

Grab Your Backpack!



___1. The elk, or wapiti, now live only in the high mountains, but Lewis and Clark may have seen them on the Great Plains as well. The Indians prized their hides for tepee covers.

___2. The Western Meadowlark was so widespread throughout the lands the expedition explored that it became the state bird of six Western states.

___3. Wife of the French Canadian interpreter Toussaint Charbonneau, this young Snake Indian proved invaluable to the expedition, translating and helping them get horses from her people for their return journey.

___4. The expedition encountered “a Buzzard of the large Kind” in the Rockies. Endangered almost to extinction, this majestic bird is making a comeback.

___5. Expedition member John Ordway made notes in his journal about a burrowing animal the group encountered on the plains, giving it the popular name we know it by today. One was sent back to President Jefferson from Ft. Mandan, making a journey of four months and 4,000 miles to live for a while in the President’s House.

___6. Indians showed Lewis and Clark the white shaggy hides and black spike-horns of these bearded steeplejacks. Because they weren’t hunted for meat or trophy, they number about the same today, about 15,000 in the land of glaciers and eternal snow.

___7. After months in the seemingly endless grasslands, the expedition reached the mountains and the forests of huge ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, an important natural resource to the nation still today.

Follow the footsteps of famous explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. President Thomas Jefferson sent a group led by Louis and Clark to explore and map the newly acquired western territories of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Known to Native Americans for centuries, Lewis and Clark recorded plants and animals not familiar to Americans of the time. Can you identify these plants, animals, and people first made famous by the Corps of Discovery?

___8. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark camped at St. Louis at the mouth of the “Big Muddy” Missouri River and began assembling the Corps of Discovery. They began on May 21, 1804, what would be a 28-month, 8,000-mile journey to the Pacific coast and back, bringing samples and records which would be of great interest to scientists.

___9. Lewis and Clark did not discover the American bison, but neither had seen one before. On the Great Plains they saw buffalo herds of some 20,000. They encountered their first grizzly bear near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. In the Rocky Mountains, they saw mountain lions, bighorn sheep, and the majestic bald eagles.

___10. Of all the creatures in the West the one that did more than any other to hasten exploration and open up the silent places was the small gnawer with the big teeth. A peculiar property of his fur gave him great commercial value and caused his near extermination.

RESOURCES: *The Book of The American West*, Jay Monaghan, Ed., Julian Messner, Inc., New York. Ron Fisher, “Lewis and Clark, Naturalist-Explorers” *National Geographic* October 1998. *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps* 24th Ed.

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