

Meriwether Lewis & William Clark

Intrepid Explorers



These are the words Captain William Clark wrote in his journal on November 7, 1805, after seeing the Pacific Ocean for the first time: “Ocian in view! O! the joy.” (His spelling of “ocean” was not how we spell it today.) Clark, along with Captain Meriwether Lewis and the rest of their party, had just completed a remarkable undertaking. They had traveled mostly overland from Missouri to what is now the state of Oregon. For much of the trip, they were accompanied by a Shoshone Indian Sacagawea; her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau; and their baby, Jean Baptiste (nicknamed Pomp). In all, Lewis and Clark

traveled for nearly three years. They began in St. Louis in the winter of 1803, headed west to the Pacific, and returned to St. Louis, to cheering crowds, on September 23, 1806.

Exploration of the West had been a longtime dream of President Jefferson. He and others sought a water route (by boat only) to the Pacific coast. Jefferson feared the French or Spanish might sail up the Mississippi River from New Orleans and take over our western territories. After the English explorer Alexander Mackenzie went through British America (now Canada) to the Pacific, Jefferson worried about the British, too. He offered to buy land from France’s Napoleon, and was amazed to be offered a huge piece of land, today known as the Louisiana Purchase, for only fifteen million dollars. He accepted, and instantly doubled the size of our country. The land extended from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. It was a vast wilderness, and Jefferson wanted to find out everything he could about it.

He put Meriwether Lewis in charge of the expedition, known as the Corps of Discovery. Lewis chose his good friend William Clark as his co-captain. The rest of the team, 33 recruits, were well-disciplined soldiers. Despite extreme hardship, only one man was lost (he died from appendicitis). Lewis did much of the advance planning and took courses in ecology so he could identify the flora (plants) and fauna (animals) they encountered. Clark, the practical engineer, was more disciplined about keeping a journal. The two designed special boats and went up the Missouri River. After building Fort Mandan (in North Dakota) near an Indian village, they spent the winter there. Next came the difficult passage through the Rockies, walking and using horses, on their journey to the Pacific. Before turning back, they spent another winter on the coast (at Fort Clatsop). In their travels, they came to know Native Americans, “respect” grizzly bears, love prairie dogs, and hate mosquitoes. The year 2003 marked the 200th anniversary of their magnificent journey.

Born: Lewis, August 18, 1774; Clark, August 1, 1770 (both in Virginia)

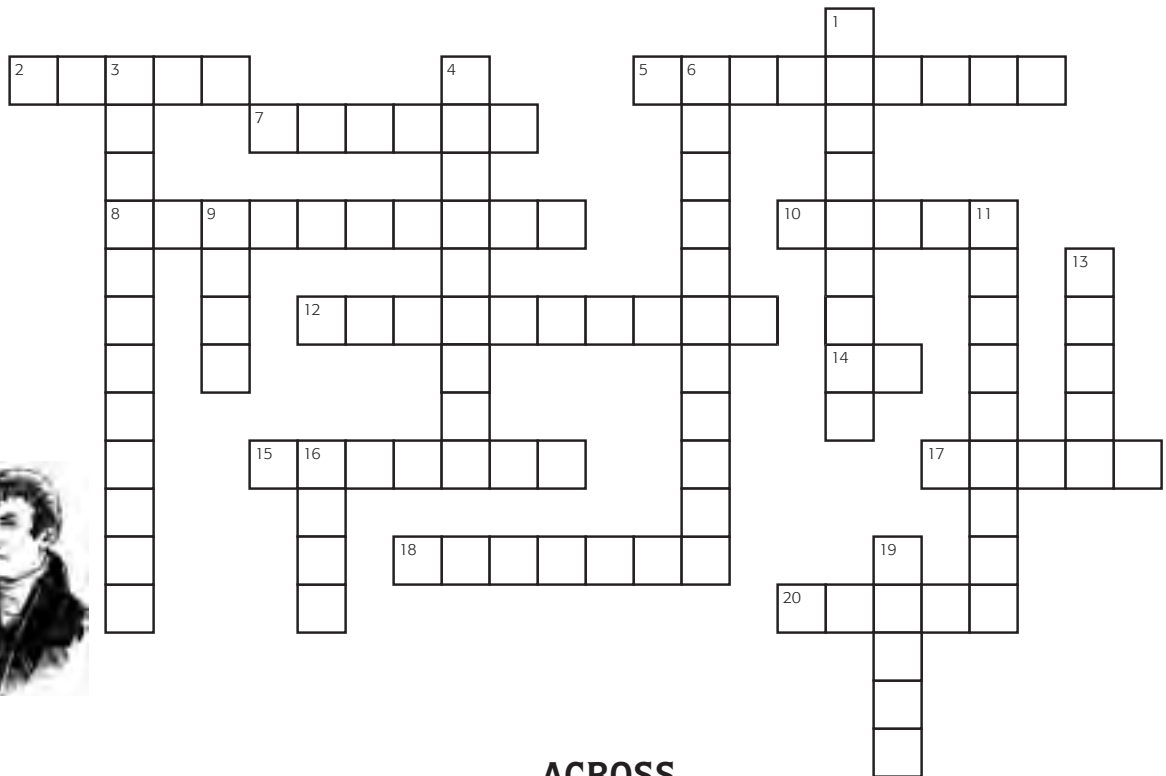
Died: Lewis, September 1809, in Tennessee; Clark, September 1838, in Missouri

Famous for: leading the Corps of Discovery (Lewis and Clark Expedition)

Name _____

Comprehension-Boosting Crosswords

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark



DOWN

1. President Thomas _____ wanted the West explored.
3. Sergeant Charles Floyd, the only man lost, died from _____.
4. Jefferson acquired the _____ Purchase from Napoleon.
6. 2003 marked the 200th _____ of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
9. Sacagawea's baby, Jean Baptiste, was nicknamed _____.
11. A Shoshone Indian woman named _____ joined the Corps of Discovery.
13. In his journal Clark spelled _____ "Ocian".
16. The members of the Corps of Discovery were in the U.S. _____.
19. The Lewis and Clark Expedition returned to cheering throngs in St. _____.

ACROSS

2. Captain Lewis chose William _____ to co-command the Expedition.
5. Alexander _____ reached the Pacific Ocean from Canada in 1793.
7. Lewis and Clark met the Pacific Ocean in what today is the state of _____.
8. The Lewis and Clark _____ began in the winter of 1803-04.
10. The Expedition lasted more than three _____ (including plans and preparations).
12. The Expedition's leaders were William Clark and _____ Lewis.
14. The official name of the group was the Corps _____ Discovery.
15. Lewis and Clark were both called " _____ " by their men.
17. The word _____ means animal life.
18. The Corps of Discovery learned to fear and respect _____ bears.
20. The word _____ refers to plant life.

Answer Key

MERIWETHER LEWIS & WILLIAM CLARK (page 2)

Down:

1. Jefferson
3. appendicitis
4. Louisiana
6. anniversary
9. Pomp
11. Sacagawea
13. ocean
16. army
19. Louis

Across:

2. Clark
5. Mackenzie
7. Oregon
8. Expedition
10. years
12. Meriwether
14. of
15. Captain
17. fauna
18. grizzly
20. flora