

When it's more than...

For this activity, first listen to the poem as read by the poet on either the historic site's lesson page or [CLICK HERE](#)

Poetry can be in many forms – rhyming, lyrical, rhythmic, etc. Luci Tapahonso has a style of an oral story teller and “In 1864” the reader is taken along on a parallel journey – one by road and the other by time. While on a road trip as her daughter sleeps, the narrator she sees the sign to direct people to Fort Sumner in New Mexico, the place of the internment of the Navajo, her people, in the 1860's. Then we are transported along with her and her daughter back in time to first a story of a friend who tried to work near Fort Sumner and then finally back to 1864 and her family's experience of the forced marches.

At Bosque Redondo Memorial we highlight another Navajo artist, Shonto Begay. He tells his story through oil on canvas; the same story of being uprooted and forced to march at the direction of the US Army. The three paintings collectively called the Long Walk, have been digitized and stretched to life-size in the memorial exhibits in what is now recognized as the Long Walk Hallway. For this activity, we



will be considering one Shonto's Long Walk paintings.

His strokes are bold and fluid as is his style. He said this painting was very hard for him as it touched him so personally. When he visited the memorial in the winter of 2015, he stated that his family was not part of the Long Walk. They hid in the mountains in the four corners. He

said that his Long Walk came after the people returned to the homeland in 1868. The 1868 treaty established requirement for education and said that for every 30 students a school and teacher would be provided; however that wasn't what happened. Instead Native American children were sent from all over the United States to boarding schools such as Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The idea was to “Americanize” or force native culture and language from the youth so as to “Kill the Indian, save the man.” Shonto Begay talked about his experience with boarding schools in the 1950's and 60's.

He said that he was herding sheep at his family's sheep camp when a man in a pickup came around. The man had other children in the truck and he gave Shonto candy. The man offered him more if he would go with him. Shonto was taken to a Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding School and he didn't go home for a year and his parents didn't know where he was. He said marks on a wall at the school determined your religion. If your height was close to a line, that was the religion that you were, you were given a different name, hair was cut.

So consider the painting, "Long Walk" and the poem "In 1864" and try your brain with these questions.

1. What elements of the poem connect you with the painting?
2. What elements in the painting connect you with the poem?
3. Does the painting affect you differently than the poem?
4. How do both the poem and the painting seem to tell a story of pain that outlasted the events of the long walk?
5. At the memorial, reactions to the atrocities that occurred to the Navajo people by the visitors vary. Some are saddened, some angry, some ask about how the Navajo and Mescalero Apache people are today and if there has been healing, and others say that what happened had to happen. The last stanza of the poem, the narrator is trying to soothe her daughter who is crying by telling her stories of frybread and clothes. Do you think that the only person the narrator is trying to soothe is her daughter? Who else could she be trying to soothe and why?

6. Think about how colonization history and stories affect you today. Before quickly answering, consider your own story. Consider the story of colonialism in America (or your country) how the history of the colonizer was the story in the history books and the stories of the Native Americans were kept to the side and movies of cowboys and Indians where the cowboys were always the good guys, where slaves were taken from one continent to another to be used as farm equipment, where names of sports teams make caricatures of Native symbols and names. If you are a Native American or African American, it will be much easier for you to answer this question because of the impacts are still so prominent in your life's story. However if you are of the race of the colonizer, it is much more difficult to see because the history has been told from the point of view of the colonizer. Now look around your part of the world and see what examples you can find. Snap or snip photos and create a collage of as many as you can find. Put the photos along with a caption explaining what it is and how it is an example of colonialism today and send to aaron.roth@state.nm.us We will be creating online virtual tour of the submissions. Include a brief biography – who you are, your age or grade (if adult then what you do), where you live and a brief statement of how the poem and/or art work affected you. If you want your name included please say so in the email and consequently if you would rather not add your name or other biographical data, let us know.

Note: we will be putting these together and displaying them as part of our virtual museum. By submitting to us, you are giving us permission to use your images as part of our online virtual exhibit.

Extension Activity – if this activity gave you fruit for thought so to speak and you would like to explore modern examples of how colonization affects Native people's today.

Consider the following site: <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/in-celebration-of-native-american-heritage-month-my-once-life-poem/>

Want a shot at grappling with a very big question with no easy answer: How do we today come to a place of understanding, healing and unifying a country based upon a history of colonization?