

“Mni Wiconi”: Bobbi Jean Three Legs on DAPL

By Guadalupe Hernandez



Fig 1 “With little response from the U.S. Army Corps Engineers, Bobbi Jean and the other runners grew eager to take more action, so they announced they would be running across the nation some 2,000 miles to gather signatures to stop the pipeline (Burke 2, 1)”. This image shows Bobbi Jean Three Legs in front of the White House in Washington DC. When I originally started my research, I was unable to find any scholarly research regarding Bobbi Jean Three Legs; however, I was able to find some responses from Native Americans towards DAPL. “Not only would potential water pollution pose an environmental and health risk to the tribe, but since they consider water a sacred element, they believe polluting it would infringe on their religious liberty. They also fear the project would disturb ancient burial grounds” (“Trump Reverses ”). Image courtesy of cdn2.hubspot.net

Introduction / Who is she?

Bobbi Jean Three Legs is a **Member of the Standing Rock Nation Sioux Tribe**, which is located at Standing Rock, ND (Democracy 1 (See Fig 1). She is a **mother** and a **Standing Rock activist** against Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) As a result, she created a 2,000-mile relay run to Washington DC which received a lot of coverage. Bobbie Jean Three Legs has been able to unite Native American tribes around the Unites States against DAPL (See Fig 2).

PROPOSED DAPL ROUTE

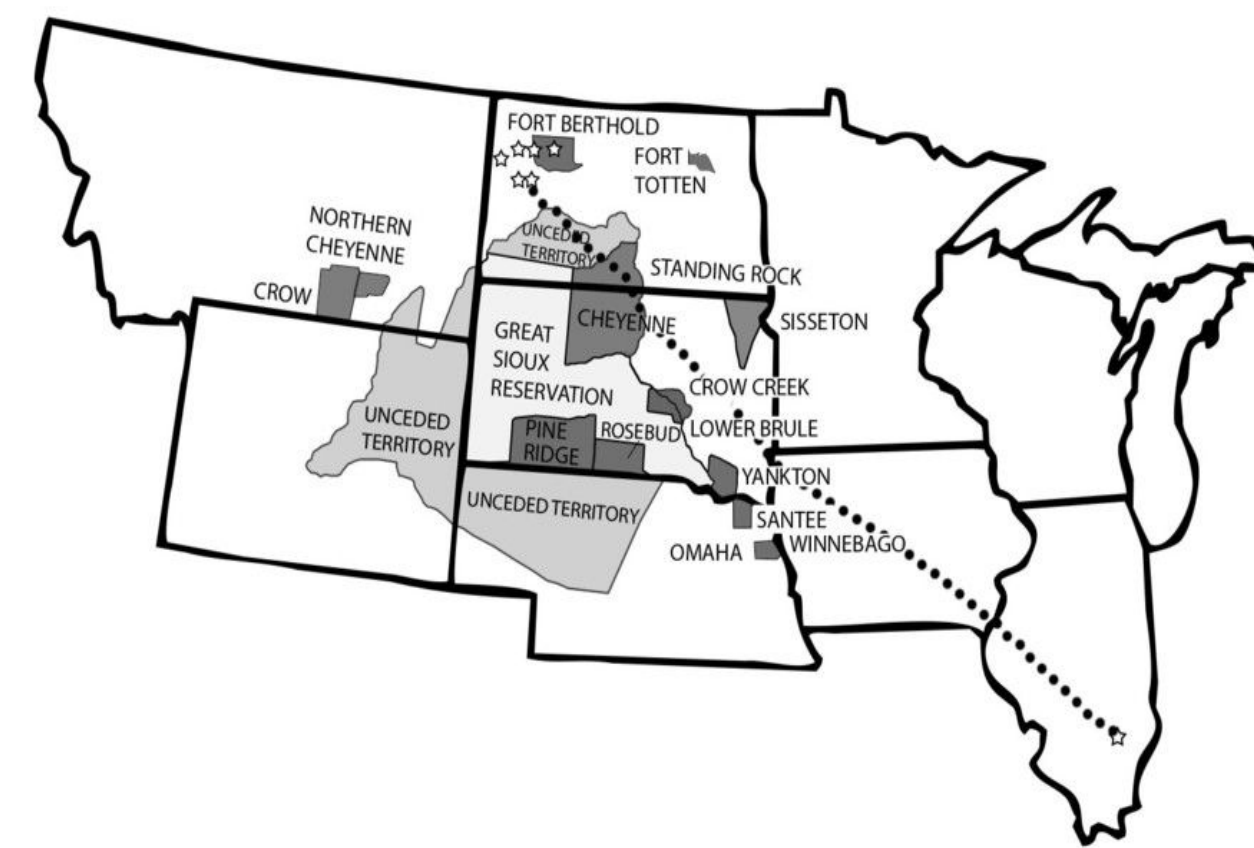


Fig 2 The proposed DAPL route will go through Native American Land. Originally the pipeline was suppose to go through Bismarck and Mandan, ND); however, residents there complained that the pipeline would contaminate their water supply. Image courtesy of static1.squarespace

How she started

“Bobbi Jean saw a **picture on Facebook** toward the end of March 2016. She remembers, “I came across this picture of Jonathan Edwards and several other individuals standing in the middle of a street in McLaughlin, South Dakota,...standing there holding up their signs [protesting the pipeline].” (Burke Part 1, 1) (See Fig 5).

Why She Got Involved

Cares for her **daughter**. In January 2017. “Bobbi Jean Three Legs: ‘Right now we’re on a lockdown in front of Chase Bank, because we want people across America to divest their money from these banks. The big banks ... , these are paying for the pipelines around the country. We want you to know what your money is being paid for and what it’s being used for. And pretty much our lives are at risk right now—everybody. There’s already people’s waters ruined around the country. And we’re just trying to protect that. We want to know that seven generations ahead, that our children are going to be OK.” (White)

Findings

Something that I found very interesting is how this has become more than just a “Native American issue”. In October, “the tension between the protesters, also referred to as “water protectors,” and the police escalated throughout the protests (See Fig 3). The police used pepper spray, rubber bullets, tear gas, and fire hoses on protesters” (Penn-Roco 176). As a result of this “In December thousands of U.S. military veterans traveled to Standing Rock to serve as human shields between the police and protesters” (Penn-Roco 176-177). (See Fig 4) The waters, which Bobbie Jean and other tribes are trying to save are a very important part to their religious beliefs: “The Cheyenne River Sioux said they also want to make a religious freedom argument in the case. “The sanctity of these waters is a central tenet of their religion, and the placement of the pipeline itself, apart from any rupture and oil spill, is a desecration of these waters,” the tribe’s attorney wrote in a court filing.” (“Trump Reverses ”) It is very important to note the following ““We are not opposed to energy independence,” said David Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, in a statement. “We are opposed to reckless and politically motivated development projects, like DAPL, that ignore our treaty rights and risk our water””(Dakota).

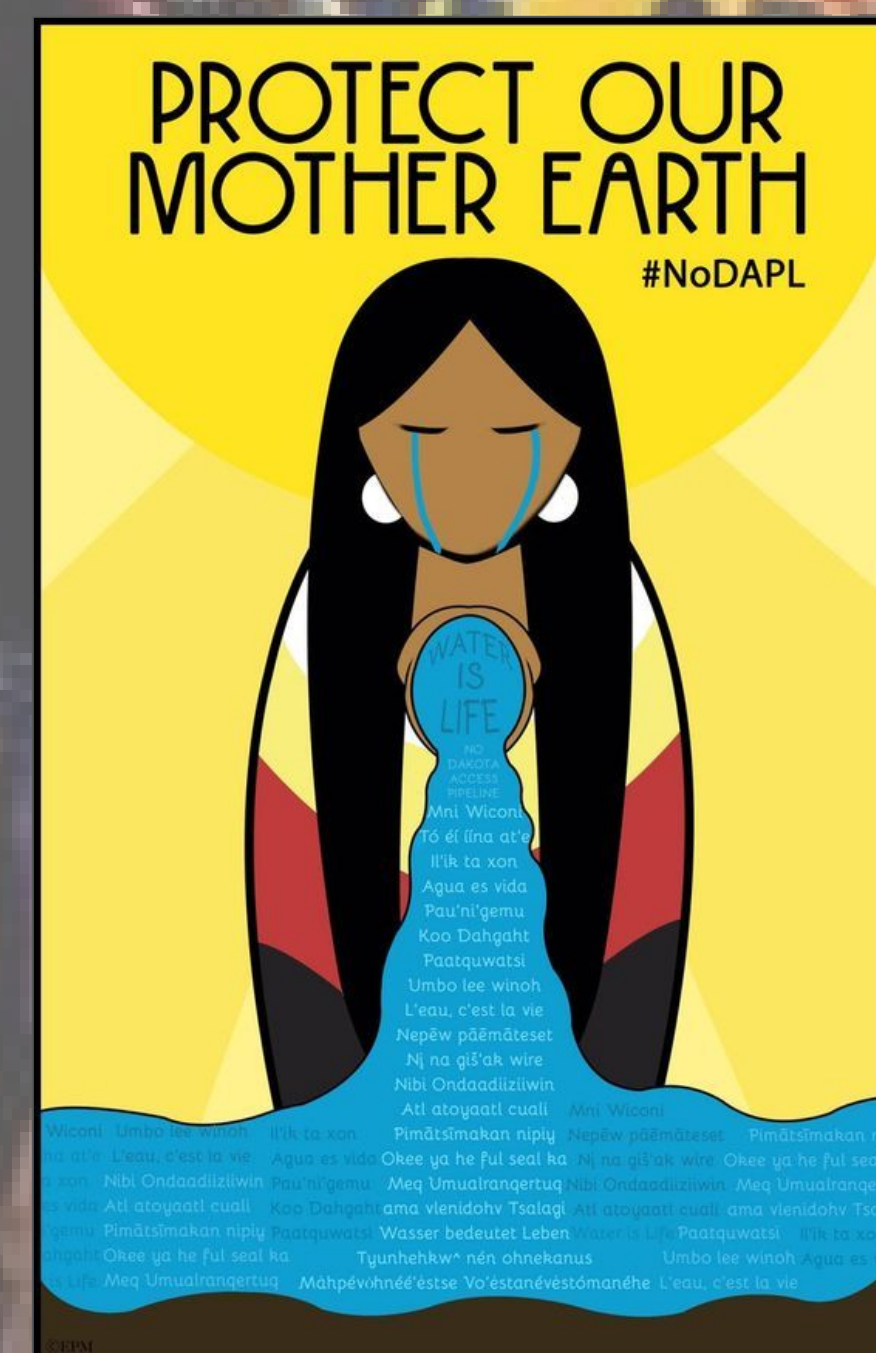


Fig 3 This image has the phrase “Water is Life” in various languages showing how water is a universal thing that unites us and that needs to be protected

Image courtesy of pinterest.com



Fig 4 Manape LaMere of the Winnebago Tribe speaks to the Lakota runners. Colonel Reese of the Army Corps listens to the speech. Fortunately, there was support from others to put a temporary halt on the pipeline: “As described below, a temporary victory came on 4 December 2016, when the Army Corps of Engineers refused to validate a permit for drilling under the Missouri River, which is under its jurisdiction”(Johnson).

Image courtesy of fallonforum



Fig 5 The Lakota tribe runners received support from 100 more supporters in Omaha for the final mile Army Corps headquarters. This image shows the support that tribes have towards one another.

Image courtesy of fallonforum



Fig 6 Bobbi Jean Three Legs and the Oceti Sakowin Youth ran because “We believe that the DAPL has great potential to leak into the Missouri River and cause harm to the great people of this nation whose water and livelihood depends on the river” (Three Legs).

Image courtesy of Change.org

What Now?

Bobbi Jean Three Legs believes that **there is always an injustice that we have to fight against.**

“We’re never going to back down,” said Bobbi Jean Three Legs of the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota, when *Democracy Now!* spoke to her Monday and asked what her message was for Trump”(Breaking). (See Fig 6).

Works Cited Page

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