

1805

During the winter Lewis and Clark worked to establish good relations with the Indians, who had been dealing with English and French-Canadian traders for some time. One of these traders, Toussaint Charbonneau, was persuaded to accompany the Expedition as an interpreter when it left in the spring. His young pregnant wife, Sacagawea, who had been captured from her Lemhi Shoshone tribe years before by Hidatsas, was to go along as well. Sacagawea thus became the only female member of the Expedition. Her baby, named Jean Baptiste, was born on February 11, 1805. Lewis and Clark realized Sacagawea would be useful as a guide as the Expedition proceeded west, and believed the presence of the woman and her child would signal that the party was a peaceful one.

During the cold winter at Fort Mandan, the members of the Expedition prepared a shipment that was to be sent back to President Jefferson. The shipment included maps, written reports, items made by Native Americans, the skins and skeletons of previously unknown animals, soil samples, minerals, seeds, and cages containing a live prairie dog, a sharp-tailed grouse, and magpies. The large keelboat and about a dozen men were dispatched downriver on April 7. The shipment was received at the President's House in Washington four months later. Many of these items, including a painted Mandan buffalo robe, were eventually put on display in Jefferson's "Indian Hall," the entrance hall of Monticello, his home near Charlottesville, Virginia. Other objects were later displayed in Charles Willson Peale's museum in Philadelphia. The same day the shipment was sent downriver, the "permanent party" of the Expedition left Fort Mandan in the two pirogues and six dugout canoes and headed westward into uncharted territory.

Proceeding into present-day Montana, the explorers were amazed by herds of buffalo numbering more than 10,000 and by the ferocity of grizzly bears. On June 13, more than two months after leaving Fort Mandan, the Expedition reached the Great Falls of the Missouri River, one of the greatest natural obstacles it would face. The falls gave off a thunderous roar, which emanated from a 10-mile stretch of river that dropped more than 400 feet over five cascades. The members of the Expedition unloaded the supplies from the boats and undertook a difficult overland portage around the falls.

In late July, the Expedition reached the Three Forks of the Missouri River then headed southwest, up the shallow, swift stream they named the Jefferson River. Sacagawea recognized Beaverhead Rock (north of present-day Dillon, Montana) and said the party was near the home of her people, the Shoshone. Desperate to find the Indians and their horses, Lewis decided to scout ahead with three men. On August 12, Lewis ascended the final ridge to the Continental Divide on the Lemhi Pass (on the present-day border between Montana and Idaho). From the summit he expected to see plains with a large river flowing to the Pacific Ocean. But when he reached the peak and looked west, he came to the realization that there was no water route to the Pacific Ocean, only more mountains.

A few days later, Lewis came upon a Shoshone village and tried to negotiate for horses needed to cross the daunting mountains. Clark and the rest of the Expedition arrived and Sacagawea was brought in to help translate. She was reunited with her brother, Cameahwait, the Shoshone chief. The explorers set up camp near the Indian village and named it Camp Fortunate. The Shoshones provided the Expedition with some horses, a guide named Old Toby who had traveled through the mountains before, and information about mountain trails and other Indian

tribes the explorers might encounter. The entire Expedition proceeded through the Lemhi Pass and made camp along a creek. This camp was called Traveler's Rest.

Even though winter was fast approaching and snow was covering some of the peaks, Lewis and Clark decided to continue on through the Bitterroots, a range of the Rocky Mountains. Cameahwait had told them of a trail (Lolo Trail) used by the Nez Perce, a tribe that lived west of the mountains. Unfortunately, the Expedition failed to locate this trail and spent many more days in the treacherous mountains than necessary. Temperatures dropped below freezing and the trail was steep and rocky. The men were fatigued and food supplies were low, but the Expedition succeeded in making it across the mountains. Once out of the Bitterroots, the explorers made canoes using the Indian method of burning out the inside of logs. Game was still scarce, so Lewis and Clark purchased roots, fish, and dogs from the Nez Perce.

On October 7, the Expedition put five new canoes into the Clearwater River and, for the first time since leaving St. Charles, paddled downstream. The party went down the Clearwater and Snake Rivers to the Columbia River, which the explorers knew flowed into the Pacific Ocean. By the end of October the Expedition had made its way around the falls of the Columbia and sighted Mount Hood. In November the Pacific Ocean was sighted. Clark estimated in his journal that the party had traveled 4,162 miles from the mouth of the Missouri River.

1. What was significant about Sacajawea's joining the expedition, other than interpreting, that would assist the Corps in reaching one of President Jefferson's goals?
2. Reviewing the items sent back to Jefferson as the permanent detachment set out to go up the Missouri was related to which of the goals given to the Corps by Jefferson.
3. What was significant about Lewis reaching the top of the Continental Divide?

