

# Lewis and Clark



Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson asked his private secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, to take charge of the expedition to explore the new U.S. territory. Meriwether enlisted his friend William Clark, a U.S. Army veteran, to join him. While Lewis assembled the supplies and equipment for the trip, Clark hired and trained the team of 40 men they took with them.

They set off from the city of St. Louis on May 14, 1804, traveling up the Missouri River with several boats. Along the way, they encountered many Native American tribes. Most encounters were friendly, and the two groups traded with each other. While wintering with the Mandan nation, they met a fur trapper named Toussaint Charbonneau and his Native American wife of the Shoshone tribe, Sacagawea.

When Lewis and Clark began traveling again, Sacagawea went with them, acting as an interpreter. She also showed them what native plants were edible, and helped them to get along and trade with other Native American tribes.

They encountered various obstacles and difficulties as they crossed the wild and unfamiliar terrain. However, eighteen months after setting off from St. Louis, the expedition arrived at the Pacific Ocean. There they spend the winter before setting off on a 6-month long return journey in March of 1806.

Who were Lewis and Clark, and what did they do?

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