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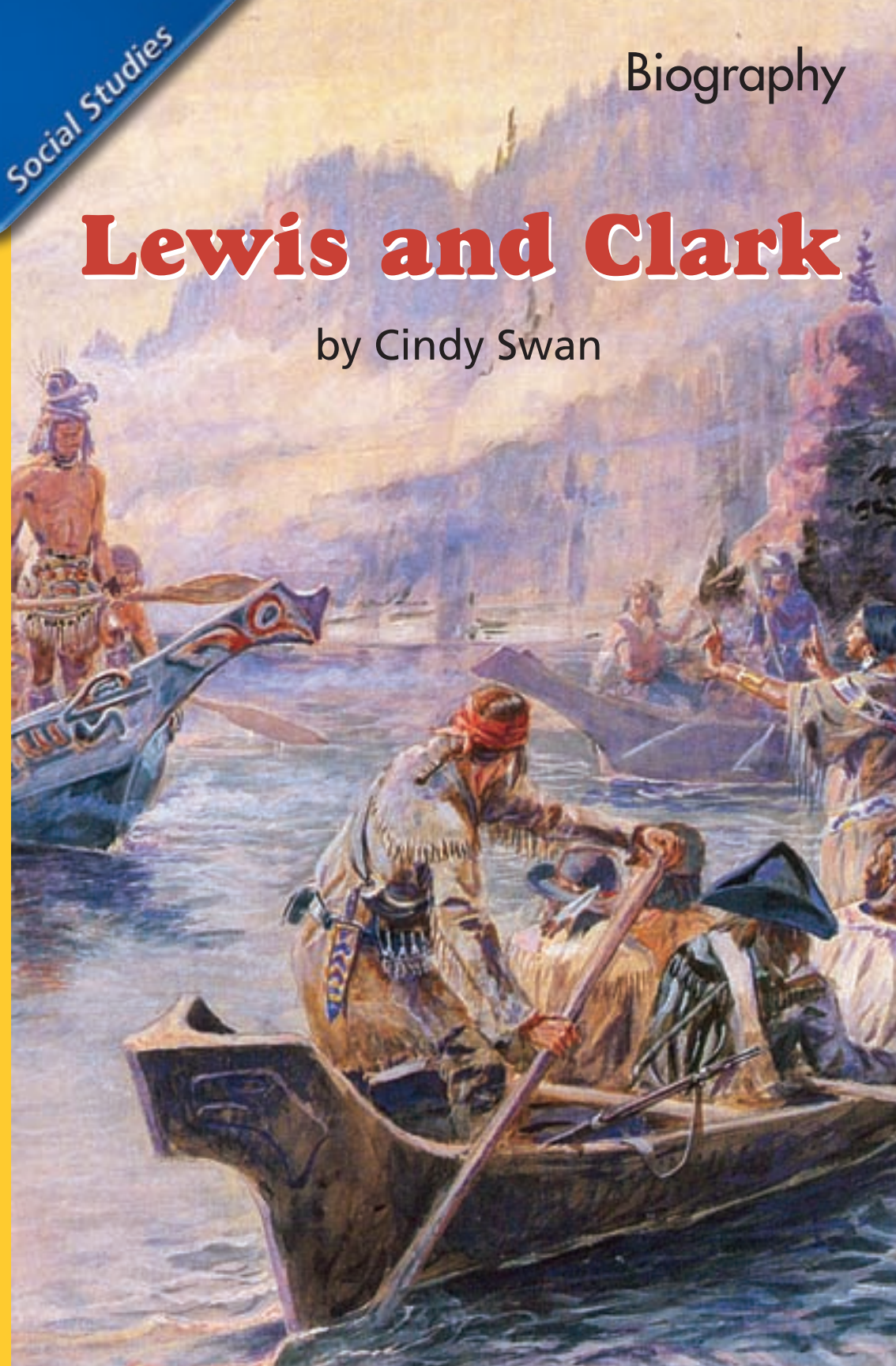
Social Studies

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Biography

Lewis and Clark

by Cindy Swan



Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy	Text Features
Biography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Author's Purpose• Compare and Contrast• Answer Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions• Map• Heads• Glossary

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Vocabulary

docks

migrating

scan

scent

translated

wharf

yearned

Word count: 1,476

Lewis and Clark

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Note: The total word count includes words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in chapter titles, captions, labels, diagrams, charts, graphs, sidebars, and extra features are not included.



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Captain Meriwether Lewis and Lieutenant William Clark were explorers. They were appointed by President Thomas Jefferson to explore the West by traveling along the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark led a group called the Corps of Discovery. They left Camp Dubois, near St. Louis, in May 1804. Their challenging expedition lasted more than two years.

Meriwether Lewis



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4 5 6 7 8 9 10 V0G1 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06

The United States bought land from France in a deal called the Louisiana Purchase. This made the territory from the Mississippi River west to the Rocky Mountains part of the United States. But that land was far from empty. Lewis and Clark met nearly fifty different Native American nations as they traveled west to the Pacific. They hoped that the Native Americans and the United States would be able to trade with each other.

What did Lewis and Clark use as a “road” for most of their journey? Use this book to help you find the answer. You will learn about some of the cultures and customs of the different people Lewis and Clark met.

As it left the **docks** near St. Louis in the spring of 1804, the Corps of Discovery was beginning an eight-thousand-mile journey across the wilderness. The map below shows the distance the group traveled. For several months the Corps saw no Native Americans.



The western United States at the time of the Corps of Discovery expedition

The Missouri and Oto

In August the Corps met with the Missouri and the Oto nations. These people farmed the land and they also hunted. They lived in oven-shaped, earth-covered houses. The meeting between Lewis and Clark and the Missouri and Oto chiefs set a pattern that would be repeated in their meetings with other Native American people. The uniformed men of the Corps did a military drill and fired on command. The picture below shows what the meetings might have looked like.

Lewis gave a speech to the Native Americans about making peace with their neighbors. He also promised future trading opportunities. The Native Americans would be able to trade their furs for other goods. The Corps gave the chiefs peace medals and other gifts.

The Native Americans listened as the speech was **translated**. No one knows if the translation was accurate or if the chiefs understood or accepted Lewis's words. The chiefs did make it clear, however, that they were not satisfied with the gifts they were given. They wanted rifles and gunpowder, not trinkets.



Lewis and Clark meet Native Americans.

The Sioux

A few weeks after meeting the Missouri and Oto chiefs, the Corps met people of the Yankton Sioux nation. The Yankton Sioux already knew British and French traders. They wanted to trade with the United States. The Corps invited them to a celebration. The Yankton sang and danced to the music of deer-hoof rattles and a drum.

When the Corps met the Teton Sioux, they saw another celebration. The Teton Sioux played tambourines, deer-hoof rattles, and goat-hoof rattles.

The Yanktons' homes were teepees of painted buffalo robes. The homes impressed the Corps. Porcupine quills and feathers decorated the warriors. They wore buffalo robes of different colors, large leggings, and moccasins. The women wore white buffalo robes.

The Tetons controlled a stretch of the Missouri River. The Tetons did not like the Corps because they saw these men as competitors. Also, no one in the Corps spoke the Sioux language. The two groups often misunderstood each other.

The Tetons did not want to make peace with their neighbors. They had a good relationship with one of their neighbors, the Arikaras, only because it was best for both groups. The Tetons traded clothes, guns, and other supplies with the Arikaras for horses and corn. The Arikaras, unlike the Tetons, were friendly to the Corps.



Painted buffalo hide robe
from the late 1800s

The Mandans and Hidatsas

Birds were **migrating** south as the Corps came to the Mandan villages. The Mandans grew corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. Their allies, or friendly partners, the Hidatsas grew these crops too. They traded these for any goods they needed.

Their villages were made up of domed earth lodges grouped around a central plaza. Each lodge housed about ten people. The more powerful and important a family was, the closer its lodge was to the central plaza.

The Hidatsas did not trust the Corps, but the Mandans did. The Corps spent the winter of 1804-1805 at Fort Mandan, which they built directly across the river from a Mandan village.

An earth lodge replica at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park in Mandan, North Dakota



The Mandans used horses to hunt buffalo. But they did not ride as far as the Rocky Mountains. The Hidatsas rode this far to raid other Native American people. The Hidatsas had captured a young Shoshone woman named Sacagawea on one of their raids.

Lewis and Clark wanted to communicate with the Shoshone people farther upriver. Sacagawea's language skills were helpful to them. She also helped them by finding edible plants. In several places she knew the territory well enough to guide the expedition. Moreover, the presence of a woman and her infant son was seen as a "token of peace," as Clark wrote. Seeing Sacagawea and her son helped convince the Native Americans they met that the Corps was not a war party.



Buffalo

With the **scent** of spring in the air, the Corps left the Mandan. They headed upriver, following the Missouri to its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains. In the summer and fall of 1804, they met many Native Americans. But they had a hard time finding the Shoshone. They wanted to buy horses from them to move their equipment over the mountains.

The Shoshone had been forced into the mountains by their rivals. Lewis believed they would welcome the Corps. The Shoshone would need guns to defend themselves against their foes. The Corps could not supply arms immediately, but they would promise future trade if the Shoshone cooperated.



Sacagawea image on U.S. dollar coin

Golden Dollar Obverse © 1999 United States Mint. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

The Shoshone and Nez Percé

The Corps finally found the Shoshone in August 1805. The chief was Sacagawea's brother. How she must have **yearned** to see her family again. How happy she must have been to be reunited with her brother! The men of the Corps were welcomed and treated as guests. They bought horses from the Shoshone and from their allies, the Salish.

An elderly Shoshone guided the Corps over the mountains to the villages of the Nez Percé nation. The Nez Percé were excellent horsemen and had the largest herd of horses on the continent. The Nez Percé fished for salmon and gathered the roots of many plants for food. Every year the Nez Percé hunters crossed the mountains to hunt buffalo.

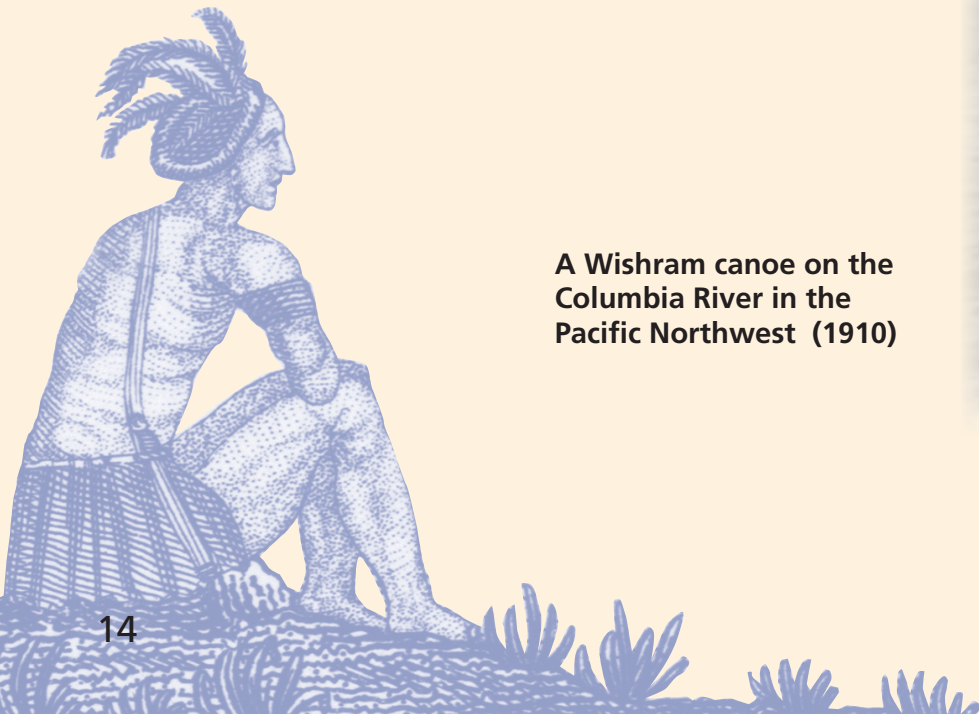


Like the Shoshone, the Nez Percé did not have guns, and they welcomed trade with the Corps. Relations were friendly. A chief and his sons helped the Corps find good timber for canoes.

The expedition paddled downstream, always ready to **scan** the horizon in hopes of seeing the Pacific. They met Native Americans living all along the river corridor, or path. Among these nations were the Wanapams, the Yakimas, the Walla Wallas, the Wishram, and the Wascos. These nations traveled in elegant canoes, like the one below, and speared salmon to eat.



A Wishram canoe on the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest (1910)





"1805: Sacajawea interprets Lewis and Clark's intentions to the Chinook Indians." by Charles Russell

The Chinooks and Clatsops

Along the Northwest coast the Corps met the Chinooks. They spoke a different language and had a different culture from that of the Native American nations upriver. The Chinooks were excellent canoe builders, navigators, and fishermen. They lived in large plank houses decorated with carvings and slept on reed mats.

The Corps spent the winter of 1805-1806 near the peaceful Clatsops, on the southern bank of the Columbia estuary (an estuary is a wide, low section of a river where the tide causes fresh water and salt water to mix). Clark called the Clatsops "the best canoe navigators" he had ever seen. They could launch their canoes, cross the estuary, and safely come to land in conditions the Corps could not begin to navigate. They could do this without the help of a **wharf**, or platform for unloading ships.

The only battle the expedition fought with Native Americans happened on the return trip. Lewis and a small party of the Corps met a group of Blackfoot warriors in July 1806. Lewis gave his speech about the United States wanting to achieve peace among all the Native American nations of the West and to trade. He added that the Shoshone and the Nez Percé had agreed to this peace. They would get rifles and supplies as goods in trade. The Blackfeet were angry that the Corps was arming their rivals. A battle began in which two Blackfoot warriors were killed.

During their 2½ year journey, Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery met different Native American nations. They learned about the differences among Native American cultures. They believed that peace could spread across the continent. The medal on this page was a token for the explorers to give to Native Americans. Lewis and Clark felt that with peace, a new American trading empire was possible.



The peace medal that Lewis and Clark gave the Nez Percé in 1805.

Glossary

docks *n.* platforms built on the shore or out from the shore; wharfs; piers.

migrating *v.* going from one region to another with the change in the seasons.

scan *v.* to glance at; look over hastily.

scent *n.* a smell.

translated *v.* changed from one language into another.

wharf *n.* a platform built on the shore or out from the shore, beside which ships can load and unload.

yearned *v.* felt a longing or desire; desired earnestly.

Reader Response

1. Why do you think the author wrote this book?
2. If you could meet the Native Americans whom Lewis and Clark encountered during their journey, what questions would you ask them? In a chart similar to the one below, write your questions on the left. Write your answers, or where you will go to find the answers, on the right.

Questions	Answers

3. Use *yearned* in a sentence that shows its meaning.
4. Look at the map on pages 4 and 5. What territory is north of the Missouri River? What territory is south of the Missouri River?