

Meet Lewis and Clark

What do you know about the men who led the Corps of Discovery? Read the following profiles, then answer the questions below.

Meriwether Lewis

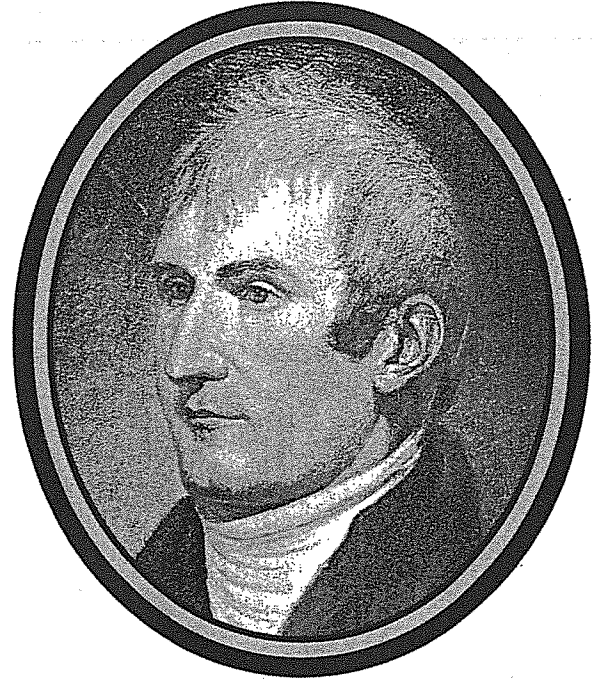
Acquaintances called Meriwether Lewis "awkward" and "stiff without grace." He had an explosive temper and a drinking problem. Yet President Thomas Jefferson still chose him to lead one of the most important expeditions in U.S. history.

Lewis was born on August 18, 1774, in Albemarle County, Virginia. He was the son of a lieutenant in the Continental Army. Like his father, Lewis served in the military. As a Captain in the U.S. Army, Lewis learned to lead men and live in the wilderness. He also became lifelong friends with one of his commanding officers, William Clark, who would go on to help lead the Corps of Discovery.

In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson made Lewis his personal secretary. Jefferson and Lewis were family friends and shared a passion for discovery. After work, they secretly discussed plans for an exploration of the West.

Jefferson believed that Lewis had the knowledge and the enthusiasm to lead a team into the unknown. Lewis was well educated, and became the expedition's scientific specialist. He also had a knack for business, and he masterminded many of the Corps' trades with the Indians.

Lewis experienced many ups and downs after the expedition. In 1807, he was appointed



Governor of the Louisiana Territory. But he did not like the job, and other government officials often criticized his decisions. Lewis's personal life was also rocky: He proposed marriage to several different women, but was rejected by all of them.

Lewis was overwhelmed by depression and alcoholism. On October 11, 1809, he died, probably by committing suicide. Despite his tragic end, he is remembered as a brave leader and a daring explorer.

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Questions

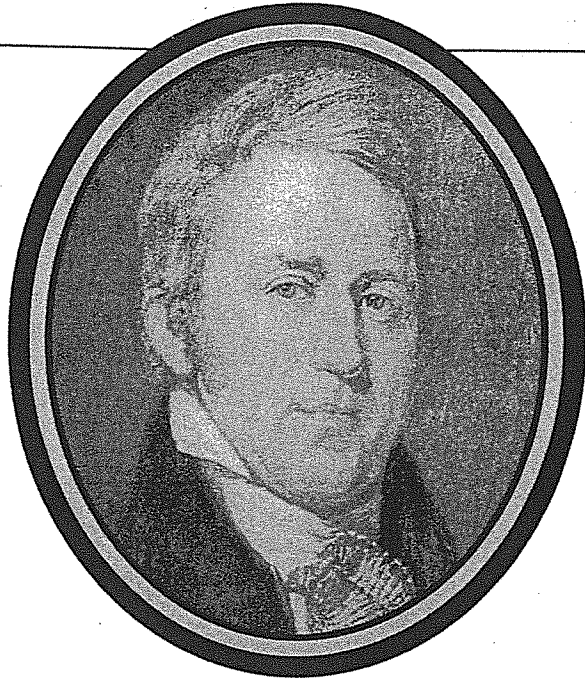
1. Who was born first: Meriwether Lewis or William Clark? _____
2. Which explorer's father was a lieutenant in the Continental Army? _____
3. Lewis was a family friend of which U.S. President? _____
4. Which explorer lacked a formal education? _____
5. What kinds of jobs did Clark have in the U.S. Army? _____

William Clark

William Clark was an experienced frontiersman long before he started on the Voyage of Discovery. He was born on August 1, 1770, in Virginia, and grew up in the wilderness of Kentucky. Clark's home was miles from the nearest school, and he had no formal education. But his rugged upbringing made him an ideal man to help lead the Corps of Discovery.

Clark was the sixth son in a family of 10 children. All five of Clark's older brothers fought in the Revolutionary War, and they encouraged him to become a soldier. At age 19, Clark joined the Army as an engineer, building forts and dams. Three years later, he rose to the rank of Captain. Clark also worked as a spy inside Spain's North American territories.

When it came time to choose men for the Corps of Discovery, Lewis immediately invited Clark to serve as co-leader of the expedition. Although Clark lacked Lewis's formal education, his skills as an outdoorsman helped guide the voyage through many rough patches. Clark possessed a calm attitude that Lewis lacked, and he had boating skills necessary to navigate the many rivers



the Corps would encounter on the trip.

Clark also developed a strong bond with many Indian tribes that lasted beyond the expedition. For years, these Indians thought that Clark—whom they nicknamed “the Red-Headed Chief”—was the only white man they could trust.

Unlike Lewis, Clark flourished after the voyage. In 1807, he was appointed Brigadier General of the Louisiana Territory's militia. He also served three terms as Governor of the Missouri Territory. He married and had five children. Clark also became the legal guardian of several Indian children, including Sacagawea's, whom he adopted after her death in 1812. Clark died in 1838.

6. Which explorer served as the voyage's scientific specialist? _____
7. After the journey, Lewis became Governor of which U.S. territory? _____
8. What nickname did Indian tribes give to William Clark? _____
9. Which man adopted Sacagawea's children after she died? _____
10. How did Meriwether Lewis die in October 1809? _____