

## Episode 1 - Text 1

### CHANGING THE WAY THE STORY IS TOLD

By Ella Inglebret (2013)

From 1803-1806, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led an expedition that traveled over 7,000 miles from St. Louis, Missouri to the Pacific Ocean and back. Their route took them through the homelands of over 100 American Indian tribal nations in search of a waterway connecting the eastern United States with the West. Members of the expedition survived because they were helped by American Indian people along the way. American Indians provided information about the routes to follow along the rivers, across the plains, and through the mountains. This helped the expedition avoid getting lost. Various tribes provided food for the expedition members, who at times were on the brink of starvation. American Indians also provided shelter and protection from severe weather conditions and taught expedition members survival skills.

The Lewis and Clark expedition did not find a continuous water route to the Pacific Ocean but they did increase America's knowledge of the West. This led to massive migration of people westward across and on to American Indian homelands. This migration resulted in drastic changes for American Indian peoples. These changes included loss of tribal homelands and forced movement on to reservations and to Indian Territory (now the state of Oklahoma). Tribes were also exposed to new diseases that decimated entire villages. Today, American Indian tribes are rebuilding their economies and strengthening their governments. They are revitalizing their cultural traditions and languages. In addition, they are promoting sustainable practices to protect their natural resources.

For over 150 years, the story of the Lewis and Clark journey has typically been told from the perspectives of Lewis, Clark, and other members of the expedition. As stated by Germaine White (2002), a Salish leader, "Early accounts of the Lewis and Clark story largely excluded or dismissed the native peoples encountered by the explorers – people who had been here for millennia" (p. 44). The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration from 2003 to 2006 changed the way the story was being told. Tribal and non-tribal peoples came together in partnership to plan for the Bicentennial. As a result, tribal peoples from all along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail spoke with pride about their traditional cultures. They shared their histories, impressions of Lewis and Clark, their cultures today, and their plans for the future. Tribal peoples added their perspectives to the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition and its impacts. The Bicentennial was a time of "bridge building" between tribal and non-tribal peoples.

#### References

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#### About the Author

Ella Inglebret, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Washington State University. For 25 years she has worked with Native American students preparing to become speech-language pathologists. Much of her work has focused on "bridge building" between tribal and non-tribal peoples. More information about Ella can be found at <http://speechandhearing.wsu.edu/facultystaff/bios/inglebret.html>