

# Lewis and Clark Heritage

*According to the Travel Industry Association of America ([www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org)) a growing number of visitors are becoming special interest travelers who rank heritage and/or cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for traveling.*

More than 200 years ago, President Thomas Jefferson sent an expedition westward to find and map a trans-continental water route to the Pacific Ocean. With approval from Congress, Captains Merriwether Lewis and William Clark embarked on their legendary three-year journey to explore the uncharted west. The expedition was comprised of 33 permanent party members, known as the Corps of Discovery. And their effort to chart the area between the Missouri and the Pacific Coast set these courageous Americans on a remarkable scientific voyage that forever changed our nation.

These intrepid explorers first visited what is now the Tri-Cities area of Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland, October 16-18, 1805 on their journey to the Pacific Ocean; and visited again April 27-29, 1806 on the return. It was at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers that the expedition knew--for the first time since entering uncharted territory—exactly where they were! They camped at Qosispah, or “the forks,” which was a large Sahaptian village located on the point of land at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers (present day Sacajawea State Park). It was an important meeting place for most of the Sahaptian-speaking people in the area. Today, we believe that the Expedition met Palouse, Walla Walla, Wanapum, Yakama, and Umatilla at Qosispah.

President Jefferson and the Corps of Discovery understood the importance of our rivers, not only as a navigational tool, but as the very lifeblood of the people. Two-hundred years after this remarkable expedition, the Columbia, Snake and Yakima rivers remain an essential part of the Tri-Cities—holding much promise for increased recreation and as a tremendous draw for tourism.

## TRI-CITIES’ FAST FACTS

- The Corps of Volunteers for Northwest Discovery (Lewis and Clark Expedition) passed through the Tri-Cities area, first on October 16-18, 1805, and again on their return trip, April 27-29, 1806.

- It was at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers or the “big forks” (present-day Pasco) that the Expedition knew - for the first time since entering uncharted territory - exactly where they were! Patrick Gass recorded they were at the “great Columbia river which comes in from the northwest.”
- The expedition spent two-and-a-half days in what is known today as the Tri-Cities, where they dressed skins, mended clothing and put their arms in order—and they paused to take celestial observations, record vocabularies and other ethnographic information about the Sahaptian-speaking peoples, make detailed descriptions of native plant and animal life, and document the river and its tributaries. This speaks to the importance of “the forks” as a place of great scientific and cultural significance.
- The interaction of the Expedition at “the forks” or Qosispah, was the first presentation of Jeffersonian medals on the lower Snake River.
- The Tapteal River (present-day Yakima) near Richland represents the furthest point up-river on the mighty Columbia that was recorded by the Corps of Discovery.
- It was here that the Expedition first encountered and recorded the tradition of head shaping, a distinct custom found in the Pacific Northwest.
- The Hanford Reach National Monument in Richland is the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River in the United States. This area was designated a National Monument in June 2000, and represents the only place where the Columbia River remains much the same as when explored by Lewis and Clark!

## “WE FORMED A CAMP AT THE POINT”

October 16 -18, 1805 The Corps of Discovery encountered a large Sahaptian village on the point of land at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers which the native peoples called Qosispah. This village was an important gathering place for most of the Sahaptian-speaking people in the area. Today, we

believe the Expedition met Palouse, Walla Walla, Wanapum, Yakama, and Umatilla at Qosispah.

“The wife of Shabono our interpertr we find reconsiles all the Indians, as to our friendly intentions a woman with a party of men is a token of peace”

The Interpreter was Toussaint Charbonneau and his wife was 17-year old Sacagawea. Today, Sacajawea State Park & Interpretive Center marks “the forks” or confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers where the Lewis and Clark set up camp in 1805; and Charbonneau Park just outside Pasco (on the Snake River northeast of Ice Harbor Dam) also reflects the areas ties to the Expedition.

### SACAGAWEA HERITAGE TRAIL PROJECT

Rivershore enhancement and the development of trails were inextricably linked in our community’s vision for the commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. The Sacagawea Heritage Trail Project provides recreational and educational enhancements to an existing 23-mile contiguous trail along the beautiful Columbia River shoreline in the Tri-Cities, Washington. The trail is dedicated to the lone woman on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The Sacagawea Heritage Trail is a 23-mile hiking, biking, and pedestrian loop trail on a well-maintained paved pathway. The trail also includes rough-terrain spurs that are ideal for nature, Audubon, or mountain bike enthusiasts. This river front trail connects the cities of Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland in Benton and Franklin County, following the Yakima and Columbia Rivers in a well identified loop trail system that winds through Columbia Park and Chiawana Park, and includes rest areas, water fountains, restroom and camping facilities. Local jurisdictions are investing in additional trail development to complete separated/signed biking sections and enhance amenities, including benches, restrooms, parking and interpretive signage. Additional trail improvements are underway that include interpretive signage designating the river’ historic ties to the Lewis & Clark expedition, identifying native flora and fauna and highlighting the significant American Indian cultural sites along the trail and riverbanks. A Bicycle Trail map is available through the Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau. Trailheads originate in a variety of riverside parks and the pathway runs adjacent to several hotels and motels properties--perfect for the outdoor adventurer looking for a bike vacation.

### BASALT SCULPTURES MARK TRAIL

Five basalt markers have been placed along the Sacagawea Heritage Trail to commemorate local history and leave a

lasting legacy of the National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. Each marker is engraved with an image and quote from the Expedition’s journals. Visitors are encouraged to make paper “rubbings” for their own travel diaries. Markers are located at Columbia Point, Columbia Park, Chiawana Park, and near Sacajawea State Park.

### LEWIS & CLARK INTERPRETIVE OVERLOOK

The Lewis and Clark Overlook is located at the intersection of Columbia Center Boulevard and Columbia Park Trail and looks out onto the Columbia River near Bateman Island. The overlook consists of a 1,865 sq. ft. concrete plaza with a pergola, two interpretive panels, and a 10’ x 16’ map of the Lewis & Clark Trail cast into the concrete plaza. Additional elements of the overlook include 10,000 sq. ft. of landscaping and an ADA accessible connection to the Sacagawea Heritage Trail in Columbia Park.

### MUSEUMS & INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

Sacajawea State Park & Interpretive Center  
2503 Sacajawea Road, Pasco WA 99301. 509-545-2361  
This state-run visitor center features the story of Sacagawea (wife of Charbonneau and interpreter for the Lewis and Clark expedition) the journeys of Lewis and Clark, and American Indian history. Local artifacts are on display. The Center is open seasonally, May through October, and volunteer staffed; call ahead for hours of operation.

Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science, & Technology (CREHST)  
95 Lee Blvd., Richland WA. (509) 943-9000  
The CREHST Museum tells the history of the Tri-Cities region from the perspective of the mighty Columbia River and its influence on our growth, development and everyday lives. The museum has interactive displays for children and adults; including robotic arms, Geiger counters, American Indian exhibits, and a Lewis and Clark Gallery. The exhibit, Lewis and Clark: Scientists in Buckskin, provides an overview of the Expedition’s scientific findings in the local area, and Lewis and Clark as Celestial Engineers plus hands-on activities relating to the Expedition for all ages. and of particular interest is the Woolly Mammoth exhibit--unearthed right in the Tri-Cities. This museum creates a learning environment for families regarding the geology, culture and history of the Columbia Basin. The Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science, & Technology is a state-of-the art center providing a fascinating look into our country’s past and education about its future. Open seven days a week. ASTC reciprocating member.Fee.

Wanapum Dam Heritage Center  
Beverly, WA. Open Daily with Free Admission.

### Yakama Nation Cultural Center

The Yakamas lived in harmony with the Tri-Cities area homelands for thousands of years. Now the Yakama Indians share their heritage with visitors from around the world. Toppenish, WA. (509) 865-2800

### Tamastlikt Cultural Institute

The Indian owned museum on both the Oregon and Lewis and Clark Trails. Experience the world through elder's stories and songs, artifacts, and exquisite gifts. Pendleton, OR. (541) 276-3873

### Franklin County Historical Society Museum

Housed in Pasco's 1911 Carnegie Library, the Museum's exhibits feature Plateau Indians, Lewis & Clark, pioneer life, railroading, aviation, and agriculture. Pasco, WA. (509) 547-3714

### East Benton County Historical Society & Museum

Beginning with the petroglyphs near the museum entrance, the petrified wood floor, gem point collection and *Kennewick Man* display, the area's history is uniquely covered. Kennewick, WA. (509) 582-7704

### Fort Walla Walla Museum

Discover a pioneer settlement; one of the nation's largest collections of horse-era agricultural equipment; pioneer, military and general domestic artifacts. Living history re-enactments. Walla Walla, WA. [www.FortWallaWallaMuseum.org](http://www.FortWallaWallaMuseum.org)

### Museum at Warm Springs

Warm Springs, OR. (541) 553-3331

### Nez Perce National Historic Park

Spalding, ID. (208) 843-2261

### Northwest Museum for Arts & Culture

Spokane, WA. (509) 326-3442

## THE SACAGAWEA MYSTIQUE

[Source: *Washington State Historical Society* - [www.wshs.org](http://www.wshs.org)]

North Dakota Hidatsa advocates vigorously promote a Sakakawea (pronounced sah KAH KAH' wee ah) spelling and pronunciation of her name. Analogous with the Sacajawea form, the Sakakawea spelling similarly is not found in the Lewis and Clark journals.

Given to her by her captors, her name-Sacajawea (pronounced Sa ca GA' we a, with a hard "g") derives from two Hidatsa Indian words: *sacaga*, meaning bird, and *wea*, meaning woman. In phonetically spelling her name as she

pronounced it to them, the captains followed their practice of "great object to make every letter sound in recording Indian vocabularies." The officers, who were there in time and place in the presence of their Shoshoni companion, documented her name 17 times, some with "down East" vernacular "ar" vowel variations, but always with a "g" in its third syllable. Captain Clark created the nickname "Janey" for Sacagawea, which he transcribed twice, November 24, 1805, in his journal, and in a letter to Toussaint, August 20, 1806. It is thought that Clark's use of "Janey" derived from "jane," colloquial army slang for girl.

Captain Lewis, on May 20, 1805, honored Sacagawea by naming a tributary of today's Musselshell River, Montana, "Sah cah gah we a or Bird Woman's River," providing both the name's Hidatsa derivation and meaning. Moreover, both captains in their June 10, 1805, longhand journal entries, transcribed her name in pronunciation form, making clear its syllabic structure by utilizing a comma for an accent mark, viz "Sah-cah-gah,wea." This confirms that through her Hidatsa conversancy Sacagawea clearly was consistent in her pronunciation of her own name. The Sacagawea spelling and the Sacaga'wea pronunciation, together with the Shoshoni spelling, were standardized in Bureau of American Ethnology literature by 1910.

The captains never spelled her name Sacajawea (pronounced SAC ah' jaw wee ah). The Sacajawea spelling was created by Nicholas Biddle, editor of the 1814 narrative of the journals, published two years after the Shoshoni woman's December 20, 1812, death at age 25, while living at Fort Manuel (South Dakota), a Missouri Fur Company trading post where Toussaint was then employed. Biddle, who was unacquainted with Sacagawea's pronunciation of her own name, retained its Hidatsa "Bird Woman" meaning in his editing of Lewis's May 20, 1805, entry. For some unexplained reason, however, he altered the explorers' original longhand "g" spelling to "j," an aberration that has resulted in wide popularity of the faulty Sacajawea form for nearly two centuries.

Over the years a number of linguistic attempts to decipher the mystery of Sacagawea's name have been published. Twentieth century "Sacajawea" advocates, in an apparent attempt to legitimize Biddle's altered spelling of the name, alleged that it is "pure Shoshone," meaning the equivalent of "boat launcher" or "boat puller." This interpretation originated in a 1920s letter to the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs when John Rees, a Salmon, Idaho, shopkeeper and local lay authority on Lemhi Shoshoni cultural issues, offered his version of how the expedition's Shoshoni Indian woman "received her Indian name...." Rees's effort was republished in 1970 by the Lemhi

County, Idaho, Historical Society as an essay titled, "Madame Charbonneau." Here Rees explains that "Sacajawea" was in effect constructed from an etymological interpretation that she "travels with the boats that are being pulled."

Dr. Sven Liljeblad, professor of linguistics, emeritus, at Idaho State University in Pocatello, analyzed the word "Sacajawea" in an attempt to trace its origin back to an antecedent Shoshoni form and meaning. He concluded that "it is unlikely that Sacajawea is a Shoshoni word.... The term for 'boat' in Shoshoni is saiki, but the rest of the alleged compound would be incomprehensible to a native speaker of Shoshoni."

Certain North Dakota Hidatsa advocates vigorously promote a Sakakawea (pronounced sah KAH KAH' wee ah) spelling and pronunciation of her name. Analogous with the Sacajawea form, the Sakakawea spelling similarly is not found in the Lewis and Clark journals. To the contrary, this spelling traces its origin neither through a personal connection with her nor in any primary literature of the expedition. It has been independently constructed from two Hidatsa Indian words found in a dictionary titled *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians*, published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1877.

Compiled by a United States Army surgeon, Dr. Washington Matthews, 65 years following Sacagawea's death, the words appear verbatim in the dictionary as "tsa-ka-ka, noun; a bird," and "mia [wia, bia], noun; a woman." In a 1950 North Dakota Historical Society publication, *Sakakawea the Bird Woman*, it is revealed that "...when Dr. Matthews's Tsakakawia is anglicized for easy pronunciation, it becomes Sakakawea...the spelling adopted by North Dakota."

This form, however, contravenes Dr. Matthews's own explanation: "In my dictionary I give the Hidatsa word for bird as 'Tsakaka.' Ts is often changed to S, and K to G, in this and other Indian languages, so 'Sacaga' would not be a bad spelling...but never 'Sacaja' [for bird]...wea means woman." On page 90 of Dr. Matthews's dictionary it is explained that there is no "j" included in the Hidatsa alphabet, and that "g" is pronounced as a "hard g."

Lewis and Clark history scholars, together with the United States Geographic Names Board, the National Park Service, the National Geographic Society, *Encyclopedia Americana*, and *World Book Encyclopedia*, among others, have adopted the Sacagawea form.

*[Source: Washington State Historical Society - www.wshs.org]*