

LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

Day 4



In 1804, Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States. The country had recently doubled in size by the purchase from France of the land called the Louisiana Territory. The land was west of the Mississippi River, and little was known about the area.

Jefferson decided to send men into the territory to explore it and find a route across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. He chose Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, officers in the U.S. Army, to lead the expedition. Jefferson told them to make detailed maps of the rivers and the land and to write about the animals, plants, weather, and customs of the Native Americans they met.

In May 1804, Lewis, Clark, and 32 men left St. Louis, Missouri, in three boats. They traveled up the Missouri River through what are now the

states of Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. On horseback, the group crossed the Rocky Mountains and made their way to the Columbia River, which follows the northern border of what is now Oregon. Again on boats, they followed the river to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. It was November 1805, and the men stayed there through the winter.

On March 23, 1806, the group began their return journey. Six months later, they were back in St. Louis. Clark kept a journal about the trip. It tells about the group's hardships, which included near-starvation, floods, attacks from Native Americans, grizzly bears, and mosquitoes. Amazingly, only one man died along the way. His death was due to a sudden illness. President Jefferson was very pleased with the expedition.

Name _____

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Complete the sentences.

1. In 1804, Thomas _____ was President.
2. The United States had just purchased the _____ Territory.
3. The land was west of the _____ River.
4. Jefferson chose Meriwether _____ and William _____ to lead an expedition.
5. They left _____ in _____ 1804.
6. The explorers first followed the _____ River.
7. Then they crossed the _____ Mountains.
8. From there, they traveled by boat on the _____ River.
9. This river followed the northern border of what is now _____.
10. In _____ 1805, they reached the shore of the _____ Ocean.
11. On _____ 23, 1806, they began their return journey.
12. The group was back in St. Louis in the month of _____ 1806.

Research: Find *Louisiana Purchase* in a dictionary or encyclopedia. Describe the general extent (boundaries) of the Louisiana Territory.