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Diplomacy of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

I. President Jefferson instructed Meriwether Lewis to lead an expedition in 1803 to lands West of Mississippi River

II. Lewis chose William Clark to co-command the expedition

III. Lewis and Clark “Corps of Discovery was supposed to:

- A.** Explore possibilities for agriculture and trade
- B.** Explore trade routes
- C.** Learn about trading in the area (primarily fur)
- D.** Learn about the Indians in the area (potentially hostile)
- E.** Find and all water route via the Missouri River all the way to Pacific Ocean
- F.** Promote peace among Indian tribes
- G.** Promote peace between traders and tribes

IV. President Jefferson ordered Lewis to:

- A.** Treat the Indians with dignity and respect
- B.** Invite the Indian Chiefs back to Washington, DC for a visit

V. Lewis and Clark gathered:

A. A team of men (most were military with impressive uniforms) to:

- Row the boats
- Serve as interpreters
- Protect and ensure success of expedition

B. Weapons

- Cannon (loud & commonly seen)
- Blunderbuss (loud & commonly seen)
- Pistols (loud & commonly seen)
- Air Rifle (quiet & not commonly seen)
 - Built by Isaiah Lukens (watchmaker / gunsmith)
 - 900+ psi
 - .31 cal.
 - 14 times shocking power of modern air rifle
 - 20-40 shots before having to pump again
 - Special pump attached to tree
 - Indians considered it “great medicine”

C. Food

- Portable soup

D. Equipment

- Keel boat

E. Gifts

Coins (89)

- Large Jefferson Medals (3)
- Medium Jefferson Medals (13)
- Small Jefferson Medals (16)
- Seal Medals (55)
- Other Medals (2-4)

Flags

- “Indian Trade Flags” maybe with eagle in the canton
- “15/15 Flag” with 15 stars and 15 bars

Jewsharpes

Beads

Used as currency

Blue beads were most valued

VI. Things done for diplomacy

- A. Shoot air rifle
- B. Trade gifts
- C. Sing songs
- D. Parade in military uniforms
- E. Eating and smoking peace pipe together
- F. Showed magnifying glass, compass, sextant
- G. Practiced limited medical skills
- H. Offered to take Chiefs back to Washington
- I. Promised future trading

VII. Success with some tribes

- A. Oto
- B. Missouri
- C. Yankton Sioux
- D. Arikara
- E. Mandan
 - Expedition spent winter with this tribe
- F. Hidatsa
- G. Shoshones
 - Sacajawea's brother was chief Cameahwait
- H. Nez Perce
 - Tribe nurtured the expedition after harsh crossing of the Rocky Mountains

VII. Limited Success

- A. Teton Sioux
 - Stole horse
 - Demanded gifts
 - Were not friendly to Expedition
- B. Hidatsas
 - Gave medals to enemy tribes because they were thought to be cursed
- C. Blackfeet
 - Tried to steal horses and guns
 - Peace medal left around neck of dead Indian

VIII. Missteps

- A. Air gun went off and hit a woman
- B. Gifts of improper grandeur given to lesser chiefs

IX. Why be diplomatic?

- A. To keep from getting killed
- B. To procure information, food and supplies
- C. To promote the peaceful U.S. as best trading partner