



THE SHOSHONE

Making «Camp Fortunate» the greatest surprise of the expedition

The first week of August 1805 must have seemed like an eternity to the men, who were tired and frustrated. Everything seemed to be going wrong for them—their canoes overturned, tow ropes broke, and Captain Clark developed an infection caused by prickly pear punctures. However, on August 8, 1805, Sacagawea recognized a landmark from her childhood and told the captains that they were nearing the place where they would find her tribe, the Shoshones. This news excited the explorers and made them happy because they were sure they would soon find Sacagawea's people. Captain Lewis decided to take a few men and go looking for the tribe while the rest of the group continued on more slowly with the boats.

Although that first sighting of a Shoshone didn't result in a meeting for Lewis, he soon did make contact with the tribe when, a few days later, he and his men met two Shoshone women, and a man.

Lewis told the chief (Cameahwait) that the rest of his party was coming along and that they had a woman with them. It was several days before Clark, Sacagawea, and the rest of the Corps caught up with Lewis and the Shoshones. When they did, Sacagawea recognized in the tribe another woman whom she had known as a child, as well as Cameahwait, the chief, who turned out to be Sacagawea's brother.

After the meeting of Sacagawea and her brother, Cameahwait, Lewis and Clark handed out medals to the chiefs and gave other gifts to the people. Then the captains began to plan how they would get horses and help from the Shoshone for crossing the Continental Divide. They decided that Lewis would spend the next six days at Camp Fortunate, taking notes for President Jefferson about the Shoshone culture.

<http://www.lewisandclarkexhibit.org>

The Great Chief of this nation proved to be the brother of the woman with us and is a man of Influence sense & easy & reserved manners, appears to possess a great deal of sincerity. ... every thing appeared to astonish those people. the appearance of the men, their arms, the Canoes, the Clothing my black Servant & the Sagacity of Capt Lewis's Dog.

William Clark, August 17th, 1805.

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1. Describe the explorers' physical and mental condition in late August 1805.
2. What role did Sacagawea play?
3. What did Lewis decide?
4. Who did he meet?
5. When finally at the Shoshone's, what did they all discover?
6. Why did Lewis and Clark decide to go to the Shoshone? What did they need?
7. Describe Cameahwait.
8. Would the situation help them?



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