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In 1905, Charles Marion Russell (1864–1926) created this work of art entitled *Lewis and Clark on the Lower Columbia*. Measuring 28 x 24 inches (71.1 x 61 cm), the opaque and transparent watercolor represents the artist's interpretation of members of the Corps of Discovery meeting Chinooks on the Lower Columbia River in October of 1805.

Expedition members reached their goal - the western coast of North America - in early January, 1806. On the 6th, Lewis recorded:

Charbono and his Indian woman were also of the party; the Indian woman was very impo[r]tunate to be permitted to go, and was therefore indulged; she observed that she had traveled a long way with us to see the great waters, and that now that monstrous fish [a whale had washed ashore on the beach] was also to be seen, she thought it very hard she could not be permitted to see either (she had never yet been to the Ocean.) (Journals, page 300.)

The next day, Sacagawea saw "the great waters" for the first time. She was likely standing at Tillamook Head, about 650 feet above the sea. Heartfelt (albeit misspelled) words in Clark's Journal record the moment:

...from this point I beheld the grandest and most pleasing prospects which my eyes ever surveyed, in my frount a boundless Ocean; ... the Seas rageing with emence wave and brakeing with great force from the rocks of Cape Disappointment as far as I coud See to the N.W. ... the nitches and points of high land which forms this Corse for a long ways aded to the inoumerable rocks of emence Sise out at a great distance from the Shore and against which the Seas brak with great force gives this Coast a most romantic appearance.

Thereafter, it was time to head back to St. Louis.

When the expedition returned to the Mandan village, Sacagawea and her family remained at the place where they had joined the Corps in 1805. Her husband received money, and 320 acres of land, for his efforts. Sacagawea received nothing.

Lewis and Clark continued on and arrived in Washington, D.C. on September 23, 1806. Most of their countrymen thought they were lost (see Clark's journal entry for September 17, 1806), but they had fulfilled a President's dream. Excluding preparation time, their trip (which began in St. Louis on May 14, 1804), had taken nearly 2½ years.

An unprecedented journey by the Corps of Discovery paved the way for later life and exploration in the western regions of what is now America. Clark had documented "new" plant and animal life as well as other interesting items (like Indian Petroglyphs engraved in limestone near the mouth of the Nemaha River in modern-day Kansas and the Rochester Rock Art Panel in Emery County, Utah).

Patrick Gass was the first member of the expedition to publish an account of what he had seen and heard. The official Journals of Lewis and Clark were published several years later. (The link takes you to an on-line version.)

As we ponder the results of the Corps of Discovery, it is fair to ask this question: Would Lewis and Clarke have been so successful had they not had the help of a teenaged Shoshone named Sacagawea?

Explorers of a different sort, in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, found mummified remains of ancient rulers. Who were these pharaohs? How were their bodies transformed into mummies?

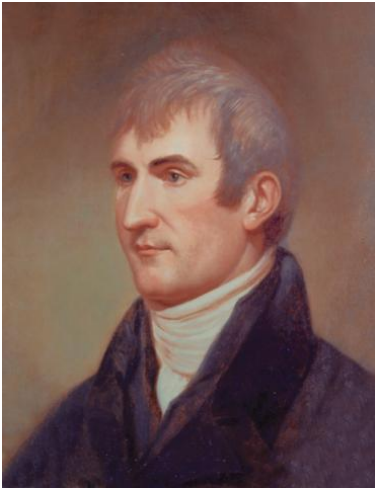
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LEWIS-and-CLARK-Night-at-the-Museum>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Meriwether Lewis

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Park Service.

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William Clark - Corps of Discovery

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Petroglyphs - Rochester Rock Art Panel

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Lewis and Clark with an Indian Council

A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery, Under the Command of Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clarke ... (page 26, 1812 edition). This engraving, one of two which Matthew Carey created, was added to a later edition of the book which Gass originally published in 1807.

Engraving, Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1812.

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Captain Lewis Shooting an Indian

A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery, Under the Command of Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clarke ... (page 245, 1812 edition). This engraving, one of two which Matthew Carey created, was added to the book Gass originally published in 1807.

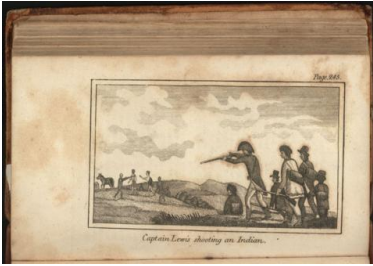
Engraving, Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1812.

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Petroglyphs - Limestone Cliff at Nemaha River

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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LEWIS and CLARK

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Lewis and Clark - Corps of Discovery

Clip from "Lewis and Clark," an Encyclopedia Britannica Film, online via YouTube.

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