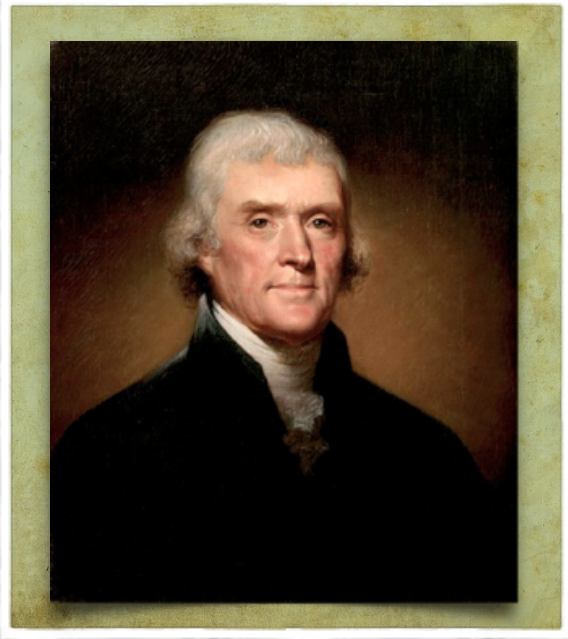




## WHY SUCH AN EXPEDITION?

### Jefferson's fascination for the West



**Thomas Jefferson**  
3rd president of the USA

While many nations dreamed of controlling the West, they still knew very little about the place itself. No-one was more anxious to change that than the new president, Thomas Jefferson. Though he had never travelled more than 50 miles west of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, Jefferson had always been fascinated by the West. His personal library at Monticello contained more books about the region than any other library in the world. Some of them told him that Mammoths and other prehistoric animals still roamed there. Others described erupting volcanoes, and a mountain of pure salt 180 miles long, 45 miles wide. Based on his reading, Jefferson believed that Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains might be the continent's highest that somewhere in the West, was a tribe of blue-eyed Indians who spoke Welsh descendants of a fable Prince Maida, who supposedly had settled in the New World three centuries before Columbus. Above all, like everyone else at the time, Jefferson believed in a North-West passage, a river, or a series of rivers connected by a short portage, that would cross the western mountains, make direct trade with the Orient easier and more profitable, and unlock the wealth of North America.

Ken Burns, The Journey of the Corps of Discovery, 1997

## JEFFERSON'S INSTRUCTIONS

### What were the goals?

"The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal streams of it, as, by it's course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce."

"[...] make yourself acquainted, as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers; their relations with other tribes or nations; their language, traditions, monuments; their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts, & the implements for these; their food, clothing and domestic accommodations; the diseases prevalent among them & the remedies they use."

"[Observe] the animals of the country generally, & especially those not known in the U.S. the remains and accounts of any which may [be] deemed rare or extinct »

**Thomas Jefferson, 1803**  
Instructions to Captain Lewis



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[myenglishclass.net/classes/premieres](http://myenglishclass.net/classes/premieres)

## WHY SUCH AN EXPEDITION?

1. Who was Thomas Jefferson?
2. Was he an adventurer?
3. What was his interest in the West?
4. How did people imagine the West?
5. What did people want to find there? Why?

## JEFFERSON'S INSTRUCTIONS

6. Write all the goals of the mission.
7. What goal was the principal and why?

