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## **A trip across America wouldn't have been possible if not for a woman: Sacagawea**

Sacagawea is one of the well-known members of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition. She was a Shoshone woman who served as their guide and was a teenager when she joined the expedition. Before the expedition, Sacagawea had been captured in 1800 by an opposing tribe, the Hidatsa; she was sold to a French-Canadian trapper named Toussaint Charbonneau, whom would be accompanying her on the Corps of Discovery expedition as her husband (Lewis, 1999).

On November 4, 1804, Sacagawea started accompanying Lewis and Clark as a guide, interpreter, an emissary. Sacagawea was the critical reason for Lewis and Clark to having strong diplomatic relation with Native Americans, especially with the Shoshones (Ripper, 2008). The need for Sacagawea for being an interpreter and emissary won't come into critical play until the spring and summer of 1805. In early August of 1805, Lewis and Clark needed to reach the other side of the Rockies. To accomplish this task, they needed horses. The Corps was planning on obtaining the horses through Sacagawea's birth tribe the Shoshones. Lewis encountered the Shoshones tribe by having spent an evening filled smoking and dances. However, the communication has been through Rouillard and sign language, so multiple conversations had to wait until Sacagawea was present (Ripper, 2008). The Shoshones tribe were worry of Clarks and his men believing they could be allies towards their enemies. Clark wanted the Shoshones to meet with the rest of the Corps especially with Sacagawea. Sacagawea would be able to establish a stable communication between the Shoshones and the Corps. Once Sacagawea met the Shoshones, the Tribe was able to form trust with Lewis and Clark. Through this encounter diplomatic talks started taking place along with peace.

From the start, Sacagawea's help was invaluable. She was able to reveal to Lewis and Clark essential passageways throughout the wilderness. She also quickly demonstrated her knowledge of edible plants along the course of the expedition, which helped in feeding the entire Corps. They passed through many lands that housed different Indian tribes allowing successful communications. Clark commented that Sacagawea's presence was able assured them of peaceful relations with the Indians of the West. (Benson, 2009).

Sacagawea was a vital component to the success of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Her skills as an interpreter between the Shoshone and the members of the Corps of Discovery helped settle diplomatic disputes that no one else was able to accomplish. Her knowledge of the routes, skills with the plants and wildlife were a vital trait that leads to some of the success of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery expedition.

Now we know Sacagawea was one of the reasons why the Corps of Discovery expedition was a success. So, my question is: How did Lewis and Clark impact the success of the Corps of Discovery expedition?