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| American History |

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| The Corps of Discovery  * **Capt. Meriwether Lewis** * **2nd Lt. William Clark** * **Sacagawea** (about 17 years old, spoke Shoshone and Hidatsa languages, wife of Charbonneau) * **Toussaint Charbonneau** (spoke French and Hidatsa languages, husband of Sacagawea) * **Jean Baptiste Charbonneau** (son of Sacagawea and Charbonneau, later became a scout) * **York** (Clark’s slave) * **George Drouillard** (hunter, sign language interpreter) * **Sgts. Charles Floyd** (only fatality), **Patrick Gass, John Ordway, & Nathaniel Pryor** * **Pvt. Francois Labiche** (interpreter who could speak French and English) * **Pvt. Pierre Cruzatte** (interpreter, fiddler, bowman on keelboat) * **Pvt. George Shannon (**youngest soldier) * **Pvt. John Colter** (Yellowstone explorer) * **Pvt. William Bratton** * **John Collins** * **Joseph Field** * **Reuben Field** * **Robert Frazer** * **George Gibson** * **Silas Goodrich** * **Hugh Hall** * **Thomas P. Howard** * **Baptiste Lepage** * **Hugh McNeal** * **John Newman** * **John Potts** * **Moses B. Reed** * **John Shields** * **John B. Thompson** * **William Werner** * **Joseph Whitehouse** * **Alexander Hamilton Willard** * **Richard Windsor** * **Peter M. Wiser**  Chronology **Up the Missouri**    **1804**  **14 May**: Clark departs with crew  **20 May**: Lewis joins party  **20 Aug.**: Floyd dies  **25 Sept**.: Corps manages dispute with Teton Sioux  **2 Nov**.: Corps begins constructing Fort Mandan  **4 Nov**.: Corps hires Charbonneau and Sacagawea    **1805**  **11 Feb**.: Sacagawea bears son    **Across the Great Plains**    **7 April**: Corps leaves Fort Mandan  **14 May**: Squall hits  **17 May**: Corps escapes falling tree  **3 June**: Corps encounters fork  **13 June**: Lewis sees Great Falls  **22 June**: Corps begins portage  **15 July**: Corps takes to Missouri River again  **12 August**: Lewis arrives at source of Missouri River    **Over the Mountains**  **& Down the Columbia**    **13 August**: Lewis makes contact with Shoshones  **17 August**: Sacagawea meets her brother  **21 September**: Men get sick from eating roots  **23 October**: Men portage around falls on Columbia  **30 December**: Fort Clatsop finished . . . and Back**1806** **23 March**: Corps departs for home  **24 June**: Corps sets out over mountains  **3 July**: Lewis and Clark separate  **27 July**: Lewis’s party fights Blackfeet  **11 August**: Cruzatte accidentally shoots Lewis  **12 August**: Lewis and Clark reunite on Missouri River  **14 August**: Charbonneau, Sacagawea, and Jean Baptiste separate from Corps to remain in Mandan region  **23 September**: Corps returns to St. Louis ResourcesBooks   [*Lewis & Clark: An Illustrated History*](https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-Clark-Journey-Discovery-Illustrated/dp/0375706526/ref=asc_df_0375706526/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312154640153&hvpos=1o2&hvnetw=g&hvrand=24625176667726426&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9016358&hvtargid=aud-801381245258:pla-494130904710&psc=1), by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns, features a succinct narrative of the expedition, along with numerous pictures and essays by Stephen Ambrose and others.  [*The Lewis and Clark Journals:* *An American Epic of Discovery*](https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-Clark-Journals-Abridged-Discovery/dp/0803280394) is an abridged version edited by Gary E. Moulton.  [*Lewis and Clark on the Trail of Discovery*](https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-Clark-Trail-Discovery-Expedition/dp/1401600751), a “Museum in a Book,” contains facsimiles of letters, a roster of crew members, journal pages, and more, as well as brief accounts of episodes in the journey.  [*Undaunted Courage*](https://www.amazon.com/Undaunted-Courage-Meriwether-Jefferson-American/dp/0684826976/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_14_t_0?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=DZZSD1JWKEV4ZTWYNWRS), a book by historian Stephen Ambrose, tells the story of the expedition.  **Films**  [*Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West*](https://www.amazon.com/Undaunted-Courage-Meriwether-Jefferson-American/dp/0684826976/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_14_t_0?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=DZZSD1JWKEV4ZTWYNWRS), narrated by Jeff Bridges, is a spectacular documentary by National Geographic.  [*Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*](https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-Clark-Journey-Corps-Discovery/dp/B000BITUHU/ref=sr_1_5?keywords=lewis+and+clark+documentary&qid=1568420955&s=movies-tv&sr=1-5) is a documentary by Ken Burns.  **Web Sites**  [The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition](https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/) “makes available the text of the celebrated Nebraska edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, edited by Gary E. Moulton.”  [The Lewis and Clark Journey Log](http://archive.secondstory.com/project/lewis-and-clark-journey-log), sponsored by National Geographic, features excerpts from the journals and more.  [Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery](https://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/index.html), a companion Web site to the documentary by Ken Burns, features information about the expedition’s crew and their supplies, a timeline, maps, and more.  [The National Parks Service’s webpage on the Lewis and Clark Trail](https://www.nps.gov/lecl/index.htm) features a map showing visitors’ centers on the trail, photographs, suggestions for things to see on the trail, and more.  [Rivers, Edens, and Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America](https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/), sponsored by the Library of Congress, features images of documents, a peace medal, maps, and pages from the journals.  Modified January 24, 2022 © [Mark Canada](http://www.markcanada.info), 2022 | **Lewis and Clark Expedition**  1804-1806  *By* [*Mark Canada*](http://www.markcanada.info/)  *Professor of English*  *Indiana University Kokomo*  **Introduction**  “I Set out at 4 oClock P.M. in the presence of many of the Neighbouring inhabitents,” the  journal reads, “and proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missourie to the upper Point of the 1st Island 4 Miles and Camped on the Island which is Situated Close on the right (or Starboard) Side, and opposit the mouth of a Small Creek called Cold water, a heavy rain this afternoon” (1).  The words could have easily come from the diary of a modern camper out on a lark.  The author, however, was William Clark, and the date was May 14, 1804.  A few days later, he would be joined by his friend Meriwether Lewis and what Lewis called “the party destined for the discovery of the interior of the continent of the North America” (2).  What lay ahead in their historic [journey into the American West](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/archive/map2_b.html) Lewis and Clark could only guess.  Although Lewis had been preparing for the expedition for more than a year, he and his partner knew almost nothing about most of the vast land they would be traversing on their way to the Pacific Ocean.  Although the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 had given the United States possession of all the land drained by the Missouri River, no one actually knew exactly how much land that was.  President Thomas Jefferson, who had acquired Louisiana from Napoleon of France, hoped that there might be an all-water route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific, but no one knew if one existed.  Simply surviving a journey with so little knowledge would have been challenge enough, but Lewis and Clark had to do more than survive.  As the envoys of Jefferson and the rest of their countrymen, they were charged with collecting information about the land, people, animals, and plants they encountered along the way.  Tutored by Jefferson himself, as well as other experts, Lewis had studied botany, zoology, geology, and anthropology before embarking on the journey.  Clark was already an experienced cartographer.  Their experience in the U.S. Army, where they had met, had schooled them in leadership, warfare, and survival.  Now they were going to put all of that knowledge and experience to work to explore, study, map, and survive one of the most important, exotic, extensive, and dangerous places on earth. **Background: Thomas Jefferson, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Plan to Explore the West** The Lewis and Clark expedition began not with Lewis or Clark, but with Thomas Jefferson.  President since 1801, when U.S. expansion stretched no farther than the Mississippi River, Jefferson had a much larger vision for his country.  An all-water route to the Pacific Ocean and positive relationships with Native Americans in the West would mean huge economic benefits for the United States, and Jefferson wanted to reap those benefits.  An insatiably curious man of the Enlightenment with a special interest in botany and Native Americans, he also thirsted for information about the mysterious land to the west of the Mississippi River.  In the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, he managed to acquire much of this land from Napoleon at the cost of $15 million, or less than 3 cents per acre.  The idea of exploring this vast region west of the Mississippi River actually antedated the Louisiana Purchase by more than a decade.  Jefferson had contemplated the idea as early as the 1780s, long before he became president, and had even invited General George Rogers Clark, a hero of the American Revolution, to lead an expedition into the region. Clark, however, declined, and other ventures in the 1780s and 1790s failed for a variety of reasons.  Then, in 1802, President Jefferson got his hands on a book called *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence, Through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Ocean*, an account of a trip that a Scottish fur trader named Alexander Mackenzie had made across what is now western Canada.  Mackenzie had actually made the trip back in 1793, but the book had appeared in print only a year before Jefferson encountered it, in 1801.  As Stephen Ambrose explains in his book *Undaunted Courage*, the success of Mackenzie suggested that the British might beat the Americans in the push to control the fur-rich West, which already occupied the thoughts of not only the British and the Americans, but also the French, the Spanish, and even the Russians (75).  When Jefferson received a copy of the book, he studied it with his private secretary, a young Virginian named Meriwether Lewis.  Born in 1774, Meriwether Lewis had grown up near Monticello, on a tobacco plantation owned by his father, William Lewis.  His father, who had joined the militia at the outset of the American Revolution, died in 1779 when Meriwether was still a boy.  When he was a teenager, he took charge of the plantation and home, called Locust Hill, but perhaps realized that the life of a settled planter was not for him.  In 1794, he volunteered for the militia and the following year became a soldier in the U.S. Army.  Over the next five years, he traveled through the Midwest on Army business, did recruiting work in Charlottesville, served as regimental paymaster, and, perhaps most significantly, served under Captain William Clark.  In 1801, President Jefferson hired Captain Lewis to serve as his personal secretary.  Lewis moved into the White House, then simply called “the President’s House,” and enjoyed a free education under perhaps the best tutor in American history, Jefferson himself.  He also reaped the benefits of Jefferson’s magnificent library—which would later become the core of the Library of Congress—and heard the discussions that went on in Jefferson’s household.  “In short,” Ambrose writes, “between the time Mackenzie’s book arrived at Monticello and December 1802, Jefferson gave Lewis a college undergraduate’s introduction to the liberal arts, North American geography, botany, mineralogy, astronomy, and ethnology” (77).  This education, together with Lewis’s experience leading men and surviving on the frontier, made Meriwether Lewis a logical choice to lead a western expedition.  In his introduction to the abridged journals of Lewis and Clark, Gary Moulton explains:    What Jefferson wanted for the expedition, he confided to a friend, was a person ‘perfectly skilled in botany, natural history, mineralogy, astronomy, with at the same time the necessary firmness of body & mind, habits of living in the woods & familiarity with the Indian character.’  He knew that no such person existed, but that Lewis filled the latter requirements perfectly and could be sufficiently trained in the former to carry out such duties in the field.  With that in mind he sent Lewis to study in Philadelphia with some of the leading scientists of the young republic. (xiv)    In Philadelphia during the spring of 1803, Lewis studied under Dr. Benjamin Rush, astronomer Andrew Ellicott, zoologist Caspar Wistar, and botanist Benjamin Smith Barton.  While in Philadelphia, Lewis also spent much of the $2500 that Jefferson had requested from Congress, purchasing medicine, tobacco, clothes, ink powder, pencils, 400 pounds of lead, 25 axes, salt, oiled linen for tents, and other items.  Some of the items he bought might surprise modern travelers: 288 thimbles, paint, and more than 20 pounds of beads.  These items, however, would perhaps be the most important he brought on the journey, for they were the trade goods that Lewis and his men would exchange with Native American tribes.  Lewis also packed a small library to bring along: Barton’s book *Elements of Botany*, a book called *History of Louisiana* by Antoine Simor Le Page du Pratz, Richard Kirwan’s *Elements of Mineralogy*, *The Nautical Almanac and Astronomical Ephemeris*, *A Practical Introduction to Spherics and Nautical Astronomy*, and a dictionary.  These supplies complemented the 15 flintlock rifles that Lewis had purchased in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, where he had stopped on the way to Philadelphia.  Lewis chose as his co-captain William Clark, under whom he had served during his time in the Army.  Clark, the younger brother of General George Rogers Clark, was born in Virginia in 1770 but had moved with his family to the area around Louisville, Kentucky, while he was still a teenager.  In a June 19, 1803, letter to Clark, Lewis wrote: “If therefore there is anything under those circumstances, in this enterprise, which would induce you to participate with me in it’s fatiegues, it’s dangers and it’s honors, believe me there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasuure in sharing them as with yourself” (qtd. in Ambrose 98).  Clark responded: “This is an undertaking fraited with many difeculties, but My friend I do assure you that no man lives with whome I would perfur to undertake Such a Trip &c. as yourself” (qtd. in Ambrose 104).    Other men apparently were equally eager to join Lewis.  In a letter to his friend, Clark reported receiving “many aplications from stout likely fellows” (qtd. in Ambrose 105).  “Clearly the word was out in the western country,” Ambrose writes, “and what young unmarried frontiersman—whether gentlemen’s sons or the sons of whiskey-making corn farmers—could resist such an opportunity?  It was the ultimate adventure.  The reward for success would be a land grant, similar to those given the Revolutionary War veterans—a princely reward to frontiersmen” (105).  By the time that Lewis, floating down the Ohio River, reached Clarksville, Indiana, his partner could present him with seven names: Joseph and Reubin Field, John Shields, Charles Floyd, Nathaniel Pryor, George Gibson, and William Bratton.  Eventually, the Corps of Discovery would grow to include some 30 men, including the two captains, three sergeants, more than 20 privates, a few interpreters, and Clark’s slave, York.  Some, like the captains, were in their 30s; one, Private George Shannon, was only 18.  Several came from Kentucky; others came from New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere.  Now they were all headed in the same direction: West.   **Up the Missouri**   On May 14, 1804, Clark and his men pushed off from Camp Wood, near present-day Alton, Illinois, crossed the Mississippi River, and entered the Missouri.  They met Lewis in St. Charles, where they spent the next several days.   Life apparently was not yet all that rustic.  In his journal entry for 19 May, Clark wrote: “I recve an invitation to a Ball, it is not in my power to go” (2).  Once they departed St. Charles, however, they quickly left behind everything they knew of civilization.    Their route for this and the next stage of their journey was the mighty Missouri River, then perhaps the wildest river in North America.  Bloated with the waters of half a continent and littered with snags, sandbars, and floating debris, the Missouri was a distant cousin to the other great rivers Lewis and Clark had already seen, the Ohio and the Mississippi.  Of the Missouri and the Mississippi, the French explorer Pierre Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix had written: “The two rivers are much the same breadth, each about half a league; but the Missouri is by the far the most rapid, and seems to enter the Mississippi like a conqueror . . .” (qtd. in “Edward . . .”).  At times, the Corps of Discovery must have felt like the conquered.  Traveling upstream, they resisted this formidable force with little more than poles, rope, and grit.  Planting the poles in the river’s bottom, the men walked from bow to stern, slowly propelling their 55-foot-long [keelboat](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/www.greatriverroad.com/lewclark/boats.htm) forward against the current, which was about 5 to 6 miles per hour (Burns).  Using rope, they sometimes stood on shore and dragged the boat.  Occasionally, they were able to use a sail.  Along with the keelboat, which held many of their supplies, they also piloted a couple of smaller boats, called pirogues.  The work involved in the journey cost an enormous amount of energy; each man involved in the labor was burning perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 calories a day and, when it was available, consuming some 5 to 7 pounds of meat per day.    The payoff for all of this toil was in some respects small.  On average, they managed only about 10-15 miles per day.  Each mile took its toll in misery as the men endured boils, dysentery, snake bite, heat stroke, and, in one case, much worse.  In his entry for 20 August 1804, Clark wrote: “Serjeant Floyd as bad as he can be   no pulse & nothing will Stay a moment on his Stomach or bowels--  Passed two Islands on the S. S. and at first Bluff on the S S. Serj.’ Floyd Died with a great deel of Composure, before his death he Said to me, ‘I am going away’ [‘] I want you to write me a letter”--   We buried him on the top of the bluff ½ Miles below a Small river to which we Gave his name, he was buried with the Honors of War much lamented; a Seeder post with the Name Sergt. C. Floyd died here 20th of August 1804 was fixed at the head of his grave--   This Man at all times gave us proofs of his firmness and Deturmined resolution to doe Service to this Countrey and honor to himself   after paying all the honor to our Decesed brother we Camped in the mouth of *floyds* river about 30 yards wide, a butifull evening” (34-35).  Modern scholars believe Floyd may have died from a burst appendix.    At this point in their journey, at least, the men often had the opportunity to eat well—sometimes 5 to 7 pounds of buffalo or other meat a day to replenish the 3,000 or 4,000 calories they were burning.  There was also a feast for the eyes.  Alongside some stretches of the river were miles of wide river bottoms; elsewhere, in modern-day Iowa and South Dakota, for instance, they saw stately bluffs rising alongside the river.  In his journal entry for 13 June 1804, Sergeant Patrick Gass wrote: “This is as handsome a place as I ever saw in an uncultivated state” (13).  Somewhat more ecstatically, Clark wrote in his journal: “The Plains of this countrey are covered with a Leek Green Grass, well calculated for the sweetest and most norushing hay—interspersed with Cops of trees, Spreding ther lofty branches over Pools Springs or Brooks of fine water.  Groops of Shrubs covered with the most delicious froot is to be seen in every direction, and nature appears to have exerted herself to butify the Senery by the variety of flours Delicately and highly flavered raised above the Grass, which strikes and profumes the Sensation, and amuses the mind  throws it into Conjecterng the cause of so magnificent a Senerey in a Country thus Situated far removed from the Sivilised world to be enjoyed by nothing but the Buffalo Elk Deer & Bear in which it abounds & Savage Indians (17-18).  Some two centuries later, in Ken Burns’ documentary on the expedition, Stephen Ambrose likened the Great Plains to the Garden of Eden.  Lewis often left the river to hike through this pristine land.  In his entry for September 17, 1804, Lewis wrote: “Having for many days past confined myself to the boat, I determined to devote this day to amuse myself on shore with my gun and view the interior of the country lying between the river and the Corvus Creek—” (45).  In this American Eden, Lewis experienced a nearly fatal fall.  Just a few days after the date of this entry, on one of his frequent walks, he lost his footing on a cliff some 300 feet high and started down the side of the bluff, somehow managing to catch himself some 20 feet down.    There were more tangible payoffs, as well.  Jefferson had dispatched Lewis and Clark with orders to collect information about the terrain, plants, and animals they encountered on their journey.  In his journal entry for 1 August 1804, Clark noted that “the Praries Contain Cheres, Apple, Grapes, Currents, Rasp burry, Gooseberris Hastlenuts and a great Variety of Plants & flours not Common to the U.S.  What a field for a Botents and a natirless” (27).  During this stage of their journey, Lewis and Clark also encountered a least tern, poorwill, pronghorns, and an animal that must have amused them as much as it continues to amuse modern tourists.  Lewis called it a “barking squirrel,” but another name has stuck: prairie dog.    Jefferson knew, of course, that Lewis and Clark would also encounter people in the West, and he wanted information about them, as well.  The president, in fact, entertained a fascination with Native Americans, probably seeing in them the perfect example of Rousseau’s “noble savage.”  There was more behind Jefferson’s interest, however, than his insatiable intellectual curiosity.  Just as Lewis and Clark could advance the future agricultural development of the West with their discoveries in the areas of geography and botany, their dealings with Native Americans stood to benefit U.S. commerce.  Both the fur trade, made enormously profitable by the European demand for beaver hats, and the general need to transport goods of various kinds along the Missouri River depended on good relations with the tribes in the West.  At a site called Council Bluff near present-day Omaha, Nebraska, the Corps of Discovery held a council with the Otoe and Missouria tribes.  Acting on Jefferson’s orders to deal peacefully with the Native Americans, the Corps distributed gifts, certificates of loyalty, and peace medals to the chiefs; however, in a prepared speech, which he delivered with the help of one or more interpreters, Lewis also let the chiefs know of the authority of their “only great father” in Washington (qtd. in Ambrose 156).  This approach apparently worked well enough with these tribes, but the scene changed when the Corps encountered the most powerful tribe on the Plains: the Lakota, or as some whites called them, the Teton Sioux.  In his journal entry for 25 September, Clark explained:    I went with those Cheifs (which left the boat with great reluctiance) to Shore with a view of reconseleing those men to us, as Soon as I landed the Perogue three of their young men Seased the Cable of the Perogue the Chiefs Soldr. Huged the mast, and the 2d Chief was verry insolent both in words & justures declareing I Should not go on, Stateing he had not recved presents Suffient from us, his justures were of Such a personal nature I felt my Self Compeled to Draw my Sword, at this motion Capt. Lewis ordered all under arms in the boat, those with me also Showed a Disposition to Defend themselves and me, the grand Chief then took hold of the roop ordered the young warrers away, I felt my Self warm & Spoke in verry positive terms. (48)    The Corps managed to resume their journey up the Missouri, stopping for the winter near the present site of Bismarck, North Dakota.  Already living in the area, in earth lodges some 30 to 40 feet in diameter, were three tribes: the Mandans, Arikaras, and Hidatsas.  Relations with these people were much warmer than they had been with the Lakota.  Indeed, the Native Americans apparently enjoyed socializing with their winter guests.  In his entry for 6 February 1805, Lewis wrote: “visited by many of the natives among others the Big white, the Coal, big-man, hairy horn and the black man, I smoked with them, after which they retired, a deportment not common, for they usually pester us with their good company the ballance of the day after one being introduced to our apartment” (82).  The Arikara women were especially friendly—or, as Clark put it, ““verry fond of carressing our men” (59).  Sergeant Patrick Gass offered some explanation in his journal; “we ought . . . to give some account of the *fair sex* of the Missouri; and entertain [readers] with narratives of feats of love as well as of arms,” Gass wrote in an entry dated 5 April 1805.  Later in his journal, he wrote:    It may be observed generally that chastity is not very highly esteemed by these people, and that the severe and loathsome effects *of certain French principles* are not uncommon among them.  The fact is, that the women are generally considered an article of traffic and *indulgencies* are sold at a very moderate price.  As a proof of this I will just mention, that for an old tobacco box, one of our men was granted the honour of passing a night with the daughter of the headchief of the Mandan nation.  An old bawd with her punks, may also be found in some of the villages on the Missouri, as well as in the large cities of polished nations.  (90)    As a result of these kinds of interactions between the white men and the Native American women, several members of the crew suffered from venereal disease.    Relations with the Native Americans may have been warm, but everything else the Corps experienced in the winter of 1804-1805 was cold—unfathomably cold.  Snow fell, ice formed in the Missouri River, and the temperature fell to 45 degrees below zero.  Before the worst hit, the men used local cottonwood trees to construct winter quarters, which they called Fort Mandan.  There they constructed six dugout canoes for the next stage of their journey and packed up a variety of plant and animal specimens, including two live magpies and a prairie dog, which they sent back to Jefferson in Washington.    It was here that Lewis and Clark met a girl who would eventually become as famous as either of them.  According to Clark’s phonetic spelling in his journal entry, her name was pronounced something like “Sacagawea” (Moulton xxv), although some know her as Sacajawea.  A Shoshone girl of about 17 years old, she had been living with the Mandans since being captured by the Hidatsas during a raid and was the wife of a French-Canadian trader named Toussaint Charbonneau.  When the captains hired the French-speaking Charbonneau to serve as an interpreter on the expedition, they got Sacagawea, as well.  In fact, before they left Fort Mandan, they got yet another traveler; on February 11, 1805, Sacagawea—with help from Lewis—gave birth to a boy, Jean Baptiste.  In what surely is one of the most amazing stories of survival—and parenting—he would make the entire journey to the Pacific and back to Fort Mandan, enduring all that the seasoned captains endured of mountain crossings and river rapids. **Across the Plains**   By the time they left Fort Mandan on April 7, 1805, they had been away from the United States for nearly a year.  They had pulled and poled their boats some 1600 miles, narrowly escaped annihilation by the Lakota, and endured sickness, frigid temperatures, and near-disasters on the river.  One man had died, several had undergone courts martial, and one had nearly starved to death after getting separated from the party.  Now the hard part was about to begin.    What lay to the west of Fort Mandan was more than a thousand miles of unknown terrain.  In an 1802 map drawn by the British cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith, this region appears as a giant blank.  It was their job—primarily the mapmaker Clark’s—to fill in the blank.  In his journal entry for their day of departure, Lewis wrote: “we were now about to penetrate a country at least two thousand miles in width, on which the foot of civilized man had never trodden; the good or evil it had in store for us was for experiment yet to determine, and these little vessells contained every article by which we were to expect to subsist or defend ourselves . . . entertaing as I do, the most confident hope of succeading in a voyage which had formed a da[r]ling project of mine for the last ten years, I could but esteem this moment of my departure as among the most happy of my life.  The party are in excellent health and sperits, zealously attached to the enterprise, and anxious to proceed; not a whisper of murmur or discontent to be heard among them, but all act in unison, and with the most perfect harmony” (93).    Over the next two weeks, Lewis and his fellow travelers would see much to sustain this ebullience.  “I asscended to the top of the cutt bluff this morning,” Lewis wrote, “from whence I had a most delightful view of the country, the whole of which except the vally formed by the Missouri is void of timber or underbrush, exposing to the first glance of the spectator immence herds of Buffaloe, Elk, deer, & Antelopes feeding in one common and boundless pasture” (99).  They were still in Eden, it seemed.  Always the scientist as well as the poet, Lewis also continued documenting the what he encountered in the region.  In a journal entry dated 9 April 1805, he wrote: “the Bluffs of the river which we passed today were upwards of a hundred feet high, formed of a mixture of yellow clay and sand--  many horizontal stratas of carbonated wood, having every appearance of pitcoal at a distance; were seen in the face of these bluffs. these stratas are of unequal thicknesses from 1 to 5 feet, and appear at different elivations above the water some of them as much as eighty feet.  the hills of the river are very broken and many of them have the apearance of having been on fire at some former period” (94).  His description of a rattlesnake, dated 17 May 1805, shows similar attention to detail: “. . . this snake is smaller than those common to the middle Atlantic States, being about 2 feet 6 inches long; it is of a yellowish brown colour on the back and sides, variagated with one row of oval spots of a dark brown colour lying transversely over the back from the neck to the tail, and two other rows of small circular spots of the same colour which garnis the sides along the edge of the scuta.  it’s bely contains 176 scuta on the belly and 17 on the tale” (112).    The most impressive creature they encountered in the course of their entire expedition would appear during this leg of their journey.  Lewis had heard from the Native Americans of something he called a “white bear,” which he wrote he was “anxious to meet” (96).  Within weeks of writing these words, he got his chance.  Even after meeting up with his first grizzly bear, which chased him some seventy yards before being brought down, Lewis was unimpressed.  He wrote in his journal: “the Indians may well fear this anamal equiped as they generally are with their bows and arrows or indifferent fuzees, but in the hands of skillful riflemen they are by no means as formidable or dangerous as they have been represented” (102).  The full-grown grizzly that Clark and Droulliard killed a week later inspired a somewhat more respectful description; “it was a most tremendious looking anamal,” Lewis wrote, “and extreemly hard to kill notwithstanding he had five balls through his lungs and five others in various parts he swam more than half the distance acoss the river to a sandbar & it was at least twenty minutes before he died; he did not attempt to attact, but fled and made the most tremendous roaring from the moment he was shot.  We had no means of weighing this monster; Capt. Clark thought he would weight 500 lbs.  for my own part I think the estimate too small by 100 lbs.  he measured 8 Feet 7 ½ Inches from the nose to the extremety of the hind feet, 5 F. 10 ½ Inch arround the breast, 1 F. 11 I. arround the middle of the arm, & 3 F. 11 I. arround the neck . . .” (104-105).  They had come a long way from prairie dogs.    If there was much to enliven their spirits, there was perhaps even more to dampen them.  In the span of a mere four days, from 14 May until 17 May 1805, one or more members of the crew had close calls with a bear, a rattlesnake, falling timber, and a squall on the river.  The last of these near-catastrophes seems to have had the greatest impact on Lewis, since it endangered the Corps’ “papers, Instruments, books medicine, a great part of our merchandize and in short almost every article indispensibly necessary to further the views, or insure the success of the enterprize” (110).  One of the heroes of this incident was Sacagawea, who fished out some of the items that had fallen into the river; the goat, unquestionably, was her husband, Charbonneau, who happened to be steering the pirogue at the time of the squall, despite Lewis’s assessment of him as “perhaps the most timid waterman in the world” (112).  In the midst of the incident, Lewis wrote in his journal, “Charbono still crying to his god for mercy, had not yet recollected the rudder, nor could the repeated orders of the Bowsman, Cruzat, bring him to his recollection untill he threatened to shoot him instantly if he did not take hold of the rudder and do his duty” (111).    Then there was the land.  As the men continued struggling up the Missouri, they must have realized that Eden was behind them.  In a journal entry dated 27 May 1805, Sergeant Patrick Gass wrote: “We have now got into a country which presents little to our view, but scenes of barrenness and desolation; and see no encouraging prospects that it will terminate” (115).  The river and banks, meanwhile, were throwing more obstacles in the men’s path: a strong current, “inumerable” rattlesnakes, and “ Sharp rocks and round Sliperery Stones which alternately cut their feet & throw them down” (134).  The worst still lay ahead, however, as Lewis realized when he climbed some hills and saw mountains in the distance.  In his journal, he wrote: “while I viewed these mountains I felt a secret pleasure in finding myself so near the head of the heretofore conceived boundless Missouri; but when I reflected on the difficulties which this snowey barrier would most probably throw in my way to the Pacific, and the sufferings and hardships of myself and party in them, it in some measure counterballanced the joy I had felt in the first moments in which I gazed on them; but as I have always held it a crime to anticipate evils  I will believe it a good comfortable road untill I am compelled to beleive differently” (114).    The compulsion to believe differently came days later, and it returned regularly over the next several months.  If traveling into a vast blank on the map allowed Lewis to hope for the best, it also meant the Corps could not know about, much less prepare for, what lay ahead.  On June 3, the Corps came to a fork in the river.  “An interesting question was now to be determined;” Lewis wrote in his journal, “which of these rivers was the Missouri . . . .  to mistake the stream at this period of the season, two months of the traveling season having now elapsed, and to ascend such stream to the rocky Mountain or perhaps much further before we could inform ourselves whether it did approach the Columbia or not, and then be obliged to return and take the other stream would not only loose us the whole of this season but would probably so dishearten the party that it might defeat the expedition altogether” (121).  After some reconnaissance, both Lewis and Clark agreed that the left fork was the Missouri; every other man chose the right fork.  The men, nevertheless, followed their captains, who turned out to be correct.    They had chosen the right “road,” but it was about to become a whole lot less comfortable.  Ten days later, again traveling by foot, Lewis heard a distinctive roar.  “I hurryed down the hill which was about 200 feet high and difficult of access,” Lewis wrote in his journal, “to gaze on this sublimely grand specticle” (129).  Lewis had arrived at the Great Falls of the Missouri—a site that Native Americans had reported to him, but that no white person had ever seen.  His description reveals several of his conflicting personalities: scientist, poet, optimist, pessimist:     . . . . immediately at the cascade the river is about 300 yds. wide; about ninty or a hundred yards of this next the Lard. bluff is a smoth even sheet of water falling over a precipice of at least eighty feet, the remaining part of about 200 yards of my right formes the grandest sight I ever beheld, the hight of the fall is the same of the other but the irregular and somewhat projecting rocks below receives the water in it’s passage down and brakes it into a perfect white foam which assumes a thousand forms in a moment sometimes flying up in jets of sparkling foam to the hight of fifteen or twenty feet and are scarcely formed before large roling bodies of the same beaten and foaming water is thrown over and conceals them.  in short the rocks seem to be most happily fixed to present a sheet of the whitest beaten froath for 200 yards in length and about 80 feet perpendicular.  the water after decending strikes against the butment before mentioned or that on which I stand and seeems to reverberate and being met by the more impetuous courant they role and swell into half formed billows of great hight which rise and again isappear in an instant . . . from the reflection of the sun on the spray or mist which arrises from these falls there is a beatifull rainbow produced which adds not a little to the beauty of this majestically grand senery.  after wrighting this imperfect discription I again viewed the falls and was so much disgusted with the imperfect idea which it conveyed of the scene that I determined to draw my pen across it and begin agin, but then reflected that I could not perhaps succeed better than pening the first impressions of the mind; I wished for the pencil of Salvator Rosa or the pen of Thompson, that I might be enabled to give to the enlightened world some just idea of this truly magnifficent and sublimely grand object, which has from the commencement of time been concealed from the view of civilized man; but this was fruitless and vain.  (129-130)    For Lewis and the rest of the Corps, however, the Great Falls were not merely a spectacle to be enjoyed; they were an obstacle to be overcome.  They would have to portage their boats around them.  This Lewis had expected.  What he had not expected were four other falls behind Great Falls.  The men were now going to have to carry tons of boats and supplies 18 ½ miles uphill over prickly pear cactus and sharp, dried buffalo tracks.  The work was so exhausting that some of the men would fall asleep instantly when they stopped.  When a storm struck, hailstones the size of softballs rained down on the men, knocking some to the ground.  This portage, which Lewis had expected to take half a day, wound up costing the Corps three weeks.  Finally, on 15 July, they returned to the Missouri River, though without an iron-frame boat that Lewis had hoped to use in this stage of the journey.  After hauling it in pieces all the way from Pittsburgh, he learned that it leaked and abandoned it.    Meanwhile, winter and the tallest mountain range in North America were just ahead, and the Corps had no horses to carry their baggage through the Bitterroot Mountains.  Lewis hoped to secure these horses from Sacagawea’s people, the Shoshone tribe, but Lewis and Clark had not sighted a Native American of any tribe in weeks.  In his journal entry for 27 July, Lewis expressed his “considerable anxiety” about locating the Shoshones: “if we do not find them or some other nation who have horses I fear the successfull issue of our voyage will be very doubtfull or at all events much more difficult in it’s accomplishment.  we are now several undred miles within the bosom of this wild and mountanous country, where game may rationally be expected shortly to become scarce and subsistence precarious without any information with rispect to the country not knowing how far these mountains continue, or wher to direct our course to pass them to advantage or intersept a navigable branch of the Columbia, or even were we on such an one the probability is that we should not find any timber within these mountains large enough for canoes if we judge from the portion of them through which we have passed.  however I still hope for the best, and intend taking a tramp myself in a few days to find these yellow gentlemen if possible” (158).    As they approached the Lemhi Pass, which Lewis hoped would take them back down to level ground for good, nature continued to throw every obstacle and danger in their path.  Clark became ill, Joseph Whitehouse was nearly crushed by a canoe after being thrown in a rapid, and the travelers continued to fight what Clark called their “trio of pests”—“these are the Musquetoes eye knats and prickley pears, equal to any three curses that ever poor Egypt laiboured under, except the *Mahometant yoke*” (156).  On top of all this, George Shannon had disappeared for three days, and Lewis and Clark themselves had become separated after a beaver had cut down a pole on which Lewis had left a note for his partner. Near Lemhi Pass, Lewis enjoyed a brief moment of satisfaction as he drank from the source of the Missouri River.  Earlier in the day, Lewis wrote in his journal, another crew member, Hugh McNeal “had exultingly stood with a foot on each side of this little rivulet and thanked his god that he had lived to bestride the mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri” (174).  With one natural wonder behind them, Lewis and McNeal were perhaps ready to add the mountains to their list of conquests.  When they climbed to the pass itself, however, Lewis saw not a vast plain, but “immence ranges of high mountains still to the West of us with their tops partially covered with snow” (174). **Over the Mountains**   It was time for some good news, and Lewis got some the next day, when he finally made contact with the Shoshones.  Ambrose notes that these people had never before seen a U.S. citizen.  Nevertheless, the Corps received a hearty welcome.  In his journal, Lewis described the meeting with uncharacteristic humor: “these men then advanced and embraced me very affectionately in their way which is by puting their left arm over you wright shoulder clasping your back, while they apply their left cheek to yours and frequently vociforate the word *ah-hi-e*, *ah-hi-e* that is, I am much pleased, I am much rejoiced.  bothe parties now advanced and we wer all carresed and besmeared with their grease and paint till I was heartily tired of the national hug” (175-176).  Three days later, the news got even better when the Corps learned that the Shoshone chief, Cameahwait, was Sacagawea’s brother.  On the same day, the men set up the aptly named Camp Fortunate.  During the short period they spent with the Shoshone, Lewis attempted to sketch the characteristics of this tribe, just he had documented plants and animals at other moments on the journey, albeit with less objectivity.  In his entry for August 19, 1805, Lewis wrote: “from what has been said of the Shoshones it will be readily perceived that they live in a wretched stait of poverty.  yet notwithstanding their extreem poverty they are not only cheerfull but even gay, fond of gaudy dress and amusements; like most other Indians they are great egotists and frequently boast of heroic acts which they never performed.  they are also fond of games of wrisk.  they are frank, communicative, fair in dealing, generous with the little they possess, extreemly honest, and by no means beggarly” (189).    By early September, the Corps of Discovery, with horses and a guide from the Shoshones, was on its way through the Bitterroots—“the most terrible mountains I ever beheld,” Sergeant Patrick Gass wrote in his journal.  “The snow fell so thick, and the day was so dark,” Gass went on, “that a person could not see to a distance of 200 yards.  In the night and during the day the snow fell about 10 inches deep” (207).   Clark noted that he kept losing the trail under the snow (206).  The trail, moreover, was treacherous.  In his journal entry for September 2, 1805, Clark wrote: “proceded on thro’ thickets in which we were obliged to Cut a road, over rockey hill Sides where our horses were in pitial danger of Slipping to Ther certain distruction & up & Down Steep hills, where Several horses fell, Some turned over, and others Sliped down Steep hill Sides, one horse Crippeled & 2 gave out.  with the greatest dificuelty risque &c. we made five miles” (201).  In such an environment, of course, food was scarce, and Lewis reported that he and others were feeling hungry and weak.  When they finally arrived at the plain below some two weeks after they had entered the mountains, they found temporary relief in the camas roots harvested and eaten by the Nez Perce who lived in the area.  These blessings, however, became a curse when several of the men, including Lewis and Clark, became sick on them.  Still, Lewis was able to reflect on what the Corps had achieved and even indulge in sanguine thoughts of success.  In a journal entry dated September 24, 1805, Lewis wrote: “the pleasure I now felt in having tryumphed over the rocky Mountains and decending once more to a level and fertile country where there was every rational hope of finding a comfortable subsistence for myself and party can be more readily conceived than expressed, nor was the flattering prospect of the final success of the expedition less pleasing” (212). **Down the Columbia**   There was another reason for celebration: their route was about to change.  Not only would they be traveling by water again instead of riding horses through snowy mountain trails, but they would be, for the first time, traveling downstream.  Having passed the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass, they could now ride the Clearwater and Columbia rivers toward their destination, the Pacific Ocean.  After making more dugout canoes, they set off down the Clearwater on 7 October 1805.  For the next month, they paddled when possible, portaged when necessary.  At The Dalles, a set of falls on the Columbia, the crew split into two groups.  Those who could not swim carried the journals, firearms, and other baggage around the Short Narrows, and those who could swim rode the canoes over the rapids.  In his book *Undaunted Courage*, Stephen Ambrose provides a glimpse into the challenge the latter group faced:    By the standards of today’s canoeists, this was a Class V rapid, meaning it could not be run even in a modern canoe specially designed for whitewater.  The natives, expert canoeists themselves, did not believe Lewis and Clark could do it in their big, heavy dugouts.  They gathered by the hundreds along the banks to watch the white men drown themselves, and to be ready to help themselves to the abandoned equipment afterward.  But, to the astonishment of the Indians, the Americans made the run without incident.  (306)    On 7 November, Clark thought he saw the Pacific.  “*Ocian in view!*” he wrote.  “O! the joy” (236).  In his edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, Moulton explains that Clark actually had spotted the Columbia estuary.  In any case, the distance separating the haggard men from their long-sought destination was not great.  As usual, however, the obstacles were.  The day after Clark’s sighting, the Corps found themselves unable to proceed because of the huge waves rolling in from the ocean.  They were forced to camp in an inadequate space close to the water and, for the next several days, endure the wettest weather any of them had probably ever seen.  In his 14 November journal entry, Clark complained: “The rain &c. which has continued without a longer intermition than 2 hours at a time for ten days past has distroyd. the robes and rotted nearly one half of the fiew Clothes the party has, perticularley the leather Clothes . . .” (238).  Finally, on the day after this entry, the waves died down, and the Corps was able to resume its journey.    With winter approaching, Lewis and Clark had to choose where to quarter .  Rather than make the decision themselves, the captains put the matter to a vote, one in which every adult in the party—including Sacagawea and York—had a say.  In the end, the majority favored crossing the Columbia to explore this area before settling on a site.  They found a site and, on December 30, finished building Fort Clatsop, named after a local tribe.    Over the next four months, Lewis had time to record ethnographical observations on the manners, labors, and rituals of the Native Americans in the area.  He noted, for instance, that the Clatsops, Chinooks, and Killamucks were “very loquacious and inquisitive” (258), and he described the way that the Clatsops and Chinooks smoked tobacco.  On the relations between the sexes, he went on at some length    they do not hold the virtue of their women in high estimation, and will even prostitute their wives and daughters for a fishinghook or a stran of beads.  in common with other savage nations they make their women perform every species of domestic drudgery.  but in almost every species of this drudgery the men also participate . . . . notwithstanding the survile manner in which they treat their women they pay much more rispect to their judgment and oppinions in many rispects than most indian nations; their women are permitted to speak freely before them, and sometimes appear to command with a tone of authority; they generally consult them in their traffic and act in conformity with their opinions.  (258-259)    In later journal entries, Lewis described the local tribes’ houses and canoes, their proclivity for blue beads, and their practice of burying their dead in canoes.    As had been the case the last time they spent the winter in a fort, the weather was awful.  This time, the problem was not frigid temperatures, as it had been at Fort Mandan, but seemingly endless rain.  The Corps of Discovery spent 106 days at Fort Clatsop; on all but 12 of them, it rained.  If they managed to stay dry inside the fort, they still had to cope with colds, injuries, and some particularly nettlesome bed companions.  “The flees are So noumerous in this Countrey and difficult to get Cleare of,” Clark recorded in his journal, “that the Indians have difft. houses & villages to which they remove frequently to get rid of them, and not withstanding all their precautions, they never Step into our hut without leaveing Sworms of those troublesom insects.  Indeed I Scercely get to Sleep half the night Clear of the torments of those flees, with the precaution of haveing my blankets Serched and the flees killed every day” (252).    Despite these various nuisances, Clark was almost wistful about Fort Clatsop in the journal entry dated March 23, 1806, the day of the Corps’ departure.  He wrote: “at this place we had wintered and remained from the 7th of Decr. 1805 to this day and have lived as well as we had any right to expect . . .” (289).  By this time, he certainly had seen much worse. **And Back**   They had done it.  Lewis and Clark, along with most of their original crew, had poled, pulled, sailed, hiked, climbed, ridden, portaged, and paddled some 3,000 miles up the raging Missouri River, across the Great Plains, over the Rocky Mountains, and down the Columbia.  They had survived bouts with boils, dysentery, disease, hunger, snakes, bears, a charging buffalo, mosquitoes, fleas, falling timber, mountains, rapids, snow, hail, freezing cold, and torrential rain.  Now it was time to go back.    In his instructions to Lewis, Jefferson had given him permission to take a ship back to the United States from the Pacific Coast.  During the five months that Lewis and Clark spent in the region, however, they never saw a single one.  That meant they would have to cover many of those same thousands of miles again.  Even to the hardy and hardened travelers who had come this far, the thought must have been staggering.  To make matters worse, they had exhausted many of their supplies, particularly the trade items they had brought along for the Native Americans, and the ones they still had were continually disappearing, apparently stolen by people they met as they proceeded up the Columbia in their canoes.  Finally, on April 21, Lewis had reached his breaking point.  “I detected a fellow in stealing an iron socket of a canoe pole and gave him several severe blows and mad the men kick him out of camp,” he wrote.  “I now informed the indians that I would shoot the first of them that attempted to steal an article from us.  that we were not affraid to fight them, that I had it in my power at that moment to kill them all and set fire to their houses, but it was not my wish to treat them with severity provided they would let my property alone” (304).  Despite run-ins such as these, the Corps managed to acquire horses from the Tenino tribe, travel overland to the mountains, and begin their ascent.  Finding the snow “12 to 15 feet deep” (327), they elected to backtrack and secure a guide among the Native Americans.  With three guides, they set out on June 24 and crossed the mountains, sometimes using their horses for food.    When they arrived at Traveler’s Rest on June 30, they could finally say that the rest of their journey was downhill—or at least downstream.  Lewis, however, still had not had enough.  Rather than launch the canoes they had left on this side of the mountains and let the current carry them home, Lewis was ready for more exploration.  Under a complicated plan, he and nine crew members would explore the Marias River while Clark would travel down the Yellowstone.  The two would reunite at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers.    “All arrangements being now compleated for carrying into effect the several scheemes we had planed for execution on our return,” Lewis wrote in a journal entry dated July 3, 1806, “we saddled our horses and set out I took leave of my worthy friend and companion Capt. Clark and the party that accompanyed him.  I could not avoid feeling much concern on this occasion although I hoped this seperation was only momentary” (333).  Lewis’s intuitions proved sound.  The first setback came on July 13, when Lewis’s party arrived at the spot where they had buried some bearskins and plant specimens on their way west.  All had been destroyed by water, along with much of his medicine, although he was able to salvage some papers.  Two days later, a member of his party had a run-in with a bear, escaping by hitting the bear over the head with his musket and climbing a willow tree.  Meanwhile, the mosquitoes tormented the men constantly.  In a journal entry dated July 15, Lewis complained: “the musquetoes continue to infest us in such manner that we can scarcely exist; for my own part I am confined by them to my bier at least 3/4ths of my time.  my dog even howls with the torture he experiences from them, they are almost insupportable, they are so numerous that we frequently get them in our thrats as we breath” (337).    The worst was yet to come.  On July 27, the men caught some Blackfeet trying to steal their guns.  In the fight that ensued, Lewis and his men wound up killing two of the Blackfeet.  Fearful that the survivors might bring down a larger force on his party, Lewis hurried them toward their planned rendezvous point with Clark.  By Lewis’s estimate, the men rode 100 miles before lying down to rest at 2 o’clock in the morning.  Two weeks later, the men still on their way to meet Clark, one of them—Pierre Cruzatte—apparently shot Lewis by mistake, hitting him in the left hip.  The wound left Lewis partially incapacitated for several days.  Things went more smoothly for Clark and his party.  Traveling down the Yellowstone River, they stopped at a huge rock formation.  Clark called it “Pompey’s Pillar” after Sacagawea’s son, whom he called “Pompey” or “Pomp.”  Before leaving, Clark left what is widely regarded as one of the only pieces of physical evidence of the expedition.  In the side of Pompey’s Pillar, he carved “Wm Clark July 25, 1806.”    On August 12, five weeks after their separation at Traveler’s Rest, Lewis and Clark reunited on the Missouri River.  The two talked.  Clark washed his friend’s wound.  They spent the night next to the river not far from Fort Mandan, where they had spent the previous winter.  Less than a week later, they reached the site of the fort, which had been partially burned in an accident.  Charbonneau, Sacagawea, and Jean Baptiste left the Corps, but not before Clark made an interesting proposal.  “I offered,” Clark wrote in his journal, “to take his little son a butifull promising Child who is 19 months old to which they both himself & wife wer willing provided the Child had been weened” (367).  Some time later, in fact, Clark did take Jean Baptiste into his home in St. Louis.    After a visit to Sergeant Floyd’s grave on September 4, the Corps continued down the Missouri toward St. Louis; “our party appears extreamly anxious to get on,” Clark wrote in his journal, “and every day appears produce new anxieties in them to get to their Country and friends” (372).  They were now regularly seeing signs of home, including interpreters and a soldier.  Lewis and Clark stayed up until midnight talking with the soldier, who filled them in on the news of their country—a country that had been all but unknown to them for more than two years and to which they were now returning as virtual strangers.  That they were returning at all, it turned out, would be a surprise to many of their countrymen; “this Gentleman informed us,” Clark wrote in a journal entry dated September 17, “that we had been long Since given out by the people of the U S Generaly and almost forgotton . . .” (373).  One person, however, was still hopeful.  Clark continued: “the President of the U. States had yet hopes of us . . .” (373).    On September 23, 1806, the Corps of Discovery arrived in St. Louis; “we Suffered the party to fire off their pieces as a Salute to the Town,” Clark wrote in his final journal entry of the expedition; “we were met by all the village and received a harty welcom from it’s inhabitants” (375).  In the weeks that followed, Lewis and Clark were honored and celebrated with balls and other events.  They were heroes, yet the most dramatic news they had to deliver to Jefferson and the rest of their countrymen was news of failure: there was no all-water route to the Pacific.  If Lewis and Clark had not found what they were seeking, however, they had found or created a host of other treasures, among them accounts or specimens of 178 new [plant species](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/www.life.umd.edu/emeritus/reveal/pbio/LnC/LnCpublic.html) and 122 new [animal species](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/www.sierraclub.org/lewisandclark/species/), positive relations with some Native American tribes, Clark’s detailed [maps](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/archive/mapforks_b.html), and an amazing set of [journals](http://web.archive.org/web/20120304213214/http:/lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/) describing their travels.  Perhaps greatest of all, they brought back home the most enduring and inspiring story of discovery, diplomacy, science, and survival in all of American history—a story we still read, tell, and treasure today. 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