

Jefferson to Lewis - Knowledge of Tribes and other objects worthy of notice

The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will pursue, renders a knowledge of those people important.

You will therefore endeavor to make yourself acquainted, as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers;

the extent & limits of their possessions;

the relations with other tribes of nations;

their language, traditions, monuments;

their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts, & the implements for these;

their food, clothing, & domestic accommodations;

the diseases prevalent among them, & the remedies they use;

moral & physical circumstances which distinguish them from the tribes we know;

peculiarities in their laws, customs & dispositions;

and articles of commerce they may need or furnish, & to what extent.

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Other objects worthy of notice will be

the soil & face of the country, it's growth & vegetable productions, especially those not of the U.S.

the animals of the country generally, & especially those not known in the U.S.

the remains [fossils] or accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct;

the mineral productions of every kind; but more particularly

metals,

limestone,

pit coal,

saltpetre;

salines & mineral waters, noting the temperature of the last

volcanic appearances;

climate

as characterized by the thermometer

by the proportion of rainy

cloudy, & clear days

by lightning, hail, snow, ice,

by the access & recess of frost

by the winds prevailing at different seasons

the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flower, or leaf

times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects.

Altho' your route will be along the channel of the Missouri, yet you will endeavor to inform yourself, by enquiry, of the character & extent of the country watered by it's branches & especially on it's southern side

Whether the dividing grounds between the Missouri & them are mountains or flat lands, what are their distance from the Missouri, the character of the intermediate country, & the people inhabiting it, are worthy of particular enquiry.