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This artistic impression depicts an event which occurred on November 11, 1805 during the Lewis & Clark Expedition to the Pacific Ocean. Captain William Clark tells us about the day in his journal as being "...a truly disagreeable one..." but those words hardly describe the actual situation. The [Army Center for Military History tells us more](#): "After days of rain and wind the Corps of Discovery was trapped on a wave-lashed stretch of shore, just miles from their ultimate goal - the Pacific Ocean. Their clothes were rotting from their backs and their food supply had been reduced to pounded fish.

"As they struggled to improve their situation, they were astonished to see a small canoe with five Indians paddle into the cove through '...tremendous waves breaking with great violence against the shores...'; Clark's journal noted. These Indians, most likely Chinooks, had fresh salmon to trade and in return for 13 of them, they [the Native Americans] received fish hooks and other 'trifling things.' This gave the Corps the first fresh food they'd tasted in days.

"The cove that sheltered them is almost directly across the river from present day Astoria, Oregon and the steep hillsides that hemmed them in are now cut by Highway 401 which follows the river." Illustration, called "The Dismal Niche," by Michael Haynes (Courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Team). [Online via The Army Center of Military History](#).

Sacajawea, like other members of the [Corps of Discovery](#), had never seen the Pacific Ocean. Leaving the [Columbia Gorge](#), the group mistakenly believed they had, at last, found the western coast of North America. But they were only at the upper estuary of the Columbia River.

They [reached their goal](#) in early January, 1806. On the 6th, Lewis recorded:

*Charbono and his Indian woman were also of the party; the Indian woman was very impo[rt]unate to be permitted to go, and was therefore indulged; she observed that she had traveled a long way with us to see the great waters, and that now that monstrous fish [a whale had washed ashore on the beach] was also to be seen, she thought it very hard she could not be permitted to see either [she had never yet been to the Ocean.] (Journals, page 300.)*

The next day, Sacajawea saw "the great waters" for the first time. She was likely standing at Tillamook Head, about 650 feet above the sea. Heartfelt (albeit misspelled) words in Clark's Journal record the moment:

*...from this point I beheld the grandest and most pleasing prospects which my eyes ever surveyed, in my frount [front] a boundless Ocean; ... the Seas rageing with emence [immense] wave and brakeing [breaking] with great force from the rocks of Cape Disappointment as far as I could See to the N.W. ... the nitches and points of high land which forms this Corse [Course] for a long ways aded to the inoumerable [innumerable] rocks of emence Sise [immense size] out at a great distance from the Shore and against which the Seas brak [break] with great force gives this Coast a most romantic appearance.*

Then it was time to head back to St. Louis. Along the way, Native Americans—like the [Nez Perce](#)—were of great help to Lewis, Clark and their companions. (Later, however, the United States government repaid that [assistance](#) in a [cataclysmic](#) manner.)

When the expedition returned to the Mandan village, Sacajawea and her family remained at the place where they had joined the Corps in 1805. Her husband received money, and 320 acres of land, for his efforts.

Sacajawea received nothing.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PACIFIC-OCEAN-Sacajawea>

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