Primary Source: Analyzing the Lewis and Clark Artifacts

Directions: answer the following questions completely.

1. What river(s) was Meriwether Lewis describing in his journal entry? Why might McNeal have been so “exultant” about the river? Explain your answers.

2. Study the buffalo robe in the picture. Why do you think Lewis and Clark chose those objects to send to President Jefferson? What do they think he learned from them?

3. Draw an illustration of a common natural object and describe it as if you had not seen it before, like the fish shown on page 20.

   Description:

   Picture:
Evaluate That Document!

Title or name of document

Date of document

Type of document:
- [ ] letter
- [ ] diary/journal
- [ ] newspaper article
- [ ] photograph
- [ ] map
- [ ] telegram
- [ ] patent
- [ ] poster
- [ ] advertisement
- [ ] drawing/painting
- [ ] cartoon
- [ ] other __________________________

Point of view:

Who created this document? ____________________________________________

For whom was this document created? ____________________________________

What was the purpose for creating this document? __________________________

What might the person who created it have been trying to express? ______________

What are two things you can learn about the time period from this primary source?

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What other questions do you have about this source?

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August 12, 1805

We fell in with a large and plain Indian road, which came into the cove from the northeast and led along the foot of the mountains to the southwest, obliquely approaching the main stream, which we had left yesterday. This road we now pursued to the southwest. At 5 miles it passed a stout stream which is a principal fork of the main stream and falls into it just above the narrow pass between the two cliffs before mentioned, which we now saw below us. Here we halted and breakfasted on the last of our venison, having yet a small piece of pork in reserve. After eating, we continued our route through the low bottom of the main stream along the foot of the mountains on our right. The valley for 5 miles farther in a southwest direction was from 2 to 3 miles wide.

At the distance of 4 miles further, the road took us to the most distant fountain of the waters of the mighty Missouri in search of which we have spent so many toilsome days and restless nights. Thus far I had accomplished one of those great objects on which my mind has been unalterably fixed for many years. Judge, then, of the pleasure I felt in allaying my thirst with this pure and ice-cold water which issues from the base of a low mountain or hill of a gentle ascent for 1/2 a mile... Two miles below, McNeal had exultingly stood with a foot on each side of this little rivulet and thanked his God that he had lived to bestride the mighty, and heretofore deemed endless, Missouri.

After refreshing ourselves, we proceeded on to the top of the dividing ridge, from which I discovered immense ranges of high mountains still to the west of us, with their tops partially covered with snow. I now descended the mountain about 3/4 of a mile, which I found much steeper than on the opposite side, to a handsome bold running creek of cold, clear water. Here I first tasted the water of the great Columbia River.

Excerpt from The Journals of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark
The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Invoice of articles from Fort Mandan to President Thomas Jefferson

First box: skins of the male and female antelope, with their skeletons;... horns and ears of the black tail, or mule deer;... skeletons of this small, or burrowing wolf of the prairies, the skin having been lost by accident.

Second box: four buffalo robes and an ear of Mandan corn.

Third box: skins of the male and female antelope, with their skeletons.

Fourth box: specimens of earths, salts and minerals; specimens of plants;... one tin box containing insects.

In a large trunk: one buffalo robe painted by a Mandan man representing a battle which was fought eight years [ago], by the Sioux and [Arikaras] against the Mandans and [Hidastas].

One cage, containing four living magpies.

One cage, containing a living burrowing squirrel of the prairies.

One cage, containing one living hen of the prairies.

One large pair of elk's horns, connected by the frontal bone.

1804–1805

Peabody Museum, Harvard University
The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Fort Clatsop: To Judge from the size and number of the caves and the general character of the surrounding country, it appears probable that this is the most important post on the Columbia River.

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c. 1804-1805

1806