

THE JOURNEY OF LEWIS AND CLARK

On May 14, 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark left Missouri to explore the vast uncharted territory of the West

Characters

Thomas Jefferson, *President of the United States*

Meriwether Lewis } *co-leaders of the*
William Clark } *Corps of Discovery*

Sheheke (SHAH-hah-kah), *a Mandan tribal leader*

Toussaint Charbonneau (TOO-sahn SHAR-buh-noh), *a French-Canadian fur trader*

Sacagawea (sah-KAH-guh-WEE-uh), *his wife, a Shoshone Indian*

Reuben Field } *members of the Corps*
Hugh McNeal } *of Discovery*

*Bertha Smith } *St. Louis*

*Ann Johnson } *residents*

Narrators A-E

**Indicates a fictional character. All others were real people.*

PROLOGUE

Narrator A: In March 1801, Thomas Jefferson is sworn in as the third President of the United States. A brilliant scholar who wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Jefferson is determined to expand the nation's size and power. He lays out his vision in his first inaugural address.

President Thomas Jefferson: The task is to lead a rising nation spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas, and advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye.

Narrator B: The President asks Congress to fund an expedition to the Pacific Ocean. He wants to establish better relations with Indian

tribes that have been displaced by European settlers, and also to gain a larger share of the profitable trade west of the U.S. border.

Narrator C: In 1803, thanks to Jefferson's efforts, the U.S. buys a tract of 820,000 square miles from France. The Louisiana Purchase doubles the size of the U.S., pushing its western border from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains [see map, p. 18]. The land will come to encompass all or part of 15 U.S. states.

SCENE 1

Narrator D: Jefferson has a keen interest in the **uncharted** territory beyond the Mississippi and wants to learn everything he can about the western half of the continent—from its waterways to its plant and animal species.

Narrator E: He speaks with Meriwether Lewis, his secretary and a former U.S. Army captain.

Jefferson: There has to be a

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Words to Know

- **botany** (n): the branch of biology dealing with plant life
- **uncharted** (adj): not recorded or plotted on a map





direct water route to the Western Ocean that will open up shipping. I want you to find that route, Mr. Lewis. And you should establish trade with the Indians you meet. Let them know that they're part of the United States now.

Meriwether Lewis: This is the adventure I've dreamed of since I was a boy, Mr. President.

Jefferson: I want you to take notes and gather samples of plants and animals. But you'll need a second commander to help you.

Lewis: I know just the man.

Narrator A: Lewis writes to an old Army friend, William Clark. Like Lewis, Clark is a native Virginian and an experienced frontiersman.

SCENE 2

Narrator B: Lewis and Clark spend months planning the journey. They pack guns, tools, and food, as well as gifts for the Native Americans they'll meet.

Narrator C: Lewis studies **botany**,

and medicine and learns how to navigate by the stars. He and Clark recruit more than 30 men, including hunters and woodworkers.

Narrator D: On May 14, 1804, the "Corps of Volunteers for North Western Discovery," later known as the Corps of Discovery, leaves St. Charles, Missouri. The group heads up the mighty Missouri River in a large boat, which Lewis sailed from Pittsburgh, and two smaller canoe-like vessels. Soon they pass the last white settlement.

Lewis: I'm going to sketch every new species we encounter. The President will be fascinated.

William Clark: He'll also be interested in the maps I'm making.

Lewis: Indeed. But the going will soon get rough.

Narrator E: Most of the Indians the explorers meet are friendly and helpful. In October, the Mandan tribe, in what is now North Dakota, allows the group to build a fort, where they spend the winter.

Sheheke: My friends, if we eat, you shall eat.

Clark: As a symbol of our gratitude, here is a silver medallion bearing the likeness of your new Great Father, Thomas Jefferson.

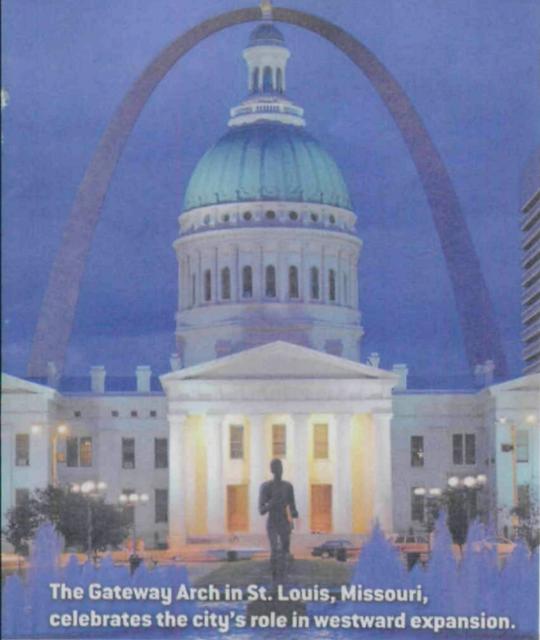
Narrator A: While at Fort Mandan, Lewis and Clark hire Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian fur trader, and Sacagawea, his Shoshone Indian wife, to be their interpreters along the route. [Since 2000, a Sacagawea dollar coin has been minted in the U.S.]

Toussaint Charbonneau: Sacagawea can help you get the horses you'll need to cross the Rocky Mountains. Her people live there.

Lewis: But she appears to be expecting a baby.

Sacagawea: I'm very strong, and the baby can travel with us.

Narrator B: The trek resumes in the spring of 1805. Even while caring for her infant, Jean Baptiste, Sacagawea proves a valuable member of the Corps. She shows the



The Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, celebrates the city's role in westward expansion.

explorers how to dig for edible roots to keep from starving. One day, she saves precious journals that fall into a river when a boat capsizes.

SCENE 3

Narrator C: As the Corps heads farther west, the landscape grows harsher. The explorers encounter hailstones, clouds of mosquitoes, and grizzly bears. When the expedition encounters the Great Falls of the Missouri River in what is now Montana, the men must carry their canoes and supplies over rough terrain for more than 18 miles.

Reuben Field (to Clark): It looks like you're limping, Captain.

Clark: I pulled 17 cactus needles from my feet last night. They go right through these moccasins.

Field: You should rest, sir.

Clark: I want to keep going. All this trouble will have been worth it once we find the river to the ocean.

Narrator D: The Corps trudges farther up into the Rocky Mountains. In August 1805, Lewis reaches Lemhi Pass on the Continental Divide—where the rivers begin flowing west instead of east. There he glimpses what lies beyond the mountain range—not a flat plain and a river to the ocean, as he and

Clark had expected, but many more mountains, jagged and rocky, covered in snow.

Lewis: There must be hundreds more miles of mountains!

Hugh McNeal: How will we get over them, Captain?

Narrator E: In the fall of 1805, the Corps is trapped by snow in the steep Bitterroot Mountains. There, they run out of food.

Field: The men aren't just eating the horses to survive. They're even eating candles!

McNeal: I've never been so cold or wet as I am in this terrible place.

Narrator A: After 11 days of misery, the group staggers out of the mountains and meets the Nez Perce tribe in what is now Idaho. The Indians feed the ravenous explorers and teach them a new way to make canoes. Now that the rivers are running westward, the expedition no longer has to battle upstream. The Corps quickly travels down the Columbia River toward the Pacific.

SCENE 4

Clark (writing in his journal): Ocean in view! Oh, the joy!

Narrator B: Clark and the Corps are actually still 20 miles from the ocean. Terrible storms keep them

KEY DATES

MARCH 4, 1801: Thomas Jefferson is sworn in as President. He is the first to be inaugurated in the new capital, Washington, D.C.

JANUARY 18, 1803: Jefferson asks Congress to authorize a journey to the West. Congress gives him \$2,500. (The trek's final cost will be \$38,000.)

JULY 4, 1803: The Louisiana Purchase is announced. For less than 3 cents an acre, Jefferson doubles the size of the U.S.

MAY 14, 1804: The Corps sets out on its expedition from St. Charles, Missouri.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1806: The Corps arrives in St. Louis, Missouri, completing its journey.

inland for weeks. In November 1805, the group finally reaches the churning ocean. Clark wryly notes that it's anything but "pacific."

Narrator C: After traveling more than 4,100 miles, the Corps builds Fort Clatsop on the coast, in what is now Oregon. Homesick and weary, they spend the winter preparing for the trek back, which will take six months.

Narrator D: When the men reach St. Louis in the fall of 1806, they are greeted as national heroes.

Bertha Smith: They look like wild men—such sunburned faces, and only buckskin rags for clothes!

Ann Johnson: Everyone I know had given them up for dead.

Smith: Three cheers for the Corps!

EPILOGUE

Narrator E: Lewis and Clark didn't find a direct water route to the Pacific, but they proved that the continent could be crossed. Their expedition helped the U.S. claim the territory that would become the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, making the U.S. even more powerful. But their journey also hastened the destruction of many of the Indian tribes that had helped the Corps survive. —Ruth Hamel