



# DAILY DILEMMA #1

LEWIS & CLARK

## Fall 1804

You and your Corps of Discovery are approaching the Mandan Villages. You know this is the trade center of the Northern Plains. Native Americans and white businessmen travel long distances to trade in the late summer. On your way to the Mandan villages you and your men have seen many abandoned villages. The Mandan Indians suffered great losses of life due to a small pox epidemic brought by the white man. You discover there are two Mandan villages, one led by Chief Big White on the west bank of the river, and another led by Chief Black Cat on the east bank.

You have yet to begin your journey into the great unknown. So far, all the distance you have come from St. Louis has been in familiar territory. In October you meet the Mandans. Chief Big White and his hunting party greet you; peace seems possible. The Mandans are delighted that your expedition requires that you spend the next five months wintering with them.

You are interested in any information the local traders can provide. You invite them to your camp to discuss the geography. One of your visitors is a man named Toussaint Charbonneau, a French Canadian. He is living among the Hidatsa Indians as an independent trader. Charbonneau has a young Indian wife. He won her in a bet from the Hidatsa warriors who kidnapped her from the Shoshone.

Toussaint Charbonneau wishes to sign on with your Expedition as an interpreter. His wife speaks both Shoshone and Hidatsa. Charbonneau can translate the Hidatsa into French to Drouillard (a member of the Corps of Discovery). Drouillard can then translate to you and Clark in English.

Communication with the Native Americans is of utmost importance. The success of your expedition may depend on the willingness of the Native Americans to trade. Your needs should be explained in their native tongue. One of your Corps members, MacKenzie, has acquainted himself with Toussaint Charbonneau and he is not impressed. Apparently, the translation chain does not flow as well as you originally believed.

Should you hire Toussaint Charbonneau and in the process agree to take along his wife, even though she is pregnant?