

# Louis and clarks exploration of the louisiana purchase

[History](#)



President Thomas Jefferson purchased a nice amount of land from France in 1803, calling it the Louisiana Purchase. After the land bought in the Louisiana Purchase was officially part of the United States, Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis to explore the new land. Meriwether then asked William Clark to join him in the exploration. In this two-year voyage west, they will be able to meet Indian tribes building diplomatic relationships with, drawing a detailed map of the new land, and took notes of the new animals they discovered.

## **The Louisiana Purchase**

While the French and Indian war was happening, France let go of its territory in America. They gave its territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain in 1762 and the rest of their territory to Great Britain in 1763. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte took control of France. With this power he was able to force King Charles IV of Spain to surrender the territory they had received previously, known as the Louisiana territory.

When Jefferson and Monroe heard that Napoleon had taken back the Louisiana territory, they made a deal to buy the land for fifteen million dollars, consisting of eight hundred and twenty-seven thousand miles. Even before the deal with France to buy the Louisiana territory, Jefferson had already appointed Meriwether Lewis as the commander of the expedition of the new land. Thomas Jefferson was hoping that during this expedition a water route would be discovered linking the Columbia and Missouri rivers. Finding this link would help connect the Pacific Ocean and Mississippi River.

## **Lewis and Clark**

Thomas Jefferson had big plans for this new territory they had just bought, he immediately chose a commander to lead this expedition. Jefferson choose Meriwether Lewis, for his intelligence, literate skills, and frontiers man skills. Lewis also appointed a partner to help him, William Clark. Clark had knowledge and skills as a draftsman and frontiers man. With this team working on exploring the Louisiana Purchase, they are now able to start getting ready and prepare for it.

### **Preparing for the Expedition**

While preparing for this scientific exploration, Lewis was busy studying topics that would help including medicine, botany, astronomy, zoology, and even memorized maps of the territory previously made. Lewis and Clark were able to collect supplies and gifts to present to the Indians they knew they were going to stumble upon during this expedition. Some of the supplies collected for the trip included maps, weapons, ammunition, camping supplies, surveying instruments, medicine, medicine supplies, and books for geography or astronomy.

The gifts they were able to find to present to the Indians were beads, knives, tobacco, face paint, colored cloth, and mirrors. Lewis and Clark knew they had to have a strong leadership style to ensure this expedition goes as planned. Meaning that, Lewis and Clark led with an iron hand. They would end up punishing people if anyone were out of line. The next step in preparing for this exploration was to find a team to go with them.

At Camp DuBois during 1803 to 1804, they picked and recruited men who were healthy, unmarried, hunting skills, and surviving skills. In the end, twenty-seven men were chosen. As well as the twenty-seven men they recruited, their team consisted of a French-Indian interpreter, a separate boat crew, and Clarks personal slave named York. After their men had completed training with Clark, him and the men traveled to St. Charles, picked up Lewis, and then traveled up the Missouri River. This was the starting point of the expedition of the Louisiana Purchase.

### **Traveling to the West**

After officially launching the expedition at Camp DuBois in 1804, Lewis and Clark travelled northwest on the Missouri river, stopping at Fort Mandan. They camped there during the winter while they prepared for the exploration in the spring. Starting in the spring of 1805, they then continued to travel up the Missouri river to present day Montana. Going from there, they traveled west by the Jefferson river landing in an area where Shoshone Indians lived.

The Indians were friendly with Lewis and Clark and their team, giving them horses to help get over the Bitterroot Mountains. Getting over the Bitterroot Mountains lead them to the Columbia river where they travel by canoes to Oregon. After landing in Oregon, Lewis and Clark decided to camp there during the winter and then return home when spring rolled around in 1806.

### **Sacagawea**

During the trip to Oregon, there was one important person that had a significant impact on this expedition. The pregnant wife of the interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, was a Shoshone Indian named Sacagawea.

Sacagawea was kidnapped when she was twelve years old by the Hidatsa Indians then being sold to Charbonneau himself.

She was a great asset during this trip because she was able to help Lewis and Clark communicate with the Shoshone Indians when they encountered them after travelling the Jefferson River and before traveling by horse up the Bitterroot Mountains. Sacagawea gave birth to her son February 11th , 1805. Giving birth helped make her invaluable and an even greater asset to Lewis and Clark.

### **The Trip Home**

After the spring of 1806 rolled around, that allowed Lewis and Clark and their team travel back and start their journey home. They started to backtrack starting March 23rd, 1806. Lewis and Clark took their canoes and traveled east on the Columbia River returning to the Bitterroot Mountains. Once there they rounded up their horses the Shoshone Indians gave to them and camped there till around June, giving time for the snow to melt.

At this point, Lewis and Clark split up and traveled two separate ways. Lewis decided to travel north wanting to explore the Marias River. Clark decided to travel east on the Yellowstone River. Even though the two men and the team split up, their plan was to meet back up in North Dakota where the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers met.

Their plan worked and were met where the two rivers met, continuing their travel back east till they returned home. Once they were home they were able to give Thomas Jefferson all their notes, maps, documentations, and pictures of their findings during the exploration of the Louisiana purchase. <https://assignbuster.com/louis-and-clarks-exploration-of-the-louisiana-purchase/>

**Conclusion**

Lewis and Clarks scientific expedition of the Louisiana Territory purchased by Jefferson from France was a significant event in our history. This expedition, from 1804 to 1806, allowed us to further gain important knowledge and make new discoveries. On top of the Louisiana Purchase more than doubling the size of the United States, it also showed other nations that the united states could peacefully find ways to solve problems. Lewis and Clark were able to discover over 100 new animals and drew detailed maps of the new land the United States had acquired.