

## *Life at Bosque Redondo Reservation*

### *Lesson 1 - Overall*

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#### Essential Questions:

1. How was life like at the fort for the Native Americans? Soldiers?
2. Did everyone at the time think that the reservation was going to be successful?
3. Was it meant to be such a bad place from the beginning?

#### Objectives: Students will be able to

1. Discuss the pros and cons of the location of the fort,
2. Analyze General Carleton's motivations and how his mindset created a no-win situation for the reservation and what that meant for the Native Americans forced to live within the boundaries.
3. Describe and discuss all the facets of life at the fort from housing, rations, disease, agriculture and fraud for the Native American and the Soldiers.

When the Mescalero Apache were removed from Fort Stanton to Fort Sumner, the area wasn't prepared for them. The fort was comprised of tents and quickly the Apache and soldiers were pressed into farming and building the fort from adobe. Apache were nomadic hunters and were unaccustomed to the work, the rations and the sedentary life.

The Navajo began arriving in 1863 and largest numbers arrived in 1864. The condition of the people varied. Those who were forced to surrender through the scorched earth tactics were hungry, without basic clothes and few possessions. Some Navajo surrendered who were considered rich as they had sheep and horses and provisions. However once at Bosque everyone was subjected to the same deplorable living conditions. General Carleton imagined a pueblo style existence for both tribes. In March of 1864, Carlton wrote "Within ten years the Navajos would be the 'happiest and most delightfully located pueblo of Indians in New Mexico, perhaps United States.'" (Thompson, p 33). However both tribes refused apartment style living. The Apache were accustomed to teepees and the Navajo built typically five sided hogans of timber. Due to religious beliefs, apartment style homes would be impossible for Navajo who abandoned structures in which people died in.

During the years of internment, the Native Americans were forced to build the forts, till and sow crops often without proper tools, and dig irrigation channels. There was never enough food, water quality was poor, people suffered through disease and crop failure which all contributed to the poverty experienced at Bosque Redondo. This unit is the Life at the Fort and has one overview lesson and then a series of smaller units looking at the conditions more closely as well as how the reservation experiment changed the state economics and political discussions. The final unit is from a broader context of how Manifest Destiny led to viewing Native Americans as less than human.

Lesson 1: Overall Life at the Fort

Lesson 2: Rations & Food

Lesson 3: Crops & Water

#### Materials

Brief History PDF

Past Essays of Fort Life

Collections of Primary Source materials – photographers, soldiers and peonage

Videos and/or power point presentation discussed in the lesson.

#### Key Concepts:

Manifest Destiny

Westward Expansion and Conflict

Grades: 7- 12



Lesson 4: Medical Care

Lesson 5: Politics and Newspapers

Lesson 1: Life at the Fort – This lesson is for overall history of life at the reservation. This is an activity that can be done alone or as part of the entire unit depending upon the time. The ages of this lesson is primarily for older students but can be adapted for upper elementary ages.

Method: To provide a strong overview of the history, you can use power point presentation in the Supplemental Materials, the following short video on You Tube created for the site:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1rldnzt\\_Wg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1rldnzt_Wg)

Another video that can be used is about 20 minutes that we utilize in the museum currently called “The Long Walk Away The Long Walk Home”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKC8ERmr5\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKC8ERmr5_U)

The final video which is also comprehensive and moderated by Peter Coyote and completed by PBS: Long Walk and is in the folder: This is the most comprehensive story of the Navajo and is narrated by Peter Coyote called the Long Walk; Tears of the Navajo and was published on PBS. This site has it broken into parts to make it easier to show. It is about an hour overall: <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Navajo-The-Long-Walk-Part-1>

This is quite long (60 minutes) and includes the entire history from the wars through the boarding schools. There is a short brief history in PDF form in the lesson file that can be used as well.

The overall project is a writing activity. The project is based on personas created for people who would have been at the Fort or Reservation or involved with the fort. The goal is to understand the life at the fort well enough to be able to write a story from the point of view of someone who lived and/or worked at the fort/reservation. The approach could be one of several ways. Once the students have the persona picked from a list by students or randomly or teacher assigned, they can do the individual lesson that relates to their persona to become a “subject matter expert” or if there is time, the students can work through all the lessons and then complete the writing assignment, or if the writing assignment is the only activity used within the unit, the students will likely need some time to gain knowledge. They can do internet research and/or read the associated packets of information. This activity is described as a short story project, but other alternatives that students can create are: power point presentation, picture books, presentation boards or other multimedia presentation, or diary. Please feel free to adapt this lesson in any way that works for the class, age of the students and time that you have.

Assumptions in the lesson: That as a teacher, you know how to teach short story writing. However here are some links of You Tube videos on writing short stories: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOHEqI3pJIM> Video on the 8 point story arc. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZNSVMaPIUQ>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP7YRzLrUns>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwXw-9nk71E> This link is to a well done lesson plan on short stories by Jennifer Gunter that may have helpful elements. <https://winterslearning.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/short-stories-unit-plan2.docx>

Instructions: After reviewing the history of the Bosque Redondo Reservation and Fort Sumner, the students are to pick by choice or be teacher picked or randomly given a persona. They are to research their persona either by doing the related lessons or other research from materials supplied with this lesson or via the internet and write a short story about the person using the setting of the fort, the time period the fort was active and be as true to the time as they can. In other words, the story needs to be consistent with the history of the fort. For example, if the persona is of a soldier following orders to hunt down escaping Navajos from the fort, the soldier isn’t going to end up letting them go if he finds them as he would be court



marshaled. Also students aren't encouraged to exaggerate the atrocities such as the soldier finds the escapees and does unspeakable injustices to the captives. Also many atrocities centered on rape, molestation, prostitution, sexually transmitted disease, illness, starvation and alcohol consumption so depending upon the age of the students, those topics are to be broached age appropriately. Other than historical accuracy, students are encouraged to be creative in crafting a story that could have happened.

For review and ideas that can be shared with students are four stories written by other students. The names and school has been removed, but these were stories submitted for a contest using the personas and are the winners from 9-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Additionally, primary source material is included with this lesson. The material is grouped in topics that may be useful for students to do research to complete their story. The topics include: photographers (along with a short diary of one of the photographers), soldiers (which include military correspondents and a letter home) and peonage (which includes correspondents regarding the taking of slaves).

### Personas:

#### Soldier

- You are a 25 year old Lieutenant from New York, enlisted with Company K of the 1st California Infantry. You are in charge of guarding the Navajo and Apache men who are digging the irrigation channels and plowing the fields with shovels.
- You are a 35 year old surgeon from Connecticut, enlisted with 1st New Mexico Cavalry. You are asked to assist wounded Navajo and Mescalero Apache after a Comanche raid.
- You are a 24 year old photographer from Sweden, asked to photograph life at Bosque Redondo Reservation.
- You are a 17 year old girl from a local homestead, who is employed as a laundress for the military and you only speak Spanish and work with five other women who are also Spanish speaking.
- You are a 27 year old civilian contractor in charge of delivering goods and food to the reservation. When you arrive at the reservation, a Mescalero Apache Indian Agent approaches you and states that the flour you delivered last was topped off with plaster of paris which caused several Native people to become sick.
- You are a 37 year old Major from Pennsylvania, enlisted with the U.S. 7th Infantry. You are the commanding officer of Fort Sumner.
- You are a 23 year old Lieutenant from Iowa, enlisted with the U.S. 5th Infantry. You are in charge of supervising the Navajo and Mescalero Apache farm developments.
- You are a 29 year old Captain from Maine, enlisted with the U.S. 3rd Cavalry. It is your duty to distribute rations to the Navajo and Mescalero Apache. You have just been informed by your superior officer, that a ration shortage has taken place and there will not be another distribution for five days.
- You are a Sergeant from Illinois, enlisted with Company A of the 5th U.S. Infantry. It is your duty to supervise Navajo and Mescalero Apache men while they make adobe bricks intended for Fort Sumner.

#### Navajo

- You are a 45 year old Navajo man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. Your family is in need of firewood. You must walk 10 miles away from your home to dig up mesquite root before walking back.
- You are a 21 year old Navajo woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You must go to the fort hospital for treatment of an illness. The medicine you receive is something you and your family have never seen before.
- You are an 11 year old Navajo boy at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You must work in the corn fields from sunrise to sunset and you are hungry.
- You are a 25 year old Navajo woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You just had 50 sheep taken from your family because a local landowner said you stole them.
- You are an 18 year old Navajo man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You are gathering water from acequia madre when suddenly you notice a Comanche raiding party near your home. You do not have any weapons or a horse.
- You are a 24 year old Navajo man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You and your family have just been informed that rations will only be distributed every 5 days.
- You are a 75 year old Navajo woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. Your daughter has become very sick after taking medicine from the fort hospital.
- You are a 30 year old Navajo woman at the Bosque Redondo Reservation, who is a mother of three. During the chaos of the roundup of your people, you lost your children and have no idea where they are.
- You are a 26 year old Navajo man at the Bosque Redondo Reservation. You are attempting to build a shelter for your family before winter arrives at the reservation.

#### Mescalero Apache

- You are a 7 year old Mescalero Apache boy at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You lost your parents during one of the marches to the reservation.
- You are a 68 year old Mescalero Apache woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You spend most of your day making rope from yucca fibers.
- You are a 28 year old Mescalero Apache man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. Your home was recently washed away during a flood of the Pecos River.

- You are an 18 year old Mescalero Apache man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. A group of soldiers have tasked you and your father with digging several irrigation ditches under guard.
- You are a 19 year old Mescalero Apache man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You have been accused of stealing livestock from a local rancher.
- You are a 25 year old Mescalero Apache woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You are trying to decide how to prepare the rations you have just received from the U.S. Military (corn meal, salted pork, whole coffee beans, and sugar). Many of these foods you have never seen before.
- You are a 20 year old Mescalero Apache woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You are tanning several pronghorn skins to make new moccasins.
- You are a 19 year old Mescalero Apache man at Bosque Redondo Reservation. You have been sent out on the reservation to hunt for small game to be used for meat and their hides.
- You are a 37 year old Mescalero Apache woman at Bosque Redondo Reservation. One of your children has died from an illness passed from a soldier.

## Standards:

Common Core: Grades 6-8: 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, & 10; Grades 9-10: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 & 10; Grades 11-12: 1-6, 9 & 10.

History: 5 – 8 & 9-12: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the complexity of the human experience. 1-D: Research historical events and people from a variety of perspectives.

Geography: 5- 8 & 9-12. Students understand how physical, natural and cultural processes influence where people live, the ways which people live and how societies interact with one another and their environments; Explain the physical and human characteristic of places and use this knowledge to define regions, their relationships with other regions and their patterns of change. 2-E: Explain how economic, political, cultural and social processes interact to shape patterns of human populations and their interdependence, cooperation and conflict.

History: 9-12: Use critical thinking skills to understand and communicate perspectives of individuals, groups and societies from multiple contexts.

## Resources:

Correll, Lee J. *The Navajo Through White Men's Eyes*. 1979, Window Rock, Az, Navajo Heritage Center.

Mautz, Carl. *Biographies of Western Photographers: A Reference Guide to Photographers Working in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century American West*, 1997, California, Carl Mautz Publishing.

Thompson, Gerald. *The Army and the Navajo*, 1976, The University of Arizona Press.