Indian Education for All

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Montana Office of Public Instruction
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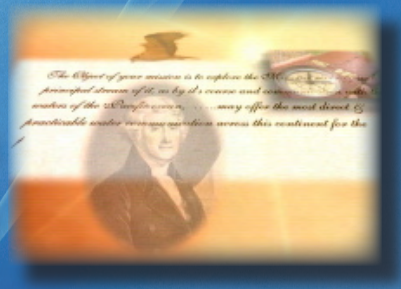
Lesson plan for:

# The Story of the Bitterroot

(64-minute DVD)

8th Grade



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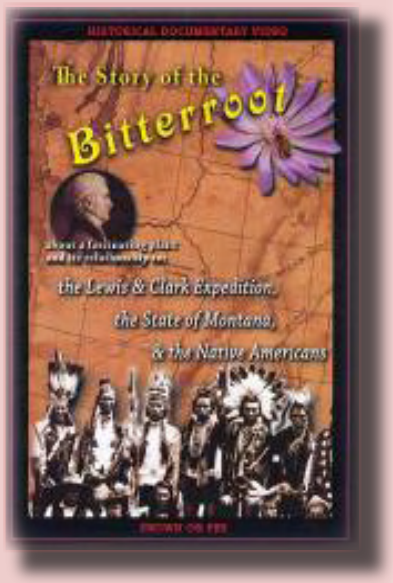
# Lesson Plan for:

# The Story of the Bitterroot

## (64-minute DVD) 8th Grade




## Unit Overview

***This lesson plan is designed to help students understand how important the natural world is to Native American culture. Specifically, the bitterroot plant is used to demonstrate the link between the natural world and Salish tribal culture past, present and future. Additionally, the Salish tribal perspective on the Lewis and Clark expedition is presented. Brief answers to classroom questions are provided. In depth answers can be derived from the teacher resource materials listed at the end.***

## Montana Content Standards

### Social Studies Standards:

#2: Students analyze how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance to understand the operation of government and to demonstrate civic responsibility.

#3: Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions, movement, and regions).

#4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

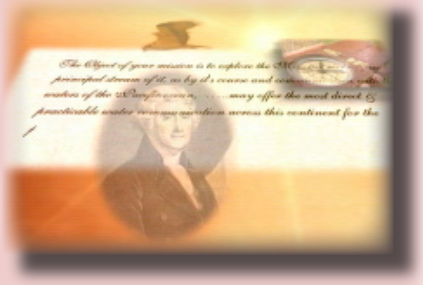
#6: Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

### Science Content Standards:

#5: Students, through the inquiry process, understand how scientific knowledge and technological developments impact communities, cultures, and societies.

#6: Students understand historical developments in science and technology.

## Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians



**#3:** The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the "discovery" of North America.

**#4:** Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given to them."

**#5:** Federal policies, put in place throughout American history, have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today.

**#6:** History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from the Indian perspective frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

## Brief Description of the DVD

The 64-minute DVD focuses primarily on the Montana Salish Indian culture, but interweaves themes common to both non native and Native Americans. Native American perspectives are strongly represented with tribal elders being the predominant source of the information contained in the DVD.

It is organized into eight discrete sections; each is individually accessible and has a title and a theme. Some sections are more relevant than others for Indian Education For All:

1. **Legend of the Bitterroot:** This section tells of the Salish Indian tribe's story of how the bitterroot came to be. It is told through the words of tribal elders and the tribal ethno-botanist. It begins the examination of the plant's importance to the tribe. It also sets up the encounter with Lewis and Clark during the tribe's gathering together for the annual buffalo hunt. It ends with the arrival of "peculiar strangers"- Lewis and Clark. This section makes use of creative techniques to bring a visual richness to the program. (6 minutes)

2. **"Corps of Discovery":** Starting with Thomas Jefferson's send off statements to Lewis and Clark,

this section explores their mandate for science, particularly with regard to botany. This section utilizes recognized experts on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Through the words of Salish tribal members, it also tells the Native American perspective with regard to Lewis and Clark's so called "discovery" of the native peoples and their lands. This segment also follows the journey of Lewis' specimens of the bitterroot plant he collected at Traveler's Rest in Montana to England where the plant was given its Latin name. Also discussed was the remarkable ability of the plant to come back to life when apparently dead. (12 minutes)

3. **Botany:** This segment provides an in depth look at the botany of the bitterroot. Utilizing a botanist it explores the hardiness of the plant and its variations. It is here that the special beauty of the plant is seen in all its glory. Both macro and time lapse photography techniques are utilized. (6 minutes)

4. **The State Flower:** Starting at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892, this section tells how the bitterroot came to be the state flower of Montana. In many ways the Columbian Exposition was a watershed event in American history, and this is briefly examined before moving on with the story of the bitterroot. The creation of Columbus Day and the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show provide avenues to Native American study themes. Through a reenactment, the DVD tells of how Mary Alderson, a Montana suffragette, led the effort to name a state flower. (8 minutes)

5. **When We Were Children:** This part tells the heartfelt story of Salish Indian elders remembering their childhood days gathering bitterroots in the plains of Missoula, Montana and the Bitterroot Valley. It tells of their travels to these areas and the rituals that surrounded the harvest. This section recounts how bitterroots were prepared for eating and how they are preserved for use in the winter. It ends with how things have changed over the years. Extensive use is made of archival photographs. (11 minutes)

6. **Mr. Bitterroot:** This segment tells the story of a real character-Henry Grant, "Mr. Bitterroot," a non-Indian of Hamilton who devoted much of his life to the cultivation and study of the bitterroot. During Bitterroot Days at the local museum tribal members are invited to come and speak, helping to bridge the two cultures. (11 minutes)

7. **The Gathering:** In this section we accompany the Salish tribal members as they go out to the plains of Camas Prairie, Montana to gather the bitterroot. It is here that tribal leaders pass on their culture to the young people. They explain the importance of this event and how it is religious in its very nature. Members of the tribe from the very old to the very young participate in digging the root and then assemble to peel it in preparation for its cooking. The tribe then heads back to the "longhouse" to participate in a feast. The gathering and feast itself are traditions that go back untold generations in their history. (8 minutes)

Bitterroot

8. **The Future:** It is here that the issues that surround the plant's continued existence are examined. We see school children planting tiny bitterroot plants so as to eventually harvest the seeds and spread them in areas which used to have bitterroots. This segment also examines the tribal elders' concerns over the cultivation of the plant. Finally, the program ends with the hope that all peoples will be able to come together in understanding of each other. (5 minutes)

# Section One:
# "Legend of the Bitterroot"

## Section Goal

- Learn about the difference between oral histories versus written history learned from books and media
- Examine how history and values are passed down from each generation
- Learn about pictographs
- Learn the importance of the buffalo hunt

## Themes

- Storytelling
- The buffalo hunt
- Pictographs

## Questions and Answers

1. According to the Salish how did the bitterroot come to be? *(The creator provided it to save the starving people.)*

2. Who only can say the first bitterroot prayer? *(It has to be a woman. Women traditionally were gatherers of the natural foods.)*

3. Why were prayers said before the first harvest of the bitterroots? *(To thank the creator for providing a bountiful harvest.)*

4. What is the traditional tool used to dig the bitterroot? *(A digging stick or petzah is used.)*

5. What are Coyote stories? Why are they only told in the winter? *(They are tales from long ago when animals and humans could speak to each other. The Coyote is a supernatural creature, a trickster, and a helper-guide to humans. They are told in winter during hibernation since some animals would be unhappy to hear unflattering stories about themselves. These animals would bring bad luck to the story teller in that case. Bear and snake are two examples.)*

6. Where did the Salishan peoples live 200 years ago? *(They lived throughout the Northwest, from Montana all the way to the Pacific Ocean.)*

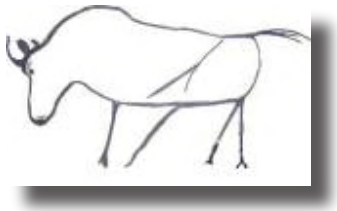
7. Why might the people have been starving during some years? *(Conditions like rain and temperature vary year to year affecting the quantity of natural foods and animals available.)*

8. Do all McDonald's serve the same tasting food? Do natural foods vary in their taste depending on the area they are found? Why? *(Modern fast food is prepared under controlled conditions that ensure its consistency across the United States. Natural foods flavors vary according to the mineral content of the soil.)*

9. What were the different roles in gathering food for men and women? *(Women were traditionally the gathers of natural foods, while men were the hunters.)*

10. What were the uses made of the buffalo? *(clothing, tents, blankets, etc. see: http://www.bluecloud.org/11.html for 103 uses)*

11. What are pictographs? What do they show? *(Visit:*
*www.pictographcave.org – access images from Pictograph cave*
*www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3951/is_200504/ai_n13602235/print*
*www.fs.fed.us/r1/helena/resources/heritage_resources/prehistoric_rock_art.shtml*
*www.sacredland.org/endangered_sites_pages/weatherman_draw.html)*



Internet

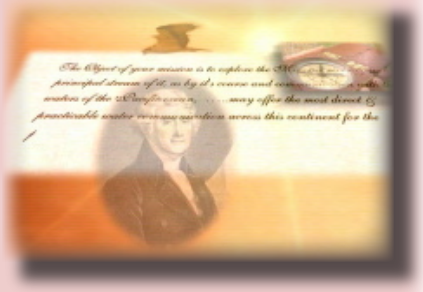
## Learning Activities

1. Ask a grandparent or parent to tell you a story about how life was when he/she was young, perhaps a story about a trip he/she took, or a special event in his/her life. Paraphrase this story to the best of your abilities. Read the story out loud to the class.

2. Show on a map where bison used to roam and the ways Salish peoples had to go to find them.

3. Read some stories from Johnny Arlee's book "Coyote Stories of the Montana Salish Indians." What do these stories teach?

4. Have students draw some pictographs to tell a story.



## Vocabulary

pictograph, petzah, spetlum

# Section Two:
# "The Corps of Discovery"

## Section Goal

- Learn about a perspective of the Lewis and Clark expedition

## Theme

- Discovery or Encounter?

## Questions and Answers

1. Who was the first white man to describe the bitterroot? *(Meriwether Lewis)*

2. Why were the native plants, including edible ones, unfamiliar to explorers? *(They didn't grow in the eastern part of the country where they came from.)*

3. Who helped many of the early white explorers travel in the western United States? *(The Native Americans who were familiar with the area. They had knowledge of things such as trails, mountain passes, hunting grounds, etc.)*

4. How is the Native American perspective of the Lewis and Clark expedition different from what is often portrayed? *(The dominant Euro-centric perspective is that the Native peoples were discovered by the Corps of Discovery. The Native perspective is that it was a chance encounter that eventually led to the destruction of much of their way of life.)*

5. What was the importance of the bitterroot to the Salish when Lewis and Clark passed through? *(The bitterroot was an important part of their diet and had great cultural significance.)*

6. When the bitterroot was given its names, Latin and colloquial, it already had had a Salish name. What were they? *(Lewisia rediva, rock rose or bitterroot, spetlum)*

## Activities

1. Write out the Indian name, the common name and the Latin name for some plants in your area. (Contact local tribes in your area.)

2. Press and dry some common plants in your area.

3. Take a class trip to one of the state parks through which Lewis and Clark passed (http://fwp.mt.gov/parks/lewisclark/visit/default.html).
    - Giant Springs
    - Missouri Headwaters
    - Beaverhead Rock
    - Clark's Lookout
    - Travelers' Rest
    - Pirogue Island

Discuss the Native American aspect of the site. (Sakakawea can always be used to portray a Native America connection if there aren't any readily available references.)

## Vocabulary

Lewisia rediva, spetlum

# Section Three: "Botany"

## Section Goal

- Learn about the life cycle of the bitterroot

## Theme

- The resilience of native plants

## Questions and Answers

1. Describe the kinds of habitats in which the Bitterroot can be found. *(Mostly arid well-drained sites)*

2. Is the bitterroot a cactus? *(No, although it does resemble one.)*

3. When do the roots contain the most nutrients? *(When the plant is in the leaf stage.)*

## Activities

1. Plant bitterroot seeds: http://www.horizonherbs.com/product.asp?specific=jpqormf8

2. Go out with a local botanist and identify edible plants in your area.

## Vocabulary

resilience

# Section four:
# "The State Flower"

## Section Goal

- Understand how America was changing at the turn of the century

## Themes

- The Columbian Exposition, the 1892 World's Fair in Chicago (16 years after the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana; three years after Montana became a state)
- Montana's state flower

## Questions and Answers

1. Why is Columbus Day viewed differently by Native Americans and non-natives? *(Columbus Day celebrates the so-called discovery of the Americas, though people had been living here for millennia. To the Native American it represents the beginning of drastic changes in their way of life.)*

2. What were some dramatic changes occurring at the turn of the 19th century? *(Technology was becoming the driving force of the economy with electricity being the prime factor in this transition.)*

## Activities

1. Research Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and the kind of performances it had. Learn about the Indians that traveled with the show, even when it traveled to Europe.

2. Research the Columbian Exposition and the various indigenous cultures represented there.

## Vocabulary

exposition, pavilion, circuitous

Bitterroot

# Section Five:
# "When We were Children"

## Section Goal

- Learn about how the Native Americans' way of life drastically changed, and how they were forced onto reservations
- See the importance of native foods to the indigenous peoples. Note that this importance goes beyond sustenance and is in fact an integral part of their spiritual world

## Themes

- Immigration of white settlers
- Reservations
- Loss of traditional collecting areas

## Questions and Answers

1. What kinds of people moved onto the Indian lands in the 19th century? *(fur trappers, prospectors, then homesteaders)*

2. Why were the Bitterroot Salish moved up to a reservation? *(To group them together with the Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille tribes so that the government could more easily control them, and to open up lands for the homesteaders.)*

3. How do you think the name Flathead was derived? *(A common misconception at the time was that Salish infants had their skulls deformed to produce a flattened brow. Though this was practiced in some Native cultures, like the Mayan culture in Central America, it was never done by the Salish. It was also attributed to the sign language gesture for the Bitterroot Salish-see http://opi.mt.gov/Streamer/indianEd/MT_Tribes_MOV.html. DVD copies are available at your school library.)*

4. What were the boarding schools? What was their purpose? *(They were schools that removed Native American children from their parents and culture and prohibited the children from speaking their native languages. Their purpose was to assimilate the children into the Anglo culture. For*

*more information see http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/Resources/Indpolicyhistory.pdf.)*

5. Name a Salish elder from the video? *(Sophie Moise, Johnny Arlee, Oshanee Kenmille, Louie Adams, Steven Small Salmon)*

6. How long is the bitterroot digging season? *(Only a few weeks.)*

7. How were the bitterroots preserved? *(They were dried in the sun.)*

8. What are some of the ways to prepare bitterroots? *(Boiled with deer broth, service berries, or huckleberries.)*

9. What is the importance of the native foods? *(They provided sustenance and were a gift from the creator which were received with thanks.)*

## Activities

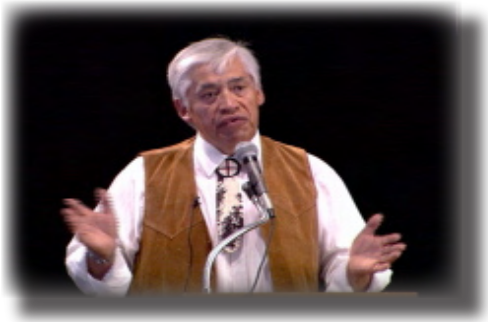
1. Locate the Flathead Indian Reservation on a map. Locate the Bitterroot Valley.

2. Dry some food items from the local market (use a dehydrator, sun or an oven). Prepare these items for eating.

3. Locate on a map the reservation that is closest to your school. Research what tribe or tribes live there. Find out what language(s) they speak.

## Vocabulary

reservation, sarvis [service] berries; assimilated



# Section Six:
# "Mr. Bitterroot"

## Section Goal

- Show how the bitterroot plant is important to our planet's biodiversity

## Theme

- Appreciation of the bitterroot plant

## Questions and Answers

1. What kinds of color variations does the bitterroot exhibit? *(from all white to deep purple)*

2. Why is the bitterroot getting harder to find? *(The land is being covered with houses, farms, ranches, and stores.)*

3. Why do you think tribal members travel to Hamilton during Bitterroot Days to speak at the museum? *(They want the local people to know that they used to live in the area and that it still has deep cultural significance to them.)*

## Activities

1. Identify endangered plants in your area.

2. Learn the names of edible plants in your area.

# Section Seven: "The Gathering"

## Section Goal

- Learn the importance of preserving tribal customs

## Theme

- See how the Salish tribe keeps their culture alive by gathering bitterroots as a group

## Questions and Answers

1. Why do tribes like the Salish and others continue to gather bitterroots even though they don't rely upon traditional ways of obtaining most of their foods? *(It represents an important part of their cultural tradition.)*

2. Why are prayers said before they start to dig the bitterroots? *(To thank the Creator for providing the bitterroot to eat and for the upcoming harvest of the other edible plants gathered during the summer.)*

3. Why are the roots peeled right away? *(That is when they peel the easiest.)*

4. What is the feast and why do you think it is important to tribal members? *(The feast presents an opportunity for the tribe to gather together and celebrate a tradition that has been around for thousands of years. This is one of the many ways the tribal culture is kept vibrant and alive.)*

## Activities

1. Invite members from a nearby reservation to come and talk about how they keep their culture alive (Contact information to reach tribal governments: http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/resources/dirindianed.pdf).

Bitterroot

# Section Eight: "The Future"

## Section Goal

- To make students think about how the world is changing

## Theme

- Learn how some people are trying to save the bitterroot as its habitat disappears

## Questions and Answers

1. Why is the bitterroot getting harder to find? *(Areas are getting covered over with housing developments, shopping malls, parking lots, etc.)*

2. Why are some people trying to save the bitterroot? *(They believe it is a valuable part of our ecosystem.)*

3. Why do tribal elders resist the cultivation of the bitterroot? *(They feel it is a path to creating a monoculture of plants that live devoid of any connection to the natural world or their culture.)*

4. How might people of different cultures come to better understand one another? *(By learning more about each others' beliefs and the understanding that we all are "people.")*

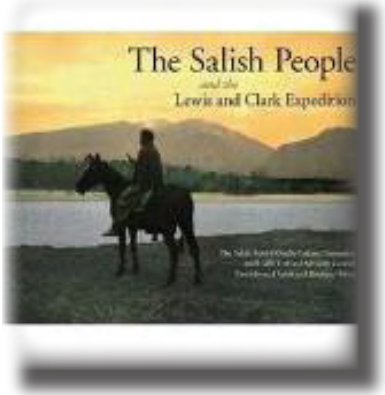
## Activities

1. Use Google Maps to locate your school. How much undeveloped area is nearby?

2. Research what natural foods are important to the tribe nearest your school.

## Vocabulary

monoculture




# Books
## for students to read.

### Note

- **The Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee asks that materials involving Coyote stories only be used during the winter months.**

- Teachers are encouraged to let students know that out of respect for tribal culture they should not go out and collect bitterroots. Other foods, such as rose hips or morel mushrooms, could be gathered as examples of traditional foods as they remain abundant.

- Arlee, Johnny/Salish Culture Committee, 1999, Coyote Stories of the Montana Salish Indians. Salish Kootenai College Press/Montana Historical Society, SKC Press, Box 117, Pablo, MT 59855

- Whealdon, Bon I. and others "I Will be Meat for My Salish": The Buffalo and the Montana Writers Project Interviews on the Flathead Indian Reservation, SKC Press, Box 117, Pablo, MT 59855

- Salish Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2005

- Salish Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2005

- Arlee, Johnny, Over a Century of Moving to the Drum: Salish Indian Celebrations on the Flathead Indian Reservation, (Describes the early powwows), SKC Press, Box 117, Pablo, MT 59855

- Bigart, Robert and Woodcock, Clarence: In the Name of the Salish and Kootenai Nation: The 1855 Hell Gate Treaty and the Origin of the Flathead Indian Reservation, SKC Press, Box 117, Pablo, MT 59855

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# Teacher Resources.

## Web Sites

- Lesson plans for state parks: http://www.opi.mt.gov/indianed/stateparks.html
- Pictograph Cave: http://visitmt.com/history/Montana_the_Magazine_of_Western_History/caves.htm And: http://www.pictographcave.org/
- About Sarvis berries: http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1997/6-13-1997/serviceberry.html
- Northwest Education Magazine: "In the Language of Our Ancestors" (article on keeping language alive, also other relevant articles) http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-03/language.php
- Boarding schools and their effect on Indian children: http://www.kporterfield.com/aicttw/articles/boarding school.html
- Marr, Carolyn, Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest University of Washington Library http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr.html
- Lewis and Clark National Bicentennial Exhibition: Lewis and Clark lesson plans-includes modules on Native Americans: http://www.lewisandclarkexhibit.org/4_0_0/page_4_1_0_0.html
- Montana State Web site on the bitterroot : http://fwp.mt.gov/parks/lewisclark/plants/bitterroot.html
- Salish Language Revitalization Institute: http://salishworld.com/
- OPI – Indian Education for All Web site: http://www.opi.mt.gov/indianed/Index.html
- Contact information to reach Montana (and Wyoming) tribal leaders: http://www.mtwytlc.com/

## Traveling Trunks

- Montana Historical Society Traveling Trunks/Exhibits: Archaeology Tool Kit, Ulm Pishkun Buffalo Jump
- Montana Native Plant Society: Native Plants, traveling trunk is rich in materials, field guides, curriculum, and visual aids to identify plants native to this Rocky Mountain palouse prairie region. http://www.thenaturecenter.org/resources/trunks.htm

- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks trunk: Life at Pictograph Cave Focuses on archaeology in Montana. Contains pictograph and artifact replicas, a video, slide show, and lesson plans Contact: 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105, (406) 247-2955

- Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture committee Web site: http://www.cskt.org/hc/salish.htm

## Books & Articles:

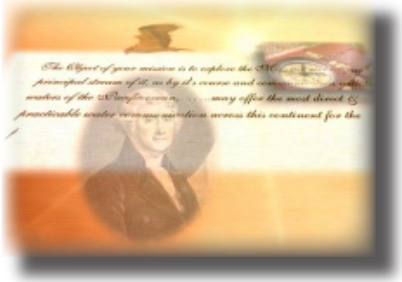

- Branch, Douglas, 1997, The Hunting of the Buffalo, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska.

- DeSanto, Jerry, 1993, Bitterroot: Montana State Flower, Lere Press, Babb, Montana. (currently out of print, but available on Amazon)

- Montana Native Plant Society article: www.umt.edu/mnps/Lewisia_rediviva.pdf

- A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy (PDF): http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/Resources/Indpolicyhistory.pdf

- Cutright, Paul R, 1989, Lewis and Clark: Pioneering Naturalists. University of Nebraska Press.



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