

Collecting with Lewis and Clark

Standards

Social Studies:

Kansas History: KH4B411 The student describes the experiences of explorers who came to Kansas before statehood.

Others:

Objectives

Knowledge:

- One objective of the Lewis and Clark expedition included collecting scientific specimens.
- Lewis and Clark collected their last specimen of the journey in Kansas, the Raccoon Grape leaf.

Skills:

- Natural history observations
- Technical writing

Focus Questions

1. Why would President Jefferson want to know about the plants and animals found in the West?
2. How did they record and share information about their new discoveries? How is this the same/different from today?

Assessment

- Create a journal entry similar to Lewis' and Clark's about a plant or animal specimen

Lesson Plan Outline

A. Observing and Recording

1. Share the drawing of the Sage Grouse and read the description by William Clark written on the back. Discuss the importance of accuracy when recording details in descriptions such as this.
2. Divide the class into four groups and provide each group with a photograph or illustration of a plant or animal from the Lewis and Clark expedition. (Buffalo, raccoon grape leaf, black-tailed prairie dog, Carolina parakeet)
3. Using a pencil or pen, have students sketch the plant or animal and write a description in the style of a journal entry similar to the Sage Grouse entry.
4. Use the students' drawings and descriptions to lead a class discussion on the importance of Lewis and Clark's contributions to natural history.

B. Extended Activities

1. Try recording the above information using a quill pen and ink.
2. Collect and press plant samples.
3. Research other plants and animals recorded by the expedition. Use "Items Sent With the Keelboat in the Spring of 1805" for ideas.

Trunk Materials

- 5 graphics (#3 and #16-19)



Collecting with Lewis and Clark

In 1803, President Jefferson wrote one letter instructing Meriwether Lewis about all that he hoped to be accomplished on the expedition. One major directive was to conduct a scientific survey and collect all “objects worthy of notice.” As a man of science, Jefferson was very broad in his definition of worthy objects. He wanted the explorers to notice everything about the soil, minerals, plants, animals, and climate of the new land, and bring back samples and specimens. They identified 178 new plants and 122 species and subspecies of animals during their 28-month journey.

Jefferson planned to share the scientific discoveries with the world. He wanted to publish the journals of Lewis and Clark that included writings, drawings, and navigational readings. The specimens would be displayed at his home, Monticello, or donated to museums for study by scientists. The specimen collection was to come in many forms including animal hides, skeletons, pressed plants, horns, and even live animals.

Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1804-1805 at Fort Mandan (present-day North Dakota) preparing notes and specimens to send to President Jefferson. In April 1805 a small crew returned with the keelboat to St. Louis. The cargo included journals, letters, maps, natural history specimens and even seven live animals. Jefferson was undoubtedly thrilled to receive this treasure trove of information. Everything arrived safely to Virginia except several of the live animals. Only the prairie dog and one magpie survived the trip.

Lewis and Clark brought the rest of their journals and specimens back with them in 1806. President Jefferson was anxious to share their scientific discoveries. He instructed Meriwether Lewis to prepare the journals for publication. Unfortunately, Lewis died three years later in Tennessee without starting on this task. In 1814 William Clark, with the aid of editor Thomas Biddle, completed the project.



Items Sent With the Keelboat in the Spring of 1805

List of Articles sent to President Jefferson from Fort Mandan on the big bateau which left for St. Louis on April. 7,1805.

Box No.1, contains the following articles, i.e.

In packing No.3 and 4 Male and Female antelope with their skeletons.

No. 7 & 9, the horns of two mule or Black tailed deer, a Mandan bow and quiver of arrow --- with some Recarra's tobacco seed.

No. 11, a Martin Skin, Containing the tail of a Mule Deer, a weasel and three squirrels from the Rocky Mountains

No. 12, the bones and skeleton of a Small burrowing wolf of the Praries the skin being lost by accident

No. 99, The Skeleton of the white and Gray hare.

Box No. 2

Contains 4 Buffalo Robes, and a ear of Mandan Corn.

Box No. 3

Nos. 1 & 2, the Skin of the Male and female Antelope with their Skeletons, & the Skin of a Yellow Bear which I obtained for the Sioux.

Box No. 4

Specimens of plants numbered from 1 to 67.

Specimens of plants numbered from 1 to 60.

1 Earthen pot Such as the Mandans manufacture and use for culinary purposes.

1 Tin box containing insects, mice, etc.

a Specimine of the fur of the antelope.

a Specimon of the plant, and a parcel of its roots highly prized by the natives as a efficacious remedy in cases of the bite of the rattle snake or mad dog.

In a Large Trunk No.5

Skins of a male & female Braro, or burrowing Dog of the Prarie, with skeleton of the female.

1 Skin of the red fox containing a Magpie

2 cased Skins of the white hare.

1 Minitarra Buffalo robe Containing some articles of Indian Dress.

1 Mandan Buffalo robe Containing a dressed Louserva (Lynx) Skin, and 2 cased Skins of the Burrowing Squirrel of the Praries.

13 red fox Skins

4 horns of the Mountain Ran, or big horn

1 Buffalo robe painted by a mandan man representing a battle fought 8 years

Since by the Sioux & Ricaras against the mandans, menitarras & Ah wah har ways.
(Mandans, etc. on horseback)

Cage No. 6

Contains a liveing burrowing squirrel of the praries

Cage No. 7

Contains 4 living Magpies

Cage No. 8

Contains a liveing hen of the Prarie

a large par of Elks horns contained (held together) by the frontal bone."

(adapted from The Natural History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition edited by Raymond Darwin Burroughs)

