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1805

- 8 January Mandans hold a buffalo-calling ceremony; several days later, buffalo arrive.
- 9 February 11 Sacagawea's son is born.
- 10 April Part of the Corps returns to President Jefferson with notes, plants, and animals.
- 11 May 20 Lewis and Clark name a stream Sah-ca-ger-we-ah after their guide.
- 12 June At the Great Falls of the Missouri, the Corps has to carry their boats for 18 miles.
- 13 June 14 A grizzly bear attacks Lewis.
- 14 July 4 Corps celebrates their second 4th of July.
- 15 August Expedition meets the Shoshones, Sacagawea's people.
- 16 September During the 11-day crossing of the Bitterroot Range, the men almost starve to death.
- 17 September The explorers meet the Nez Perce and get sick stuffing themselves with salmon and other food.
- 18 October The group reaches the Columbia River.
- 19 November 7 The Corps of Discovery reaches the Pacific Ocean.
- 20 December The expedition builds Fort Clatsop and celebrates Christmas.

Lewis and Clark Journals

When Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery crossed the continent, they wrote detailed journals on their expedition—about 140,000 words altogether. They described every day of their journey and all of the events leading up to it. The group traveled through 7,689 miles of wilderness to the Pacific Ocean and back, and made detailed maps of fertile prairies, towering mountains, raging rivers, and forests. They chronicled the customs, languages, and artifacts of more than fifty eastern and western Native American nations and established peaceful relations with most of them. They also discovered scores of plants and animals formerly unknown to science. Throughout the expedition, Lewis, Clark, and the members of the Corps overcame enormous hardship with imagination and humor. In the end, they carried out President Jefferson’s goal of exploring the American West.

May 14, 1804, Camp Wood, near St. Louis: Set out at 4 o’clock p.m. in the presence of many of the neighboring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a gentle breeze up the Missouri. (Clark)

Summer, 1804, Wildlife of the Plains:

We stopped to dine under some trees near the high land. In a few minutes caught three very large catfish, one nearly white. A quart of oil came out of the surplus fat of one fish. Turkeys, geese and a beaver caught. Great numbers of deer are seen feeding on young willows on the sandbars of the river. Men in high spirits. . . . (Clark)

Before sunrise I set out with 6 of my best hunters. I do not exaggerate when I estimate the number of buffalo to amount to 3,000. We found the antelope extremely shy and watchful. Their flight appeared as rapid as the flight of birds! (Lewis)



A page from a journal with a drawing of a eulachon (candlefish).

Among the Indians: At sunset a part of the Oto and Missouri nations came to camp. Among those Indians, six were chiefs. We sent them some roasted meat. In return they sent us watermelons. . . . To the Grand Chief of the Yankton Sioux we gave a flag and wampum with a hat and chief coat. After dinner we made a large fire and all the young men prepared themselves for a war dance. The Sioux live by the bow and arrow, some making a vow never to retreat, let the danger be what it may. The warriors are very much decorated with paint, porcupine quills, and feathers. (Clark)

October 9, 1804: Many Arikaras came to view us all day, much astonished at my black servant. This nation never saw a black man before; all flocked around him and examined him from top to toe. By way of amusement he told them that he had once been a wild animal and to convince them, he showed them feats of strength. The children would follow him, and when he turned toward them and roared, they would run from him and holler and pretend to be terrified and afraid. The Arikaras are the best-looking and cleanest Indians I have ever seen on the voyage. They raise great quantities of corn, beans, simmons (squash), and also tobacco. (Clark)

December 7, 1804, A Winter of Excessive Cold: Captain Lewis took 15 men and joined the Indians, who were killing buffalo on horseback. Three men frostbit badly today. (Clark)

January 10, 1805: The mercury this morning stood at 40 degrees below 0. An Indian man came in who had stayed out all night without fire, and very thinly clothed. This man was not the least injured. Those people bear more cold than I thought possible. (Clark)

May 14, 1805, A Narrow Escape:
A sudden squall hit the white pirogue and Charbonneau—who is perhaps the most timid waterman in the world—dropped the rudder, crying to his god for mercy and almost turning the boat topsy-turvy. In this pirogue was every article necessary to insure the success of our journey. Repeated



A page from a journal with a drawing of a vulture.

American Philosophical Society

orders could not bring him to do his duty until the bowsman, Cruzatte, threatened to shoot him instantly. The boat righted but was filled with water. The waves were running high. Cruzatte ordered two of the men to throw out water with some kettles while he and two other men rowed her ashore. Sacagewea, whose fortitude was equal to any person on board, caught and saved most of the light articles which were washed overboard. (Lewis)

June 13, 1805, The Great Falls of Missouri: My ears were saluted with the sound of a tremendous roaring and I saw spray rise above the plain like a column of smoke. I hurried to gaze on the grandest sight I ever beheld, an enormous cascading fall of water, beating with great fury. (Lewis)

August 17, 1805, We Meet the Shoshonis: A fair cold morning. I saw Indians on horseback coming toward me. Sacagawea danced for the joyful sight and made signs to me that they were her nation. The Great Chief Cameahwait of this nation proved to be the brother of Sacagawea! He is a man of influence, good sense, and easy manners. We spoke to the Indians about our want of

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Map used by Lewis and Clark with notes by Meriwether Lewis showing the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, Lake Winnipeg, and the country onwards to the Pacific.

horses to cross the mountains. They said the route was unfavorable, with immense waterfalls and steep cliffs, and that there were no deer, elk, or game to eat. (Clark)

Late summer, 1805, Crossing the Bitterroot Mountains: On August 30, we set out on our route. Traversed some of the worst roads that a horse ever passed on the sides of steep and stony mountains, some covered with snow. (Clark)

Several horses fell, some crippled. Frazier's horse fell near a hundred yards into the creek, but to our astonishment, he arose to his feet but little injured. (Lewis)

Several times compelled to kill a colt for our men and selves to eat for want of meat. Encamped one night at a bold running creek I called Hungry Creek as we had nothing to eat. (Clark)

To our inexpressible joy, saw a prairie 60 miles distant. We should reach its borders tomorrow. Spirits of the party much revived, as they are weak for want of food. (Lewis)

October 1805, Onward to Oregon: I went on shore and found the Indians much frightened in their lodges. They thought we were not men but birds that fell from the clouds. As soon as they saw Sacagawea, they understood our friendly intentions, as no woman ever accompanies a war party. (Clark)

The river widens and becomes a beautiful gentle stream of about a half mile wide. Great numbers of harbor seals about. Salmon trout which we had fried in a little bear's oil, I thought one of the most delicious fish I have ever tasted. (Lewis)

November 7, 1805, Closer to the Great Pacific: We were encamped under a high hill when the morning fog cleared off. Ocean in View! Oh! The joy. This great Pacific Ocean which we have been so long anxious to see, and the roaring noise made by waves breaking on rocky shores may be heard distinctly. (Clark)

November 18, 1805, Our Goal is Reached at Last!: We behold with astonishment the waves dashing against the rocks & this immense Ocean!