

This is a typed transcription of Jefferson's letter to Lewis. The original is currently housed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. See <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page028.db&recNum=635> for an image of the original manuscript.

JEFFERSON'S INSTRUCTIONS TO LEWIS, JUNE 20, 1803

To Captain Meriwether Lewis esq. Capt. of the 1st regimt. of Infantry of the U.S. of A.

Your situation as Secretary of the President of the U.S. has made you acquainted with the objects of my confidential message of Jan. 18, 1803 to the legislature; you have seen the act they passed, which, tho' expressed in general terms, was meant to sanction those objects, and you are appointed to carry them into execution.

Instruments for ascertaining, by celestial observations, the geography of the country through which you will pass, have been already provided. Light articles for barter and presents among the Indians, arms for your attendants, say for from 10. to 12. men, boats, tents, & other travelling apparatus, with ammunition, medecine, surgical instruments and provisions you will have prepared with such aids as the Secretary at War can yield in his department; & from him also you will receive authority to engage among our troops, by voluntary agreement, the number of attendants above mentioned, over whom you, as their commanding officer, are invested with all the powers the laws give in such a case....

The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by it's course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce.

Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, you will take observations of latitude & longitude, at all remarkable points on the river, & especially at the mouths of rivers, at rapids, at islands, & other places & objects distinguished by such natural marks & characters of a durable kind, as that they may with certainty be recognised hereafter....

The interesting points of the portage between the heads of the Missouri, & of the water offering the best communication with the Pacific ocean, should also be fixed by observation, & the course of that water to the ocean, in the same manner as that of the Missouri.

Your observations are to be taken with great pains & accuracy, to be entered distinctly & intelligibly for others as well as yourself, to comprehend all the elements necessary, with

the aid of the usual tables, to fix the latitude and longitude of the places at which they were taken, and are to be rendered to the war-office, for the purpose of having the calculations made concurrently by proper persons within the U.S. Several copies of these as well as of your other notes should be made at leisure times, & put into the care of the most trust-worthy of your attendants, to guard, by multiplying them, against the accidental losses to which they will be exposed A further guard would be that one of these copies be on the paper of the birch, as less liable to injury from damp than common paper.

The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will pursue, renders a knolege of those people important. You will therefore endeavor to make yourself acquainted, as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers;

the extent & limits of their possessions;

the relations with other tribes of nations;

their language, traditions, monuments;

their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts, & the implements for these;

their food, clothing, & domestic accomodations;

the diseases prevalent among them, & the remedies they use;

moral & physical circumstances which distinguish them from the tribes we know;

peculiarities in their laws, customs & dispositions;

and articles of commerce they may need or furnish, & to what extent.

And, considering the interest which every nation has in extending & strengthening the authority of reason & justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knolege you can of the state of morality, religion, & information among them; as it may better enable those who may endeavor to civilize & instruct them, to adapt their measures to the existing notions & practices of those on whom they are to operate.

Other objects worthy of notice will be

the soil & face of the country, it's growth & vegetable productions, especially those not of the U.S.

the animals of the country generally, & especially those

not known in the U.S.

the remains or accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct;

the mineral productions of every kind; but more particularly metals, limestone, pit coal, & saltpetre; salines & mineral waters, noting the temperature of the last, & such circumstances as may indicate their character; volcanic appearances;

climate, as characterized by the thermometer, by the proportion of rainy, cloudy, & clear days, by lightning, hail, snow, ice, by the access & recess of frost, by the winds prevailing at different seasons, the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flower, or leaf, times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects.

Altho' your route will be along the channel of the Missouri, yet you will endeavor to inform yourself, by enquiry, of the character & extent of the country watered by it's branches & especially on it's southern side, the North river or Rio Bravo which runs into the gulph of Mexico, and the North river, or rio colorado which runs into the gulph of California, are understood to be the principal streams heading opposite to the waters of the Missouri, and running Southwardly. Whether the dividing grounds between the Missouri & them are mountains or flat lands, what are their distance from the Missouri, the character of the intermediate country, & the people inhabiting it, are worthy of particular enquiry. The Northern waters of the missouri are less to be enquired after, because they have been ascertained to a considerable degree, & are still in a course of ascertainment by English traders, and travellers. But if you can learn any thing certain of the most Northern source of the Missisipi, & of it's position relatively to the lake of the woods, it will be interesting to us....

In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly & conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey, satisfy them of it's innocence, make them acquainted with the position, extent, character, peaceable & commercial dispositions of the U.S. of our wish to be neighborly, friendly & useful to them, & of our dispositions to a commercial intercourse with them; confer with them on the points most convenient as mutual emporiums, and the articles of most desirable interchange for them & us. If a few of their influential chiefs within practicable distance, wish to visit us, arrange such a visit with them, and furnish them with authority to call on our officers, on their entering the US. To have them conveyed to this place at the public expence....Carry with you some matter of the kinexox; inform those of them with whom you may be, of it's efficacy as a preservative from the smallpox; & instruct & encourage them in the use of it....

On your arrival on that coast [Pacific] endeavor to learn if there be any port within your reach frequented by the

sea-vessels of any nation, & to send two of your trusty people back by sea, in such way as shall appear practicable, with a copy of your notes: and should you be of opinion that the return of your party by the way they went will be eminently dangerous, then ship the whole, & return by sea, by the way either of cape Horn, or the cape of good Hope, as you shall be able....

Given under my hand at the city of Washington this 20th day of June 1803.

TH: J. Pr. U.S. of A.

Letter copied from: Jackson, Donald, ed., Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: with Related Documents 1783 – 1854, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1978, pages 61-66.

In preparation for the journey, Meriwether Lewis wrote a list of necessary items to be taken. Due to Lewis's spelling, some of the words may not look familiar to you; please sound them out phonetically to understand them. See <http://media.nara.gov/media/images/19/29/19-2831a.gif> for a look at the manuscript version of the Indian gifts.

LEWIS'S PACKING LIST

Mathematical Instruments

1	Hadley's Quadrant
1	Mariner's Compas & 2 pole chain
1	Sett of plotting instruments
3	Thermometers
1	Cheap portable Microscope
1	Pocket Compass
1	brass Scale one foot in length
6	Magnetic needles in small straight silver or brass cases opening on the side with hinges.
1	Instrument for measuring made of tape with feet & inches mark'd on it,...
2	Hydrometers
1	Theodolite
1	Sett of planespheres
2	Artificial Horizons
1	Patent log
6	papers of Ink powder
4	Metal Pens brass or silver
1	Set of Small Slates & pencils
2	Creyons
	Sealing wax one bundle
1	Miller's edition of Lineus in 2 Vol:
	Books
	Maps
	Charts
	Blank Vocabularies
	Writing paper
1	Pair large brass money scales with two setts of weights...

Arms & Accoutrements

15	Rifle
15	Powder Horns & pouches complete
15	Pairs of Bullet Moulds
15	do. Of Wipers or Gun worms
15	Ball Screws
24	Pipe Tomahawks
24	large knives
	Extra parts of Locks & tools for repairing arms
15	Gun Slings
500	best Flints

Ammunition

200	Lbs. Best rifle powder
400	lbs. Lead

Clothing

15	3 pt. Blankets
15	Watch Coats with Hoods & belts
15	Woolen Overalls
15	Rifle Frocks of waterproof Cloth if possible

30	Pairs of Socks or half Stockings
20	Fatigue Frocks or hinting shirts
30	Shirts of Strong linnen
30	yds. Common flannel.

Camp Equipage

6	Copper kettles (1 of 5 Gallons, 1 of 3, 2 of 2, & 2 of 1) falling Axes.
25	Drawing Knives, short & strong
4	Augers of the patent kind...
2	Small permanent Vice
1	Hand Vice
36	Gimblets assorted
24	Files do.
12	Chisels do.
10	Nails do.
2	Steel plate hand saws
2	Vials of Phosforus
1	do. Of Phosforus made of allum & sugar
4	Groce fishing Hooks assorted
12	Bunches of Drum Line
2	Foot Adzes
12	Bunches of Small cord
2	Pick Axes
3	Coils of rope
2	Spades
12	Bunches Small fishing line assorted
1	lb. Turkey or Oil Stone
1	Iron Mill for Grinding Corn
20	yds. Oil linnen for wrapping & securing Articles
10	yds do. do. Of thicker quality for covering and lining boxes. &c
40	yds Do. Do. To form two half faced Tents or Shelters...
4	Tin blowing Trumpets
2	hand or spiral spring Steelyards
20	yds Strong Ozaburgs
24	Iron Spoons
24	Pint Tin Cups (without handles)
30	Steels for striking or making fire
100	Flints for do. do. do.
2	Frows
6	Saddlers large Needles
6	Do. Large Awls
	Muscatoe Curtains
2	patent chamber lamps & wicks
15	Oil Cloth Bags for securing provision
1	Sea Grass Hammock

Provisions and Means of Subsistence

150	lbs. Portable Soup.
3	bushels of Allum or Rock Salt
	Spices assorted
6	Kegs of 5 Gallons each making 30 Gallons of rectified spirits such as is used for the Indian trade
6	Kegs bound with iron Hoops

Indian Presents

5	lbs. White Wampum
5	lbs. White Glass Beads mostly small
20	lbs. Red Do. Do. Assorted
5	lbs. Yellow or Orange Do. Do. Assorted
30	Calico Shirts
12	Pieces of East India muslin Hanckerchiefs striped or check'd with brilliant Colours.
12	Red Silk Hanckerchiefs
144	Small cheap looking Glasses
100	Burning Glasses
4	Vials of Phosforus
288	Steels for striking fire
144	Small cheap Scizors
20	Pair large Do.
12	Groces Needles Assorted No. 1 to 8 Common points
12	Groces Do. Assorted with points for sewing leather
288	Common brass thimbles – part W. office
10	lbs. Sewing Thread assorted
24	Hanks Sewing Silk
8	lbs. Red Lead
2	lbs. Vermillion – at War Office
288	Knives Small such as are generally used for the Indian trade, with fix'd blades & handles inlaid with brass
36	Large knives
36	Pipe Tomahawks – at H. Ferry
12	lbs. Brass wire Assorted
12	lbs. Iron do. Do. generally large
6	Belts of narrow Ribbons colours assorted
50	lbs. Spun Tobacco.
20	Small falling axes to be obtained in Tennessee
40	fish Griggs such as the Indians use with a single barbed point – at Harper's ferry
3	Groce fishing Hooks assorted
4	Groce Mockerson awls assorted
50	lbs. Powder secured in a Keg covered with oil Cloth
24	Belts of Worsted feiret or Gartering Colours brilliant and Assorted
15	Sheets of Copper Cut into strips of an inch in width & a foot long
20	Sheets of Tin
12	lbs. Strips of Sheet iron 1 In. wide 1 foot long
1	Pc. Red Cloth second quality
1	Nest of 8 or 9 small copper kettles
100	Block-tin rings cheap kind ornamented with Colour'd Glass or Mock-Stone
2	Groces of brass Curtain Rings & sufficently large for the Finger
1	Groce Cast Iron Combs
18	Cheap brass Combs
24	Blankets.
12	Arm Bands Silver at War Office
12	Wrist do. do. Do.
36	Ear Trinkets Do. Part do.
6	Groces Drops of Do. Part Do.
4	doz Rings for Fingers of do.
4	Groces Broaches of do.
12	Small Medals do.

Means of Transportation

1	Keeled Boat light strong at least 60 feet in length her burthen equal to 8 Tons
1	Iron frame of Canoe 40 feet long
1	Large Wooden Canoe
12	Spikes for Setting-Poles
4	Boat Hooks & points Complete
2	Chains & Pad-Locks for confining the Boat & Canoes &c.

Medicine

15	lbs. Best powder's Bark
10	lbs. Epsom or Glauber Salts
4	oz. Calomel
12	oz. Opium
–	oz. Tarter emetic
8	oz. Borax
4	oz. Powder'd Ipecacuana
8	oz. Powder Jalap
8	oz. Powdered Rhubarb
6	Best lancets
2	oz. White Vitriol
4	oz. Lacteaum Saturni
4	Pewter Penis syringes
1	Flour of Sulphur
3	Clyster pipes
4	oz. Turlingtons Balsam
2	lbs. Yellow Bascilicum
2	Sticks of Symple Diachylon
1	lb. Blistering Ointments
2	lbs. Nitre
2	lbs. Coperas

Materials for making up the Various Articles into portable Packs

30	Sheep skins taken off the Animal as perfectly whole as possible, without being split on the belly as usual and dress'd only with lime to free them from the wool; or otherwise about the same quantity of Oil Cloth bags well painted
	Raw hide for pack strings
	Dress'd letter for Hoppus-Straps
	Other packing

Do. = ditto

&c. = etcetera

Oznaburgs = strong cloth

Worsted feiret [ferret] = woven wool tape, used for embellishment and trade

Hoppus = might possible refer to an Indian term for knapsack

List copied from: Jackson, Donald, ed., Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: with Related Documents 1783 – 1854, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1978, pages 69-74.

The original of this list was written in Clark's handwriting. The words within the brackets [] were written by Jefferson and indicate where the items were sent – to Charles Willson Peale, the American Philosophical Society, or kept by Jefferson himself.

The original documents are at the Library of congress and can be viewed at: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page033.db&recNum=138>

Invoice of articles forwarded from Fort Mandan to the President of the United States through Captn. Stoddard at St. Louis and Mr. H. B. Trist the Collector of the Port of New Orleans.

FORT MANDAN PACKING LIST

No.	Package	Contents
1	Box	Skins of the Male and female Antelope, with their skeletons. [came. P.]
1	do	2 Horns and ears, of the Black tail, or Mule Deer. [came]
1	"	A Martin skin [came] containing the skin of a weasel [came P.] and three small squirrels of the Rocky Mountains & the tail of a Mule deer fully grown. [came.]
1	"	Skeletons of the small, or burrowing wolf of the Praries, the skin having been lost by accedent. [some skeletons came, not distinguishable. sent to P.]
1	"	2 skeletons of the White Hare. [as above. P.]
1	"	A Mandan bow with a quiver of arrows [came] the quiver containing some seed of the Mandan tobacco. [came]
1	"	A carrot of Ricara tobacco. [came.]
2	Box	4 Buffalo robes, [came] and an ear of Mandan corn.
3	Box	Skins of the Male and female Antelope, with their skeletons [undistinguishable. P.] and the skin of a brown, or yellow Bear.
4	Box	Specimens of earths, salts, and minerals, numbered from 1. to 67. [came]
4	"	Specimes of plants numbered from 1 to 60. [came.] [A. Ph.Society.]
4	"	1 earthen pot, such as the Mandans manufacture, and use for culinary purposes. [came]
4	"	1 tin box containing insects, mice &c.
4	"	a specimen of the fur of the Antilope.

No.	Package	Contents
4	"	a specimen of a plant, and a parcel of its roots, highly prized by the natives as an efficacious remedy in the cure of the bite of the rattle snake, or mad dog.
4	in a Large Trunk	Skin of a Male and female Braro, or burrowing Dog of the Praries, with the skeleton of the female. [came. P.]
4	in a large Trunk	1 skin of a red fox containing a Magpie [came.]
4	"	2 cased skins of the white hare. [came. P.]
4	"	1 Minetarre Buffalow robe, [came] containing some articles of Indian dress. [came]
4	"	1 Mandan Buffalow robe, [came] containing a dressed skin of the Lousivire [came] an two cased skins of the burrowing squirrels of the praries. [came P.]
4	"	13 red fox skins. [came.]
4	"	4 horns of the mountain ram, or big horn. [came.]
4	"	1 Buffalow robe painted by a Mandan man representing a battle which was faught 8 years since, by the Sioux & Ricaras, against the Mandans, Minitarras & Ahwahharways. [came.]
6	Cage	Containing four liveing Magpies. [1. came P.]
7	do.	Containing a liveing burrowing squirrel of the praries. [came. P.]
9	do.	Containing one liveing hen of the Prarie.
10	-	1 large par of Elk's horns connected by the frontal bone.

do. = ditto

" = ditto

List copied from: Jackson, Donald, ed., Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: with Related Documents 1783 – 1854, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1978, pages 234-236.