



# Lewis & Clark

## in Columbia River Country

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

#### Along the Rapids

##### Introduction

Have you ever played "telephone," where you pass some specific message from one person to the next and then compare notes from beginning to end? Think about all the challenges faced by the Corps due to language barriers and cultural differences. How well do you think the people in these scenarios understood each other?

Read excerpts in the links below from Lewis and Clark's journals to learn of some of these communication challenges and how they were overcome.

##### Arrival at Celilo Falls

The Lewis and Clark party spent the least amount of time in the region between the Cascade Range, two weeks on the downstream trip and two weeks on the return trip in the spring. Heading down the river in the fall of 1805, Lewis and Clark arrived at Celilo Falls on October 22nd. They portaged when it was necessary and paddled through the rapids and cascades as they were able. The fast-moving water deposited them at the mouth of Sandy River on November 3rd.

On their return trip, they proceeded on from Sandy River on April 6th and arrived back at Celilo Falls on April 21st, where they stayed for just a day.

##### Language and Respect for Elders

On April 3rd, 1806, amongst Upper Chinook people near present-day Portland, Oregon, William Clark wrote:

*Those people speak a different language from those below tho' in their dress and habits and manners &c. they differ but little from the Quathlahpohtles. Those people have Some words the Same with those below but the air of their language is entirely different...they pay great attention to their aged Severall men and women whom I observed in this village had arived at a great age, and appeared to be helthy tho' blind.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.7, 65-6)

##### War Parties of the We-ock-sock and Wil-la-cum

On April 14th, 1806, in a village on White Salmon River, Meriwether Lewis wrote of the travels of these Upper Chinook people and their war parties:

*...their language is the same with that of the Chilluckittequaws. these people appeared very friendly, some of them informed us that they had lately returned from a war excursion against the snake indians who inhabit the upper part of the Multnomah river to the S. E. of them. they call them To-wannah'-hi'-ooks. that they had been fortunate in their expedition and had taken from their enemies most of the horses which we saw in their possession.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 118-9)

### **Dress and Appearance near Sandy River**

On April 3rd, 1806, amongst Upper Chinook people near present-day Portland, Oregon, William Clark wrote:

*Those people speak a different language from those below tho' in their dress and habits and manners &c. they differ but little from the Quathlahpohples. Their women ware the truss as those do of all the nations risideing from the quathlahpohple to the enterance of Lewis's river and on the Columbia above for Some distance... their men are Stouter and much better made, and their womin ware larger & longer robes than those do below; those are most commonly made of Deer skins dressed with the hair on them.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.7, 65-6)

### **Tenino Appearance and Customs**

On November 1st, 1805, at the "Great Chute" of the cascades, between Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood, William Clark wrote of the people there, whom he calls the E-nee-Shur:

*I Can't lern whether those Indians trade with white people or Inds. below for the Beeds & copper, which they are So fond of-- Those Beeds they trafick with Indians Still higher up this river for Skins robes... The Indians on those waters do not appear to be Sickly, Sore eyes are Common*

*and maney have lost their eyes, Some one and, maney both, they have bad teeth, and the greater perpotion of them have worn their teeth down, maney into the gums, They are rather Small high Cheeks, women Small and homely, maney of them had Sweled legs, large about the knees,--owing to the position in which they Set on their hams, They are nearly necked only a piece of leather tied about their breech and a Small robe which generally comes to a little below their wastes and Scercely Sufficely large to cover arround them when confined-- they are all fond of Clothes but more So of Beeds perticularly blue & wquite beeds. They are dirty in the extreme both in their Coochery and in their houses... Their nose are all Pierced, and the wear a white Shell maney of which are 2 Inch long pushed thro the nose-- all the women have flat heads pressed to almost a point at top The press the female childrens heads between 2 bords when young - untill they form the Skul as they wish it which is generally verry flat. This amongst those people is considered a great mark of buty - and is practised in all the tribes we have passed on this river more or less...*

(Clark, from Mouton V.5, 367-8)

Clark also wrote of the people above the "Great Chute," whom he lists as Chim-na-pum. This is a name for a band of Yakama, who have no history of head-flattening. This is one of the many examples of the difference between what was recorded by the Lewis and Clark party and tribal histories.

*Their nose are all Pierced, and the wear a white Shell maney of which are 2 Inch long pushed thro the nose - all the women (are) have flat heads pressed to almost a point at top The press the female childrens heads between 2 bords when young - untill they form the Skul as they wish it which is generally verry flat. This amongst those people is considered as a great mark of buty - and is practiced in all the tribes we have passed on this river more or less. Men*

*take more of the drudgery off the women than is common with Indians...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 369)

### **Women and Men of the Wahclellahs, Clahclellahs and Yehhuhs**

On April 11th, 1806, the party remained for several days in the area of the cascades between Mts. Hood and Adams. Meriwether Lewis described the appearance of the inhabitants of the various villages of the Watlala Nation:

*...their women as well as those of the 3 villages next below us pierce the cartilage of the nose and insert various ornaments, they very seldom imprint any figures on their skins; a few I observed had one or two longitudinal lines of dots on the front of the leg, reaching from the ankle upwards about midleg. most of their women braid their hair in two tresses as before mentioned. the men usually cew their hair in two parsels which like the braded tresses of the female hang over each ear in front of the sholder, and gives an additional width to the head and face so much admired by them. these cews are usually formed with throngs of dressed Otterskin crossing each other and not roled in our manner arrond the hair. in all other respects I observe no difference in their dress habits manners &c. from those in the Neighbourhood of the diamond Island.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 107)

### **Dress and Appearance of the We-ock-sock and Wil-la-cum**

On April 14th, 1806, in a village of Upper Chinookan-speakers, just above White Salmon River, Meriwether Lewis wrote:

*These people call themselves We-ock-sock, Wil-la-cum. They differ but little in appeance dress &c. from those of the rapids. Their men have*

*some leging and mockersons among them. these are in the stile of Chopunnish.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 118-19)

### **Wishram-Wasco Dress**

On April 15th, 1806, in the vicinity of The Dalles, Meriwether Lewis compared the dress of inhabitants with those of the villages downriver:

*...these people are much better clad than any of the nations below; their men have generally legging mockersons and large robes, many of them wear shirts of the same form those of the Chopunnish and Shoshonees highly ornamented with quills of the porcupine as are also their mockersons and leggings. They conceal the parts of generation girdle and hanging loosely in front of them like a narrow apron. The dress of their women differs very little from those about the rapids. Both men and women cut their hair in the forehead which comes down as low as the eyebrows, they have long earlocks cut square at the end. The other part of their hair is dressed in the same manner as those of the rapids.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 123-4)

### **Dried Salmon at Celilo Falls**

On October 22nd, 1805, at Celilo Falls, William Clark wrote about the great quantities of dried salmon observed there:

*...the waters is divided into Several narrow chanelis which pass through a hard black rock forming Islands of rocks at this Stage of the water, on those Islands of rocks as well as at and about their Lodges I observe great numbers of Stacks of pounded Salmon (butifully) needy preserved in the following manner, i e after Suffiently Dried it is pounded between two Stones fine, and put into a speces of basket neatly made of grass and rushes of better than two feet long and one foot Diamiter, which basket is lined with the Skin of Salmon Stretched*

*and dried for the purpose, in this it is pressed down as hard as is possible, when full they Secure the open part with the fish Skins across which they fasten tho' the loops of the basket that part very Securely, and then on a Dry Situation they Set those baskets the Corded part up, their common Custom is to Set 7 as close as they can Stand and 5 on the top of them, and secure them with mats which is rapped around them and made fast with cords and Covered also with mats, those 12 baskets of from 90 to 100 w. each (basket) form a Stack. thus preserved those fish may be kept Sound and Sweet Several years, as those people inform me, Great quantities as they inform us are Sold to the whites people who visit the mouth of this river as well as to the natives below.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.7, 323-5)

### **Portable Apartment Houses in the Shadow of Mt. Hood**

On April 11th, 1806, Meriwether Lewis wrote about the villages of the Wahcllellahs, Clahcllellahs and Yehhuhs. These people of the Watlala Nation lived along the rapids and falls between the great mountains:

*The inhabitants of the Y-eh-huh Village on the North side immediately above the rapids have lately removed to the opposite side of the river, where it appears they usually take their salmon. like their relations the Wah-Clel-lars they have taken their houses with them. I observe that all the houses lately established have their floors on the surface of the ear[th], are smaller and of more temperary structure than those which are sunk in the ground. I presume the former are their spring and Summer dwellings and the latter those of the fall and winter, these houses are most generally built with boards and covered with bark. some of an inferior ore more temperary cast are built entirely of cedar bark, which is kept smooth and extended by inserting small splinters of wood through the bark*

*crosswise at the distance of 12 or 14 inches assunder. several families inhabit the same apartment.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 106-7)

### **Large Houses along the Rapids and Falls**

On October 30th, 1805, while in the area below the Cascades in present Skamania County, Clark described the large houses of this area:

*...this village contained verry large houses built in a different form from any I had Seen, and latterly abandoned, and the most of the boards put into a pond of water near the village, as I conceived to drown the flees, which was emencely noumerous about the houses...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 356)

On November 1st, 1805 the Corps traveled through present Skamania County, camping near what are now Fort Rains and North Bonneville. Clark commented on the houses he found there:

*I visited the Indian (Lodge) Village found that the Contruction of the houses Similar to those abov described, with this difference only that they are larger Say from 35 to 50 feet by 30 feet, raised about 5 feet above the earth, and nearly as much below The Dores in the Same form and Size cut in the wide post which Supports one end of the ridge pole and which is carved and painted with different figures & Hieroglyphics...*

*Their beads are raised about 4 ½ feet, under which they Store away their dried fish, between the part on which they lie and the back wall they Store away their roots burries nuts and valuable articles on mats. Which are Spread also around the fire place which is Sunk about one foot lower than the bottom flore of the house, this fire place is about 8 feet long and Six feet wide Secured with a fraim those houses are calculated for 4, 5, & 6 families, each family*

*having a nice painted ladder to ascend up to their beads. I Saw in those houses Several wooden Images all cut in imitation of men, but differently fashioned and place in the most conspicuous parts of the houses, probably as an ornament...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 371)

### **Subterranean Houses along White Salmon River**

On April 14th, 1806, near the mouth of White Salmon River, Meriwether Lewis observed deserted underground houses:

*These people call themselves We-ock-sock, Wil-la-cum... here I observed several habitations entirely under ground; they were sunk about 8 feet deep and covered with strong timber and several feet of earth in a conic form. these habitations were evacuated at present. they are about 16 feet in diameter, nearly circular, and are entered through a hole at the top which appears to answer the double purpose of a chimney and a door. from this entrance you descend to the floor by a ladder. the present habitations of these people were on the surface of the ground and do not differ from those of the tribes of the rapids...*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7 118-9)

### **Canoes at Celilo**

On October 23rd, 1805, at Celilo Falls, Clark wrote about the canoes of the Chinook people there:

*...these Canoes are neeter made than any I have ever Seen and Caluclated to ride the waves, and carry emence burthens, they are dug thin and are supported by cross pieces of about 1 inch diameter tied with Strong bark thro' holes in the Sides.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 328)

### **Houses of the Echelutes**

In present Klickitat County Washington, near what is now Horsethief Lake State Park, Lewis and Clark camped on October 24th, 1805. Here they met the Wishram-Wasco Chinookans (whom Lewis and Clark called Echelutes). Clark made note of these two intriguing house designs:

*...the houses of those Indians are 20 feet Square and Sunk 8 feet under ground & Covered with bark with a Small door round at top rose about 18 Inches above ground, to keep out the Snow I saw 107 parcels of fish Stacked, and great quantities in the houses...*

*...The natives of this village reived me verry kindly, one of whome envited me into his house, which I found to be large and commodious, and the first wooden houses in which Indians have lived Since we left those in the vicinity of the Illinois, they are scattered permiscuisly on a elevated Situation near a mound of about 30 feet above the Common leavel, which mound has Some remains of houses and has every appearance of being artificial-- those houses are about the Same Shape Size and form 20 feet (Square) wide and 30 feet long with one Dore raised 18 Inches above ground, (which) they are 29 ½ inches high & wide, forming in a half Circle above those houses were Sunk into the earth Six feet, the roofs of them was Supported by a ridge pole resting on three Strong pieces of Split timber thro' one of which the dore was cut (on which) that and the walls (which the top of which was just above ground Suported certain number of Spars which are Covered with the Bark of the white Ceadar, or Arber Viteai; and the whole attached and Secured by the fibers of the Cedar. The eaves at or near the earth, the gable ends and Side walls are Secured with Split boards which is Seported on iner Side with Strong pieces of timber under the eves... to keep those pieces erect & the earth from without pressing in the boards, Suported by Strong posts*

*at the Corners to which those poles were attached to give additional Strength, Small openings were left (in the roof) above the ground, for the purpose, as I conjectured, of discharging Their arrows at a besieging enemy; Light is admitted Thro an opening at top which also Serves for the Smoke to pass through. One half of those houses is appropriated for the Storeing away Dried & pounded fish which is the principal food The other part next the dore is the part occupied by the natives who have beds raised on either Side, with a fire place in the center of this Space each house appeared to be occupied by about three families; that part which is appropriated for fish was crouded with that article, and a few baskets of burries...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 329, 333-5)

### **Horses of the We-ock-sock and Wil-la-cum**

On April 14th, 1806, in a village on White Salmon River, Meriwether Lewis wrote of the first horses they observed on their upriver journey:

*These people call themselves We-ock-sock, Wil-la-cum...they have some good horses of which we saw ten or a douzen. these are the fist horses we have met with since we left this neighbourhood last fall, in short the country below this place will not permit the uce of this valuable animal except in the Columbian vally and there the present inhabitants have no uce for them as they reside immediatly on the river and the country is too thickly timbered to admit them to run the game with horses if they had them. we halted at this village and dined, purchased five dogs, some roots, shappalell, filberds and dried burries of the inhabitants...*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 118)

Article written/adapted by?

(note: I'm not sure who wrote these but we probably need a source?)