

Thursday, September 27, 1804

Unit: Politics & Diplomacy (Elementary and Middle School)

The next morning, Thursday, September 27, 1804, the captains and chiefs were up early. The captains again joined the chiefs in the Sioux village to talk, and that night they had another feast and dance. When the dancing ended the chiefs again went with Lewis and Clark to spend the night to the keelboat. But as the men paddled in the pirogue to the keelboat, there was an accident, which caused the Indians to become excited. The noise and confusion brought many warriors out to the riverbank. Although the captains and the chiefs made it safely to the keelboat, many warriors stayed on the riverbank all night to keep watch.

Lewis and Clark didn't like the idea of so many warriors standing by on the riverbank, because they thought maybe the Sioux intended to stop or rob them, so in the morning Lewis and Clark were determined to leave. Indians lined the shore. Black Buffalo and other chiefs appeared and came on board. They began their demand that the expedition remain with them longer, but Captain Lewis had made up his mind to leave and told the crew to make preparations to cast off. Several of the Partisan's warriors tried to stop them and took hold of the cable to keep the keelboat where it was. Clark saw what was happening and complained to Black Buffalo, who went forward to assure Lewis that the warriors simply wanted tobacco. Lewis was tired of giving gifts. He said, "All hands ready to depart," and he angrily ordered all Indians off the boat. Clark threw a carrot of tobacco on the bank and turned to Black Buffalo, who was now off the keelboat, saying, "You have told us you are a great man...have influence...take this tobacco and show us your influence by taking the rope from you men and letting go without coming to hostilities."

By this time the warriors were hurrying the women and children away from the riverbank. Black Buffalo wanted to show his influence with the tribe over the Partisan, so as Lewis threw the tobacco to the Indians, Black Buffalo seized the cable and then let it go. The expedition proceeded up the Missouri.

Now read about the events of Thursday, September 27, 1804 from Clark's journal.

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 27, 1804, by William Clark.

William Clark

Thursday, September 27, 1804

I rose early after a bad night's sleep. Found the chiefs all up and the bank as usual lined with spectators. We gave the 2 great chiefs a blanket a piece (or rather they took off agreeable to their custom the one they lay on) and each one peck of corn. After breakfast Capt. Lewis & and chiefs went on shore. I [stayed on the boat and] wrote a letter to Mr. P. Durion & prepared a medal and come certificates & sent [them] to Capt. Lewis.

After about half an hour, I went with them on shore. Those men left the boat with reluctance. I went first to the 2nd chiefs lodge, where a crowd cam around. After speaking on various subjects, I went to [other lodges] until the dance began, which was similar to the one of last night.

Capt. Lewis came on shore and we continued until we were sleepy and returned to our boat. The 2nd chief 7 one principal man accompanied us.... The man who steered not being much accustomed to steer, passed the bow of the boat & the perouge came broad side against the cable and broke it which obliged me to order in a loud voice, "All hands up and at their oars!" [This shouting] alarmed the chiefs. The chief hollered and alarmed the camp. In about 10 minutes the bank was lined with men armed. About 200 men appeared and after about _ hour returned all except about 60 men who continued on the bank all night. [We] all prepared on board for anything which might happen. We kept a strong guard all night in the boat. No sleep.