arrived on the plains, the Mandans and their Hidatsa neighbors lived in fortified earthlodge villages along the Missouri River. These agricultural tribes traded their farm produce and Knife River flint to other tribes and later were leaders in developing the trade with Hudson's Bay and American Fur Company traders.

The men of these tribes honed their hunting skills and formed hunting parties in the summer to pursue the buffalo. Women grew corn, squash, sunflowers, and beans in plantings along riverbanks. Men and women took part in religious ceremonies held throughout the year.

Things to Know About the Lewis and Clark Trail

In 1978 Congress established the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail as part of the National Trails System. The 3,700-mile-long trail begins in Hartford, Illinois, and passes through Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

The trail traces the explorers' route as closely as possible given the modern landscape. Today you can follow in the footsteps—or close to them—of Lewis and Clark, exploring the route they traveled and experiencing the adventure of the Corps of Discovery. Travel by car, bus, or train, boat, canoe, or kayak, on foot or bicycle. Interpretive signs, exhibits, visitor centers, and living history programs are found along the way (see map), helping you learn about the trail and the epic journey it commemorates.

The National Park Service administers the trail through partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies; tribal nations; nonprofit organizations; and private landowners. It is especially important to respect tribal land regulations and the rights of private landowners. If an area is not open to visitors, you must obtain permission to enter the property.

Do not disturb these lands by littering or removing items from sites. Natural and cultural features of the trail are protected by law; please do not disturb them.

As you follow the trail route, look for signs with the Lewis and Clark image. A rectangular sign designates a highway that is a Lewis and Clark Auto Tour Route. The designated motor routes—for bus or car—follow the historic trail as closely as possible.

The Trails & Rails Program, sponsored by Amtrak and the National Park Service, allows train passengers to learn about the natural, cultural, and historical features—including sites associated with Lewis and Clark—while traveling. For more about Trails & Rails, visit www.amtrak.com.

Recreational opportunities abound. Information on hiking, biking, and horseback trails is available from the local, state, and federal agencies that administer them.

If you plan to travel the water route by boat, canoe, or kayak, please be aware that long portions of the rivers Lewis and Clark traveled are now impounded by dams. The dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers have locks;

Missouri River dams do not. Commercial boat trips are available on some segments.

Six different water trails cover some 1,373 miles of the Lewis and Clark water route:

Missouri River Water Trail
missouririverwatertrail.org

Missouri National Recreational River Water Trail
www.nps.gov/mnrr

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/umrbbnm/intercenter.html

Jefferson River Canoe Trail
www.jeffersonriver.org

Northwest Discovery Water Trail
www.ndwt.org

Lower Columbia River Water Trail
www.estuarypartnership.org/explore

The Lewis and Clark Trail serves as the friends group for the national historic trail. The Trust is dedicated to telling the story and preserving the trail from coast to coast. Learn more at www.lewisandclarktrust.org.

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation is a nonprofit national organization preserving the heritage of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The foundation publishes the quarterly magazine *We Proceeded On* and meets each year at one of the Lewis and Clark sites. Visit www.lewisandclark.org or call 406-454-1234.

The headquarters of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is located on the Omaha riverfront in the NPS Midwest Regional Office. A visitor center operates year-round.

To take a more in-depth look at the Trail's geography, visit the Interactive Trail Atlas at www.lewisandclarktrailmap.com.

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
601 Riverfront Dr.
Omaha, NE 68102
402-661-1804
www.nps.gov/lecl