

WASHINGTON STATE COMMITTEE'S SPEECH OUTLINE
FOR THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE
LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

SYNOPSIS

By Mitchell Doumit, Cathlamet

NOTE: There will be many calls for special talks on Lewis and Clark during the Sesquicentennial period, and it was felt by the Washington Committee that speakers would greatly appreciate an outline which would give them a certain amount of material and suggest sources of additional material should more be needed. Mr. Mitchell Doumit of Cathlamet, a member of the state committee, was asked to accept this assignment and has given us a splendid outline which will be appreciated by every person using it. In urging the use of this Outline, we would at the same time urge speakers to make use of any material of their own which they may have, and ALSO, to impress with all the emphasis possible, the importance of this Expedition to the United States. It can also be shown to have exerted a very important influence on free government the world over---CHAPIN D. FOSTER, Chairman.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition left St. Louis in the Spring of 1804, ascending the Missouri River to the Five Villages, where they built Fort Mandan and spent the winter.

In April, 1805, the Expedition continued on up the Missouri River, past the Great Falls to the Three Forks, where they took the Jefferson River branch, thence overland to Clarks Fork, thence across to the Clearwater, which they followed into the Snake, thence into the Columbia, arriving at the Pacific in November, 1805, where they built Fort Clatsop.

In March, 1806, they started their long journey homeward. At the mouth of Lolo Creek in Idaho they separated to meet again on the Missouri. Down the Missouri and into the Mississippi, they arrived back at St. Louis September 23, 1806, after an absence of nearly 2½ years, during which they had been given up for lost.

OUTLINE OF THE EXPEDITION

I. A President's Dream.

Even before the peace treaty signed after the Revolution, Thos. Jefferson dreamed and schemed for a Western exploration.

After Gray's discovery of the Columbia River in 1792, Jefferson, as Secretary of State in Washington's cabinet, proposed to the American Philosophical Society to raise funds to explore that region.

Following receipt of an estimate from Meriwether Lewis that it would require \$2500.00 to make an exploration of the Northwest, Pres. Jefferson sent a secret message to Congress, January 18, 1803, requesting the appropriation "for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States" which Congress granted.

II. Preparations for the Expedition.

Pres. Jefferson granted his secretary, Meriwether Lewis' request to head the expedition.

Lewis estimated that "Mathematical instruments, arms and accoutrements, camp equipage, medicine and packing, means for transportation, Indian presents, provisions, pay for hunters, guides, interpreters and contingencies" would cost about \$2500.00

Lewis spent three months in intensive study at Philadelphia, under able professors, learning natural science and how to make astronomical observations for the geography of the route.

He selected Captain William Clark, younger brother of George Rogers Clark, as his companion and sharer of his command.

Pres. Jefferson secures letters of passports from British, French and Spanish ministers for the expedition through foreign territory.

Jefferson gave Lewis his instructions and signed the historic document-- "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado, or any other river, may offer the most direct and practicable water-communication across the continent, for the purpose of commerce."

III. The Louisiana Purchase.

During the preparations for the exploration, Spain, knowing it could not hold Louisiana, ceded it to France.

Napoleon, aware of the possible loss of Louisiana to England in a war which he considered inevitable, determined to put it out of her reach by negotiating its sale to the United States.

Negotiations between the French ministers of state and Livingstone and Monroe resulted in the purchase of Louisiana by the United States from France for \$15,000,000 on July 4, 1803.

Thus, the exploration which started out in its planning across foreign soil, became an exploration of the vast new territorial acquisition of the infant republic hugging the Atlantic, which overnight became a world power extending to the Pacific.

IV. Personnel of the Expedition.

Meriwether Lewis
William Clark
George Shannon
John Collins
George Gibson

Silas Goodrich
Richard Windsor
Hugh Hall
John B. Thompson
George Drouillard

Hugh McNeal
John Potts
Peter Wiser
William Bratton
John Shields
William Werner
John Colter
Reuben Fields
Joseph Fields
Joseph Whitehouse
Charles Floyd
Nathaniel Pryor
York, the negro
Sergeant John Ordway
Patrick Gass

Pierre Cruzatt
Francis Labiche
Pierre Dorion
Rene Jessaume
Toussaint Charboneau
Sacajawea
Corp. Warvington and
six soldiers
Nine French boys to
paddle
Baptiste Lepage
Alexander Willard
Robert Frazier
Thomas P. Howard

V. Assembling at St. Louis

In December, 1803, Lewis and Clark arrived in St. Louis and went into winter camp to prepare for an early spring start.

During the winter of 1803-04, Lewis pursued his scientific studies-medicine, surgery, electricity-under the able tutelage of Dr. Saugrain.

Saugrain, chemist-physician, showed Lewis how to make matches by dipping sulphur-tipped splints of wood into phosphorus and sealed them in small tin boxes for safety.

He also provided him with some kine-pox virus to treat the plague among the Indians.

On Monday, May 14, 1804, the expedition consisting of a heavy laden bateau, 55 feet from stem to stern, two piroques, swung out from St. Louis and started up the Missouri.

The expedition was on its way.

VI. Enroute to Mandan.

June 26 - tied up at mouth of the Kansas River.

July 21 - sailed past mouth of River Platte.

Chas. Floyd dies and is buried on Floyd's Bluff,
around which Sioux City later grew.

Aug. 28 - George Shannon is lost.

Sept. 11 - He comes dragging into camp.

Sept. 24 - They reach the mouth of the River Teton, present
site of Pierre, South Dakota.

Autumn - They arrive among the Mandans.

Nov. 20 - Triangular fort completed.

Dec. 24 - Stockade around Fort Mandan finished and gate closed.

Feb. 1805 - Sacajawea becomes a mother at 16. Captured 5 years
before, and brought to land of Dakotas and sold to
Charboneau.

- Apr. 7 - Dispatches, maps, presents, dispatched back to St. Louis with 10 men, while 6 small canoes and the two pirogues with 31 men and Sacajawea and her child started up river.

VII. Over the Rockies.

Toward the end of April, 1805 they arrive at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

- May 26 - First sight of Rocky Mountains.
June 3 - Forks of Missouri River reached.
June 12 - Lewis discovers Great Falls of the Missouri.
A whole month spent in making the portage around the falls.
July 15 - Boats launched above the Great Falls of the Missouri.
July 25 - They arrive at the three forks of the Missouri near present site of Gallatin--which they named the Jefferson, the Madison and the Gallatin Rivers.
July 30 - They start up the Jefferson River.
Aug. 7 - They camp at Beaverhead Rock, a steep, rocky cliff shaped like a beaver's head 150 feet above the water--an Indian landmark.
Aug. 11 - Lewis stood at Summit of Great Divide, stooping to drink from the waters of the Columbia and to sleep that night in Idaho.
Aug. 12 - Lewis meets the Shoshones, Sacajawea's people.

They cross the Bitter Root Mountains, journey from the main Bitter Root Valley, named Clark's River, September 9, then over the Lolo Trail.

- Oct. 4 - They got into boats, floating down the Kooskooske into the Snake, and on into the Columbia.
Oct. 16 - They are met at the Columbia by 200 friendly Indians.

VIII. And Down the Columbia.

They sight Mt. Hood and then Mt. St. Helens. They shoot the rapids at the Dalles and portage around the Cascades and enter the valley of the Lower Columbia.

Nov. 4 - They land at a village on the left side of the Columbia opposite present Vancouver. Then past St. Helens and Mt. Coffin to Cathlamet.

They continued on to Chinook and Cape Disappointment, some of the party reaching the ocean on November 14, 1805. From their camp on Haley's Bay, Lewis explored the area on foot in search of the white men whose sailor uniforms made strange looking garb when worn by the Indians.

Clark and another party went to see the Great Western Ocean, and decided it had been grossly misnamed for it was "more raging than pacific."

On these excursions they camped along the ocean beach, went some distance north toward Willapa Bay and inland far enough to get a fair idea of the country, and to taste the cranberry for which the area has become widely known.

A democratic vote decided the issue of where to locate the winter camp. Indians pointed across the bay, saying "Deer, elk, good skin, good meat."

Though Indian canoeists crossed the treacherous river at its mouth, Lewis and Clark dared not attempt the crossing until the party had returned a considerable distance up the north side.

Finally reaching the south side, they began to make their winter camp on the banks of the river which now bears their name, Lewis and Clark, 10 miles from the ocean, 3 miles from the Columbia.

By Christmas they had completed and moved into 7 cabins, built of logs, and by New Year's Eve they completed the palisades and closed the gates to Fort Clatsop.

IX. Wintering at Fort Clatsop.

A salt-makers camp was established near Tillamook Head, 15 miles southwest of the fort, to provide salt to preserve their meat.

Lewis reported that he never experienced so warm a winter.

Snow, 4 inches thick, appeared about the last of January, but disappeared in a week, and then it was spring.

The Chinooks, because of their thieving, were excluded from the fort, but the Clatsops came trading for beads, knives or old files, and the Cathlamets for fishhooks.

Old Concomly, King of the Chinooks on the North side, and Tyee Coboway, Chief of the Clatsops, on the South bank of the Columbia, told of traders who frequented the river since it was discovered by Captain Robert Gray 14 years before, but were unable to identify any of the many three-masted ships which they told of coming to trade.

By Feb. 11, 1806, Captain Clark had completed a map of the country, including rivers and mountains from Fort Mandan to Clatsop.

Dickering began for a boat for the return trip. Unsuccessful with the Chinooks and the Clatsops, a trade was finally negotiated with Queen Sally of the Cathlamets for nothing less than Capt. Lewis' laced uniform coat.

X. The Return.

On March 23, 1806, the boats were loaded and all was ready for the start on the return trip. Back past Cathlamet, Oak Point, Coffin Rock, to make camp on the future site of Vancouver on March 30.

Ten days were spent at the River Sandy near the base of Mt. Hood waiting, with the Indians, for the salmon run and needed food. Clark discovered the Willamette, sleeping one night near site of present Portland.

Great difficulty and delay were experienced in making portages up the Columbia and past The Dalles, so long in fact, that food supplies failed. Yellept, Chief of the Walla Walla, invited them to his village with promise of food and horses. He lavished hospitality on his visitors, who vainly desired to press on, to be beseeched by Yellept to "Wait."

Following the Nez Perces trail, encountering a May snowstorm, delayed by rising waters, finally they were started back over the Bitter Root range on the Lolo trail by which they had entered.

On July 3, 1806, on the mouth of Lolo Creek, the expedition separated-- Lewis to cross to the falls of the Missouri and explore Marias River-- Clark to come to the three forks and cross to the Yellowstone. Lewis crossed the Missoula and came out on the opening through the main range of the Rockies now known as the Lewis and Clark Pass. Clark set out along the Bitter Root Valley, through Hell Gate Pass on the Rockies, and by way of Clark's Pass over the Continental Divide to the Big Hole River, down the Jefferson to Three Forks, thence over Bozeman Pass to the headwaters of the Yellowstone and down it to the Missouri.

Aug. 12, the two parties met again and started down the Missouri. Charboneau and Sacajawea were left in the Mandan country. Shahaka, or Big White, a stately chief of the Mandans left with them to go to Washington. Down the Missouri and into the Mississippi they went, arriving back at St. Louis on noon, Tuesday, September 23, 1806, after an absence of nearly 2½ years.

It was well into January, 1807 before the captains reached Washington to report to the President, and to receive the plaudits of a nation.