NARRATOR

DARK RIVER AERIAL  Honored Parents. I am now on an expedition to the westward, with Captain Lewis and Captain Clark, who are appointed by the President of the United States...to go through the interior parts of North America...to ascend the Missouri River with a boat...and then to go...to the western ocean.

If we live to return...and if we make Great Discoveries as we expect... the United States has promised to make us Great Rewards.

ACTION MONTAGE  (SFX, MUSIC ONLY)

AERIALS  They were a small party charged with going where no one from the outside world had ever gone, to open one of the last great wilderness regions of earth...a place they thought might still hold woolly mammoths and other prehistoric creatures. To find out what was really out there and to survive -- was the equivalent in its day...of a journey to the moon.

To lead this dangerous expedition, President Thomas Jefferson chose his chief aide, Meriwether Lewis, a skilled soldier and woodsman. He called him a man "of courage undaunted...with... qualifications as if...implanted by nature...for this express purpose..." He was only twenty-eight.

CLARK  Lewis wanted a co-captain for such a long and risky mission -- his old army commander William Clark, who was four years older, an expert mapmaker and river man, and a proven leader.

Lewis asked Clark to join him...
LEWIS

L&C MEET

“…in this enterprise...with its...dangers and honors...there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasure in sharing them as yourself...

NARRATOR

Clark answered Lewis’ letter...

CLARK

“My friend, I join you with hand and heart.”

NARRATOR

GOLD TITLE SHOT

Many feared they would never return. But if they made it, they would forever change the course of history.

TITLE:

LEWIS and CLARK
Great Journey West

NARRATOR (CONT.)

AERIALS

At the time, the great powers of the world could only guess what existed in the uncharted West. Native Americans already called this land home, but other nations hoped for a wealth of natural riches and had staked competing claims...

MAP

Britain, to Canada and the Oregon Country... Russia, the Pacific Northwest... Spain, the west and parts of the south ... France, an immense tract called Louisiana.
NARRATOR (CONT.)

By sending an expedition into foreign land, Thomas Jefferson hoped to open the West up for the United States. In 1803, a surprise: Napoleon offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory. The US quickly purchased it for 15 million dollars, more than doubling the size of the nation. To cross this unknown land would be among the most ambitious and difficult journeys ever conceived.

KEELBOAT, CLARK

Clark wrote in his journal…

CLARK

HAULING SCENES “…all in health and readiness to set out. Boats and everything complete, with the necessary stores of provisions…though not as much as I think necessary for the multitude of Indians through which we must pass…”

NARRATOR

MEN PULL ROPE They pushed off upstream from St. Louis -- young American soldiers and French-Canadian river men handpicked for strength and wilderness skills. Among them – a man named York, Clark’s slave and companion since childhood. All were leaving their families behind for years.

Their main mission was to find a water route to the Pacific, and the Orient beyond – the long-hoped-for Northwest Passage.

LEWIS ON SHORE Lewis was a studious and solitary man. Under Jefferson, he had been trained to observe and record for science every new thing he saw, and he spent hours exploring alone with his dog.

In this unfamiliar territory, just collecting a specimen could be dangerous.

LEWIS FALLS,
WS RIVER, DUSK
Only two days out, Lewis had nearly lost his life – with a long journey still ahead. But a greater challenge they faced every day – the backbreaking work of moving tons of gear upriver against the full flood of the powerful, unpredictable Missouri.

William Clark…

CLARK

“The sergeant at the helm run under a bending tree and broke the mast…”

“I am tormented with mosquitoes and ticks.”

NARRATOR

Meriwether Lewis…

LEWIS

“The barge run foul three times today on logs … happily no injury was sustained, though the barge was … in imminent danger…”

CLARK

“…passed a bad sandbar, where our tow rope broke twice…”

“…a storm struck our boat and…would have thrown it up on the sand island and dashed to pieces in an instant had not the party leaped out…and kept her off.”

NARRATOR

Some days they made only a few miles, with more than three thousand to go.

CLARK, COMPASS

Clark was a practical and plain-spoken man. He usually commanded the men on the river, and kept records to make an accurate new map of the West.
As they pushed up the Missouri, toward present-day Omaha, Nebraska, they were deep into Indian lands. Traders and trappers had been up here, but no well-armed military party.

“a party of Oto and Missouri Nation came to camp… Captain Lewis and myself…sent them some roasted meat…in return they sent us water melons.”

“…been up the greater part of last night with Sergeant Floyd, who is as bad as he can be…

“he expired…having said to me before his death that he was going away…We buried him…with all the honors of war, much lamented…"

They pushed on into the heart of the Great Plains.

“The immense river…waters one of the fairest portions of the globe, nor do I believe that there is in this universe a similar extent of country…"
In this vast grassland, Lewis discovered new species, including animals that barked -- like “little toy dogs,” he wrote. They would be named Prairie Dogs.

Where there were buffalo, there were also buffalo hunters. Lewis and Clark were under orders to be friendly with native tribes. Lewis also let them know—in full military dress -- that the United States now claimed their land.

“Children: We have been sent by the Great Chief of the seventeen Great Nations of America, to point out to you the road that you must now walk…and to inform you that a great council was lately held, between this great chief and your old fathers…”

There were only medals, and small gifts for now. But in the future, Lewis told them, other Americans would arrive with a wealth of trade goods.
Lewis and Clark were passing through a world unknown to them, but well-known to the Arikara, Sioux, and Omaha...to the Crow, Cheyenne and Blackfeet...to more than one hundred and seventy tribes and hundreds of thousands of people living west of the Mississippi...hunters, farmers, fishermen. Some traded peacefully, some were regularly at war.

The Teton Sioux were the most powerful tribe on the middle Missouri. They controlled traffic on that stretch of the river, and had stopped traders before.

The expedition now approached Teton land, and a tribe that had the superior numbers to annihilate them.

The encounter did not go well.

“Three of their young men seized the cable of the boat... and the second chief was very insolent...declaring I should not go on ...”

Finally, Chief Black Buffalo waved his men off.

The entire expedition could have ended that day, near the present site of Pierre, South Dakota.

They had come some sixteen hundred miles in five months, but ahead lay the long, bitter cold of winter on the northern prairie.
Lewis and Clark hoped to stay near the Mandan and Hidatsa, buffalo hunters who were often visited by traders. The tribes welcomed them as friends, and the Mandan called them *Maci*, “the pretty people”.

Together, their five villages were home to some four thousand people, more than lived in St. Louis at the time. Nearby the expedition settled in for five months of bone-chilling cold.

“...The thermometer stood at 45 degrees below zero...” “...snowed all day, ice ran thick and air cold...” “...three men frostbit badly...”

The captains knew almost nothing about the land of the west.

They hired an interpreter – a French fur trader named Charbonneau. He had two young Shoshone wives captured by the Hidatsa in a raid. The captains asked him to bring one along to help interpret on the trip. She was about 16 years old, and pregnant. The Hidatsa called her “Sacagawea.”

Tribal leaders such as Black Cat told them of a chain of mountains far to the west that could be crossed in half a day...but they would need horses. Sacagawea’s tribe, the Shoshone, would have horses and might help.
In winter quarters they called Fort Mandan, the captains prepared a shipment for President Jefferson to be taken back downriver by some of the men in spring. Clark drew a map of the land while Lewis packed what he had collected, including dozens of new plant and animal species.

Sacagawea gave birth in February, a difficult labor assisted by Lewis. Tiny Jean Baptiste Charbonneau became the final member of the expedition.

“...we were now about to penetrate a country ...in which the foot of civilized man had never trodden; the good or evil it had in store for us was...yet to determine... I could but esteem this moment of my departure among the most happy of my life”

Sacagawea quickly grew more important to the expedition. She showed them edible plants and roots – white apples, wild artichokes and licorice.
When a boat overturned in a strong wind, it was Sacagawea who saved their most important items.

Off the river, they faced other challenges.

In present-day Montana, the expedition came to a fork in the river – and a critical decision.

“…which of these rivers was the Missouri...to mistake the stream...would not only lose us the whole of this season but would probably so dishearten the party that it might defeat the expedition altogether.”

The Hidatsa had told the captains to look for a waterfall as proof they were still on the Missouri.

What Lewis found would test the strength and spirit of his men.

The Great Falls of the Missouri were five massive cascades.
To continue, they would have to carry everything vital to the expedition on a detour more than seventeen miles around the falls over rough terrain.

“We all believe that we are about to enter on the most perilous and difficult part of our voyage...All appear perfectly to have made up their minds to succeed in the expedition or perish in the attempt.

“...at every halt these poor fellows tumble down and are...asleep in an instant...some are limping from the soreness of their feet, others faint and unable to stand...yet...all go with cheerfulness...”

The grueling portage left the men badly worn down with mountains still to come.

But they willingly followed their captains – very different men, who seemed to command as one. There is no record the two friends ever argued or disagreed on an important decision.

They had lost almost a month at the falls, and they needed to find the Shoshone, and obtain horses, before the cold weather set in.

Sacagawea now recognized places from her youth and could help guide the men. But the Shoshone remained elusive.

Finally, Lewis set out with a scouting party to
search for them.
ON BANK  “...if we do not find them, I fear the successful issue of our voyage will be very doubtful.”

Clark and the rest of the men labored on through frigid water that was barely passable. They planned to reunite further upriver once Lewis had found the Shoshone.

Ahead somewhere was the Missouri’s source. From there, the men hoped for a quick mountain crossing, and then an easy ride downstream to the Pacific Ocean.

Ahead of the boats, Lewis made an historic discovery.

“...I had accomplished one of those great objects on which my mind has been unalterably fixed for many years…”

The source of the great Missouri River had finally been found.

From the continental divide above, Lewis hoped to see a river heading westward toward the ocean. Instead, he confronted a scene of crushing disappointment.
I discovered immense ranges of high mountains still to the West of us with their tops partially covered with snow…”

The need for horses was now more important than ever.

The very next day, Lewis finally made contact with the Shoshone and persuaded them to accompany him to meet with Clark on the river. Once again, the fate of the entire expedition was in the hands of Native people, who had never seen strangers like these before.

As Sacagawea began to interpret the stakes could hardly have been higher. Suddenly, she paused…

Across the years of separation from her tribe, Sacagawea recognized Cameahwait, the Shoshone chief.

He was her brother.

As the translation proceeded from Shoshone to Hidatsa to French to English, the two captains must have realized that once again they were extraordinarily lucky.

They would have their horses.
They spent more than two weeks with the Shoshone – a time of reunion for one, and rest for them all.

But ahead, a mountain barrier, whose size no one had anticipated, loomed like a monster with a hundred heads.

The United States lay behind them now; ahead, lands claimed by Britain, Spain and Russia. They entered the Bitterroot Range of the Rocky Mountains near today’s Montana-Idaho border.

An early storm brought bitter cold, and made a dangerous crossing even more difficult, coating the steep slopes in snow and ice.

Their Shoshone guide, “old Toby,” even lost the way for a time.

“Our sufferings were everything cold, hunger and fatigue could impart.”
CLARK

“I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life, indeed I was at one time fearful my feet would freeze in the thin moccasins which I wore…”

NARRATOR

HUNTERS After two agonizing weeks, they had nothing left to eat but a little soup, bear oil, and candles.

GROUP ON HILL Desperate, Clark and a small party went ahead hoping to find a way out of the mountains.

AERIALS Clark finally found a way down from the snow-covered mountains to a lush, open country.

SUNSET They were found by children of the Nez Perce tribe, and made their way to a nearby village. As the story goes, the strangers might have been killed, but for an old woman named Watkuweis who pleaded for their lives.

TRANSITION SHOTS TO RIVER, NEZ P.

AX TO TREE TRUNK TREE FALLS

WS DIGGING OUT CANOE For two weeks, the Nez Perce provided food and comfort.

CLOSER, DIGGING PLANING

DIGGING, FALLS IN B.G.
NEZ PERCE FISHING  Lewis would later call the Nez Perce…

CANOES INTO WATER  “…the most hospitable, honest and sincere people…we met with in our voyage.”

SETTING OUT  NARRATOR

**DATE SUPER:  For the first time since setting out 17 months before, they were going downstream.
Oct. 1805**

WS RIVER, CANOES  But ahead were rapids so dangerous the nearby tribes gathered to watch the white men drown.

AERIALS

RAPIDS SEQUENCE  NARRATOR

WS RIVER, CRANES UP  They were heading down the Columbia…the great river of the Northwest.

EAGLE  It was the last highway leading to the Pacific, the realm of tribes such as the Yakima, Umatilla, Walla Walla and Chinook…

EAGLE TAKES OFF

OVER RIDGE, MTN  REFLECTING RIVER

PADDLING  There was one all-consuming thing on their minds…

CLARK

“…this great Pacific Ocean which we have been so long anxious to see…”

SAC TOUCHES WATER
Finally the moment was at hand…after a year and a half of exhausting struggle…

(CLARK CRIES: “Ocean in view!”)

Lewis must have felt triumphant. His party had done what many considered impossible -- they had made it all the way to the Pacific alive.

“The Men appear much satisfied with their trip, beholding with astonishment the high waves dashing the rocks and this immense ocean.”

It was late in the season, and they had to face the reality of another long winter, far from home. The captains asked the entire corps to vote on the location for a winter camp site… the first time in recorded U.S. history that a slave or a woman was allowed to vote.

Near what is now Astoria, Oregon, they built winter quarters – named Fort Clatsop after the nearby coastal tribe. They traded with their Indian neighbors for salmon, berries, and roots… and settled in for four miserable months. There were only twelve days without rain.
The winter dampened their spirits as well. They were homesick, and longed to see their loved ones back in the States. Most at home assumed they were dead.

Nearly two years after setting out, they headed back upriver, crossing land now charted on Clark’s new map. The return trip would take only six months.

In the end, the journey opened up the West to their fellow countrymen. It was the beginning of a new era for the United States. But the Native American way of life would never be the same.

They had passed among some fifty tribes, without whose help, they might never have returned.

None played a greater role in their success than the young woman at their side.

At the Mandan and Hidatsa villages, they bid farewell to Sacagawea, who stayed behind with her family. She had endured every danger and deprivation, while also caring for a child.

Most of the men would never see her again.

Twenty-eight months after setting out, Lewis and Clark reached St. Louis, ending an 8,000-mile odyssey. They were acclaimed as national heroes…the first U.S. citizens to cross the continent.

Lewis had described at least 178 plants and 122 animals new to science.

Clark had drawn new and accurate maps that would guide the next generation of pioneers.
Together, they had blazed the path of their nation’s future.

(SILHOUETTES) Friends to the end, the two captains met very different fates.

LEWIS & DOG Meriwether Lewis was named Governor of the Louisiana Territory, but he fell into a deep depression, and is believed to have taken his own life only three years after the expedition.

CLARK ALONE By contrast, William Clark went on to a life of success, serving as Governor of the Missouri Territory. So different in nature, the two never lost admiration for one another.

TWO SHOT Clark was a father to ten children. His firstborn…he named Meriwether Lewis…Clark.

SUPER CARDS:

CARD #1 Only one expedition member died on the two and half year journey, but two Blackfeet Indians were killed in a skirmish on the return trip.

CARD #2 Clark’s slave, York, asked for his freedom and finally gained it more than ten years after returning.

CARD #3 Most believe that Sacagawea died only six years later, though some say she returned to the Shoshone and lived to be 100 years old.

CARD #4 Her son, Jean Baptiste, was raised by Captain Clark. After a life of adventure in Europe and the West, he died in Oregon at the age of 61.

END CREDITS