

## **Tuesday, September 25, 1804**

Unit: Politics & Diplomacy (Elementary and Middle School)

On Tuesday morning, September 25, 1804 the captains set up a place to hold a council on a sandbar in the Bad River. After the two groups shared food with each other, Lewis gave a short speech telling the chiefs that the Americans were their new fathers and protectors. Then the captains gave out presents. They chose Black Buffalo to be the main chief and gave him special gifts. This made the other chiefs, especially the Partisan, angry. All the Indians began complaining that there were not enough gifts and that they were not very good gifts, either. Then the chiefs told Lewis and Clark that if the expedition wanted to continue up river, they would have to leave a whole pirogue (canoe) filled with trade goods for the Sioux.

Captain Lewis would not leave the pirogue with the Sioux and he tried to change the subject, but the chiefs were angry. The captains decided to take the chiefs on board the keelboat and offer them some whiskey. This was a big mistake, because instead of getting better, things got worse. Captain Clark took the chiefs back to shore, where warriors were standing with their bows and arrows ready to shoot.

**Read the following excerpts from William Clark's journal of Tuesday September 25, 1804, to see how it all ended that day:**

Note: Spelling and punctuation have been edited below for easier reading for elementary students. The original spelling is available from the journal entry for Tuesday, September 25, 1804, by William Clark.

William Clark  
Tuesday, September 25, 1804

Met in council at 12 o'clock and after smoking, agreeable to the usual custom, Captain Lewis proceeded to deliver speech which we were obliged to curtail for want of a good interpreter.

All our party paraded. Gave a medal to the grand chief named Black Buffalo (said to be a good man)...[The] second chief is named the Partisan. [He is] bad...the third is Buffalo Medicine...the first considerable man is called, Warzinggo and the second considerable man is called Second Bear.

Invited those chiefs on board to show them our boat....We gave them \_ glass of whiskey which they appeared to be very fond of...and soon began to be troublesome... I went with

those chiefs in on of the pirogues with five men, three (of us) and two Indians...as soon as I landed the pirogue, three of their young men seized the cable of the pirogue (in which we had presents, etc.) The chief soldier hugged the mast and the second chief was very insolent both in words and gestures...declaring I should not go on, stating he had not received presents sufficient from us.... I felt myself compelled to draw my sword and made a signal to the boat to prepare for action. At this motion Captain Lewis ordered all under arms in the boat. Those with me also showed a disposition to defend themselves and me. The grand chief then took hold of the rope and ordered the young warriors away. I felt myself warm and spoke in very positive terms.

Most of the warriors appeared to have their bows strung and took out their arrows from the quiver, as I (being surrounded ) was not permitted to return, I sent all the men except two interpreters to the boat. The pirogue soon returned with about 12 of our determined men ready for any event. This movement caused a number of the Indians to withdraw at a distance. Their treatment to me was very rough & I think justified roughness on my part. They all left my pirogue...nearly all went off ..After sometime I offered my Hand to the 17 2 chiefs who refused to receive it. I turned off and went with my men on board.

I had not proceeded more than 10 paces before the 1<sup>st</sup> chief and 3<sup>rd</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> brave men waded in after me. I took them in and went on board.

We proceeded on about 1 mile & anchored out off a willow island, placed a guard on shore to protect the cooks & guard in the boat, and fastened the pirogues to the boat. I call this island, Bad Humored Island as we were in a bad humor.