



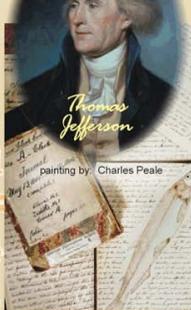
## The Missouri River and The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commemoration

The watershed for the Missouri River provides drainage for approximately one-sixth of the United States. From the headwaters in Montana to the mouth in Missouri, the "Big Muddy" flows through seven states. Its importance to the American economy and its history is unparalleled.

For over 200 years, the United States Army has had very close ties to the Missouri River. After all, Lewis, Clark and most of the other explorers on the "Corps of Discovery" were members of the US Army. Over the years, the Army has removed snags, protected banks, constructed a navigation channel, built flood control levees, established fisheries, preserved cultural resources, enhanced recreation, built dams, and developed wildlife habitats. The Army's relationship to the Missouri continues through today as the Corps of Engineers is the primary steward of the water and land along the most famous waterway in America.

Beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2006, the Corps of Engineers will be participating with the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council, Native American Tribes and other Federal, State, and local governments in the Bicentennial Commemoration of the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Corps of Engineers wants you to enjoy the commemoration and has assembled the following maps to assist in your travels throughout the Lower Missouri River. Whether traveling by car along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, by bike along the beautiful Katy Trail State Park, or by boat on the Missouri River, the Corps of Engineers hopes that you experience some of the same feeling of discovery that Lewis and Clark did 200 years ago.

Courtesy of the Independence National Historical Park

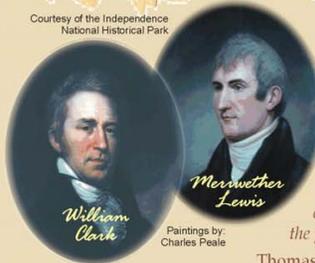


### About the Expedition

The origin of this greatest of American adventures was a product of the visionary intellect of President Thomas Jefferson. By the time Jefferson negotiated the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France, he had already arranged to send a contingent out to explore this new land. Jefferson gave command of the Expedition to the United States Army.

Lewis & Clark Collage  
Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society

Courtesy of the Independence National Historical Park



Paintings by Charles Peale

Thomas Jefferson

With these instructions, Captain Meriwether Lewis began what was destined to be the most significant exploration of the American West. Lewis' journey began in the summer of 1803 when he left Washington D.C. after completing months of preparation and specialized training in medicine, botany, and navigation. His first stop was Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to obtain the custom designed 55' keelboat. Then, with a limited crew, he proceeded down the Ohio River to present day Louisville, Kentucky where his partner and co-captain, William Clark, joined him. There the two captains selected the initial enlisted members of the expedition before proceeding on to their first winter campsite at Camp Wood, Illinois, near St. Louis. They eventually began their journey up the Missouri River and into the newly acquired Louisiana territory on May 14, 1804. For the next two and a half years, the expedition traveled the length of the Missouri River, crossed the Rocky and Bitterroot Mountains, and followed the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia Rivers to the Pacific Ocean and back again.

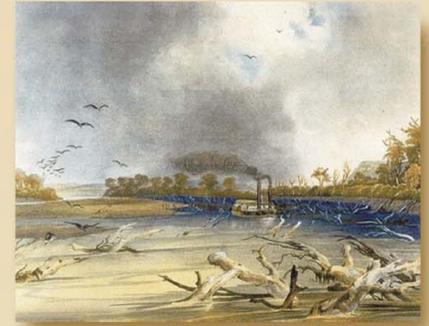
Along the way Expedition members kept detailed journals of their activities, collected specimens of discoveries, and charted their progress. They proceeded up against the Missouri's current, rarely making more than 12 miles per day, to the Mandan Villages where they spent the winter of 1804-05. The next spring they continued on, joined by a French trapper Charbonneau and his young Shoshone wife Sacagawea. With her assistance they crossed the mountains and proceeded down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. After spending the winter of 1805-1806 on the coast, they retraced their route, eventually returning to St. Louis in late September of 1806.

### Navigation

Fur trappers and traders led the way in navigating the Missouri River, using canoes and flat-bottomed French boats. Larger vessels, keelboats, first navigated the river in 1804 when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark explored the recently purchased Louisiana Territory. In 1819 the steamboat came to the Missouri. Steamboat traffic was vital to the opening of the west and reached its peak in 1880. Taking advantage of the paddle wheeler's shallow draft, river men eventually pushed the head of navigation to Fort Benton, Montana, 2,285 miles from the mouth. During these early days the river meandered widely, occupying at one time or another most of the valley from bluff to bluff. Unpredictable bank erosion, snags and floods presented a constant threat to navigation and valley improvement.

...The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado, or any other river, may offer the most direct and practicable water-communication across the continent, for the purposes of commerce...

As early as 1824 the Corps of Engineers began snag removal, but it was not until 1881 that Congress appropriated funds for Missouri River improvement. The improvements consisted of clearing the streambed of dead trees and other obstructions, and included alterations of the river itself. The Corps relied on a number of techniques to keep the river open and check bank erosion. One of the most effective was the building of dikes and piers into the river to divert the current away from the eroding



Snags (Sunken Trees) on the Missouri  
Hand-colored Engraving by Karl Bodmer

shoreline. These structures increased the river's velocity, loosening sediment and deepening the channel for steamboats. The Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project authorized by Congress in 1912, established a permanent six-foot channel for navigation from St. Louis, Missouri to Sioux City, Iowa. In 1945 the project was modified to provide for a nine-foot deep and 300 foot wide channel. Today more than 1.5 million tons of commodities, not including sand, gravel and waterway material, are moved by barge on the river annually.

### Stewardship

Through the years, Congress has authorized the Corps of Engineers to complete many different projects along the river with many different project purposes. In addition to navigation, bank stabilization and flood control have been long standing Corps of Engineers responsibilities along the river. The newest project purpose has been creation of fish and wildlife areas as a part of the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project. The Mitigation Project was established to compensate for fish and wildlife habitat losses that resulted from past channelization efforts on the Missouri River. The project, which extends 735 river miles from St. Louis to Sioux City, will eventually encompass 166,750 acres of land for the purpose of restoring and preserving aquatic and terrestrial habitat at certain locations along the river in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

Implementation of the project began in 1991. Presently, 27 different mitigation sites, or approximately 30,700 acres, are in various stages of acquisition and development. Shallow waterside channels have been reopened, wetlands have been constructed, bottomland timber has been planted and many other achievements have been made. This project will take many years to accomplish and will preserve vital habitat for future generations.