



0. NAVAJOS and THE LONG WALK - Story Preface

1. NAVAJOS and THE LONG WALK

2. NAVAJO and the ANCESTRAL LANDS

3. NAVAJO FAMILY LIFE

4. LIFE on the NAVAJO RESERVATION

5. THE NAVAJO NATION

6. PHILIP JOHNSTON and the CODE TALKERS

7. MEET the NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

8. WEST LOCH DISASTER

9. AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT on SAIPAN

10. CODE TALKERS and the BATTLE of SAIPAN

11. BANZAI CHARGE at SAIPAN

12. HARI-KARI on SAIPAN

13. CASUALTIES AT SAIPAN

14. BATTLE of PELELIU - LANDINGS

15. CASUALTIES at PELELIU

16. SECRETS of the CODE TALKERS

17. BELATED HONORS

Canyon De Chelly National Monument, a stunning and sacred part of the Navajo Nation, is located in Arizona. In this image, from the National Park Service, we see the Tseyi Overlook. Click on it for a great view.

Who are the Navajo? Why did Philip Johnston believe this ancient people could turn the momentum of war against America's enemies?

Navajo are Native Americans who, like other tribes, were mistreated by Europeans settling in the "New World" of North America. That world was not new, of course, for the Navajos. They and their ancestors, like members of other tribes, had lived on the North American continent for thousands of years.

There was a problem, however. Citizens of a newly formed country, the United States of America, wanted those Indian territories. Battles and massacres followed.

In 1864, while the U.S. Civil War was still raging, an American officer was sent west on another type of mission. Colonel Kit Carson's orders were to round up Navajos who had been raiding in northwest New Mexico. He found them at Canyon de Chelly, among other places.

It wasn't just members of the raiding parties that Carson focused on, however. The government forced thousands of Navajos to surrender when soldiers destroyed Navajo crops and livestock.

Over 8,000 Navajos were uprooted from their ancestral homelands in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. They were forced to walk hundreds of miles to Bosque Redondo, a parched tract of land in eastern New Mexico.

The government planned to put the Navajo people on a "reservation" in order to "tame" them. Many died of cold and starvation during the walk. Old people and small infants suffered most. Navajo people today still tell the story to their children.

When the Navajo arrived at this desolate reservation on the Pecos River, they found the water was brackish. Many people became ill and were forced to find water elsewhere.

Life, during their four years at Bosque Redondo, was miserable. But for the first time, the Navajo were together as a people - not separated by clans. It was during those difficult days that the idea of a Navajo Nation was envisioned.

After four years, the federal government allowed the Navajos to return to their homeland. Their lives were still difficult, as documented by photographs taken in 1873.

Sent to explore and survey territory west of the 100th meridian, members of a Corps of Engineers expedition

found the Navajo living their daily lives in very primitive conditions.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/NAVAJOS-and-THE-LONG-WALK-Wind-Talkers-Navajo-Code-Talkers-in-WWII>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Navajo Nation - Tseyi Overlook

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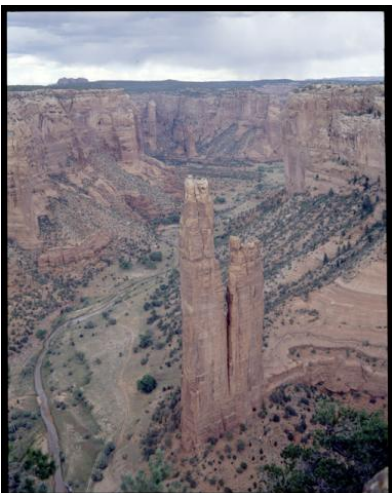
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Colonel Kit Carson

Image online, courtesy the Colorado Historical Society.

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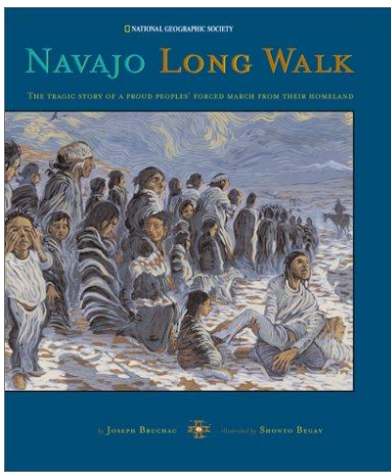


Canyon de Chelly

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Navajo - The Long Walk

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Bosque Redondo

Image online, courtesy The Native American Experience, via California State University, Long Beach.

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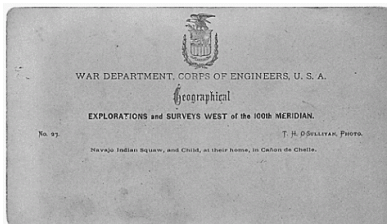
Scene from the Long Walk of the Navajo

Image online courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps, U.S. National Archives.

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War Department Corps of Engineers

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Navajo Life on the Reservation

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Navajo - The Long Walk, Part 1

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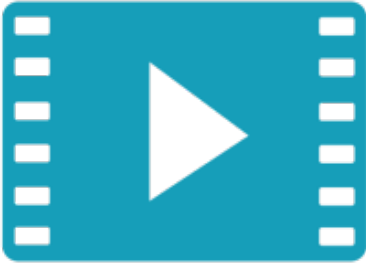


Navajo - The Long Walk, Part 5

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