

Think Dot Group: SIX

Lewis & Clark Expedition 1803-1805

Summary of Project

Historical Events: The states that were traveled through during the two years of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 1803-1805, were Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. On November 15, 1805, the explorers reached the Pacific Ocean. They built Fort Clatsop and waited out the winter. In March, they started home, arriving in St. Louis seven months later. The entire expedition took twenty-eight months and covered 7,500 miles. It encouraged exploration and white settlement of the Western territories and led to the end of a way of life for the many Native Americans who lived there.

Prior to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, more and more people were moving west and settling land long held by Native Americans. Most settlers traveled the rough trails on horseback or in wagons. In some places, canals were built to connect rivers and lakes to make transportation easier and faster. After the Lewis and Clark Expedition, more and more people headed west. Fur traders and Mountain Men followed Lewis and Clark's trails. After 1848, and the discovery of gold in California, more people headed west. Later, in the 1850's to the 1870's railroads were built and a whole new age of transportation was begun. By 1900, the U.S. frontier – the boundary dividing settled lands and wilderness – had virtually disappeared into the Pacific Ocean.

Significance of Events: Early trails in the U.S. frontier were made by Native Americans and later by fur trappers and traders, who chopped down trees and shrubs to clear rough roadways. As trails, called turnpike roads, were wagon roads built by private companies that charged fees for their use.

The **Cumberland Road** (Ms. Hacker's hometown is Cumberland, MD) was built in 1811, construction began on a road that would cut across the Alleghany Mountains. This road ran from Cumberland Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois. In 1812, Robert Stuart crossed the continent from east to west using a route that became known as the **Oregon Trail**. It was 2,000 miles long and took five months to travel by covered wagon. The trail started in Independence, Missouri, and went to Oregon by way of Soda Springs, Idaho. In the 1840's, thousands of people used this trail.

The **Santa Fe Trail** ran from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was nearly 800 miles long and passed through the Cimarron Desert. William Becknell, a Santa Fe trader, blazed the trail by slashing trees along the way.

Mexican trader Antonio Armijo created a route that carried travelers nearly 900 miles from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California. ***The Gila Trail*** branched off the Santa Fe Trail at Santa Fe and led to San Diego, California.

This trail from Soda Springs, Idaho, to San Francisco, California, branched off the Oregon Trail, slightly north of the Great Salt Lake. Wagons traveling to California turned off the ***Oregon Trail*** at Soda Springs and headed down the ***California Trail***.
