

Lewis and Clark #1

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1 Did Lewis and Clark Treat the Native Americans they Encountered Respectfully?

Lewis and Clark did not treat the natives with respect based on their writing and their speech to the Otoe Tribe. Throughout Document E, you can see Lewis and Clark referring to the Native Americans as children. He also instills fear in the Natives, forcing them to submit to the demands of white men.

Children . . . you are to live in peace with all the white men, for they are [the great chief's] children; neither wage war against the red men your neighbors, for they are equally his children and he is bound to protect them.

- *Lewis and Clark to the Otoe Indians, August 4, 1804.*

It's clear from the text Lewis and Clark think of themselves not as equals, but above the Native Americans. Additionally, Lewis and Clark killed a Native American stole their gun, leaving a medal over the Native's dead body to intimidate the tribe. We can see this in Document B

We left one of our horses and took four of the best of those of the Indians. While the men were preparing the horses, I put four shields and two bows and quivers of arrows which had been left [by the Indians] on the fire. . . . I also retook the flag but left the medal about the neck of the dead man that they might be informed who we were.

- *Diary of Meriwether Lewis, July 27, 1806.*

Lewis and Clark were insensitive to the Native Americans and their needs. In addition to calling the blackfeet “a vicious, lawless and rather an abandoned set of wretches.”, the two explorers brought diseases that killed up to 90% of some tribes. Times magazine agrees, calling Lewis, Clark's, and Jefferson's land-grab policy, a direct of what they call “Cultural Genocide” and “ethnic cleansing”