

Document A: Jefferson's Letter to Meriwether Lewis (Modified)

The passage below is from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis on June 20, 1803.

Considering the interest which every nation has in extending and strengthening the authority of reason and justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knowledge you can of the state of morality, religion, and information among them; as it may better enable those who may **endeavor** to civilize and instruct them. . . .

In all your interactions with the natives, treat them in the most friendly and **conciliatory** manner. . . . Assure them that the purpose of your journey is innocent. Make them acquainted with . . . our wish to be neighborly, friendly, and useful to them, and to trade with them. Find out what articles would be most desirable for both of us to trade.

If a few of their influential chiefs . . . wish to visit us, arrange such a visit for them. . . . If any of them wish to have some of their young people raised by us and taught things that may be useful to them, we will receive, instruct and take care of them. Such a mission, whether of influential chiefs or of young people, would give some security to your own party.

Carry with you some smallpox medicine . . . and instruct and encourage them to use it. This may be done wherever you spend the winter.

Source: *Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, June 20, 1803.*

Vocabulary

endeavor: to try hard to do something
conciliatory: trying to avoid conflict

Document B: Diary Entry of Meriwether Lewis (Modified)

This morning at daylight the Indians got up and crowded around the fire. J. Fields, who was on post, had carelessly laid his gun down behind him. . . . One of the Indians, the fellow to whom I had given the medal last evening, slipped behind J. Fields and took his gun and his brother's gun. At the same instant, two other Indians advanced and seized the guns of Drewyer and myself. J. Fields seeing this turned about to look for his gun and saw the fellow just running off with it and his brother's. He called to his brother, who instantly jumped up and pursued the Indian with him. They overtook him. . . . R. Fields, as he seized his gun, stabbed the Indian to the heart with his knife. The fellow ran about 15 steps and fell dead.

Drewyer, who was awake, saw the Indian take hold of his gun and instantly jumped up and seized it. . . . His jumping up and crying "Damn you, let go of my gun" awakened me. . . . I saw Drewyer in a scuffle with the Indian for his gun. . . . Drewyer asked me if he might not kill the fellow, which I also forbid as the Indian did not appear to wish to kill us. As soon as they found us all in possession of our arms, the Indians ran. . . .

We left one of our horses and took four of the best of those of the Indians. While the men were preparing the horses, I put four shields and two bows and **quivers** of arrows which had been left [by the Indians] on the fire. . . . I also retook the flag but left the medal about the neck of the dead man that they might be informed who we were.

Source: *Diary of Meriwether Lewis, July 27, 1806.*

Vocabulary

quiver: a case for holding arrows

Document C: *Time Magazine* Article (Modified)

For more than a century, the history of Lewis and Clark's encounters with the 58 tribes along the trail has been defined by the white men's journals. . .

Today Indians are looking to their own oral histories, as well as reading between the lines of the journals, to re-interpret what happened.

Says Ben Sherman, president of the Western American Indian Chamber in Denver: "The upcoming events [for the Lewis and Clark Expedition bicentennial] portray Clark as the **benevolent** protector of Indians — that's **propagandist** baloney." The tragic aftermath: as Governor of the Missouri Territory and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Clark presided over President Thomas Jefferson's land-grab policy, which some historians characterize as a direct cause of "**cultural genocide**" and "**ethnic cleansing**."

In his journal, Lewis called the Blackfeet "a vicious, lawless and rather an abandoned set of wretches." . . .

Whites brought diseases that killed as many as 90% of some tribes' members. Most of the tribes Lewis and Clark encountered were forced off the rivers that sustained their commerce and culture and herded onto reservations with poor soil.

Source: Margot Roosevelt, "Tribal Culture Clash," *Time Magazine*, July 8, 2002.

Vocabulary

benevolent: well-meaning

propagandist: promoting misleading information for a political cause

cultural genocide: the deliberate destruction of a group of people's way of life

ethnic cleansing: the killing of members of a specific ethnic group

Document D: Diary Entries of William Clark (Modified)

Many people have heard the name of Sacagawea, the Native American woman who with her husband Shabono and newborn baby accompanied Lewis and Clark on their journey and served as an interpreter. Below are Clark's diary entries about Sacagawea and Shabono.

May 11, 1806

We were crowded in the lodge with Indians who in great numbers were around us. The one-eyed chief Yoom-park-kar-tim arrived, and we gave him a medal of the small size and spoke to the Indians through a Shoshone boy Shabono and his wife. We informed them who we were, where we came from, and our intentions towards them, which pleased them very much.

August 17, 1806

We . . . took our leave of Shabono, his Shoshone wife and their . . . child, who had accompanied us on our route to the Pacific Ocean in the capacity of interpreter. . . . We offered to **convey** him down to the Illinois if he chose to go. He declined **proceeding** . . . observing that he had no acquaintance or prospects of making a living below, and must continue to live in the way that he had done. I offered to take his little son, a beautiful promising child, who is 19 months old, to which they both, himself and wife, were willing, provided his the child had been **weaned**. They observed that in one year the boy would be sufficiently old to leave his mother and he would then take him to me if I would be so friendly as to raise the child for him in such a manner as I thought proper, to which I agreed etc.

Source: *Diary of William Clark, 1806.*

Vocabulary

convey: take to a place

proceeding: moving forward

weaned: made used to eating solid food

Document E: Meriwether Lewis's Speech to the Otoe

Captain Meriwether Lewis gave the following speech to a band of Otoe during the council of Camp Calumet Bluff on August 4, 1804.

Children . . . we have come to inform you, as we go also to inform all the nations of red men who inhabit the borders of the Missouri, that a great council was held between this great chief of the Seventeen great nations of America [the United States], and your old fathers the French and Spaniards; and that in this great council it was agreed that all the white men of Louisiana . . . should obey the commands of this great chief. . . .

Children . . . you are to live in peace with all the white men, for they are [the great chief's] children; neither wage war against the red men your neighbors, for they are equally his children and he is bound to protect them. . . .

Children. Do these things which your great father advises and be happy . . . lest by one false step you should bring upon your nation the displeasure of your great father, the great chief of the seventeen great nations of America, who could consume you as the fire consumes the grass of the plains . . . The mouths of all the rivers through which the traders bring goods to you are in his possession, and if you displease him he could at pleasure shut them up and prevent his traders from coming among you; but it is not the wish of your great father to injure you. On the contrary, he is now pursuing the measures best calculated to insure your happiness. . . .

Children. We hope that the Great Spirit will open your ears to our councils, and dispose your minds to their observance. Follow these councils and you will have nothing to fear, because the Great Spirit will smile upon your nation, and in future ages will make you outnumber the trees of the forest.

Source: *Lewis and Clark to the Otoe Indians, August 4, 1804.*

Guiding Questions

Name _____

Document A

PER, _____

1. According to Thomas Jefferson, how were Lewis and Clark supposed to treat the Native Americans they met?

Document B

2. According to the diary entry, why did one of Lewis and Clark's men kill a Native American?
3. Why do you think Lewis left the medal around the dead Native American's neck?

Document C

4. According to this article, why has the history of Lewis and Clark been one-sided?
5. According to this article, what were some of the long-term outcomes of Lewis and Clark's journey on Native Americans?

Document D

6. Based on these two passages, how would you describe the relationship between Sacagawea's family and Lewis and Clark?

Document E

7. What term did Lewis use to address the Otoe? What does that suggest about how he viewed them?

8. In the speech, Lewis referred to a "great father" and "great chief." Who was this? Why do you think Lewis used these terms?

9. What did Lewis say would happen if the Otoe disobeyed the "great father"?

Why do you think Lewis said this?