

# Soldiers As Naturalists

Lewis and Clark's "CORPS OF DISCOVERY" was the first major expedition launched by the United States to explore new lands with an emphasis on scientific inquiry. Lewis spent months being tutored in both physical and biological sciences in preparation for the expedition.

Jefferson's letter of instruction admonished Lewis and Clark to bring home scientific, anthropological, and geological information.

*"Your observations are to be taken with great pains & accuracy, to be entered distinctly, & intelligibly for others as well as for yourself . . . several copies of these, as well as your other notes, should be made at leisure times & put into the care of the most trustworthy of your attendants to guard by multiplying them, against the accidental losses to which they will be exposed."*

Many plants and animals familiar to American Indians in the West were unknown to the people in the eastern United States before the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804. In fact, President Jefferson instructed Lewis to keep an eye out for *transitions*. They kept detailed journals of "new" species they observed. They also shipped bird skins, furs and even live animals -- four magpies, one sharp-tailed grouse and one prairie dog -- from Fort Mandan, North Dakota, back to Jefferson in Washington, D.C.



*On this section of the trail, some of the plants they recorded included grand fir, subalpine fir, western larch, Engelmann spruce, whitebark pine, lodgepole pine, mountain lady's slipper, common snowberry, and western buckleberry.*

*Along Lolo Creek and over the Bitterroot Mountains, Lewis and Clark recorded several animals they'd never seen before: ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, mourning dove, Steller's jay and the broad-tailed hummingbird.*



The Lewis and Clark Expedition camped here on September 12, 1805.