Lewis & Clark: The Voyage of Discovery

Overview:

It has been said that every Oregon teacher has a lesson unit on Lewis & Clark that they personally cherish. We wouldn’t ask you to give it up! However, please be aware of all the related content available online on Historic Oregon Newspapers: there are articles your class can read and images you can share, in order to further enrich the learning opportunities.

An interesting fact that comes to light is that neither Lewis and Clark, nor their Voyage of Discovery were always famous! Interest and awareness of the explorers had in fact waned throughout the 1800’s, and only truly revived around the turn of the 20th century. This is reflected in the digitized Historic Oregon Newspapers, where articles about the celebrated explorers are exceedingly rare prior to 1900. (One notable exception is the Willamette Farmer’s 1879 obituary notice for the last surviving member of the expedition, linked below.) Given that Lewis and Clark are almost universally recognized names throughout America today, this can be a valuable lesson in the ways that “History” is not a static thing, but something that grows, evolves, and changes over time.

Here are links to some of the best Lewis & Clark content available through our website:


- This is a full-page, front-page article, well-illustrated with portraits of the explorers, plus a large map of “The Oregon Country as defined by the Treaty of 1846.”


- Shorter article for in-class reading/discussion. Illustrated with portraits of the two explorers.


- Eva Emery Dye of Oregon wrote one of the first, comprehensive books about Lewis and Clark, “The Conquest.” This article reviews the book, with extensive excerpts, and also relates some of the challenges Dye faced in researching her subjects.
“What Lewis And Clark Did.” **From Portland Morning Oregonian, January 1, 1903.**

- Essay about the long-term effects of the Voyage of Discovery on the history of Oregon and the United States. Features a portrait photo gallery of many prominent Oregonians of the early, Territorial period.

“Talks Lewis and Clark.” **From Portland Morning Oregonian, February 9, 1903.**

- Major William Hancock Clark, the grandson of Captain William Clark the explorer, discusses his ancestors’ accomplishments during the lead-up to the Lewis & Clark Exposition of 1905. Interesting to note here, that the Voyage of Discovery had been nearly forgotten in many quarters of the East at this time!

Local as well as national interest in Lewis & Clark was heightened during the lead-up to Portland’s “Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition” of 1905. View the Exposition Banner here: [http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn83025138/1904-05-24/ed-1/seq-12/](http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn83025138/1904-05-24/ed-1/seq-12/).

- The class may discuss the meaning of the symbolism included on the flag.

“Explorer Lies In Lonely Grave: Captain Meriwether Lewis Lies Buried In Heart Of Dismal Oak Forest In Tennessee.” **From Portland Sunday Oregonian, April 16, 1905.**

“Frozen To Death.” **From Salem Willamette Farmer, March 7, 1879.**

- Obituary report of Tom Lewis, an African American who was the last surviving member of the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

“As To The Descendants Of Lewis And Clark.” **From Portland Sunday Oregonian, April 2, 1905.** And “Colonel William Hancock Clark,” **From Portland Morning Oregonian, August 26, 1901.**

- By the turn of the 20th century, many Americans were claiming to be descended from the famous duo—some fraudulently. Claims of ancestry among the famous and historical can be an interesting topic of class discussion, as we still see this going on today!