



# Lewis & Clark

## in Columbia River Country

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

#### Learning about People of the Mid-Columbia Villages

##### 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.

##### Traveling in Spring

The spring trip back up the Columbia was a vastly different experience for Lewis and Clark than their fall trip down the river. The party knew the lay of the land, they had learned some of the trade language, and they had gathered information about the various peoples along the river. To learn as much as possible about the various tribes, the expedition took time to document details they had missed before.

Clark took care to fill in his map, transforming what had been a blank on previous European and American maps with the details of people and rivers and geography. Of course, to Native American eyes, every stream and every hill were already known.

##### Wapato Island and Inlet and its People

On March 29th, 1806, Captain Meriwether Lewis wrote:

*...after breakfast we proceeded on and at the distance of 14 miles from our encampment of the last evening we passed a large inlet 300 yds in width. this inlet or arm of the river extends itself to the South 10 or 12 M. to the hills on that side of the river and receives the waters of a small creek which heads with killamucks river, and that of a bayau which passes out of the Columbia about 20 miles above, the large Island thus formed we call wappetoe island. On this inlet and Island the following nations reside, Clan-nah-min-namun, Clacks-star, Cath-lah-cum-up, Clah-in-na-ta, Cath-lah-nah-qui-ah, and Cath-lah-cam-mah-tup. The two first reside on the inlet and the others on the bayau and island. — observed a speceies of small wild onion growing among the moss on the rocks...*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 26)

## The Mult-no-mâh and its People

On April 2nd, 1806, Captain Meriwether Lewis wrote:

*...about this time several canoes of the natives arrived at our camp and among others one from below which had on board eight men of the Shah-ha-la nation these men informed us that 2 young men whom they pointed out were Cash-hooks and resided at the falls of a large river which discharges itself into the Columbia on it's South side some miles below us. we readily prevailed on them to give us a sketch of this river which they drew on a mat with a coal. it appeared that this river which they called Mult-no-mâh discharged itself behind the Island which we called the image canoe island and as we had left this island to the S. both in ascending and decending the river we had never seen it. they informed us that it was a large river and run a considerable distance to the South between the mountains. Capt. Clark determined to return and examine this river accordingly he took a party of seven men and one of the perogues and set out 1/2 after 11 A. M., he hired one of the Cashhooks, for a birning glass, to pilot him to the entrance of the Multnomah river and took him on board with him.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 54)

Lewis continued:

*Capt C. now prevailed on this old man to give him a sketch of the Multnomah river it's branches and the position and names of the Indian nations residing thereon this the old man son executed with his finger in the dust. he informed that the Cush-hooks and Char-cow-ah nations who reside at the falls of that river were not numerous; but that the Cal-lâh-po-e-wah nation who inhabited both sides of this river above the falls as far as it was known to himself or his nation were very numerous. that the country they inhabited was level and wholly destitute of timber. that a high range of*

*mountains passed the Multnomah river at the falls, on the upperside of which the country was one vast plain, the nations who inhabit this country reside on the rivers and subsist like those of the Columbia on fish and roots principally.*

(Lewis, from Moulton V.7, 86)

Here is Clark's telling of this story in his journal on April 3rd:

*I prevailed on an old man to draw me a Sketch of the Multnomar River and give me the names of the nations resideing on it which he readily done, and gave me the names of 4 nations who reside on this river two of them very noumerous. The first is Clark a-mus nation reside on a Small river which takes its rise in Mount Jefferson and falls into the Moltnomar about 40 miles up. this nation is numerous and inhabit 11 Towns. the 2d is the Gush-hooks who reside on the N E. Side below the falls, the 3rd is the Ghar-cowah who reside above the Falls on the S W. Side neether of those two are noumerous. The fourth Nation is the Gal-lar-po-e-wah which is very noumerous & inhabit the Country on each Side of the Multnomar from its falls as far up as the knowledge of those people extend. they inform me also that a high mountain passes the Multnomar at the falls, and above the Country is an open plain of great extent.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.7, 66)

## Conveying Good Will

On October 18th, 1805, Captain William Clark wrote:

*Several canoes of Indians Came down and joined those with us, we had a council with those in which we informed of our friendly intentions towards them and all other of our red children; of our wish to make a piece between all of our red Children in this quarter &c. &c. this was conveyed by Signs thro: our 2 Chiefs who accompanied us, and was understood, we made*

*a 2d Chief and gave Strings of wompom to them all in remembrance of what we Said — four men in a Canoe came up from a large encampment on an Island in the River about 8 miles below, they delayed but a few minits and returned, without Speaking a word to us...The Great Chief of the Chim-â pum nation (gave) drew me a Sketch of the Columbia above and the tribes of his nation, living on the bank, and its waters, and the Tâpe tett river which falls in 18 miles above on the westerly side...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 296)

### **An Encouraging Message**

On November 14th, 1805, Captain William Clark wrote:

*rained all the last night without intermition, and this morning, wind blows verry hard but our Situation is Such that we Cannot tell from what point it comes— one of our Canoes is much broken by the waves dashing it against the rocks— 5 Indians Came up in a Canoe, thro' the waves, which is verry high and role with great fury— They made Signs to us that they Saw the 3 men we Sent down yesterday.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.6, 46)

### **Danger Signs**

On January 7th, 1806, Captain William Clark wrote:

*after walking for 2½ miles on the Stones my guide made a Sudin halt, pointed to the top of the mountain and uttered the word Pe Shack which means bad, and made Signs that we could not proceed any further on the rocks, but must pass over that mountain, I hesitated a moment & view this emence mountain the top of which was obscured in the clouds, and the assent appeard. to be almost perpindecular; as the Small Indian parth along which they had brought emence loads but a flew hours before,*

*led up this mountain and appeared to assend in a Sideling direction, I thought more than probable that the assent might be torerably easy and therefore proceeded on, I soon found that the [blank] become much worst as I assended, and at one place we were obliged to Support and draw our Selves up by the bushes & roots for near 100 feet, and after about 2 hours labour and fatigue we reached the top of this high mountain, from the top of which I looked down with estonishment to behold the hight which we had assended, which appeared to be 10 or 12 hundred feet up a mountain which appeared to be almost perpendicular...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.6, 177-8)

### **Salmon Signs—A Cultural Lesson**

On October 17th, 1805, Captain William Clark wrote:

*I took two men in a Small Canoe and assended the Columbia river 10 miles to an Island near the Stard. Shore on which two large Mat Lodges of Indians were drying Salmon, (as they informed me by Signs for the purpose of food and fuel, & I do not think at all improbable that those people make use of Dried fish as fuel,) The number of dead Salmon on the Shores & floating in the river is incredible to Say and at this Season they have only to collect the fish Split them open and dry them on their Scaffolds on which they have great numbers, how far they have to raft their timber they make their Scaffolds of I could not lern; but there is no timber of any Sort except Small willow bushes in Sight in any direction...*

(Clark, from Moulton V.5, 287)

### **Ghost Town**

On April 3rd, 1806, Captain William Clark wrote:

*...back of this house I observe the wreck of 5 houses remaining of a very large Village, the*

*houses of which had been built in the form of those we first saw at the long narrows of the E-lute Nation with whom those people are connected. I endeavored to obtain from those people of the Situation of their nation, if scattered or what had become of the natives who must have peopled this great town. An old man who appeared of some note among them and my father to my guide brought forward a woman who was badly marked with the Small Pox and made signs that they all died with the disorder which marked her face, and which she was very near dying with when a girl. From the age of this woman this destructive disorder I judge must have been about 28 or 30 years past, and about the time the Clatsops inform us that this disorder raged in their towns and destroyed their nation.*

(Clark, from Moulton V.7, 65)

Article written/adapted by?

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