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## **A History of Water on Navajo Nation Interpreted Through The Diary of Gary, the Literate Rock**

August 9, 1306 B.C

Dear Diary,

Today marks the best day of my life. I am positively certain of it. I have finally separated from those arrogant canyon rocks. Good riddance! Air screamed past as I fell for what seemed like eternity, admittedly this lack of time perception was to my confused state. I fell into the water and the water took the wheel, guiding me wherever it pleased. All of this led up to now, as I sit here with water sprinting and sand whizzing past me. I know the everdecent moon's ripples of light on the water is foreshadowing my next millenia. My time in this river will be thrilling, my destiny untouchable.

May 23, 1850 (C.E.)

Dear Diary,

My sharp edges have long been worn off along with any aspirations for a future outside of here. Today the son of Mr. Fred was carried away. He wasn't much of a rock, always small and weak, but anything to take an edge off the boredom is worth something. I feel more and more lethargic every day despite all those pesky grains of dust and sand eroding my outer layer. I don't know why I'm writing: each day is the same. The water flows by and little rocks ask me for permission to stay here. Anyway, that's what happened.

July 16, 1979

Dear Diary,

This is absolutely, utterly, and completely outrageous. I have been aware of the presence of "people" or as the scientific community calls them "homo idiots". I have stayed in my part of the river as they made the decision for me to sacrifice the intensity of the current in MY RIVER. But have I complained?? No ma'am. Now, it's different. This morning 100 million gallons of radioactive acidic garbage liquid came crashing over me and everyone else in the river. I writhed in pain as I felt the acid on my skin. Oh but that's not all, I looked over to see the people's sheep falling over and dying in the river. And what did they do? Clean them up? Nooooo, they were

too busy crying and hugging each other because without their sheep they would have no money and no food. The audacity of these people is astonishing.

January 2, 1985

Dear Diary,

I have learned much since my last writing. Apparently there are two groups of people. I could not tell you why, but there are the Navajo Native Americans and there are the white people. I can only distinguish between the two by their action: the former are poor, drink water from all parts of the river, and make nearly everything themselves and the latter are rich, and march in with material goods and an ego issue. But now to the point of my writing: the water is not as concentrated with acid as it was before, however it is still quite dirty and toxic. I heard the original catastrophe was from the white people's Uranium mine. Unfortunately, typical. The Native people have only gotten poorer since the tragedy and despite my intentions to hate them, I have begun to understand. They are a bit like me. They've broken free of their own canyon rocks, their past persecution from colonists, to find themselves in an even more desperate situation, unimaginable poverty. There's no more hope for them than there is for me. The poorest among them (being already the poorest group in The "United" States) have to drink undrinkable water and have no money to escape the vicious cycle that traps them here. I suppose we'll both be here forever until I disintegrate and their population collapses.

October 4, 2020

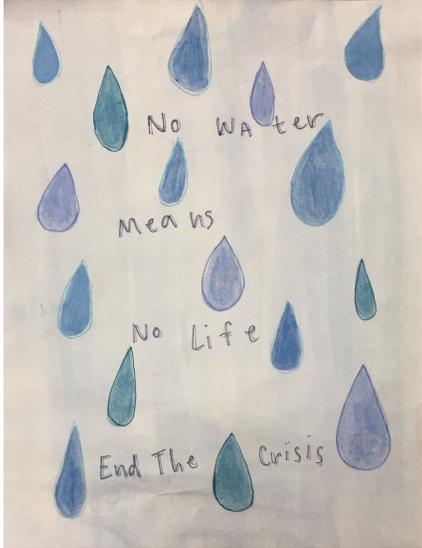
Dear Diary,

I'm excited. Not because the Navajo Nation has the highest rates of poverty in America. Not because the Navajo Nation has the highest rates of COVID in the world. Not because 5 years ago another spill, originating in Colorado, introduced more Arsenic and Lead into the water, and the poorest Native American's in the outskirts of this reservation still drink this contaminated water. Because 85% of people have running water now. Yes, that's terrible. But it's half the rate it was just 17 years ago. I'm optimistic because just yesterday I saw a 16-year-old girl with a passion for helping other people bring food and water to dozens of people. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. A future where Native Americans are rich in every way and where no one drinks polluted water from my river is within reach. I know that I'll one day be gone, but these people will survive, carrying with them a legacy of resilience, and hope for a long time to come.

- How would you bring awareness to the people and leaders of the community in which this problem exists? How would you build a campaign with a clear call to action that would help this community fight back?

I would mainly use social media to show people the extent and importance of the issue. I will start a social media campaign and be posting about this on social media, tagging local leaders, and am hoping to message someone who has or does live at Navajo Nation because this problem as well as other problems that they face are interesting and important. I think one major thing that would help the community fight back is funding for another nurse on the reservation to inform and help people come up with solutions to their individual problems with toxic water. I could start a GoFundMe and donate myself, or volunteer in some way that would benefit them. Additionally, I think funding for research on the levels of toxins in the water and at which points would also be beneficial and would enable those living in the Navajo Nation to take control of their health and their life.

- Create a poster with a bold message that will mobilize people to create change.



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sahs.pgc No water means no life!! #endthewatercrisis 💧 Navajo Nation has been without clean water since 1976 due to Uranium mine runoff and a dam breaking. This is only one of thousands of communities across the world without clean, drinkable water. Together we can end the crisis! #pgc2020 @turninggreenorg @numiorganictca 🌱 @navajodephealth @navajonationcouncil

8h

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