

Lewis and Clark



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Thomas Jefferson had many goals for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but the main goal was to find an all water route to the Pacific Ocean. Although they did not accomplish this goal, they did accomplish many more of their goals. One of the goals they fulfilled included taking notes of the lands economic potential during their expedition. Also, Lewis and Clark, both wrote diaries that reported wildlife, abundant resources, opportunities for trade, and other information about the Louisiana Purchase.

The leaders of the expedition were chosen by President Thomas Jefferson, who had been thinking about discovering the Louisiana Purchase for a while. President Jefferson did not look any further than his personal secretary, Merriweather Lewis. Thomas Jefferson thought that Merriweather had a lot of knowledge about botany, natural history, mineralogy and astronomy, and a familiarity with the Indian manners and character. Merriweather Lewis grew up on a family plantation in Albemarle County, Virginia. He spent a lot of time outdoors as a youth gaining an interest in plants, animals, and geology.

The Expedition began on May 14, 1804 after Lewis and Clark had picked up all of their crew members. Lewis and Clark started out in St. Charles, Missouri on the Missouri River trying to find an all water route to the Pacific Ocean. Next, Lewis and Clark made their way to Fort Mandan, where they stayed during their second winter. This is also where they met Sacagawea. After they left Fort Mandan, they made their way to Fort Clatsop, which is where they made salt. Lewis and Clark thought that their original route took too long and took them too far south, so they tried something different.

Lewis followed the original route while Clark followed the Yellowstone River to Fort Mandan, where they met each other and traveled back to St. Louis. Lewis and Clark arrived back in St. Louis on September 23, 1806. Along the way, though, there were a couple interesting things that happened on the trip. I think it is very interesting that only one crew member died on the whole trip. Throughout this entire journey the only man to die was Charles Floyd, apparently from a burst appendix. Nobody died from hypothermia in the winter or of attacks from Indians.

Also, another unusual fact is that Merriweather Lewis was shot by his own men while being mistaken for wild game. After the expedition William Clark returned to St. Louis and the east coast to a lot of fanfare and accolades. When he got back he quickly impressed his superiors and was eventually made head of Indian Affairs in St. Louis. Clark and his family were well liked amongst the people of St. Louis, unlike Merriweather Lewis. He was the head of Indian Affairs in St. Louis until 1830. Lewis Clark died in 1838.

Merriweather Lewis' life was filled with tragedy after his return from the expedition.

While he was very popular as soon as he returned home he was named governor of the Louisiana Territory in 1808. While he was a great leader of the expedition, he was not a very successful political leader. Lewis' Lt. Governor, William Bates did not like him and accused him many times of improper use of governmental funds. All of these things going so badly led Lewis into a state of depression. In 1809, while traveling to Washington D. C. to answer to some of these allegations Merriweather Lewis sadly ended his own life.