

Journey Across America

Many people have tried to do what Meriwether Lewis has done, but have failed.
Lewis

was born August 18, 1774. His family had a history of Hypochondria (depression).
As a boy his

father died and he inherited a 2,000 acre plantation, 520 pounds in cash, 24
slaves, and 147

gallons of whiskey. By the time he became a teenager Lewis had become an
alcoholic. As he

became older he joined the army and helped put down the whiskey rebellion. The
whiskey

rebellion started because the government put a tax on whiskey, and many of the
frontiersmen

couldn't pay it.

On February 23, 1801 Thomas Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis to be his secretary.
The

job paid \$500 a year. This was much less than he made at the plantation but he
still accepted. As

Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis became friends Thomas Jefferson taught
Meriwether

Lewis to read. Thomas Jefferson wanted to explore America so he asked Lewis to
lead an

expedition to the Pacific coast and back. He agreed but he knew it would be long and hard and

that they would need many supplies. Meriwether bought 15 Pennsylvania Rifles, colapsable

boat, tackle, lead, ink powder, 30 steels, mosquito netting, and oilskin bags. He also bought

many presents for the Indians: 5 pounds white glass beads, 20 pounds red assorted beads, 144

scissors, 288 brass thimbles, many blue beads, silk, paint, vermilion, and 288 knives.

On July 5, 1803 Lewis set out for Pittsburgh. Upon arriving at Pittsburgh they discover

the colapsable boat is not even close to being done. So they cant leave for the Pacific coast yet.

On August 31, 7:00 A.M. the last nail was driven into the boat. But by that time the river was at

a record low. On September 1st they left Pittsburgh and went Down the Ohio river. In some

places the river was only 6 inches deep. There were a lot of mosquitoes and fog on the way

down the river. In late October George Rogers Clark Accepted his invitation to go along on the

expedition. The voyage picked him up at Clarksville.

On November 13 the expedition set out for fort Mastic, on the Mississippi river.
From

November 20, 1803-March 1804 the expedition stayed the winter in St. Louis. There they bought

corn, flour, biscuits, salt, pork, lard, and Indian goods from local traders. On May 2nd they

started their way up the Missouri. At the end of July they had made it 640 miles up the river.

The expedition Met their first Indians, the Ottoes, on August 2. Soon after their

confrontation they held a council on Council Bluff. The expedition continued on its way and

soon met the Sioux. A disagreement came about between the two parties because the Sioux

wanted a canoe load of gifts. This almost started a fight but the Sioux finally let the expedition

continue.

The Arikaras met the expedition on October 18. The expedition was very generous to the

Arikaras with gifts. Here Fort Mandan was built so the expedition could stay the winter. The

blacksmiths proved to be very valuable because they made battle axes and sold them to the

Indians for corn. During the stay at Fort Mandan the expedition would be there from Dec 21,

1804-April 7, 1805. On April 7 the expedition continued their journey on the Missouri.

The expedition came to the junction of the Marias and the Missouri river on June 3. The

captains were not sure which river was the Missouri. The party split up and explored a part of

each river. On June 16 they met back at the junction. They decided the south fork was the

Missouri. They started to build the collapsable boat but they didnt have any pitch, so they made

a sealant out of beeswax and charcoal. When they put it in the water it leaked so badly they

decided not to use it. Instead they made some canoes out of cottonwood trees. They started up

the Missouri again on June 16.

They made it to the three forks of the Missouri on July 27. At that

time Clark had been

leading some men up ahead of the rest of the party. Clark decided to go up the left fork, but not

before leaving Lewis a message to go up the right fork. Before Lewis got a chance to go up the

right fork Clark had come back down the river and met Lewis because he had become ill. As

soon as Clark became well enough Lewis went up the Jefferson River and Clark went up the

Wisdom river. They met back at the forks after 2 days. Private Shannon had been sent up the

Wisdom river to hunt but had not returned. The whole party went up the river to find him. On

August 9 Shannon was found. They saw an Indian on August 11 but he ran away. On August 13

they met 2 Indian woman and an Indian man from a tribe of Shoshones. They met the chief and

became friends. Sacagawean, the interpreter, family was part of the Indian tribe. This is

probably the reason the Indians decided to guide the Americans over the Rocky Mountains.

Many horses were purchased from the Shoshonas.

When the expedition got over the Rocky Mountains they met the Nez Pierce on September

10, 1805. Their chief, Twisted Hair, sold roots to the expedition. The expedition Started

descending down the Columbia River October 7. On the way down they met the Chinooks and

found out they were thieves. When they got to the coast they met the Clatsop Indians and traded

with them. Here they built Fort Clatsop. On march 23 the expedition left Fort Clatsop and

started back up the Columbia River. On the way home they met the Nez Pierce again at the end

of April. They crossed the Lolo Trail From June 10, 1806-July 2, 1806. The captains decided to

explore the Marias from July 3-July 28. During the exploration of the Marias their was a conflict

between the Blackfeet and the party and a few indians died. On September 23 the party finally

made it back to the president. And that concludes my book report on the book Undaunted

Courage.

