

Mandan/ Hidatsa Encounter Packet

Unit: Politics & Diplomacy (Elementary and Middle School)

To the Cooperative Group:

In this packet you will find:

1. a map showing locations of four tribal encounters
2. a short explanation of the Mandan/Hidatsa encounter
3. excerpts from Clark's journal concerning that encounter
4. four questions for your group to discuss and try to answer

Lewis and Clark spend the winter of 1804-1805 in North Dakota near the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes. During this winter the temperature dropped as low as 40 degrees below zero. The Captains had their men build a fort near the Mandan villages, which they named Fort Mandan. That is where they spent the winter, waiting for spring so that they could continue their journey. The Mandan and Hidatsa Indians were well acquainted with white fur traders and knew of many European customs. During the winter of 1804-1805, these Indians visited Fort Mandan almost daily and were helpful in providing food and information to the Americans. It was while they were at Fort Mandan that Lewis and Clark met Charboneau and his wife Sacagawea. It was also here that baby "Pomp" was born.

Here is what Captain Clark wrote in his journal about the Mandan/Hidatsa Indians visiting the Corps at Fort Mandan:

William Clark, December 31, 1804

"A number of Indians here every Day our blacksmith mending their axes, hoes etc for which the squaws bring corn for payment."

At the end of their stay, the day before leaving Fort Mandan, Clark wrote:

William Clark, Wednesday, March 20, 1805 *"I visited the Chief of the Mandans in the Course of the Day and Smoked a pipe with himself and Several old men."*

Questions and activities for cooperative group to consider:

- find the location of Fort Mandan
- how far did the Corps travel from St. Louis to the Mandan Villages?
(Use the scale of miles on your map)
- how did the time of year, the location, and the length of the stay affect how Lewis and Clark got along with the Indians?
- do you see any evidence in Captain Clark's journals that the encounter with the Mandan/Hidatsa was successful? explain.