

The Adventures of Ben York and the Corps of Discovery

By James Farrell

In May of 1804 Mr. Clark, Mr. Lewis and some other young men from the area started off on an exciting adventure. Of course, I would be joining them because I, Ben York, was Mr. William Clark's manservant. We were going because President Jefferson had purchased the land from a man named Napoleon. I believe he wanted us, the core of discovery, to investigate the land, which was an unknown frontier. We all started upstream of the Mississippi River, not knowing what lay ahead.

For what seemed to be quite a long time, we continued upstream until we hit a place where we had to explore. Meriweather had been drawing and taking notes for most of the time of fish and bugs and animals, too. We went for an awfully long time until we met a large group of Indians. They seemed hostile until they noticed me and started praising me like I was some sort of god or something. I guess they've never seen a colored man like me before and I guess I looked powerful with my gun and Mr. Clark's luggage over my shoulder. The Indian's ordered the young lady to come forward. She offered us food but we did not accept any. A Frenchman then ran up, taking her by the wrist excitedly.

"I just purchased her from the Indians" he explained.

We all looked confused because we didn't know that Frenchmen lived out here and that they purchased Indians. It seemed a little strange since we just bought the land from the French. We then tried to communicate with Charbenu and Sacagewea, convincing them that they should come with us. After they thought, they agreed.

We continued exploring for awhile when we came across another tribe of Indians. This tribe just happened to be the one that Sacagewea was kidnapped from. She saw her brother and they ran up to each other and hugged and I started laughing. I mean, we had no idea what was going on until they explained that she had been kidnapped and sold many times. We then understood and left. We saw horses and decided to ask for use of them. We asked Sacagewea to relay the message to the Chief. He thought very hard about it. Once he had his mind made up, we set off. Oh and one little thing-we had the horses. We rode along, I with my gun strapped across my back. We kept going into the sunset, Lewis checking the compass. We got to the Rocky Mountains and just barely conquered them. I was working so hard to climb these towering mountains.

After defeating the huge mountains, reaching the sea air seemed like a breeze. As a matter of fact, it was a breeze. The cool air seemed so relaxing. There were gulls overhead and the tide was smashing rocks. Then we saw something amazing – a huge skeleton that I believed to be a whale. I know that it was in one of the few books that Charbenu brought. We set up camp and stayed there until spring.

We then left. Sacagewea helped us getting there but we would use maps getting back. We had to follow in the same route we used getting here. We crossed the Rockies again not using so much effort since there was no snow. The rivers were easy riding since it all was downstream. We walked through the forests in the same paths. I always had my gun ready though. We saw beautiful mountains, hills and plains. There were beautiful

sunrises and sunsets. We felt as though we had done something that no one else could ever do. I felt as though I could jump up and hug Mr. Clark because if I wasn't his servant, I could have never gone on such an amazing journey. A few days later we reached home. We had gone across the country and been the first Americans to go from one side to the other. We were the corps of discovery.