The Journals of Lewis and Clark Study Guide

The Journals of Lewis and Clark by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

The Corps of Discovery, a crew of over 40 men led by Captain Clark, leaves Camp Dubois in Wood River, Illinois, on May 14, 1804. They are traveling aboard 3 boats: 1 huge 55 feet long keelboat and two pirogues. They pick up their co-captain, Meriwether Lewis, in St-Louis. On May 25, they reach the last settlement of white men on the MIssouri River, a agglomeration of seven habitations named La Charette. On the Fourth of July, they celebrate by firing the cannon of the keelboat and drinking in a creek they christen Independence Creek.

On August 3rd, the Corps officially meets with a small delegation of Oto and Missouri Indians. The Captains use diplomacy to convince the Indians to keep the peace with the neighboring tribes in exchange for prosperity guaranteed by the United States. Sergeant Charles Floyd dies from illness in Sioux City, Iowa, on August 20. A few days later in Dakota, the Corps befriends the Yankton Sioux and Captain Lewis wraps an Indian newborn in an American flag, declaring him an American. In September, the journals record nearly 300 species of plants and animals yet unknown to science: antelopes, deer, coyotes, etc. The crew captures a prairie dog with the intent of shipping it back to Jefferson. In South Dakota, the Corps stays with the local Teton Sioux and manages to avoid a fight with the tribe with the help of Chief Black Buffalo.

The expedition reaches North Dakota and encounters the communities of the Mandans and the Hidatsas, who live in huge villages made of earth-lodges. The Corps decides to build their winter camp across the river from the main village and name it Fort Mandan. During their stay, they hire a French Canadian trader, middle-aged Toussaint Charbonneau, as an interpreter through his young wife Sacagawea. In January 1805, members of the expedition participate in the hunting of buffalo. The intense cold causes frostbite amongst the hunters; Captain Lewis is forced to amputate the frozen toes of a young Indian boy. A month later, Sacagawea, the wife of Toussaint Charbonneau, gives birth to a boy named Jean Baptiste. Captain Lewis helps with the delivery with a potion made from the crushing of the rings of a rattlesnake's rattle.

In April, the Captains send a dozen crewmen downstream aboard the keelboat. The boat is loaded with samples meant for Jefferson. The samples include various mineral, animal and plant specimens, including live animals. On the same day, the remaining crew of 33 men departs for their journey westward aboard the two pirogues and six dugout canoes.

The party reaches an area filled with rich wildlife and flora; they encounter herds of thousands of buffalos and the famed grizzly bears. In May, they reach the White Cliffs of the Missouri. Early in June, the Corps reaches an area undocumented on their map where the river seems to split in a fork. The captains know from the Hidatsas that if they encounter a huge waterfall, they are following the right route. The members of the Corps believe the northern fork is the right one, but the captains conclude otherwise. Lewis and a small team of men scout ahead on the south fork and encounter the Great

Falls of the Missouri. Due to the difficult conditions of the terrain, the party portages around the falls for nearly a month.

The Corps reaches Lemhi Pass, located at the border between present-day Montana and Idaho. With more mountains to traverse, the party is in dire need of horses. They stop at a Shoshone village, where the Chief turns out to be the brother of Sacagawea, and negotiate 29 horses, 1 mule and the company of a Shoshone guide they need. In September, they reach the Bitterroot Mountains. They run out of food, snow starts falling and the mountains seem to have no end. Nearly starving to death, the party reaches the village of the Nez Percé Indians and the men are able to eat and recover.

In early October, the expedition reaches Clearwater River (Idaho) and the current finally pushes their new canoes toward their destination. They get to the Columbia River but find only fish to eat; they resort to eat the dogs bought from the native tribes. A couple of weeks later, they see Mount Hood in the distance and conclude they are finally near their goal.On November 7, Clark writes the Ocean is finally in view and they can hear the waves crashing on the shores. The party elects, through the popular vote of all its members, that they will establish their winter quarters on the south side of the Columbia; the spend Christmas in Fort Clatsop.

The Corps departs from Fort Clatsop on March 23rd, 1806, and heads home. They decide to spend nearly a month with the Nez Percé once again, waiting for the snow to melt and clear the way through the Bitterroots Mountains. The Corps splits in two groups: Clark heads down the Yellowstone River while Lewis explores the Marias River. In late July, Lewis' party confronts a few Blackfeet warriors trying to steal their horses and guns; two Indians are killed in the scuffle that ensues. Afraid of reprisal, the group flees toward their rendezvous point with Clark at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

In mid-August, they are back at the Mandan villages. John Colter is discharged from the Corps on his own request, as well as Charbonneau and his family. The Corps of Discovery races toward its destination, reaching it on September 23. By then, most U.S. citizens seem to have given up on the explorers and think they are all dead; they are welcomed as national heroes.

The Corps of Discovery Shoves Off

The Corps of Discovery Shoves Off Summary and Analysis

On the morning of May 13, 1804, Captain William Clark and a staff of around 40 people leave the Army camp of River Dubois, on the eastern mouth of the Missouri River. Clark mentions he wrote to Meriwether Lewis, who is in St. Louis attending some necessary business. The co-captain will be picked up later by the exploration team. The initial team leaves aboard 3 boats: 1 huge boat and two smaller pirogues. The boats are loaded with as many munitions and provisions as they can afford, but not as much as Clark would have liked. On the following day, the team reaches the French village of St. Charles, near St. Louis, where it waits to pick up Captain Lewis. Later that afternoon, the Corps leaves the village and sets up camp on an island 4 miles away.

During their stay on the island near St. Charles, the Captains set up a court martial to judge and punish 3 members of the team—Hugh Hall, John Collins and William Warner—for absence without leave and general misconduct. On May 23rd, the Corps leaves the island and sets up a new camp near a creek named Osage Woman's River, a settlement of around 40 American families. Lewis barely escapes an accident as he nearly falls from a 300 feet high cliff he attempts to ascend. Two days later, they set camp in a creek above Rivière La Charrette, a small village of seven houses serving as a trading post with local Indians. They gather important information from trader Régis Loisel.

On June 12rh, the Corps buys 300 pounds of buffalo grease from a trading cargo. They also pick up Pierre Doiron, a veteran trader with an intimate knowledge of the Sioux tribes, and decide to take him along. Five days later, the Corps' hunter George Drouillard manages to kill a bear and two deer with the help of another member. They also bring back a horse abandoned by a warring tribe.

On June 29th, the Court Martial decides on the cases of Hugh Hall and John Collins; both are found guilty and condemned to receive lashes on their bare back. On Independence Day, the Corps christens a creek the "Fourth of July 1804 Creek" and dine on corn to celebrate. A few days later, they manage to pass the Nodaway River. Several men fall sick and Captain Lewis has to help one of them by bleeding him and providing him niter. While they stay on the Nodaway Island, the Captains establish specific appointments for Thompson, Warner and Collins; in order to manage their provisions better, they will act as cooks and caretakers for the provisions, thus relieving them from the guard tours and other ordinary duties.

During the next few days, the exploration team crosses paths with several Indian war parties on shore, but none of these encounters result in an altercation. From July 10th to 12th, Captain Clark visits several islands and creeks; he walks along the river and describes plains and mounts covered with weed and flowers. On the 14th, the

expedition faces a minor storm but with no damage to their cargo or arms. The following day, Clark takes a couple of men with him to visit the prairies on the left bank of the river. Once again, he describes rich prairies covered with luxuriant vegetation.

From the Platte to the Vermillion

From the Platte to the Vermillion Summary and Analysis

The Corps sets up a camp christened White Catfish, located roughly nine miles above the Platte River. On July 24th, after sending a party to collect timber and two others to hunt, Captain Clark gives George Drouillard and Peter Cruzat some tobacco and sends them to invite local members of the Otos and Pawnees tribes to come talk to them. He then spends some time drawing a map of the river to send to the President. The following day, Lewis prepares the papers that will be sent back to the President in a pirogue from River Platte. Goodrich catches a strange, white catfish that looks partly like a dolphin. On the 25th, the stormy weather keeps Clark from attending to his drawing task. He cures one of the men who had a tumor by emptying it.

On July 29th, Clark sends La Liberté to invite the Otos Indians to a meeting futher up the river. The Corps dine under high trees and finds there are many fish to catch in the river around the area. The following day, the horse found near the Kansas River dies. On the 30th, they catch a young beaver alive and find it quite friendly.

On the second day of August, a party of Otos and Missouri Indians accompanied by Mr. Fairfong arrives at the camp. Both parties settle on a meeting for the next day. These natives are part of a village of approximately 250 men from the Otos and Missouri Nations. During the said meeting on August third, they exchange speeches and exchange presents. The Captains of the expedition gives each Indian tribe medals and certificates. The Corps departs on the same day and travels approximately five miles ahead, setting up camp on large sand bar. La Liberté did not come back, leading the captains to imagine he was either lost or ran down his horse. Clark notes the mosquitoes are getting increasingly troublesome. On August fifth, the Corps sets up camp early to avoid getting caught in an anticipated storm. While walking along the river, Clark observes another river running parallel to the Missouri will certainly merge with it in the coming years. They suspect one of the men, Reed, might have deserted. Four members of the Corps—Drouillard, Fields, Bratton and Labiche—are sent after the suspected deserter with the order to kill him if he does not surrender peacefully. The same party is also ordered to find La Liberté and to bring him to the Otos and Missouris village, where they will direct a few of their chiefs to meet the captains in the Maha village to help them establish a peace treaty between the Mahas and the Sioux.

On August 8, they pass an island a few miles above the Little Sioux River where they witness a gathering of hundreds of pelicans fishing. Three days later, they visit the resting place of the Maha king Blackbird, who was killed by smallpox four years earlier. They fix an American flag on a pole in the middle of the mound where the king was buried. On August 14th, a scouting party, sent after the party previously sent to invite the Indians, returns with no sighting of the Indians. Clark mentions these Indian tribes

are nomads probably in pursuit of buffalos. Their nation was decimated by smallpox and it lost more than half its population.

On August 15, they set up camp approximately 3 miles from the Maha village. Captain Clark takes ten men with him to explore a creek dammed by the beavers, located between their camp and the village. In a matter of hours, they catch over 300 fish of various kind, including pikes, bass, salmon and silverfish. In the camp, Lewis sends Doiron and three other men to find out the source of a fire sending up clouds of smoke. If they find the Sioux, the party is to invite them to meet the captains. The reconnaissance party returns later, having encountered none of suspected authors of the fire. On the following day, Captain Lewis takes a dozen men to the same creek to fish; they come back with 800 fish. The men enjoy the later part of the evening, when the breeze pushes the mosquitoes away from their area.

On August 17, Labiche, a member of the party who left over a week earlier on a mission to the Oto village, shows up at the camp and announces he is followed by the rest of the scouting party and the deserter, as well as several representatives of the Oto Nation. The Otos' goal is to seek the help of the captains to make peace with the Sioux and Mahas. The following day, which is Captain's Lewis's birthday, the deserter is put on trial and found guilty of desertion and of stealing public property. He avoids the more severe physical punishment but will not be considered a member of the party from now on.

On August 19, the Indians and the members of the Corps formally meet to discuss and exchange gifts and speeches. Sergeant Floyd is suddenly very ill and dies on the following day. He is buried on a cliff near a river the Captains christen after the deceased. P. Gass is later chosen by vote to replace Sergeant Floyd. On August 23rd, Captain Lewis takes a dozen men with him to carry the corpse of a buffalo killed earlier by J. Fields to the boat. The expedition encounters a lot of animals and kills a few elks.

The Council of August 3rd, between the Oto and Missouri Indians and the Corps, is the first official meeting between representatives of the United States and native Indians. The meeting occurs slightly north of what is now the State of Omaha. During this council, Lewis and Clark use the routine they will repeat with great success throughout their journey. Their goal is to insure the Indians live in peace with each other and with the white people. For this purpose, the captains start out by handing out gifts to the most important representatives or influential people of the tribes. They also give peace medals and American flags. They follow this ceremony by showing off the white men's technology—guns, telescopes, compasses, for example. The captain will then give a speech introducing the tribes to their new "Great Father," and promises the Indians peace and prosperity if they keep the peace with their brothers and with the whites. This first council with the Oto and Missouri Indians occurs without any problems and proves the rules of diplomacy of the Corps are actually working.

Sergeant Charles Floyd's death marks the first casualty of an American soldier west of the Mississipi River. Historians have concluded the sergeant probably died from a burst appendice, a condition which would best explain the symptoms described by Clark in the Journals.

Between the Vermilion and Teton Rivers

Between the Vermilion and Teton Rivers Summary and Analysis

On August 23rd, both captains decide to explore the mount feared by every tribe in the area. Their scouting mission starts with 9 other members of the Corps and Clark's dog, but the latter becomes exhausted from the heat and returns to the camp after a few miles. Captain Lewis, still recovering from his cobalt poisoning, is also becoming tired and thirsty. They decide to set out on a creek to drink and feed on the wild berries and fruits plentiful in the area. They reach the mound but cannot find anything unusual about it, except for its isolated location. Clark notes the source of the Indians' superstition is probably that the mound is often surrounded by a large number of birds which use it as a refuge. From the top of the hill, they can see herds of thousands of buffalos in every direction.

On August 30th, the captains hold a council with Yankton Sioux met by Sergeant Pryor and Doiron the day before. They distribute peace medals and gifts, smoke the pipe and dine with the natives. Clark describes the colorful clothing of the tribe, decorated with porcupine quills, feathers and paint. They later leave Peter Doiron with the tribe, commissioning him to make peace with the local Indian tribes.

On September 5th, the expedition encounters an empty village on the shore of the Ponca River, two miles off the Missouri River. The village is empty and the tribe is believed to be hunting. On the 7th, the men find a "village" of prairies dogs and with great effort, manage to capture one alive by flooding his hole. Clark notes these animals are rumored to live with a companion snake or lizard. Clarks adds that they discovered unknown species of animals: antelope, coyote, mule deer, for example.

Two days later, they camp on a sandbar and hunt for buffalos and other animals, which are plentiful in the region. Clarks directs his servant York to kill a buffalo from the boat. On the 11th, George Shannon, who disappeared 16 days before in pursuit of the horses, finally shows up, extremely weak and nearly starved to death. Clark mentions he is amazed that in a land with so many resources, a man could starve to death without a gun to hunt for meat. In the following days Lewis proceeds to describe the amazing characteristics of the wilderness they are exploring. On the 21st, he manages to push the boats away from a sand bank over which their camp was built. A few minutes later, the bank crumbles along with the camp.

On September 23, the Corps encounters a few Sioux boys who swim to their party from a neighboring Teton tribe; the captains give them two carrots of tobacco and ask the boys to inform their chiefs that they will meet with them on the following day. On the 24th, the explorers are confronted by five Teton Indians. That night, one third of the members sleep on the shore, on guard.

To the Mandan Country

To the Mandan Country Summary and Analysis

On September 25, a party of natives Teton Sioux Indians, including a few Chiefs, meets with the explorers. The captains distribute gifs and medals but soon find they lack a good interpreter for the situation. They invite some members of the Indian party aboard their boats. Several Indians on shore start behaving aggressively and demand one of the pirogues as a tribute. The captains refuse to give up the pirogue; the situation becomes tense and the party manages to avoid a violent encounter. The situation is defused in part by a Teton chief, Black Buffalo, who is inclined to diplomacy. The Corps camps with the Tetons during the following 3 days, holding councils and diplomatic meetings when needed. The situation is rather tense and the men are constantly on their guard.

The Corps of Discovery leaves the area on September 29, with Black Buffalo on board. As they proceed up the River, they meet with several other bands of Teton Indians who insist on coming aboard; the captains are not willing to threaten the security of their party and systematically turn down their requests. In many occasion, the situation once again becomes tense and is defused in extremis by Black Buffalo.

On the first of October, the explorers find a lone house on the shore, half hidden by the willows. A French man, Jean Vallé, operates a trading post from this house. The trader explains that the Cheyenne River runs under the Black Mountains; it is very hard to navigate and the mountains themselves are very high and covered with snow, even in the summer. He says grizzly bears and mountain goats are plentiful in the mountains. On the following day, the French trader travels a few miles aboard the explorers' boats. On the fourth of October, they discover a three-mile-long island in the middle of the River; they name it Good Hope Island. A few miles ahead, they find an old deserted Arikaras village on an island. On the sixth, they encounter another Arikaras village of about 80 lodges. The village is empty and the captains conclude the Indians are out hunting on the trails of a buffalo herd.

On October 7th, they encounter a fortified Arikaras village of 60 houses located by a river named "Surwarkarna." The following day, they discover an inhabited Arikara village located in the middle of a 3-mile-long island. Several French traders meet with Lewis; one of them is Mr. Gravelines, an experienced trader who gives the captain detailed information about the Indian nations and their environment. Clark notes on October 9th that he observes several Indian women (squaws) riding canoes made of a single skin of buffalo. On the tenth, they hold a council with several Indian bands. Clark reports that his servant, York, manages to astonish the natives but may have exaggerated his origins (as a wild monster who used to eat children) a little too much.

On the 13th, one of the men, J. Newman, is tried for "mutinous expression" and sentenced to receive 75 lashes. He is also removed from the permanent party. The

following day, Clark has to explain the reason for the harsh punishment delivered to Newman to an Indian Chief. He notes the Indians of this nation never inflict corporal punishment on their children.

On October 18, two French traders in a pirogue meet the captains; they explain they had been robbed of their traps and furs by the Mandans, then proceed to follow the party. Two days later, the hunters wound a grizzly; Clark observes the track of these animals is about three times the size of those of a man. They also note gangs of wolves seem to always follow wherever herds of buffalos go, in order to feed on the weaker or dying ones. On the 24th, they enter Mandan country and meet with two of their Grand Chiefs on a hunt. The Chiefs hold a council with the Arikaras chief accompanying the Corps.

Among the Mandans

Among the Mandans Summary and Analysis

Starting October 27, 1804, Clark gives descriptions of the Mandan villages and cultural characteristics of their inhabitants. He notes their houses are large and round and that they host many families. He meets with René Jussome, a Frenchman living among the Mandans; he gives them some important information about the locals and they use him as an interpreter. During the last days of October, the captains hold several councils and exchange gifts with the tribes. On November 2, Clark travels three miles down the river and decides on a proper place for the Corps' winter camp. The men start building the huts out of the cottonwood available and proceed to build the fortification for the winter.

On November 4th, they meet with Toussaint Charbonneau, a French Canadian fur trader living with the Mandans. He asks to be hired as an interpreter and the captains agree. Later, they learn the man has two Shoshone wives, whom he bought as slaves. His youngest wife, Sacagawea, is sixteen years old and already six months pregnant.

On November 22nd, William Clark learns from an interpreter that a man living near the construction site is about to kill his wife. He goes to meet the husband, who is convinced his wife slept with one of his officers. Clark argues no one is allowed to kill anyone around the Fort, and he does not believe that anyone of the Corps' party touched his wife because such behavior is strictly forbidden.

Five days later, several Chiefs from different tribes complain that they learned through an interpreter that the Corps is going to join the Sioux and cut off the Mandan tribes. Lewis denies the rumors and tells Mr. LaFrance, a trader for the N.W. Company, that he cannot continue to spread such false rumors unless he wants to face some serious consequences.

On November 30th, an Indian tells the captains that a party of Sioux and Pawnees attacked a five Mandan hunters and killed one of them after taking their horses. The captains promise the Indians to protect them; they immediately organize the protection of the Mandan town by placing their armed men around it. The Indians are a little nervous at first by this show of force, but Captain Clark explains it is his duty to protect his children against their enemies.

The cold temperature sets in and on December 1804, Clark records a temperature of 42 degrees below zero. A few days before Christmas, the man Clark kept from murdering his wife comes to visit with his two wives and asks to make peace with the man throught to have slept with his wife. On Christmas day, several men go out to hunt while the others remain in the camp and celebrate all day long, until 9 that evening.

Leaving the Mandans

Leaving the Mandans Summary and Analysis

During their stay with the Mandans, the officers have a chance to discover many strange customs nnd habits of the native tribes. The Mandan city is a collection of villages where approximately 4500 people from different tribes and bands live. The Mandan women are generally very attractive and in January, some men end up with sexually transmitted diseases.

Throughout the winter, the captains spend a lot of time trying to convince the different chiefs that they would profit from establishing and maintaining peace with their neighbors. They always add that a warring nation may not only lose its wealth and liberty through war, but also the protection and care of its Great Father (the President).

On the ninth of February, Private Howard returns to the Fort by scaling its wall after a visit to the Mandan village late at night. He is put under guard and later tried and sentenced. Two days later, Sacagawea, the young wife of Toussaint Charbonneau, gives birth to a small boy named Jean-Baptiste. Captain Lewis provides the rattlesnake's rattle to Jussome, who then uses it as medicine to accelerate the difficult delivery of the baby. Lewis writes he does not understand how a crushed rattle mixed with a little water can help the delivery of a baby, but the birth followed the administration of the medicine. Clark later applies a similar, scientific logic when he explains the beliefs in the 'medicine stone' the Indian tribes have. The so-called medicine stone "draws" characters in the morning after it has been smoked by the visitors; these characters are then interpreted. Clark says the thick and porous surface of the rock probably responds to the sun because of the properties of the minerals it contains.

At the end of February, the captains assign 16 men to the building of four pirogues in preparation for their spring departure. During that time, Joseph Gravelines informs them the Teton and Yankton Sioux are preparing to attack some nations in the village and they will kill the white men that stand in their way. This warning has no follow up and no such attack occurs. In mid-March, the Corps hires Toussaint Charbonneau as an interpreter through his wife. Charbonneau first tries to set his own terms of employment, but the captains refuse. A week later, the would-be interpreter sends them a message he has changed his mind and that he is willing to accept the initial terms of employment.

To the Yellowstone

To the Yellowstone Summary and Analysis

By the end of March, the ice running down the Missouri finally shows up and the water level rises quickly. The Indians enjoy jumping from block to block and catch floating buffalos. On April 7th, Lewis writes that the Corps is ready to leave. The keelboat, loaded with specimens and documentation to deliver to the President of the United States, as well as personal letters to friends and relatives of the member of the Corps, leaves Fort Mandan for St. Louis. Lewis commissions Richard Warfington, an experienced corporal, to command the boat and its 5 men crew; Joseph Gravelines will be responsible for piloting the vessel to its destination. At the same time, William Clark and the rest of the Corps leave aboard the 2 large pirogues and six small canoes; Lewis chooses to walk along the shore toward the next camp, so he can get back in shape after the long winter. The captain writes that considering what is ahead of them, this moment of departure is without a doubt the happiest moment of his life.

In the afternoon of April 13, a sudden wind strikes the sails of the pirogues and Charbonneau, steering of one of them, maneuvers in such a way that the boat nearly capsizes. Lewis quickly orders Drouillard to take over the helm and manages to save the situation. The captain notes the boat was at least 200 yards from either shore when the accident was avoided; the distance would have made it nearly impossible for the 3 men aboard who could not swim, as well as for the Indian mother and her newborn child, to survive an accident. The loss of the material transported as cargo in the pirogue would probably have doomed the expedition.

On April 14, they pass a creek Charbonneau once used as an encampment for a few weeks while hunting with the Indians. The captains name the creek Charbonneau's Creek. A week later, Lewis writes that a buffalo calf followed him closely while he was walking on the shore and would not leave him until he stepped back on the boat. He suspects the reason the young buffalo was so fond of him was because he was scared by the captain's dog, who resembled the wolves that attack the buffalo trailing behind their herds.

On April 26, Lewis dispatches Joseph Field to scout the Yellowstone River as far as possible and return the same day. When Field comes back, he reports the river is gentle, and that it goes straight for 8 miles before starting to twist from side to side entering into a valley. The same captain notes that even though there is plenty to kill, the men are ordered to kill only what is necessary for them to eat. Finally, he notes the bald eagle is more abundant in this part where the Yellowstone and the Missouri meets, than in any other part of the country.

From the Yellowstone to the Musselshell

From the Yellowstone to the Musselshell Summary and Analysis

On April 28, 1805, Lewis continues to document his observations of the spectacular wilderness of the region. He says that while the antelope is extremely fast on land, it is a very poor swimmer; the wolves usually catch them whenever they get in the water. His own dog caught an antelope in the river, drowned it and brought it back to shore. On May 4th, the party is delayed in the morning while repairing the pirogues. The river bottom is covered with timber, making the water much harder to navigate safely.

There is plenty to hunt for the men in this area of the continent. The hunters manage to kill a huge grizzly, but not without problems. They have to shoot him 10 times, and the animal still swims half way across the river to a sandbar where he finally dies after 20 minutes. The captains measure the monster and estimate his weight to be between five hundred and six hundred pounds, over eight and a half feet high and close to six feet around the breast. Hunting is so easy and the game so plentiful that the two captains can easily kill enough for the whole Corps to feed on during a day. Lewis adds that while he wishes things would continue to be as easy for the remainder of the trek, he seriously doubts it.

On May 8, Clark notes that Sacawagea participates in feeding the party by picking up berries and fruits on the shore. She picks up some white apples and wild licorice fruits and feeds them to the captain. Lewis, who often acts as the doctor in the party, mentions that boils, abscesses and sore eyes are problems common to most of the members of the Corps at this point of the expedition. On May 10, Lewis sees a man running toward them in great distress. He recognizes Bratton, a man who decided to walk on the shore, and lets him in the boat. The man is so out of breath he cannot tell the reason for his distress before a few minutes passed. He then tells that over a mile downstream, he shot a grizzly and wounded him badly. Yet the bear went after him and he had to run for his life for half a mile. Lewis sends a few men in search of the animal; they find it and kill it with two bullets in the head. The captain remarks he would rather fight two Indians than a single grizzly.

On May 14, a strong wind almost turns over a pirogue loaded with essential cargo. Once again, Charbonneau is at the rudder but in a state of such panic that he cannot recover the control of the boat after a bad maneuver. In order to avoid a disaster, Cruzatte, who stands at the bow, resorts to threatening to shoot Charbonneau on the spot should he fail to obey. A few seconds later, Charbonneau recovers and the boat is secured. Five days later, Lewis writes that his dog was bitten by a wounded beaver trying to swim away from the hunting crew. The dog's wound is so deep Lewis fears he will not recover (as he will).

From the Musselshell to Maria's River

From the Musselshell to Maria's River Summary and Analysis

On May 20, the Corps reaches the Musselshell River, as described to Lewis by the Minnetarees Indians. The captain proceeds to detail the multiple chains of mountains nearby, as well as his estimation of their relationship to the many rivers and streams. Soon the river becomes difficult to navigate freely. Their towropes, made of elk skin, are rotten and slippery; they often rip and give up.

On the night of May 29, the party awakes in a panic, only to discover a large buffalo bull swam across the river while they were asleep and pulled itself out of the water over a pirogue. The animal then ran toward the camp's fires, changed its course and headed toward the lodges. Once it reached Lewis' tent, Seaman started barking, which made the animal change its course and disappear into the wilderness. They feel lucky no one was hurt during the incident, since the crazed bull missed the heads of some of the party members by a few inches only. Later that day, they pass by an enormous pile of rotting buffalo carcasses. Lewis writes that some Indian bands manage to kill entire herds of buffalo at once by using a decoy to direct the herd toward a precipice. The stench emanating from the pile is quite strong; they name a nearby stream Slaughter River.

On June 3, 1805, the Corps faces a challenge that forces the captains to innovate in order to solve an unexpected problem. Early that morning, the explorers arrive at a point where the Missouri seems to split in two branches. Since they have no map or information indicating which of the two streams is the true Missouri River, they set up camp at the mouth of the junction. The captains decide they cannot afford to take the whole party along the wrong river leg. Cruzatte, who is a very experienced waterman, is convinced the northern stream is the right one, and most of the party members agree; however, following their calculations, the captains think otherwise. However, they need to be sure before taking the Corps in any one direction; they decide to split the party temporarily: Lewis will take Cruzatte and a small party to explore the northern fork, while Clark and his party will scout the southern stream. The two parties will rejoin with the boats at the junction once they are convinced of the path of the real Missouri River. Sixty miles into the northern fork, Lewis is able to see his branch of the river is heading too far North to ever join with the Columbia River, thus disproving Cruzatte's intuition. By then, Clark's party has reached a point where the captain is able to see his own party is following the true Missouri River. Clark's scouting party comes back to the junction on June 6.

On June 7, the team of Lewis is still on a trek along the Maria's River, heading towards the junction. Rain keeps falling and the water turns the ground into very slippery terrain. Lewis compares the exercise to walking on a thick, half-thawed iced terrain. While traversing a narrow pass near a precipice, one of the men following the captain falls and

calls for help; he is hanging over the precipice, hardly holding on with an arm and a leg. Lewis uses his leadership skills to direct the man step by step into saving his own life. Lewis' party is back at the junction on June 8, two days later than Clark.

Great Falls of the Missouri

Great Falls of the Missouri Summary and Analysis

The captains are now both convinced the southern fork is the right one, but they yet have to convince the other members. After a day spent studying the maps, taking measurements and analyzing the water of each stream, they are more convinced than ever of the correctness of their choice. However, their scientific arguments are not sufficient to convince the other members of the party. The co-captains then make the political decision and decide to send another scouting team up the southern fork, until they can reach a huge waterfall; they know from the Hidatsas that if they see the falls, they are following the true Missouri River. On June 12, after recovering from an illness with the help of a decoction of his own trade, Meriwether Lewis leaves Clark behind at the junction, takes a small party of men and goes on to explore the south stream. They travel quickly. Along the way, the co-captain takes care to leave a note to Clark about his progress. The party manages to kill a buffalo, an antelope and a few mule deer.

A day later, after traveling several miles further than Clark's previous mission along the Missouri River, Lewis arrives the first Great Fall of the Missouri. The fall is located where the Hidatsas said it was, but it is a lot higher than predicted. He writes several paragraphs about the beauty of the falls he encounters before admitting he wishes he had the pen of a talented writer to convey his amazement to the readers. Pushing ahead, he realizes there is not one, but rather five waterfalls cascading into each other. After setting up his camp for the night, he decides to dispatch a man to inform Clark of his successful venture. Goodrich catches six huge trout near the falls, as well as several white fish. On that night, noting his appetite is finally back, the captain and his team feast on fine buffalo meat and delicious trout.

On June 14, J. Fields is dispatched to meet Clark and to let him know the starting point of the portage. A little before noon, Lewis decides to take a walk alone along the river, in hope of establishing the ending point of the rapids. During his trek, he encounters a grizzly bear and barely escapes death, as well as a cougar ready to jump on him before he shot at it. He writes it seems like all the animals were out to get them that day. He returns to his camp after dark, where the men have already given him up for dead and are planning a return route on their own.

On June 15, Fields returns to inform Lewis that his co-captain and the rest of the crew are waiting for him, just a few miles below. During the next few days, they explore the area and prepare for the portage, which appears to be a lot longer than expected. On June 16, Lewis gives Sacagawea, who had been quite sick for the last few days, doses of barks and opium. The medicine seems to work and the woman recovers. On June 18, Lewis and the men hide the pirogue on the shore and hide part of their material in a cache. This operation will lighten their burden during the rest of the trek and insure the material will be available during their return journey.

Among the Grizzly Bears

Among the Grizzly Bears Summary and Analysis

The portaging process begins slowly, as the weather turns stormy. For days, intense rainfalls turn the terrain into a pool of mud, making it nearly impossible for the weighted-down men to portage for extended periods. Intense heat periods alternate with heavy hailstorms, making the trek all the more difficult.

On June 21, Lewis starts to worry about the construction of the main boat; even though they already have enough animal skins, he wonders whether they will be able to find the material to build a solid frame and to seal the skins correctly. The following day, the men put together a primitive chariot able to carry a leather canoe loaded with material. On their way to the first camp site of the portage, they find the prickly pears covering the ground are a major problem, as the pears sting the feet of the men through the sole of their moccasins. Worse, the makeshift chariot keeps breaking and requires hours of work to repair every time. Captain Lewis dispatches several parties around the portage area; some men are assigned to hunt, others to locate the timber necessary for their future constructions.

The men are dispatched around the area to hunt, find construction material or transport cargo back and forth between camps. Some of them begin to report sighting threatening grizzly bears. On the 25th, J. Fields has yet another close encounter with a grizzly and escapes death almost miraculously. On that day, the men report the winds are sometimes so strong that when a sail is set on a canoe on land, the wind carries it. Lewis calls it "sailing on dry land." The following day, Lewis reports the cache located near the starting camp is complete and filled with the cargo they will need on their return.

The weather turns aggressive; on the 27th, the party suffers under a violent burst of hail of exceptional size. The following day, the bears are roaming so close to the camp that Seaman, Captain Clark's dog, keeps barking all though the night. Lewis mentions it is now too dangerous to send a man anywhere on his own; he also orders the men to sleep with their guns, just in case. On the 29th, Clark writes his party was taken aback by a sudden and heavy rainstorm, "like one volley of water falling from the heavens." His party takes cover under a cliff while the torrent cascading down the hill carries rocks and mud. The party, which includes Sacagawea and her baby, barely make it to the top of a rock, thus avoiding a flood which sees the water rising up to 15 feet and engulfing their previous cache.

The weather continues to harass the explorers, who are all extremely tired and injured. The construction of the boat continues under difficult conditions. The pirogue is almost ready and on July 5th, Lewis estimates it will be able to carry 8000 pounds of cargo. On July 13, Lewis notes the men's regime consist almost entirely of meat. They require an entire buffalo, or an elk and a deer, to fill their needs for single a day. As long as there is

plenty to kill around the camp, the party can save the flour and the other portable meals for later use. The captains are well aware the crossing of the Rocky Mountains will require them to use a different source of food. They have yet to encounter the Shoshone Indians, who should be able to provide them with horses and other material necessary for their trek across the Rocky Mountains and towards the Columbia River.

Three Forks of the Missouri

Three Forks of the Missouri Summary and Analysis

On July 18, the captains agree to send a party ahead to look for the Indians. On July 20th, the scouting party led by Captain Clark observes smoke in the distance; the captain decides to leave signs on his trail in order to let the Indians know they are peaceful. A few days later, Sacagawea, traveling with Lewis and his party, starts to recognize the country of her youth; she says they should reach the Three Forks quite soon. By June 22nd, the Corps is reunited; Lewis sets small flags on each canoe in order to indicate to the Indians that they are not their enemies. The captain is still wary about the river ahead and the possible obstructions, even though the woman of the party assures him the river is clear.

The explorers reach the Three Forks on July 25 and begin a difficult trek across a rough countryside. The ground is still covered with prickly pears and rocks, making it nearly impossible for them to walk at a fast pace. Many of the men are sick or exhausted, and often both. This situation slows down the party considerably. Lewis notes the road ahead seems increasingly difficult to follow; however, if the Indians can thrive in such a difficult country, white men can no doubt find what they need to survive through it.

Three Forks to Beaver's Head

Three Forks to Beaver's Head Summary and Analysis

On July 28, the captains agree to name the three forks of the Missouri after the most important men in the government of the United States: The President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Treasury. The western fork is christened Jefferson's River, the middle one Madison's River and the eastern fork Gallatins' River (after Albert Gallatin). On that day, Lewis also notes their encampment is located precisely where the kidnapping of Sacagawea and her friends occurred five years earlier. He is quite surprised to see that the woman does not display any emotion in that regard and that she is just perfectly content to be wherever she has food and clothes.

A few days afterward, Clark observes the fresh tracks of a man climbing up a hill not too far from the camp and concludes that they have been observed. On August 8, Sacagawea says they are nearing the summer retreat of her people, as she recognizes a hill her nation calls the Beaver's Head. Lewis immediately decides to go ahead with a small party (Drouillard, Gass and Shields) and follow the track to find the Indians.

Reaching the Great Divide

Reaching the Great Divide Summary and Analysis

On August 11, Lewis` sees a man on a horse two miles away, coming toward them down the plain. Flanked at a distance by Shields and Drouillard, the captain walks in his direction and signals his friendly intentions using his blanket. However, as Lewis gets closer, the horseman turns and rides away. The party follows the horse tracks in the hope of finding a village; they find more horse tracks, but no Indians and decide to camp out for the night. On August 12, the men travel miles down a valley along the river stream; they eventually find the furthest fountain, the point of origin of the mighty Missouri River. Lewis drinks from the source and climbs the dividing mountain. On the other side, he finds a similar source which he identifies as a source of the great Columbia River. However, Lewis also realizes that instead of the expected plains, the rivers are divided by a great chain of mountains covered with snow.

On the following day, Lewis' party encounters a small group of Indians and distributes some gifts. They lead the party to a village where the white men are met by over fifty warriors and an overwhelming number of hugs and welcome signs in Indian fashion. Lewis meets Cameâhwait, the main chief of the band. Lewis fails to secure the trade for horses, but stays with the Shoshone Indians, waiting for the rest of the Corps to join them. Lewis makes several attempts to convince the Shoshone his intentions are good and that a trade would be to their advantage, but the Indians remain weary. Lewis describes the Shoshone as an extremely poor yet jovial tribe whose conditions of living are quite diminished by a difficult environment. For instance, he notes the men feed mostly on dried fruits and it requires a team of 40 or 50 hunters on horseback, working for hours, to round up a herd and kill 2 or 3 antelopes.

Lewis takes the chief and a party of Indians to the river where he thinks he will find Clark's party, but the men are not where he expected. Lewis notes he would rather walk than ride on a horse with no saddle.

Across the Rocky Mountains

Across the Rocky Mountains Summary and Analysis

On August 17, Clark shows up along with the rest of the explorers. Sacagawea is reunited with her relatives. She meets with one of the women captured along with her five years earlier. Cameâhwait turns out to be her brother, a coincidence which greatly facilitates the negotiations in the days that follow. They name their encampment Camp Fortunate for the occasion. On August 18, which is Meriwether Lewis' 31st birthday, the men start buying horses by trading items valuable to the Indians but of no essential value to the explorers. In the following days, they go back to the Shoshone camp and start to prepare their trek across the Rocky Mountains.

A scouting party led by Clark establishes that the road ahead is very treacherous and difficult to traverse. The captains are now convinced they will need as many horses as possible in order to traverse the mountains with their cargo. They tell the Indians they will need all the available animals as well as a guide. Cameâhwait assures them he will do what he can about the horses; he adds that an old man by the name of Old Toby, the most knowledgeable person about the area, will accompany them. By the end of August, they have crossed a mountain pass and reached the valley of the Bitterroot River. However, they yet have to go across the main mountains.

On September 11, the Corps starts ascending the Bitterroots Mountains. The journey proves extremely difficult, even more so than the captains expected. To make matters worse, the Shoshone guide loses the track. There is no source of food anywhere and the men start to kill their horses to survive. The temperature drops significantly and the ground is often covered with two inches of snow; the hills are steep and the terrain is very difficult to walk. Some roads are merely narrow and slippery rocky paths along a steep precipice. Horses keep falling and the men are overly tired and hungry. On September 20, after three weeks of an exhausting journey across the Rockies, the starving men finally make it across the mountains and to an agglomeration of Indian lodges in a small plain.

The explorers are met with a mix of fear and enthusiasm by the Nez Percés women living in the camp. They learn most of the men are on a hunting trek; the Indians feed them with a soup and bread. A day later, the members of the Corps, still broken and tired, enter the main village of the Nez Percés where they are able to feed on salmon and other food from the valley.

Downward Toward the Coast

Downward Toward the Coast Summary and Analysis

On September 23, the captains hold a council with all the influential members of the tribe. Short of an interpreter, they rely on sign language to tell the Indians about their goals as explorers and to give them their advice of peace. The men are still very weak and most of them are sick or hurt. Lewis is barely able to ride a horse. They set up camp a few miles down the village, near the Kooskooskee River (now known as Clearwater River) and start building canoes in preparation for the remainder of their odyssey. Many Indians from neighboring tribes come to visit them during this period.

On October 7, the Corps leaves the plains aboard 5 new canoes. The old Shoshone guide leaves unexpectedly on the following day, without his pay. The captains are advised not to go after him for the purpose of paying him, since the Nez Percés tribe will most likely rob him of his pay. They sail quickly towards their destination, since the river's current is now pushing along. The Clearwater River becomes the Snake River before it finally rushes into the Columbia. The stream is extremely rich in salmon; the explorers are able to buy the fish at villages along the shore. However, the men are so accustomed to eating meat that they would rather buy and cook dogs from the Indians than eat fish again.

On October 14, a canoe filled with provisions capsizes in a rapid; a lot of food is lost in the accident. Short on firewood and food that night, the explorers resort to breaking a tradition of never taking anything from the Indians; they take split timber and smoked fish hidden under rocks next to an empty Indian lodge. Down the way of the Columbia, the captains continue to fulfill their diplomatic missions with the tribes they meet. The presence of a native woman with the Corps serves to reassure the visited tribes as to the pacific intentions of the visitors. The captains also gather important information regarding the geography of the Columbia River area from the knowledgeable locals. The current carries the explorers quickly yet the party is constantly slowed down by the many rapids and falls that stand on their way.

...And Gazed at the Pacific

...And Gazed at the Pacific Summary and Analysis

On November 3rd, Clark notes he can clearly see Mt. Hood on the horizon, less than 50 miles away from their encampment. Four days later, the captain writes about the "great joy in the camp" at the sight of the ocean and the sound of the waves crashing on the shore at a distance. Indeed, this has been the goal of the members of the Corps of Discovery since the start of their long trek, which has stretched over 4000 miles and started over a year and a half ago.

Their joy is soon tamed by the heavy weather that hampers their advance. The size of the waves makes the men sea sick and the huge logs carried by the stream threaten to break and sink the canoes. Rain keeps falling, all their equipment is constantly wet and their mats and covers start to rot. The party can barely advance and is constantly force to camp in temporary shelters threatened by the high tides. Because of the violent Pacific storms, they remain stranded in their various camps for nearly three weeks.

On November 14, Lewis decides to proceed to the Ocean by land along with a party of four: Drouillard, R. Frazer and the Fields brothers. The two explorer teams rejoin in various Indian villages along the shore. On November 17, Lewis returns from the seashore to Camp Station, where Clark and his men are stationed. Clark then takes his turn in visiting the seashore and journeys, along with eleven other men, to the seashore. They set up a night camp near the coast, under heavy rain. They often cross path with the Chinook Indians, who offer them roots, mats and sea-otter skins for trade.

On November 21, the parties are reunited during a council with local Chinook chiefs. Two days later, the men, including both captains, write their name or initials as well as a date stamp on trees nearby. They continue to trade with the Indians, including the Clatsop who live across the Columbia. The entire team, including Clark's servant York and the Indian woman, vote to decide on the location of their next winter camp. They elect a site located the Columbia (present-day Astoria, OR), near a Clatsop village.

On December 3, Clark writes the following inscription on a large pine tree: "Capt. William Clark December 3d 1805. By Land. U. States in 1804-1805"

On December 9, Clark meets a few men from the Clatsop nation who offer him food and hospitality for the night. The captain recounts the man laid down two new mats near the fire for him to sleep. However, the mats were filled with fleas and the captain was up all night.

Fort Clatsop

Fort Clatsop Summary and Analysis

The team starts building the huts and the fortification in Fort Clatsop, named after the neighboring tribe of the same name. The fort is almost complete by Christmas; the men spend the day dancing and exchanging gifts. Many natives are present and participate in the festivities. However, the available food is poor and partly spoiled; they eat dinner out of necessity more than pleasure.

In the following days, hunters are dispatched to hunt while the others prepare the salt and work on constructing the walls of the fortification. On the 28th, Clark reports York has a violent cold, accentuated by exhaustion from working too much with the men. The fortifications are completed on the 30th. As usual, the natives are ordered to go out of the camp at sunset and are only allowed to come back when the gates open in the morning. Clark also says that just like most of the other men under his command, he grows fond of dog meat after living on it by force of necessity.

In early January, the corpse of a beached whale, 15 miles from the camp, attracts a lot of attention. Clark decides to set out to see the animal and possibly buy a parcel of the blubber. Sacagawea and her husband want to be part of the adventure, since the woman has never seen the ocean, even less a monster of such a size in her life. When the party arrives at the site of the animal's death, they only find a skeleton and have to buy oil and blubber from the local Tillamook Indians.

On the following day, the life of Private McNeal is saved by a Clatsop woman who called for help when she finds another Indian about to kill him to steal his blanket. The criminal, who comes from a different tribe, runs away and disappears. Later that day, Clark saves a woman whom he finds barely hanging on the side of a cliff, pulled by the weight of the load on her back. The captain manages to hold the load until the woman is back in a safer position; he notes the load itself weights at least a hundred pounds. He also notes the Clatsop have rather loose moral values and prostitute their wife or daughter for a fishing hook or a string of beads. Otherwise, the winter of 1806 is rather uneventful and the diarist usually finds there is nothing new to report.

The Return Journey Begins

The Return Journey Begins Summary and Analysis

The Corps leave Fort Clatsop on March 23, 1806. The captains are convinced they are carrying enough salt and supplies to last them until they reach the Missouri. Before leaving, Lewis leaves behind several copies of a list of the explorer's names, insuring that a physical proof of their feat will be recorded. Seven days after their departure, Lewis writes they can view Mount St. Helens ("the most noble-looking object of its kind in nature") and Mount Hood in the distance.

On April 2nd, a few canoes filled with natives visit the camp. The men mention to Lewis that a couple of them live near some falls on the side opposite of the Columbia, on a river that feeds the Columbia on the south. Lewis decides to take a small party with him and visit this unexplored area. After tricking a family of Indians into trading with him, he visits the Multnomah Rivers, a stream that feeds the Columbia on the south-east.

On April 11th, Lewis notes the water levels are considerably higher than when they first descended the river, by up to 20 feet. On that day, they encounter several men from the Wahclellahs who give them trouble. On one occasion, they attack John Shields, who is trailing behind the party, and try to steal a dog he has just bought. He has to threaten them with his large knife to avoid getting hurt. Later, three men from the same tribe steal Seaman; luckily, they let the dog go once they realize a party of white men is after them. The following day, unable to keep a hold of a canoe caught at a bad angle in rapids, the party loses one of its vessels. Captain Lewis manages to replace it quickly by trading a few animal skins in exchange for two canoes and some paddles.

Clark sets up displays of bundled trade goods next to Indian villages in the hope of attracting attention and acquiring horses (for portaging) as well as dogs (for food). The natives do not trade horses easily and the process turns out more tedious than expected. However, the arrival of the salmons in the Columbia River on April 19 thrills the Indian bands and eases the process of trading. Once the river becomes too difficult to navigate, the explorers decide to sell their canoes. However, the value of their vessels is greatly diminished once the Indians learn the men will not need the canoes anymore; On April 24, the canoes are exchanged for a few strands of beads.

Wallawallas and Nez Percé

Wallawallas and Nez Percé Summary and Analysis

On April 27, the captains of the Corps of Discovery meet with Yellept, the principal chief of the Wallawalla tribe. They convince him they need horses and as many provisions as possible in order to complete their trek across the mountains. The chief then talks to his people and does his best to persuade them to help the explorers as much as possible. By the end of the day, the explorers are in possession of ample stock and provisions. However, the horses remain a problem.

The following day, Yellept brings a beautiful white horse to Clark; in return, the captain gives him his sword, a lot of munitions and a few other articles of small value. During the day, Sacagawea meets with a Shoshone prisoner, who helps in translating their conversations with the Wallawallas. That night, hundres of men and women from the Wallawalla and Chymnappos tribes surround the Corps' encampment and celebrate with them at the sound of the fiddles until late that evening.

On May 1st, Lewis acknowledges the Wallallas are "the most hospitable, honest, and sincere people (...) met with in our voyage," a praise of the natives quite unique in the Journals of Lewis and Clark.

In early May 1806, the explorers are once again living alongside the Nez Percés. They hold a council with the main chiefs of the nation and spend half a day cementing trade relationships with the tribe. The translation process is slow and quite tedious, mixing elements of the French, Shoshone, Minnetaree and Chopunnish languages. However, by the end of the afternoon, both parties are pleased with the result.

Having learned about the healing abilities of the white men, the natives soon line up at the camp, waiting for medical help from the captains turned doctors. Clark notes many of their medical requests are so simple they have little to do with medicine. On May 22nd, Sacawagea's son is found to be very sick with swelling and fever. Lewis uses a poultice of onions and some cream of tartar. The child recovers after a few days. Bratton's destabilizing back aches are cured by applying a "violent sweats" treatment. The treatment involves the digging of a hole in the ground, which is then heated with fire. The ill man is then placed in the hole to sweat for an hour, then bathed in cold water before returning to the heated hole. The treatment works so well the captains manage to help an old Indian man whose limbs are paralyzed using the same method.

Before leaving the Nez Perc/s, the captains request that a few Indians accompany them as guides across the mountain range. However, they are unable to convince them because these Indians are scared of the Blackfeet and Minnetarees. As they are preparing for their difficult trek ahead, the captains are comforted by the fact that all their patients, including the old Indian man, Bratton and Charbonneau's son, have recovered due to their treatments.

The Bitterroot Range

The Bitterroot Range Summary and Analysis

The explorers are now at the edge of the Bitterroot Mountains. They wait for mountain snow to melt by keeping an eye on water level. In order to traverse the range, the captains devise a strategy that allows the horses to feed in between portages. They soon find the padding formed by the snow on the ground makes it much easier for the horses to travel; indeed, they do not need to walk across a broken terrain filled with debris, rocks and timber. Still, the road is not free of obstacles and problems abound. Private Potts is injured by his own knife and bleeds heavily from a split vein in his inner thigh. Colter and his horse tumble and fall down a steep hill, rolling over each other several times; luckily, they both escape injury and are able to continue their journey.

Food is scarce and they rely mostly on fishing to feed themselves. Mosquitoes are once again a source of trouble, adding to the difficulties of the portage. Returning to the flats to let the horses eat, they hire three Indians as guides. In exchange for a couple of guns, the natives will accompany them and point to shortcuts up in the mountain range leading to the Great Falls. By the end of June, Potts leg is doing much better and he is able to participate in the daily tasks. On June 29, they camp near a hot spring and are able to bathe in hot water for a while. Unlike the explorers, the Indian guides alternate between the hot bath and the icy cold water running down the creek below.

The Expedition Divided: Lewis and the Indians

The Expedition Divided: Lewis and the Indians Summary and Analysis

On July 1st, 1806, the captains decide to divide the party in order to explore the area to a greater extent. Lewis selects Drouillard, the Fields, Gass and two other privates to explore Maria's River, along with their Indian companions; Clark, along with five men, will explore the Yellowstone River; Pryor will lead the horses by land to the Mandan village; and Ordway, leading the remaining nine men, will descend the river with the canoes. From this point on, Lewis and Clark, until they reunite down the Missouri River, will write their diaries separately.

On July 3, Lewis' team follows the Indians' suggestion and crosses the river near some rapids, which gives them a bit of trouble. The Indians then tell Lewis about a road they should take near the camp; this road leads from the Clark's River to the Cokahlarishkit, a tributary of the Medicine River, and then from the latter they can get to the Great Falls quite easily. The friendly Indian guides separate from the team and return to their nation on the following day. On July 11, Lewis notes the mating season of the buffalo has begun and that they can hear the constant roaring of the bulls for miles. The following morning, the men can only find seven of their horses, leading Lewis to believe the remainder has been stolen by Indians. For three days, starting on July 13, Lewis collects the material that was left in caches during their trek a year earlier. A few of these objects were destroyed by sunk caches or flood, but many can be restored at least partially.

On July 17, the captain notes they are now entering the Blackfeet and Minnetarees country, two tribes he would rather avoid. 9 days later, he spots a pack of about 30 horses, guarded by a few Indians, a few miles down a plain. After realizing it would be impossible to avoid them completely, he decides to meet with them. During the tense meeting, he distributes a medal and a few items. The men are warned to stay together and alert during the night. While R. Fields is guarding the camp, the same Indians who met with Lewis the day before, sneak in and steal their guns. Fields spots one of them and calls on his brother to help him catch the thief. They catch up with the man and kill him with a knife through the heart. Awakened by all the noise, Lewis draws his pistol and runs after a few of them as they try to steal their horses. He loses them in a bush but manages to shoot one of them in the belly; a bullet shot in return by the dying Indian misses his head by a few inches. In the end, the men are able to recover their guns and effects.

They also recover some of their horses, taking some of the Indians' animals in exchange for their losses. They then collect their effects, saddle the horses and ride away, non-stop, until the following morning. Before leaving the camp, Lewis purposely

leaves the peace medal around the dead Indian's neck, "so they might be informed who we were."

After riding non-stop for nearly two days, they reach the shore of the Missouri and rejoin with Ordway and the canoes, On the same day, they also encounter Gass and the horses on their way to the Falls. On August 7, the party reaches the point of departure at the mouth of the Yellowstone River; here they find a note left by Clark indicating he was planning to camp a few miles below. Lewis tries to catch up with his co-captain's team but fails to find him for a few days. On August 11, Lewis is accidentally shot in the thigh by Pierre Cruzatte while they are out hunting for deer. Lewis does not reprimand Cruzatte since he find it was an accident. Yet the captain is forced to lay down a pirogue and writes that in the weeks to come, he will be unable to write his diaries while he recovers. His team catches up with Clark on the following day.

The Expedition Divided; Clark in the Yellowstone

The Expedition Divided; Clark in the Yellowstone Summary and Analysis

William Clark sets out toward the Yellowstone on July 3, 1806. His party includes several men, the entire Charbonneau family as well as 50 horses. On the 12th, the captain intends to carry all the cargo by canoe as far as possible, while Sergeant Pryor proceeds to take the horses by land to the next camp. On the 14th, Sacagawea indicates to the captain that a road nearby leads to a pass in a gap through the mountains nearby. Clark follows her advice.

The horses' feet are so sore they are unable to chase animals for any length of time. Clark uses makeshift moccasins made from buffalo skin to help the horses and relieve their pain. On July 20, the captain orders two new canoes from timber available around the camp. Three men armed with axes work on the canoes until dark. The following day, they wake up to discover that half of their horses are gone and cannot be found. Clark suspects the horses have been stolen by Indians, but finds no horse tracks leading to their village. Pryor is commissioned to take the horses to the Mandan village. A few days later, Pryor tells Clark that since the horses are trained to go after the buffalos, they cannot be controlled whenever the party encounters a herd. Clark adds another man (Hall) to the party and puts him in charge of advancing ahead of the party and of scattering the buffalo herds when he encounters them.

On July 25, Clark discovers a tall sandstone structure and names it Pompy's Tower, after Sacagawea baby's nickname, by far the youngest explorer of the American West. William Clark engraves his signature in the structure—a signature which can still be viewed today, making Pompy's Pillar the only remaining physical trace of the passage of the Corps of Discover.

In early August, the ferocious mosquitoes become such a problem to the party that the men can barely sleep or work unless they are standing on a sandbar and wind is blowing the mosquitoes away. After reaching the Mandan area, Clark conveys the chiefs of the local tribes (Minnetarees, Hahas, and Black Cat's) to a council during which he repeats the speeches he gave them two years earlier. He invites them personally to come to Washington and meet their Great Father, the President of the United States himself. However, the Indians are scared of being attacked by the Sioux and none of the chiefs will accept Clark's invitation. After a bit of convincing, one of the chiefs by the name of Big White says he will accompany Clark, under the condition he is allowed to bring his wife and son, and that the the interpreter Jussome's wife and children are also part of the journey. The Corps of Discovery, thus augmented by two families, sets out for St. Louis on the 17th of August.

Last Lap

Last Lap Summary and Analysis

From the end of August 1806 until the middle of September, the Corps of Discovery navigates speedily down the Missouri River toward St. Louis. This time, they are accompanied by a representative of the Mandan tribe. The captains of the Corps of Discovery spend much of their time and efforts in sealing the diplomatic relationships they first established on their way to the Pacific, two years earlier.

They first encounter members of the Teton Sioux tribe, with whomn they want little to do with. Clark tells their representatives they did not listen to their counsel and they will not be suffered around their camp. He refuses to give in to any of their demands and leaves them. Soon afterward, he provides similar warning to the representatives of the Pawnees. He adds that no white trader will deal with them or even visit them, unless they are sufficiently armed to defeat them. He also tells them he is aware of their war against the Mandans, but warns that the latter are well armed and perfectly able to whip their party.

The closer they get to St. Louis, the more traders they encounter going the opposite way; it looks as though their odyssey has paid off, by opening a new route toward the American West, even before it ends. On September 12, they meet with Joseph Gravelines and use the opportunity to renew his commission to bring Indian Chiefs to Washington and meet with the President.

Their pace home is strong with the Missouri river at their back. In fact, they cover up to 70 miles a day and even avoid hunting to quicken their daily pace. On their way, they pay their respects at Charles Floyd's grave who perished earlier in the journey and also get into a verbal spat with the Teton Sioux chief, Black Buffalo. Most remarkably, they also pass new American traders who are already heading upriver to explore and being their own ventures into the new land. Their incredible journey ends at noon on September 23, 1806. They are welcomed as national heroes by a people who, except for their President, had practically given them up for dead.

Characters

Captain Meriwether Lewis

Meriwether Lewis is born in Virginia on August 18, 1774. After serving six years in the Frontier Army and rising to the rank of Captain, he is appointed by the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, as his personal secretary. Lewis is a tall man with an excellent knowledge of geography, topography and natural sciences in general. While preparing the expedition under the supervision of Jefferson, Lewis contacts Captain William Clark and asks him to share the command of the planned expedition. For the sake of the expedition, Clark is named Captain and they are both equal in rank. This allows them to share the responsibilities of this complex enterprise in an organized manner.

Because of his work under Jefferson's office, Captain Lewis acquires an extensive practical knowledge of political diplomacy and social interaction. He uses—and even improves on—these skills extensively during his journey with the Corps of Discovery. He is the principal instigator of the diplomatic 'speeches' delivered to the Indians. During these speeches, translated by interpreters into the various native languages required by the situation, he makes promises to the Indian peoples in exchange for peace. He insists the Indians will greatly benefit from cooperating peacefully with their new "Great Father," the "head chief of the seventeen nations of the United States." He then distributes gifts, medals and certificates. He also invites many of these newly cooperative chiefs to come to Washington and see for themselves the great cities the white men had built. Through his diplomatic skills, Lewis succeeds as an efficient agent of early American imperialism.

Lewis is in exceptional physical shape and does not hesitate to take risks during the journey. He is involved in an accident three times during the expedition. Early on in the trek, he falls 20 feet down a 300 feet high cliff he ascends towards a cave. According to Clark's diary, he manages to save himself with the help of his knife. A few weeks later, he poisons himself while conducting 'taste' tests trying to identify some ore samples discovered on a bluff. Finally, in August 1806, he is accidentally shot in the thigh during a hunting trip by Pierre Cruzatte.

Lewis is a skilled naturalist; he provides Jefferson with numerous descriptions and maps of their discoveries. He is also responsible for selecting and organizing the specimens collected during the first leg of the trek as well as writing many of the documents and descriptions to be sent back downstream to the President after their winter stay in Fort Mandan.

Meriwether Lewis' writing style differs significantly from that of his companion. Though he never revises his entries in the Journals, his descriptions are very precise and they generally convey more information than those of his co-captain. His better grasp of the

English language, his undeniable sense of organization and his informative personal musings help make the Journals livelier and less confusing.

After the completion of the expedition, Lewis is rewarded with double pay as a member of the Corps ($1,228), 1600 acres of land and the title of "Governor of the Territory of Upper Louisiana." Depressed by the conditions of the publication, he never manages to complete the revision of his own entries in the Journals. His melancholic character and his drinking habits lead to increasing problems in his personal life. He takes his own life in September 1809.

Captain William Clark

Captain William Clark is born in August, 1770. He is a tall, red-haired man gifted with a strong constitution and great leading skills. Raised in a family of military men, Clark learns early on the skills necessary to survive in the wilderness through his brother George. The future co-captain of the Corps of Discovery enters the military at age 19 and meets Meriwether Lewis as an ensign under his command. The two men become friends during this period, around 1795. Lewis contacts Clark in April of 1803. With the approval of the President, he offers to share on equal terms the command of the "Corps of Volunteers on an Expedition of North Western Discovery." William Clark gladly accepts the challenge. After joining the Corps and supervising the enlisted men in the construction of the winter camp at River Dubois, Clark is officially ranked as Second Lieutenant in the Corps. However, true to his promise, Lewis insists on addressing Clark as 'Captain' and corrects this administrative discrepancy by annotating the official records accordingly.

Clark is sole captain in charge when the Corps launches from Camp Dubois, on May 14, 1804. Lewis joines the party on the following day in St. Charles, near St. Louis. Clark is responsible for drafting a new map of the terrain ahead of them while staying at camp Mandan during the winter of 1804-05. The captain uses all the information he can gather from the local Indians and traders to modify the maps initially provided by Lewis at the beginning of the trek.

Clark's entries fill over half of the Journals' entries. However, he is short on formal education, a condition which leads to entries filled with major grammatical and stylistic mistakes. His entries are therefore often difficult to decipher and the result is sometimes confusing. For many years after the completion of the expedition, Clark continues to work on the legacy of the Corps' discoveries. He establishes a complete map of the American West based on updated information and for many years, he keeps improving the information gathered throughout their historic journey. He dies of natural causes in St. Louis in September, 1838.

Toussaint Charbonneau

Charbonneau is a 45-year-old independent fur trader from Canada. He has been living among the natives since 1796 when he first visits Fort Mandan on November 4, 1804.

He can speak fluent French and Hidatsa, but no English. He tells the captains he wishes to be hired as an interpreter. He has two wives, both Shoshone Indians, whom he brings from the Hidatsa Indians as captives. In March of the following year, Charbonneau is officially enlisted with the Corps as an "interpreter through his wife," along with the latter. Sacagawea is sixteen years old at the time, and the mother of a newborn son, Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau. This establishes a rather strange chain of communication, where Sacagawea speaks Shoshone to the natives, then translates it to Hidatsa for her husband; Charbonneau then translates from Hidatsa to French, and Labiche does the same from French to English for the Captains.

Charbonneau has no particular skills beside cooking. He is a rather poor boatman and is at the helm during two incidents involving the pirogues, which happen within weeks of leaving Fort Mandan in 1805. Luckily, the incidents are averted with the involvement of other members of the party and the cargo is kept safe.

Upon their return to Fort Mandan on August 14, 1806, Charbonneau is paid $500.33 for his services and then discharged. William Clark eventually adopts both of Charbonneau's children, one of which is Baptiste. Toussaint Charbonneau disappears at the age of 80.

Sacagawea

Sacagawea is the name of the wife of Toussaint Charbonneau. She is captured by the Hidatsa Indians who are enemies of the Shoshone when she is 12 years old. Charbonneau buys her from the Hidatsa tribe as a slave. He then marries her, as well as another Shoshone captive. Sacagawea is 16 years old and the mother of an infant born in February when she is hired, in March 1805, as a Shoshone interpreter by way of her husband. She speaks neither French nor English, but she is a fluent Shoshone and Hidatsa speaker. Charbonneau speaks only French and Hidatsa, yet he is the one hired as an interpreter.

Despite these multiple complications, Lewis and Clark decide they need horses to cross the Bitterroot Mountains, and that the Shoshone tribe are able to provide the animals in a trade; to accomplish this trade, they need a native Shoshone speaker. They decide to hire Toussaint Charbonneau as "an interpreter through his wife," effectively making Sacagawea the only woman to travel with the Corps, and her infant son Jean-Baptiste, the youngest American explorer. She works for the Corps by collecting roots, berries and other plants useful to the party.

In mid-August 1805, the Corps find a band of Shoshones who possess horses near the trail they need to cross. The leader of that band happens to be Sacagawea's brother, a coincidence which greatly facilitates the transaction. Despite this encounter with a long lost family member, Sacagawea stays with her husband and the Corps for the remainder of the trek, until their return to Fort Mandan. Throughout the expedition, she proves extremely helpful in mediating the transactions between the Indians and the white men of the Corps.

A few years after the expedition, she gives birth to a dauther, Lisette, but dies soon afterward from a medical condition aggravated by the birth. William Clark eventually adopts both children.

Jean Baptiste Charbonneau

Jean Baptiste Charbonneau is the youngest person to travel with the Corps of Discovery. He is born in Fort Mandan, a few weeks before his father, Toussaint Charbonneau, is hired as "an interpreter through his wife," Sacagawea. Jean Baptiste is often referred to as "Pomp" or "Pompy" by Clark, who grows fond of the little boy during the voyage. On July 25, 1806, Captain writes his own name in a sandstone formation and gives the free standing rock the name of "Pompy's Tower"—a only physical monument of the trek still visible. He also names a nearby creek after the boy.

Clark eventually legally adopts the boy, as well as his sister. In 1823, Jean Baptiste is taken under the protection of a German prince and moved to Europe where he completes his education in an aristocratic environment. In 1829, he returns to America and to the harsher life of the hunters and trappers he joins. After a brief stay in the Army, he tries unsuccessfully to build his fortune as a miner during the California Gold Rush. He dies of pneumonia at age 61.

Seaman

Seaman is the assumed name of a dog Captain Lewis purchased (for $20) prior to the expedition. Lewis brigns the animal along on their journey across the continent. The dog is a Newfoundland (nowadays known as a Landseer Newfoundland), a breed known for its physical strength and its natural swimming skills. The color of the dog is not explicitly mentioned in the Journals; however, subsequent literature led historians to assume the dog was completely black.

Seaman first appears in William Clark's entry of August 24th, 1804, when Seaman accompanies the captains and a few other men on their way to explore the Mountain of the Little People, a mount feared by the Indians. The dog appears exhausted after walking six miles and they are forced to send him back to the creek where the rest of the crew is waiting. In April of 1805, Lewis writes of his relief that Seaman, who had not been seen since the night before, reappears at eight o'clock that morning.

On May 19th, Seaman is bitten on a hind leg while in pursuit of a beaver. Lewis fears the injury will "prove fatal to him" as the bite goes through his artery. However, the animal recovers quickly. A few days later, the dog, on guard, scares away a buffalo threatening the camp. Lewis mentions the dog keeps barking through the night of June 27th, when bears roam around a temporary camp. A few weeks later, Lewis mentions his dog managing to catch up with a wounded deer in the river, drown it and bring it back to the camp.

Seaman's sagacity seems to have been a great source of amazement to the Indians; his owner mentions this fact in his entry of July 5th, 1806. Ten days later, Lewis mentions Seaman for the last time, noting the dog is very bothered by the mosquitoes and keeps howling. This is the last entry in the Journals pertaining to Seaman.

Pierre Dorion

Pierre Dorion was a half-French, half-Teton trapper who has been living with Teton Sioux for over a decade when he is hired by Lewis as an interpreter. Dorion is instrumental in instigating the peace process between the Yankton Sioux and their neighboring tribes. Dorion is put in charge of collecting and transporting various Indian chiefs to St. Louis and to Washington, as promised by the speeches of the captains. These visits will eventually prove extremely important for the President of the United States in building the relationships between the American government and the various Indian tribes.

George Drouillard

George Drouillard, born from a French Canadian father and an Shawnee mother, is hired by Lewis for his skills as an interpreter and as a hunter. He is not part of the military, but has superior hunting skills and is able to serve as an interpreter for sign language as well as native Shawnee language. His knowledge of American wildlife as well as of the native culture proves a key to the success of the Corps' expedition. Drouillard completes the journey of the Corps of Discovery and safely deliveres Lewis' expedition reports to the postmaster in Cahokia. Drouillard is killed by Indians during a fur trading expedition in 1810.

York

York is the name of William Clark's "servant." He is a black slave bequeathed by the captain's father in 1799. Clark and York, who are about the same age, live together all throughout the expedition. The character of York, the first black man to cross the continent north of the Mexican continent, becomes part of the legend of the Lewis and Clark expedition. His story and prowess are often embellished by subsequent fiction writers as well as imaginative historians.

Though York is not part of the military, he serves as Captain Clark's body servant and shares responsibilities in performing many of the tasks required by the other members of the party. The color of his skin and his great strength are often used by the captains to awe and convince the Indians during their diplomatic encounters. On August 25, Clark notes his servant is nearly exhausted at the end of their trek toward the "Spirit Mound," supposedly because he is fat and not accustomed to walking long distances like the rest of the men in the scouting party. A few days later, Clark writes that he takes his "servant York with [him] to kill a buffalo." He also notes that during a meeting with the

Arikaras Indians in October, York "made himself more terrible than we wished him to do" and pretends that he used to eat children before being caught by Clark in the wild.

York is also quite caring for the other members of the party. According to Clark, he is the most attentive to Floyd on the day the latter dies in pain. He also goes out in a storm to look for Clark and a few other members whom he thought had been lost. York is only reported sick once during the first half of the expedition, and only for a brief period, which is quite a testament to his overall health and condition. York is among the few men who first go along with Clark and walk 19 miles between the last western camp near the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. York is often counted as a voice when the men have to vote on various issues.

Despite the color of his skin, York receives his share of adulation when the party finally returns to St. Louis. However, Clark waits nearly 10 more years to grant the servant his freedom. York dies of cholera around 1830.

Sergeant Charles Floyd

Charles Floyd joins the Corps as a sergeant on August 1st, 1803. His cousin, Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor, is also part of the expedition. Floyd is considered a "man of much merit" by Captain Clark, as noted in the Journals. However, on August 20, 1804, he becomes the first and only casualty of the entire trek. At the time, his condition is diagnosed by the Captains as a "bilious cholic," but historians suspect he died from a ruptured appendix, a condition to which there was no remedy at the time. Therefore, there is nothing that could have saved him from this condition. On his deathbed, he tells Captain Clark, 'I am going away, I want you to write me a letter.' After his death, his personal effects are given to his cousin, Sergeant Pryor.

Like his captains, Charles Floyd kept a journal of the expedition. His diaries are published alongside the Lewis and Clarks Journals. After his burial, the Corps honors him by christening a nearby river with his name. A 100 foot-high obelisk is later raised as a memorial near his grave site, in what is now Sioux City, Iowa.

Sergeant Patrick Gass

Patrick Gass is born in June 1771. In 1804, Gass is already an experienced military man, having served in the Army since 1789. He joins the Corps at his own request in January 1803. He is elected sergeant after the untimely death of Charles Floyd. Gass is a carpenter whose skills prove invaluable in building the winter camps used by the Corps. He is also instrumental in building the chariots used to transport the canoes by land around the waterfalls in July of 1806. On July third 1806, the Captains decide to split the expedition in three and assign Gass to command 18 men whose task is to portage 18 miles around the Montana's waterfalls.

Gass kept his own diary of the Corps' journey; his Journals, substantially edited for readability and stylistic purposes, are published in 1807, and the original copy is lost.

Gass' Journals are responsible for the name "Corps of Discovery," which is a shorthand for the more cumbersome but official denomination of the enterprise, "Corps of Volunteers on an Expedition of North Western Discovery." Patrick Gass dies on April 1870; he is 99 years old.

Sergeant John Ordway

John Ordway is the sergeant responsible for keeping the men in order while Lewis and Clark are absent on duty. Many instances of disciplinary problems occur while Ordway is in command, which suggests he might not have had the natural leading skills or sufficient authority necessary to command the party. However, because of his relatively high level of instruction, Ordway is in charge of keeping the registers of the Corps in order.

Ordway also kept a diary of the expedition, the content of which is bought by Lewis and incorporated into the 1814 edition of the Journals of Lewis and Clark. Like most of the members of the Corps, Ordway is awarded double pay and 320 acres of land.

Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor

Pryor is married at the time he is recruited by Clark to take part in the expedition. Nathaniel Pryor is cousin to Sergeant Charles Floyd, the only member of the party to die during the expedition. In late August, Pryor goes with Pierre Dorion to a Sioux camp to invite the Chiefs to a council. On the following day, Clark writes that Pryor found the Sioux camp in quite a good order and that the population was around 500 persons. In June of 1905, Clarks refers to Pryor as a "steady valuable and useful member of our party."

Pryor accidentally displaced his shoulder during the portage of the dugout canoes around the Missouri waterfalls. The man never fully recovers from this orthopedic problem and it slows him down for the rest of the trek. Pryor is part of the party that accompanies Captain Clark and his servant from camp on the shore of the Columbia River to the Pacific ocean.

Pryor is a very reliable military administrator. In June of 1804, he is assigned by the captains to preside over the Court Marshall that condemns John Collins and Hugh Hall for being drunk on duty. In September, Pryor saves the party from major trouble when he orders the men to get away safely; the sand bar on which they are camped starts to crumble into the river and threaten the vessels below. In July of 1806, Pryor is in charge of a small party that is ordered to take the horses over land to Mandan. However, all the horses are stolen by Indians, most of them during the night of the 22nd. This leaves Pryor's party with no way to get back to the camp quickly. The men kill a few buffalos, then use the skins and some willow to build 2 makeshift round ("bull") boats. They manage to make it back to the Corps, sailing on one of the boats while pulling the other in tow, keeping it for safety.

After the expedition, Pryor becomes a trader and lives among the Osage Indians. He lives with the Clermont band and eventually marries one of their women. He dies on June 10, 1811.

Private William Bratton

William Bratton is born in July 1778. He is an apprentice blacksmith, as well as a great gunsmith. He is a member of the party that brings back to the Corps deserter Reed, in August of 1804. During the winter of 1804, Bratton builds a forge in Fort Mandan. The Corps uses this facility to repair tools and other metallic objects brought in by the Indians; in return, they receive much needed food. On May 11, 1805, Bratton encounters a grizzly bear and shoots it. The shot does not kill the animal and the bear runs after the private, who then has to run for half a mile on the shore with a dangerous grizzly on his tail, until he is finally able to catch up with the Corps and hail them for help.

The private's health becomes a cause of concern around the middle of 1806; in April, he is suffering from such intense pain in the lower back that he is prevented from walking. He is the only member of the Corps who travels on a horse while the others members walk. Luckily, the Nez Percé treat Bratton in a sweat house and give him a lot of mint tea. The treatment is sufficient to allow the private to walk with little pain during the remaining part of the trek to St. Louis.

Private John Collins

John Collins is enlisted in the Corps on January 1rst, 1804. He is one of the Corps' hunters, along with Drouillard, Colter and the Field brothers. Early in the expedition, Collins is tried for getting drunk while on duty. He pleads non-guilty but the Court decides otherwise; he is sentenced to receive 100 lashes on his bare back, but continues his service with the Corps.

Private John Colter

John Colter is a permanent member of the Corps' expedition from the start. He is an excellent hunter as well as a courageous explorer. In November 1805, he is part of the team that travels alongside William Clark for 9 miles, from Camp Disappointment to the Pacific coast. He is discharged early from the Corps, before reaching St. Louis, on his own request. He joins other trappers and eventually joins the Manuel Lisa Company. In 1809, while trapping in Blackfeet country with John Potts, he manages to outrun the Indians who are after them. He escapes but his partner does not is was killed. Prior to the 1814 publication of the Journals, he helps Clark to draw a more precise map of the American West by providing him with detailed descriptions of the mountain country he knows. He is the first white man to set foot in Yellowstone.

George Gibson

George Gibson is one of the 'fine' men from Kentucky that are enlisted in late 1803. He is a skilled gunsmith and an experienced woodman. Like Cruzate, he entertains the party by playing the fiddle at night. Helped by his skills in sign language, he is part of the team that looks for the party sent out to recover deserter La Liberté in the Otto camp, early in the expedition. He dies in St. Louis in 1809.

Private Hugh Hall

Hugh Hall is in his early thirties when he joins the Corps of Discovery. He is most notable for having been punished for drinking on duty early on. He is punished by 50 lashes on his bare back but keeps his post as a member of the party.

Thomas Proctor Howard

Private Howard is in his mid-twenties when he joins the Corps. He is found guilty of scaling the wall of Fort Mandan during their winter stay in 1805, but remains a member of the party.

Hugh McNeal

Born and reared in Pennsylvania, no record has been found of Hugh McNeal's life before the expedition. Although his enlistment date in the army is unknown, he is entered on the roll of the Permanent Party on April 1, 1804. He is listed among the deceased on Clark's 1825-1828 "List of Men on Lewis and Clark's Trip."

John Potts

Potts is serving in the Army in Tennessee before joining the Corps in 1803. After the expedition, he becomes a trader for the Manuel Lisa company. He is killed by the Blackfeet Indians in the same ambush John Colter escapes.

Objects/Places

Blackfeet Tribe

An native tribe located in present-day Browning, Montana. Two Blackfeet Indians are killed by Corps members while attempting to steal their horses during a night in July, 1806.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day South Dakota. This tribe is also known as the Teton Lakota tribe in the Journals of Lewis and Clark.

Chinook Indian Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Chinook, Washington.

Clatsop Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Turner, Oregon. The Corps of Discovery name the their Western winter quarters after this tribe.

Eastern Shawnee Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Oklahoma.

Lemhi-Shoshone

A native tribe located in present-day Lemhi Valley, Idaho. This is Sacawagea's tribe.

Nez Perce Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Lapwai, Idaho. This tribe saves the members of the Corps from starvation and almost certain death after their difficult crossing of the Bitterroots Mountains.

Osage Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

Pawnee Indian Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Pawnee, Oklahoma.

Shoshone Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Fort Washakie, Wyoming.

Mandan Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day New Town, North Dakota. The Mandans are affiliated with the Hidatsa and Arikara tribes. Fort Mandan is named after this tribe.

Hidatsa Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day New Town, North Dakota. The Hidatsas are affiliated with the Mandan and Arikara tribes. This is the tribe that kidnaps Sacagewea when she is 12.

Arikara Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day New Town, North Dakota. The Hidatsas are affiliated with the Hidatsa and Mandan tribes.

Yankton Sioux Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Marty, South Dakota. The Corps meet the Yankton Sioux tribe at Calumet Bluff.

Omaha Tribe

A native tribe located in present-day Macy, Nebraska.

Fort Mandan

Fort Mandan is the name of the winter quarters built and occupied by the Corps of Discovery during the winter of 1804-1805.

Fort Clatsop

Fort Clatsop is the name of the winter quarters built and occupied by the Corps of Discovery during the winter of 1805-1806. It is named after a neighbouring tribe.

St. Louis

St. Louis is a city located near the eastern mouth of the Missouri River. St. Louis is the point of departure of the Lewis and Clark expedition, as well as its final destination.

Jefferson Peace Medal

Following their councils and speeches, Lewis and Clark award the Jefferson Peace Medal to the Indian Chiefs they meet. These medals are made of either copper, bronze or silver.

Prairie Dog

A live specimen of prairie dog is caught and sent back to St. Louis by keelboat following the Corps' winter stay at Fort Mandan. The animal survives the trek back to St. Louis and is received by the President of the United States.

Tobacco

Leaves of tobacco twist were regularly used as trade and gifts items by the Corps. They could be either chewed or smoked.

Great Falls of the Missouri River

The Great Falls are a series of waterfalls located in present-day north-central Montana. The falls marked the limit of the navigable section of the Missouri River. The first sight of the Falls is a great relief for Captain Lewis, proving without a doubt he is on the correct fork of the River.

Missouri River

The Missouri River travels across the continental United States from East to West. The Missouri River is the waterway the Lewis and Clark expedition used for most of their trek.

Teepee

The teepee is a cone shaped dwelling used by the nomadic tribes of the Plains.

Columbia River

The Columbia River is the river that starts where the Missouri River ends, on the northwestern end of the continent.

Louisiana Purchase

Land purchased from France in 1803. The Louisiana Purchase was the primary political motive for the expedition of the Corps of Discovery.

Themes

Tribes of the First Nations

Throughout its journey across America, the Corps of Discovery encounters and interacts with a great number of native Indian tribes. These tribes are often vastly different from each other. In keeping with the orders received from Jefferson, the diarists spend a lot of time describing each tribe's customs, cultures and habits. Differences are observed in the language spoken by the Indians, in the clothes they wear, in the way they travel and live, in the way they paint their body, for example. The captains record important distinctions between tribes living in the same area; the differences are even more important between tribes living in different geographical areas.

The expedition of Lewis and Clark covers three major geographical areas: the Plains, the Plateau and the Northwest Coast. These geographical areas translate into cultural areas for the Indian tribes. The native inhabitants of the Plains are generally nomadic hunters, living in tepees and following the buffalo wherever it goes. The tribes of the Plains encountered by the Corps are: Pawnee, Osage, Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, and Mandan. The Plateau, an area which starts where the Missouri River meets the Rocky Mountains, hosts the Blackfeet, Flathead, Shoshone, Nez Perce, Spokane, and Yakima tribes. These Indians are sedentary hunters and fishermen. Finally, when the land meets the Pacific Ocean, the Corps meets with Clatsop, Tiliamook, and Chinook tribes.

The Corps' relationship to the native tribes evolves significantly in the course of the exploration. Their orders are to use diplomacy to curb the antagonism of the many Indian tribes toward each other as well as toward the white Americans. However, their views of the natives change significantly as they discover more about their culture, differences and customs. For instance, the reader cannot help but notice that the sense of inner superiority displayed by the military is obvious throughout the Journals; the Captains often refer to the Indians as "savages" and "ignorant people." However, these words slowly disappear from the text as the Captains realize their party is growing more dependant on the native tribes than they first thought. It is doubtful the Corps would have survived its journey if not for the Nez Coupé. In September 1805, the party was literally starving and it is more than likely none of its members would have survived the ordeal if not for the Nez Coupé's hospitality.

The success of the Corps of Discovery's expedition can be attributed in no small part to the only Indian in the party. Since the Corps was originally composed strictly of men, the presence of a native woman among them served to reassure the Indians of the friendly intentions of the military. Clark himself admits "A woman with a party of men is a token of peace." Given this woman was also a native Indian, this token certainly held a much greater value.

In dealing with the Indians, the Captains often transcribe names differently from one day to the next, making it quite difficult for the reader to follow the thoughts of the diarist.

This is due in part to a linguistic confusion inherent in human communications, as the ears of Europeans and Americans speakers are not trained to distinguish syllables the way they are treated by aboriginal languages. For instance, the opening vowels of Indian words or names are often skipped; the Mahars, Mahas and Omahas are but a single tribe, even though it appears under different names in the Journals. Other reasons for these discrepancies should also be factored in. In referring to the same object or person, the diarists also alternate between a transcription of the spoken word in its original language, its French designation and its American translation (from French); the reader needs to keep in mind that most of the communications between the Captains and the Indians are filtered through an interpreter, the latter being most often of French origins. Lewis and Clark are of different origins and they hear (and speak) differently, which also leads to some confusions as each diarist alternate in writing the Journals. Finally, the Indian pronunciation of the same name sometimes differs substantially from one tribe to the next. This combination of factors tends to make it difficult for the reader to follow the course of events described in the Journals.

Geography of the American West

On April 30, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase instantly doubled the size of what was then the United States. In order to make the most of this immense territory, the President decided that the best way to conquer the land would be to explore the territory and find ways to enable trade of its immense natural resources. As stated by the President himself, the goal of the Corps of Discovery was to discover the "most direct and practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce." He commissioned Meriwether Lewis to study the available data relating to the yet unexplored American West and to put together a party of men to accomplish the goal of conquering the western part of the continent.

Lewis studied geography with the best teachers of his time. He gathered all the maps drawn by previous explorers and traders and imparted to him by Jefferson. These maps were considerably enhanced during the Corps' four months long stay at Fort Mandan; throughout the winter, the co-captains would correct their topographic data according to information collected from the local traders and natives. In the same fashion, they continually improved on the maps themselves during their odyssey. After the untimely death of Lewis in 1809, Clark continued to work on the mapping of the American west.

Much of the information they used to correct the initial maps was gathered from the native Indians. This information came in different forms—maps drawn with charcoal on tanned hided, scratched on the snow or dirt, modeled with sand or deciphered through stories told in sign language—which then had to be integrated with the more practical printed format. Distances, time and directions were expressed by the natives with very different units; the Indians would estimate distance and time in terms of the number of nights necessary to travel from A to B, while direction was relative to the Sun's position.

In spite of the many problems and inaccuracies they had to manage, Lewis and Clark soon became highly skilled in this trade. One particular event, occurring in early June

1805, illustrates their exceptional aptitudes. On June 3rd, the explorers encountered an unmapped fork in the Missouri River. Standing at the mouth of the forking river, the captains were unable to decide which route to take. Pierre Cruzatte, an experienced boatman, insisted the northern fork was the route leading to the Columbia River. Most of the members of the party agreed with Cruzatte, but the captains were soon convinced otherwise. Yet since the captains were unwilling to risk weeks of useless and potentially dangerous trek along the wrong route, the captains sidestepped the popular vote, which is the way they would usually solved similar dilemmas. Instead, they decided to split the Corps temporarily: Lewis would take Cruzatte and a small party to explore the north fork, while Clark would scout the south fork. They would only rejoin once they were certain of which way was the right one. Sixty miles along the northern fork, Lewis calculated from his observations that this branch of the river was heading too far to the north to ever cross path with the Columbia, thus disproving Cruzatte's initial intuition. By then, Clark was also assured his team was on the path of the true Missouri River. Yet the members of the Corps were still unconvinced and believed the north path was the right one. The party rejoined a few days later at the mouth of the conjunction between the Maria's and the Missouri. Lewis and Clark spent a day making further calculations and topographic measurements, which furthered their conviction and led them to believe the map drawn by a previous explorer was in error.

Despite these findings, the co-captains were still unable to convince their party; they were also unwilling to force the explorers to follow them against their convictions. The only thing they knew for certain was that if they found the waterfalls, they would know without a doubt that they were following the true Missouri. So the captains decided to send a party further along the southern path until it encountered the falls. On June 11, Lewis left Clark behind and pushed ahead with a small party. On June 13, he reached the falls, which he described as a wonder of Nature.

Lewis and Clark always insisted on explaining their discoveries with science. They systematically measured and documented the animal and plant specimens they found. They always explained the mysteries or superstitions of the locals they encountered with reason and science. To them, science had precedence over tradition, intuition and even experience. Standing at the mouth of the junction between the Missouri River and Maria's River, the leaders of the Corps of Discovery decided they could not risk the future of their expedition on intuition, and that only science could ultimately direct them on the right path. They were master topographers, a science which enabled them to read all the signs provided by Nature with precision.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a key factor in the success of Lewis and Clark's expedition. If not for the great diplomatic skills and talents of the co-captains, it is doubtful the explorers would have survived their dozens of encounters with Indian tribes across the continent. The fact they managed to accomplish the whole mission of President Jefferson without any violent encounter or bloodshed (short of the two Blackfeet Indians killed in self-defense during a robbery attempt) is a testament to the captains' convictions and will.

The captains always used the same kind of diplomacy in their encounters with the natives. They would start by setting up a council with the chiefs and other influential members of the community. They would then give a speech, telling them they have a new 'Great Father' who will take care of them. In exchange for supplying them with protection and care, the Indians would need to establish peaceful relationships with their neighbors as well as allow free trade between the white men and the Indian tribes. Once the chiefs agree to their conditions, the captains would distribute peace medals and certificates, as well as gifts the natives were known to be fond of: tobacco, flags, mirrors and other technological products of the white civilization.

Gaining the trust of a few influential individuals in the community was essential; this is why they usually resorted to local traders or individuals that they showered with gifts prior to the council. The captains did not hesitate to back up their statements and promises with action: when the Mandan village was threatened by the Sioux, Lewis posted armed guards around the village and insured its protection in a visible way. The addition of an Indian woman and her son was also of great help when it came to dealing with suspicious tribes; obviously, a native woman among the crew was a reassuring presence to the eyes of the Indians.

The diplomacy of Lewis and Clark was often dependent on a deep understanding of the political conditions of the area,. Indeed, the captains spent a great deal of time listening to the locals and documenting the trade relationships between the tribes. Though they would usually succeed in the political field, they failed at understanding the politics of the Sioux bands of North Dakota. This fundamental misunderstanding led to a situation that could have turned the enterprise into a disaster. They apparently did not understand the Teton Sioux tribes were essentially trying to preserve their share of the market, as they were controlling the trade between the Arikaras and the European traders. If not for the diplomatic skills of Black Buffalo, a chief who chose to navigate with the crew in this critical area of the Missouri River, the Corps of Discovery might have been a total failure. Such a failure would have no doubt changed the history of the United States.

Style

Perspective

The Journals of Lewis and Clark is one of the most amazing pieces of literature of the last few centuries. The book combines a unique storyline, extraordinary adventures, a large set of exceptional characters and an unusual writing style. It is the result of the combined diaries of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, co-captains of a military unit set to explore the American West for the first time. The unit, called the Corps of Discovery, was sent by President Thomas Jefferson to explore the territories opened up by the recent purchase of the Louisiana Territories from France. The official goal of the exploration party was to find and document the most efficiently navigable waterway from East to West via the Missouri River. They were also ordered to establish peace with the native tribe of Indians through diplomacy. For this purpose, the Corps had to travel with enough equipment to enable the men to survive the long trek to the West coast and back, and enough valuable items to satisfy their need for trade and diplomatic exchanges with the natives.

The Journals were written as diaries, day by day. Both co-captains alternate the writing of the entries in the diary in an effort to report and comment of their discoveries. For nearly 600 days, the forty men traveled over nine thousand miles by pirogue, canoes, on horses and on foot, carrying tons of material, food and equipment. The Journals document several incredible accomplishments unlikely to ever be reproduced by any team of men. They completed their exploration with a single man loss (to an untreatable disease), with almost no violent encounters (two Indians killed in self-defense, during a single event), through sometimes very difficult climatic conditions, and all the while accomplishing all the goals set by the President. They opened the American West by facilitating its conquest. They established the supremacy of the American government over an immense territory, and did so peacefully and to the satisfaction of all parties.

Hundreds of books have been written about the voyage of Lewis and Clark since the original publication of the Journals. While many of these books tend to romanticize the Corps' characters, adventures and accomplishments, the original Journals remain to this day the best and most complete way to get acquainted with this unique adventure. The Journals of Lewis and Clark are not easy to read, but they reward the reader with a unique point of view and a number of adventures and discoveries with few equals in historical literature.

Tone

"The Journals of Lewis and Clark" is the result of the combined diaries of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Lewis and Clark were co-captains of the Army Corps that conducted the first exploration of the American West up the Missouri River. The trek of the two men at the command of the Corps of Discovery ran for a total of two years, four

months and nine days. Though their fantastic odyssey ended in 1806, the Journals themselves were not published until 1814. This original edition of the Journals was overly edited and corrected; luckily, all modern editions of the Journals of Lewis and Clark are either annotated transcripts of the original diaries, or edited versions that correct the major errors in the original document in order to make it more readable. Indeed, it would be very difficult for any reader without a good grasp of historical context to understand the text of the Journals by itself.

Because they were mainly addressing the President, points where the authors made no effort to put their notes in perspective or to explain were edited in the text from its original form. Since the diaries were written by hand, day by day, and often in environment that made writing itself a difficult exercise, the resulting original documents remain hard to decipher. William Clark, who wrote over half of the entries, had little formal training or skills in writing. Clark revised his own entries in the edited copies and tried to incorporate some essential factual corrections. Lewis never revised his own entries and was deceased by the time of the publication. The result is

Of the two men, Meriwether Lewis had the best formal education. However, both men had very bad grammar and spelling habits and their handwriting was not the most readable. To make matters worse, the popular style of writing in the early 1800's involved a great freedom, both from a syntactic and a spelling point of view. To put things in perspectives, the Journals are over two centuries old; yet, among modern historians, debates are still ongoing as to the true meaning of certain of the Journal's passages.

Structure

The Journals are written as a narrative description, with the authors alternating in relating the events of the day and the scenery they were able to observe. The author typically uses the first person whenever he himself becomes the center of the events described, but otherwise the point of view remains generally neutral.

The book itself is divided in 24 chapters; each chapter describes one important step in the historic journey of the Corps of Discovery. Each chapter is titled with a descriptive reference to the geographical location or the people they encountered. For instance, Chapter 8 is entitled "From the Yellowstone to the Musselshell, April 28-May 19, 1805." The chapters are simply a collection of diary entries, with no introduction, comment or analysis. Entries are typically delimited by a date and usually consist of one to four long paragraphs. Each author displays his own style and point of view, as Lewis and Clark alternate the authorship of the diary in a more or less random fashion. Lewis typically writes longer entries; in some cases the entries extend over several pages, whereas Clark's contributions are shorter and more technical.

The diary of the trek across the continent was not written for the sole pleasure of its authors, but rather in response to an order of the President of the United States. Lewis and Clark were military men trained to lead men and operate in difficult conditions. Their

writing style often reflects these preoccupations; each entry combines observations of the climatic conditions, the natural environment they were observing and the state of the men they were leading. Beside these observations, each entry systematically reports the number of kills by the hunters (the men ate an average of 9 pounds of meat a day), the results of each council with the Indians and all the results of the calculations the captains needed to perform to accomplish their scientific goals.

Quotes

"Sand bars are so numerous that that it is impossible to describe them, and think it unnecessary to mention them," Chapter 4, p. 78.

"Note: The Arikaras are not fond of spirituous liquor, nor do they appear to be fond of receiving any or thankful for it. They say we are no friends or we would not give them what makes them fools," Chapter 4, p. 90.

"The Big Bellies and Wetersoons are at war with the Snake Indians and Sioux, and were at war with the Arikaras until we made peace a few days past. The Mandans are at war with all who make war only, and wish to be at peace with all nations. Seldom the aggressors," Chapter 5, p. 105.

"Although the game is very abundant and gentle, we only kill as much as is necessary for food. I believe that two good hunters could conveniently supply a regiment with provisions." Chapter 7, p. 137.

"I felt myself very unwell this morning, and took a portion of salts, from which I feel much relief this evening." Chapter 10, p. 174.

"It is worthy of remark that the winds are sometimes so strong in these plains that the men informed me that they hoisted a sail in the canoe and it had driven her along on the truck wheels. This is really sailing on dry land." Chapter 11, p. 202.

"Some of the party had also told the Indians that we had a man with us who was black and had short curling hair. This had excited their curiosity very much, and they seemed quite as anxious to see this monster as they were the merchandise which we had to barter for their horses." Chapter 15, p. 241.

"Great joy in camp. We are in view of the ocean, this great Pacific Ocean which we have been so long anxious to see, and the roaring or noise made by the waves breaking on the rocky shores (as I suppose) may be heard distinctly." Chapter 17, p. 277.

"We had a view of Mount St. Helens and Mount Hood. The first is the most noble-looking of its kind in nature." Chapter 19, p. 298.

"This gentleman informed us that we had been long since given up by the people of the U.S. generally, and almost forgotten. The President of the U. States had yet hopes of us." Chapter 24, p. 380.

Topics for Discussion

Discuss how it is possible to prepare an expedition to the unknown. Can you make a list of what you will need? What do you need to learn before you leave?

Did the "democratic" leadership of Lewis and Clark play a role in the success of the Corps' expedition? Does democracy increase the chances of success of an enterprise involving a team of persons?

The white men and the Indians of America had a radically different conception of the world and of what it should be. How did these differences affect the expedition? List several instances of the effect of these cultural differences and the method used by Lewis and Clark to circumvent them.

Is diplomacy a useful skill in exploration? Discuss the relationship between the politics of white America and the diplomatic techniques used by Lewis and Clark during their long journey across the continent.

The Corps of Discovery was a military unit and all the men were bearing arms, yet—except for one instance—no blood was spilled. Can the military be used for establishing peace? What is needed to bring about peace between widely different peoples?

How much has changed in terms of racial perception between the early 1800's and now? Why did Clark bring his servant York along? Was York treated as a "slave" at any point during the expedition?

The diplomacy of Lewis and Clark managed to bring the Corps through the entire journey across the American continent without a single violent encounter with the Indians. What techniques did Lewis employ to win over the Indian tribes to his cause? Name a few factors that contributed to the Corps' diplomatic success.

Discuss how much geographical knowledge is necessary to survive in an expedition into the unknown. Try to draw a map of an area you never visited before.

Discuss the reasons why the American Indians were inclined to follow the captains' advice. Who, between the white men and the native Americans, benefited the most from the Corps of Discovery's diplomatic success?

Do you think the expedition of Lewis and Clark changed the course of history? If so, what would be different now, had the Corps failed to complete the President's mission?