



THE NAVAJOS

THE LONG WALK AND THE ESCAPE TO UTAH

TEACHER BACKGROUND

In the winter of 1863/1864, after their crops, livestock, and homes had been destroyed by the United States Army under Christopher “Kit” Carson, over 8,000 Navajos were forced to walk twelve-to-fifteen miles a day—with little food and little or no protection from the winter weather—from their ancestral homelands to the remote and desolate Bosque Redondo Reservation. The memory of the Long Walk has haunted generations of Navajos, and the story of the Long Walk is important to the history of Utah’s Navajos. Some Navajos were able to escape the army and moved into what is now southeastern Utah. Their continued presence in this area eventually led the government to add additional lands in Utah to the Navajo Reservation.

OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to examine United States Indian policy by understanding the events surrounding the Long Walk. They also will be able to understand how the Long Walk and the escape to Utah serve as examples of Navajo determination and persistence.

TEACHER MATERIALS

At a Glance: The Long Walk and the Escape to Utah

Navajo Interactive Map (available online at www.UtahIndians.org)

We Shall Remain: The Navajo (chapter 2, 5:57–9:02)

STUDENT MATERIALS

Federal Indian Policy Vocabulary

Grey Eyes Remembers the Long Walk

“The Carson Expedition—Depredations of the Navajoes”

“Kit Carson’s Expedition against the Indians”

“The Navajoes”

TIME FRAME - VERSATILE

Two standard class periods with homework

One block period with homework

Three standard class periods

PROCEDURE

Using the Navajo Interactive Map, the information from *At a Glance*, and/or a clip from *We Shall Remain: The Navajo*, introduce students to the story of the Long Walk. Ask the students to think about what it would have taken to survive such an experience, whether they had been among those who were forced to Bosque Redondo or whether they were part of the group that escaped north. Ask the students to consider how these experiences might have affected the future of the Navajo. Give the students the Federal Indian Policy Vocabulary worksheet and tell them to study the vocabulary.



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PROCEDURE (CONT.)

The next day (or following a study period), review the Federal Indian Policy Vocabulary and then distribute copies of the newspaper articles and the Navajo oral histories. Have the students read the newspaper stories and the oral histories. The students should review the materials and write a description of what the newspaper stories and oral histories suggest about federal Indian policy. Following this activity, the class may discuss how primary historical documents can reflect a historical event in different ways.

ASSESSMENT/PRODUCTS

Discussion contributions

Writing assignment

VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

Continue the story of the Navajo to include the restoration of the Navajo to their ancestral homelands with the Treaty of 1868.

Have the students view *We Shall Remain: Trail of Tears* and compare/contrast the Navajo Long Walk to the Cherokee removal experience.

Have the students do additional research/writing assignments on a particular aspect of federal Indian policy or a specific element of Navajo government or culture

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Bailey, L. R. *The Long Walk: A History of the Navajo Wars, 1846–1848*. Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1964.

Benally, Clyde, with Andrew O. Wiget, John R. Alley, and Garry Blake. *Dinejí Nákéé' Nááhane': A Utah Navajo History*. Monticello, Utah: San Juan School District, 1982.

Denetdale, Jennifer. *The Long Walk: The Forced Navajo Exile*. New York: Chelsea House, 2008.

Iverson, Peter. *Diné: A History of the Navajo*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.

Maryboy, Nancy C., and David Begay. "The Navajos of Utah." In *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Ed. Forrest S. Cuch. Salt Lake City: Utah Division of Indian Affairs and the Utah Division of State History, 2000.

McPherson, Robert S. *The Northern Navajo Frontier 1860–1900: Expansion through Adversity*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

State Standards

High School – United States History II: 1/3/a,c&e

Accreditation Competencies

Thinking and Reasoning/Understands the process of accessing background knowledge when organizing information/Recognizes situations in which a variety of conclusions can be drawn from the same information; Social and Civic Responsibility/Understands that appropriate social interaction is critical for productive civic engagement/Analyzes diverse viewpoints of social and civic issues in local, regional and global events

NCSS Standards

High School: 1/d,f&g; 2/d&e; 6/a,d,&f



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AT A GLANCE: THE LONG WALK AND THE ESCAPE TO UTAH

The Navajos' ancestral homeland covered parts of what is now Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. The Navajo people believe that their ancestors emerged into the place between four sacred mountains and that they have lived there since time immemorial. Without the Navajos' knowledge or consent, the United States laid claim to these lands in 1848 as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the U.S.-Mexican War.

As the Civil War began in 1861, the United States government sought greater control over New Mexico in order to protect gold shipments coming from California and to guarantee that the area would not fall into Confederate hands. Federal officials also wanted to secure valuable mining and grazing lands for white settlers, who had moved into the Navajo homeland in the 1850s and 1860s. These outsiders threatened the Navajos' livelihoods and way of life, and the strain on resources and cultural differences between the two groups led to constant tension. After many soldiers were removed from the area to fight in the Civil War, conflict between the Navajos and settlers escalated.

In 1862, Brigadier General James Carleton was given command of New Mexico Territory. Carleton, like many non-Indians at the time, felt that the best way to resolve the conflict was to remove the Navajos to a reservation, where they would be taught to farm and learn Christianity. As a destination for the Navajos, Carleton chose to build the Bosque Redondo Reservation, guarded by the nearby military post Fort Sumner, on the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico. Though many military officials warned the site contained

insufficient resources, Carleton persevered with his plan and sent word to the Navajo leaders that they must surrender by July 20, 1863. Noted trapper and scout Christopher "Kit" Carson was chosen to oversee the removal of the Navajos from their homeland to Bosque Redondo. Carson and his approximately seven hundred soldiers, scouts, and New Mexico volunteers began a series of patrols through Navajo land, destroying crops, homes, watering holes, and livestock in order to force the Navajos to surrender.

Facing starvation, in the winter of 1863/1864 many Navajos decided to surrender to the U.S. government at places like Fort Canby and Fort Wingate. In the book *Diné: A History of the Navajo* Peter Iverson writes, "Albert H. Pfeiffer led an expedition through Canyon de Chelly in January 1864, taking as prisoners Diné who were 'half starved and naked.' Pfeiffer reported that he killed one Navajo woman 'who obstinately persisted in throwing rocks and pieces of wood at the soldiers.'" After they surrendered to the army, the Navajos endured a three hundred mile forced march, with little food, clothing, shelter, or medical attention, through unusually cold winter conditions. Many sick and elderly died, and other tribes took the Long Walk as an opportunity to raid the Navajos for women and children who could be sold into slavery. The Long Walk continued throughout 1864, and over eight thousand Navajos made the long journey to Bosque Redondo. Numbers vary as to how many Navajos died or disappeared along the trail, but it may have been two hundred or more.

Once the Navajos reached Bosque Redondo, they found miserable conditions. The compiled



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problems of poor planning by Carleton, a feud between the army and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Navajos' unfamiliarity with how to prepare the food provided, bad water, and crop destruction due to weather and insects all meant that the Navajos had insufficient food and shelter. In 1868, in response to Navajo petitions and concern over conditions at Bosque Redondo, a treaty was signed that allowed the Navajos to return to a reservation in their ancestral lands. Though they had participated in large-scale farming and had lived in large settlements while at Bosque Redondo, once they returned to their homeland they resumed their traditional lifestyle, including living in small groups and practicing their own cultural traditions.

Utah plays an important part in the story of the Long Walk, as many Navajos were able to escape the army raids. The secluded and difficult-to-reach areas in what is now known as southeastern Utah, though loosely controlled by the opposing Ute tribe, made excellent places of refuge for the Navajos. For example, a Navajo man named Haskeneinii, who lived near Monument Valley, was able to escape the advancing troops and live at Navajo Mountain for the next four

years. Through the efforts of Navajo leaders in Utah, particularly Manuelito, Utah's Navajos were able to survive and avoid being moved east. These Navajos continued to fight the soldiers and settlers who attempted to force them off their land. Cooperation with the local Paiute bands was another factor that allowed the Navajos to survive both Ute and U.S. Army raids. The Paiutes were especially useful allies because they often helped to mediate conflict between the Navajos and Utes. In 1933, due to their continuous presence in southeastern Utah, this area was restored to the Navajos' reservation, though, as a testament to the fact that it was an area of joint occupancy, this section of the reservation is referred to as the "Paiute Strip."

FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY VOCABULARY

ASSIMILATION The absorption of people from one culture into the dominant culture. Many federal government officials, including several presidents, felt that by leaving their native culture American Indians could become part of the dominant white society. This often led to policies that attempted to destroy Native American cultures and lifeways.

RELOCATION This term can refer to two different efforts by the federal government. The first, which occurred from the beginning of United States history through the nineteenth century, was an attempt to push Native Americans off of lands desired by non-Indian settlers, initially by moving them west and then by forcing them onto reservations. A later program in the twentieth century sought to move Native Americans off of reservations and into major cities throughout the western and midwestern United States with the goal of forcing them to assimilate into the dominant American culture.

RESERVATION Areas that are defined by treaties or other agreements between the federal government and a particular Indian tribe or tribes for the use of that group. Today, reservations serve as important land bases for the exercise of tribal economic and cultural sovereignty.

SOVEREIGNTY The ability, right, and power of a governing body to control its territory, and the actions therein, free from external influence.

TREATY A contract or binding agreement between two nations. From 1778–1881, the United States signed treaties with individual groups of Native Americans. These treaties usually dealt with the transfer of land to the United States in exchange for certain rights and/or goods, including other land, monetary compensation, and/or continued rights to the use of land for hunting, fishing, and other practices. Throughout the nineteenth century the United States consistently failed to fulfill its treaty obligations to Indian nations.

GREY EYES REMEMBERS THE LONG WALK

The people were going to be herded to Ft. Sumner, and the people were cornered. They were herded into tight places where they couldn't get out anymore—run away anymore. And all the stories lead to Toh-lizhini (black water). And at the top of Toh-lizhini there were tents pitched and wagons that were standing by, and in the canyon people were meeting—or gathered. And from somewhere around A-hi-di-dini (place where the flows come together or join) there was a man named Ma-ee (coyote), and the land is even named after that, Ma-ee-bi-keh-ya (land belonging to the coyote). Maybe he belonged to the Ma-eedesh-geezh-ni clan. And he picked up something from over there, I don't know what it was, but he tied something white to a piece of wood, and came on out—or moved out, and he came out waving that wood, I guess—to—came out through Tseh-bi-na-az-eli (flow around the rock). And this other person wondered who it was, and he found out that it was this one guy, the one that was named Ma-ee.

And he made peace and—with the army, I guess. And having made peace, the people moved into the camps, and from there they were started herding—herded to Ft. Sumner. First they were placed at Ft. Defiance. And then they moved on and placed at Fort Wingate. And then they were moved on to Nakai-na-bi-deh-teen (tracks of Mexicans), and then on to Dzil-nah-yisi-bi-geezh (between the turning mountain), and then on to Fort Sumner, and it's told they spent four years over there. And through the people's negotiations, they were returned to their lands. And the people were crying for the Canyons. . . . I don't know how many people were killed. And the food killed some of them—they didn't know how to prepare it. And many died from sicknesses, and others from large sores (infections), and many died from fever.

Grey Eyes, interview with Sally Pierce Hansen, June 28, 1965, interview no. 966, Doris Duke American Indian Oral History Project, American West Center, University of Utah, t.s., 21–23.

The following newspaper stories contain highly inflammatory and racially charged language and attitudes regarding the Navajos. Such language was, unfortunately, common in that time period, but it is entirely inappropriate today. It does, however, suggest the historic extent of bias against Indian peoples.

THE CARSON EXPEDITION - DEPREDACTIONS OF THE NAVAJOES

We learn from the Santa Fe papers that at last accounts from the Navajo country, Col. Carson's expedition was making good progress. While near the Moqui villages, in the western part of the Territory, he encountered a band of Navajos, killing twelve men, and capturing thirty women and children; also three hundred horses and a large flock of sheep. After the battle, Koneatchs, the Utah Chief, and the men left Col. Carson, and arrived at Fort Defiance, (now Ford Canby,) on the 15th ult. He claimed that he and his Utes, having done the killing and capturing, were entitled to the horses, &c. and said that Col. Carson having refused to let him have them, he concluded to leave and go home. However valuable these people may be as guides and spies, it is not to be presumed that Col. Carson would allow them to dictate to him the terms upon which the prisoners and stock captured should be disposed of.

The command was in pursuit of another party of Indians when the Ute Chief left. It is supposed that the larger part of the Navajos are in the country where Col. Carson is operating.

In the more southern portion of the Territory the Navajos occasionally make their appearance with booty stolen from the settlements. These occasions give rise to exciting pursuits on the part of the volunteers stationed there, which develop and manifest their capacity and fitness for Indian fighting. We will here direct attention to one of these pursuits, which was

conducted by Capt. Henry A. Green, First Infantry, California Volunteers, from Fort McRea on the 8th ult. With a small body of men (twenty in number) mounted on wagon mules, he followed the Indians for five days through a desert country and finally overtook them among the mountains, the numerous cañons of which afforded them opportunities to escape without being drawn into a conflict with the Captain and his men. But the booty was recovered. About 1,600 sheep were recovered and returned to Fort Craig.

The difficulties in the way of hunting up the enemy in that country (as in all wild country) are, however, very great. As showing this, Maj. Wills reports that with one hundred and thirty men he spent twelve days and traveled two hundred and eight miles, in the direction of Zuni, accomplishing nothing beyond the arrest of a Navajo squaw, though he was satisfied there were bands roving through the region he traversed.

The Santa Fe Gazette of the 29th says: "Major Wallen, Inspector-General of the Department, leaves for Denver City to-day, accompanying his family that far on their way to the East. On the Major's return to Fort Union, he will enter on a tour of inspecting duty from that point to Forts Bascom, Sumner and Stanton to Santa Fe."

— St. Louis Republican, 18th.

KIT CARSON'S EXPEDITION AGAINST THE INDIANS

Correspondence of the St. Louis Republican,
FORT CANBY, NEW MEXICO, Monday, Jan 18, 1864.

As you may find some interest in ascertaining how the "Navajo Expedition," under command of Col. Kit Carson, First Cavalry, N.M. Volunteers is progressing, I have concluded to send you the following items for information.

On the sixth of the present month the command left Fort Canby for the renowned Gibraltar of Navajo-dom, Cañon de Chelly. One division of Companies B, C, D and K, under the lead of the colonel, to penetrate the Cañon by the east opening; the other, under the command of Capt. A. H. Pteiter, with companies E and H, who will enter by the west opening. The Cañon is some fifty or sixty miles in length, perhaps longer. The command took with them two mounted howitzers – the field pieces being under the charge of Lieut. Franklin Cook, Fifth Infantry, U.S.A., Capt. A. B. Casey, Thirteenth Infantry, U.S.A., Chief Quartermaster, also accompanied the expedition. There are about eighteen officers and 500 enlisted men with the Colonel. Col. Carson is somewhat sanguine in the belief that he will be able to capture a good many Indians in this hiding place of the Navajos, at all events he will thoroughly explore its hidden recesses, so that it will no longer be a mystery to the outside world, and the 'rest of mankind." The command is rationed for 30 days and will probably return to this post about the 1st or 5th of February, 1864. As soon as the Colonel gets 100 Indians, (captives,) men, women and children, he will leave here enroute for Santa Fe and the Bosque Redondo.

New York Times, Feb. 28, 1864, p. 6.

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The Navajoes. That fierce and untameable tribe of redskins, the Navajoes, whom we have been fighting for the last eighteen years, are reported to have lately surrendered to our forces in New Mexico; and on the heels of this news, we have the announcement from Washington that an appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars is asked for Congress for the subsistence of the tribe. It is thought in official circles, we are informed, that it will be more economical to support the Navajos than to fight them. We doubt the accuracy of this theory; though on grounds of humanity, we might concede the wisdom of giving these galloping wretches rations of bread and beef rather than of bullets and cold steel. In the meantime, our soldiers, who have just got through with a big fight with the Navajos, are dividing their rations with them being themselves put on short commons for the purpose of feeding the savages. This is certainly very nice. In future it is proposed to give each individual of the tribe, numbering seven thousand in all, a daily allowance of one pound of flour and one pound of fresh meat, which, if they consume it all, will, it is thought leave them little stomach for the fight. But the Navajos are very treacherous, and pay little regard to treaties or agreements with white men. Col. Doniphan beat them and made a treaty with them in 1846, but they soon forgot it; Col. Washington did the same things in 1849, with the same result; Col. (subsequently Major-General) Sumner repeated the operation in 1851, but we have heard of their depredations almost every year since. The fact is, fighting has been the ceaseless and immemorial occupation of the Navajos; and we fear that the bread and beef now furnished to them will only give them strength and muscle to fight us again the coming summer.

New York Times, Apr. 9, 1864, p. 4.