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Introduction

President Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. The President decided the territory needed to be explored. Thomas Jefferson hired Meriwether Lewis to be the captain of the Corps of Discovery expedition. The purpose of the expedition was to find a water route that linked the Columbia River to the Missouri River. Meriwether Lewis chose his friend William Clark to co-command the expedition. The explorers met many Native American tribes including the Shoshone, Mandan, Hidatsas, and many more. Lewis and Clark made maps and wrote about the plants and animals they found along the way. The expedition took about two years to complete.
Meriwether Lewis was born on August 18, 1774 in Virginia. President Thomas Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis to be his personal secretary in 1801. He was also an explorer and a soldier. He met William Clark while serving in the military with him in 1795. When Meriwether Lewis returned home from the journey he was named the governor of the Louisiana Territory.
William Clark was born on August 1, 1770 in Virginia. William Clark was an explorer and a soldier, which is similar to Meriwether Lewis. William Clark received a letter from Meriwether Lewis in 1803 asking him to share the command of an expedition. Meriwether Lewis made William Clark his co-commanding caption but the government did not recognize it.
The Journey

The expedition began on May 14, 1804 at Camp Wood in Ohio. They built Fort Mandan across the river from the main village of the Mandan and Hidatsas Native Americans. They stayed in Fort Mandan for the winter of 1804. Then they came to a fork in the river. Lewis and Clark believed the south fork was the Missouri river but the other men on the expedition thought it was the north fork. They followed the south fork and reached the three forks of the Missouri river in Montana. They continued southwest and reached the Columbia River on October 16, 1805.
Sacagawea was a Shoshone Native American. She was married to Touissant Charbonneau, who was a French-Canadian trader. They were invited on Lewis and Clark’s expedition during their first winter. Sacagawea’s husband was an interpreter for the two explorers. They needed Sacagawea’s help to find the Shoshones because the Shoshones were believed to live at the headwaters of the Missouri River.
### Timeline

1770  
August 1 – William Clark was born.

1774  
August 18 – Meriwether Lewis was born.

1801  
March 6 – President Jefferson asked Lewis to be his secretary.

1803  
Spring – President Jefferson asked Lewis to be the commander of the expedition. Lewis asked Clark to be the co---commander. Clark accepts.

1804  
July 4 – President Jefferson announces the Louisiana Purchase.

1805  
Fall/Winter – Camp Wood is established.

1804  
May 14 – The expedition begins.

1805  
November 4 – Sacagawea and her husband were hired on to the expedition.

1805  
December 24 – Fort Mandan is completed and the crew stays there for the winter.

1805  
August 8 – Sacagawea recognizes Beaverhead Rock near the Shoshones and the headwaters of the Missouri River.

1806  
October 16 – They reach the Columbia River

1809  
September 23 – Lewis and Clark return to St. Louis.

1812  
October 11 – Lewis dies.

1838  
December 20 – Sacagawea dies.

1838  
September 1 – Clark dies.
Journals

Lewis and Clark both wrote detailed journal entries about the expedition. They wrote about the different plants and animals they had seen and also the different types of weather they experienced. These journals have given us insight on the expedition from the point of view of Lewis and Clark.

An entry from Meriwether Lewis-
May 20, 1804
“We set forward… to join my friend companion and fellow labourer Capt. William Clark, who had previously arrived at that place with the party destined for the discovery of the interior of the continent of North America… As I had determined to reach St. Charles this evening and knowing that there was now no time to be lost I set forward in the rain… and joined Capt. Clark, found the party in good health and sperits.”
I do not pretend to have been in battle of Chumney with Genl. C. C. Clark. Since the year 1835, and have since during that time been occasionally called upon to attend him as a Physician. His principal complaint, of the abscess at the joint where the hip bone is, has been of many years standing. I have heard him frequently complain of it, attended with such general weakness of the extremity, as that in walking the body could scarcely be steadied and supported. It is the opinion of the surgeon now on duty that his condition was the consequence of the abscess and upon his attempting to walk, which he was unwilling to do, engaged in the business of the County, was the cause on account of the above an intestinal accident, which happened to him in the month of March last, made confinement of the opposite limb necessary in consequence of which he has been confined of late, in which no hope of moving from place to place rea is now.
Outcomes

There were many outcomes of the expedition. The first one was diplomatic relations with Native Americans. Lewis and Clark traded goods and created useful relationships. William Clark drew detailed maps that named and noted rivers, creeks, significant points in the landscape, and where the explorers camped. They also found a water route that linked the Columbia and the Missouri rivers. Meriwether Lewis was named the governor of the Louisiana Territory and William Clark was appointed as the agent for Indian Affairs in the west. He later became he governor of the Missouri Territory.
Questions

Compare and contrast Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Describe the purpose of the expedition.

Discuss Sacagawea and her family’s important role in the expedition.

What outcome was most useful for William Clark for his future career?
Glossary

**Diplomatic Relations**: To conduct relationships between governments peacefully.

**Expedition**: A journey people go on with a purpose, which is generally exploration or scientific.

**Explorer**: A person that explores an unfamiliar area.

**Government**: The rules and people who make them for a group of people.

**Governor**: The head of a specific state.

**Interpreter**: A person who translates one language into another.

**Purchased**: Bought with money.
Secretary: A person who is hired to assist with keeping records, making appointments, etc.
Similar: Alike; has the same qualities.

Territory: An area of land that is rule by a government.
Media Attributions

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Works Referenced

Common Core State Standards

2.SS.4.3.2 Name historic and contemporary people who model characteristics of good citizenship. CCSS.ELA---Literacy.RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
CCSS.ELA---Literacy.RI.2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic subject area.
CCSS.ELA---Literacy.RI.2.5 Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
CCSS.ELA---Literacy.RI.2.6 Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
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