

Turtle Island



STORIES FOR CHILDREN

By Pat Guerard
June 2022
New Hampshire

Turtle Island



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These people and their wiliness to believe in magic still exists in the world have contributed in someway in making these books and other books on our website possible.

Pat Gerard

UNITED STATES

THIS BOOK WAS ORIGINAL DONE AS A GIFT TO PAT'S GRANDCHILDREN AND NOW SHE SHARES IT WITH CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD.

Elroy Germishuys

SOUTH AFRICA

Susan Brandt

UNITED STATES

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Dedication:



Turtle Island seen as North America

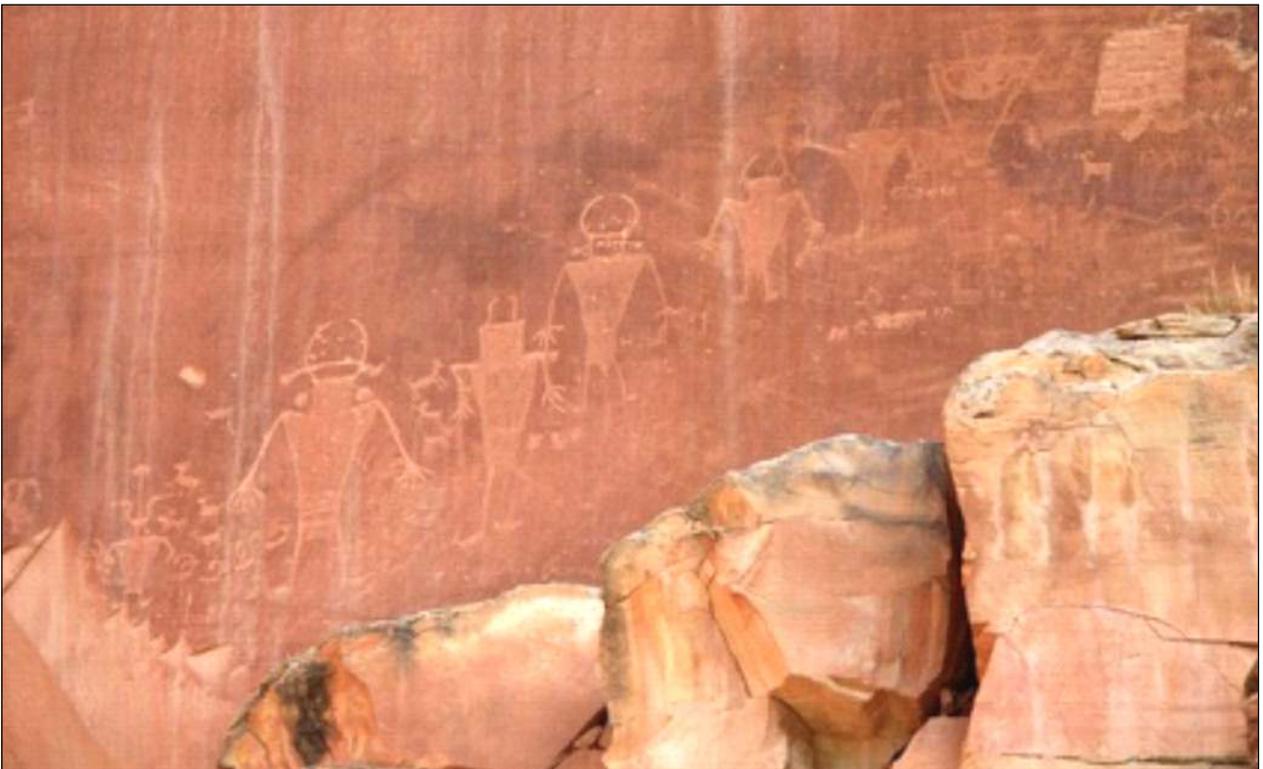
To all the stone people,
The trees that gave us wood for our flutes,
The fast running deer, the wise old wolf,
The enduring buffalo and soaring eagle people.
To all the beings that crawl upon the earth,
Fly in the air, swim in the cool waters or tunnel
beneath the soil,
To all the beginnings
and
All the endings,
To all the images and imagining,
And all the little people of the world.

This little book is the result of the stories I gathered
for my granddaughter as I drove
across America and Canada in 2017.
Each story is more than just entertainment.

Origin stories address many aspects of being human.
For example - Toad stealing Fire is also about accessing
that part of our brain that allows for continual
creativity not just animals living in the desert.
I encourage you to look beyond the words and symbols
and allow your mind to wander through these
marvelous images.

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Capitol Reef National Park, Utah, petroglyphs
Humanity has been telling stories since the beginning of time.

Sky Woman and the creation of Turtle Island

Huron, Ontario, Canada



Skywoman - used with the kind permission of the artist, Bruce King (Oneida)

Long, long ago, before the world as we know today existed, and there was only water everywhere. Above the clouds was an invisible place called sky world.

One day a woman was seen by a flock of geese, falling through a hole in the sky, falling down. The geese called to one another hurriedly and decided that if they did not help, she would fall to her death. In an instant they came together and created a blanket with their wings and caught her mid fall. They carried her a short way but found she was too heavy for them as she was pregnant and so was the weight of two people.

The Geese then shouted out to all the other animals to ask if any could find a place to put Sky Woman, as they now called her, down. They were in a hurry as she was a heavy burden for them. All the other animals looked around - found no place to put her, until finally, a turtle poked his head up from the water and said:

“Go ahead, place her on my back for the time being.” The geese did just that, gently allowing Sky Woman to slip down safely onto turtle’s back.

All the animals then gathered together and wondered where and how this woman would be able to live in their watery world. Sky woman asked for some dirt and the animals began to search around for a piece of soil for her. They



looked everywhere and found none. Then they started to dive below the surface of the waters, the wolves and ducks could not dive very deep, nor the bears or eagles.

The fish found coral and sand, but no earth, not even the great mountain lion could find the smallest piece of dirt. Finally, otter, who lived in and loved the waters; who played in them all day, dove down, so far and for so long, all the other animals thought for sure he was dead.

At last, and with much gasping for air, he returned to the surface of the waters completely spent. He lay on his back, paws apart, and did not

respond to questions or calls. All the other animals had given up the idea of finding any dirt until the red-tailed hawk, from far, far up above, spotted a tiny clump of brown mud clutched in the otter's paw.



“Look, look” cried hawk, otter has found some dirt! Everyone stared and sure enough, there in otter's tiny paw was a small round ball of dirt. “Bring it here” said Sky woman, and when the tiny bit of dirt was placed in her palm she spread a thin layer over the top of the turtle shell she was sitting on. This became turtle island, the continent of America, and sky woman was proud to call it her home.

Soon sky woman gave birth to a beautiful baby girl who grew up with the knowledge of both the sky world and earth world. Because of her mother's love for turtle island, her daughter carried within her body the seeds of all the plants we know today.

We, human beings are the ones who sometimes forget that everything in the natural world is connected, dependent on each other, and it is our responsibility to respect and take good care of our little island and the planet that supports it.



Coyote and the creation of the Milky Way

Dine (Navajo), New Mexico

Once, long, long ago, after the first twin brother and sister had finished fighting, (and in so doing, creating much of the landscape we know and love today); the ancient and powerful spirit of darkness, the first woman, thought she would do some housekeeping.



She found some jewels she was saving that she had wanted to share them with creation. “Where can I put them? She mused; “place them in the sea” said her brother, “no one will see them there” she replied. “Put them into the earth?”, “no” she said, “I know, I will hang them in the sky for all to see” and she set about to make a detailed and intricate map for the placement of each sparkling jewel in the night sky so all living beings could find their way and know the laws of creation.



"How the Stars Fell into the Sky"
by Lisa Desimini

She began by hanging the constellations carefully, one by one, ever so slowly, to make sure she got things perfectly right. She laid out a plan for the stars in perfect order, on a blanket, and was content to see each twinkling jewel being placed in its very own special location.

Now, on a mesa, not too far away, coyote, the trickster, whose name is m'ii, was watching with much curiosity. He knew just what the old goddess was doing and wanted eagerly to help. He crept quietly closer and closer so as not to disturb her.

Observing intently coyote ached to place the stars too. The goddess saw this and happily invited him to try. While taking one of the glittering jewels in his paws, it slipped out.

He tried again and found it was too hard to hold onto the stars

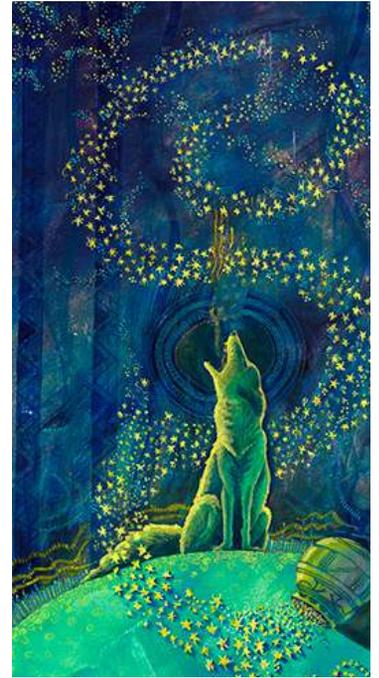
much less place them in perfect alignment. In frustration, with his teeth, he grabbed the corner of the blanket, and with one swift tug, scattered the remaining stars all across the dimly lit sky.

First woman saw this and was amazed, then deeply saddened. She saw the work of coyote, the scattered path of stars we now call the Milky Way. She sighed, and with no stars left to place, she went on to other business.

And, this is why we have recognizable returning constellations like the great bear or "Long Sash", that appear reliably, while other stars are like a line of paint in the night sky: the milky way, dimmer and scattered.

Can't you just see this? Coyote sitting on a high mesa with a corner of the blanket tucked in his mouth and the stars all scattered around?

This is the reason humanity will never know what could have been the natural order that was meant to be in the world.



Coyote Spills the Stars
by Nancee Jean Buszse



Coyote and Fire

The Pacific Northwest by D.M. Souza

Long ago when the world was young, people did not have Fire. They ate their meat and salmon raw. When cold winds blew, or snow covered the ground, they could not warm their houses. Only the skookums had Fire. These three evil sisters lived high on a mountain and would not share with anyone.

One icy cold winter, the people met Coyote on the road. "Please, Coyote," they begged, "capture Fire from the skookums or we will freeze."

"I will do what I can," he said.

That night Coyote climbed the snow-covered mountain where the skookums lived. When he reached the top, he spotted Fire in the distance. Moving closer, he saw one of the skookums sitting in front of a house, warming herself by Fire.

For a long time Coyote watched until the skookum went to the door and called, "Sister, sister, get up. It's your



the first two skookums took called, again only yawns and groans drifted outside.

Quick as an arrow, Coyote raced into the open, seized a burning stick, and ran across the snowy field.

“Aieeee, a thief!” Two skookums began chasing Coyote and throwing ice and snow at him.

Coyote’s legs moved faster and faster. His feet barely touched the ground. Still, the skookums came closer. He could feel their fiery breath on his fur. One of the skookums grabbed the tip of his tail. Her hot hand burned it black. (Even today all coyotes have black tips on their tails.)

At last Coyote reached a thicket of shrubs and fell to the ground exhausted. Just at that moment Cougar jumped out, seized the burning stick, and disappeared down the mountainside. For a minute the skookums were confused. But soon they were racing after Cougar.

When Cougar reached a grove of trees, Fox was waiting. She took the burning stick and ran until she came to a tall tree. There Squirrel grabbed the flaming torch, raced up the trunk, and jumped from branch to branch. She leaped along even as the flickering flame burned a black spot on the back of her neck, and her tail curled forward. (Even today squirrels have black spots on their necks and their tails curl forward.)

At the forest’s edge, the skookums almost caught up with Squirrel. That’s when Antelope took the stick of Fire, sped across a meadow, and handed it to Deer. One animal after another passed Fire on, keeping it just out of reach of the skookums, until it became a tiny hot coal.

Frog swallowed the coal and hopped away, but he wasn’t quick enough. A skookum grabbed hold of his tail. So Frog took the biggest leap he had ever taken and left his tail in the skookum’s hand. (Even today frogs do not have tails.)

Finally Frog slipped into a river and swam to the other side. By now he was too tired to jump again. He spit out the coal, and it landed on Wood. Wood swallowed it.

The skookums looked at one another. Neither one knew how to take Fire from Wood. With a heavy sigh and a shrug of their shoulders, they turned back and returned home to their still sleeping sister.

turn to guard Fire.”

The second sister appeared and took her place. After a while, she called the third sister. Coyote could hear the sleepy one yawning and groaning loudly inside.

“She is taking so long to come out, maybe I could seize Fire now,” Coyote whispered to himself. “But the skookums are swift. They would surely catch me before I got very far. I must think of a good plan.”

Coyote thought and thought, but his mind was foggy. So he asked his sisters, the three huckleberries who lived in his stomach. They were wise. They would surely know what to do. And they did.

Carefully, Coyote listened to their plan. Then he went back down the mountain and called together all the animals to tell them what they must do.

The next evening Coyote trudged up the mountainside again. Patiently he watched while their turns in front of Fire. When the last sister was

Meanwhile, Coyote told all the people to stand in a circle around Wood. He gathered branches and leaves and piled them high. Then he began rubbing two pieces of Wood together.

Minutes passed. The people watched. Suddenly sparks flew up. Coyote blew and blew as Fire slipped out of Wood. The flames danced higher and higher, and the people came closer, smiling when they felt Fire's warmth. Now they could cook their food and warm their homes. (Even today people know how to draw Fire out of Wood.)

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<https://www.shmemorial.org/cms/lib/NJ01912932/Centricity/Domain/58/Coyote%20and%20Fox%20AND%20How%20B ear%20Got%20Stuck%20in%20the%20Sky.pdf>



Grandmother Spider's Dreamcatcher

Ojibway, Minnesota

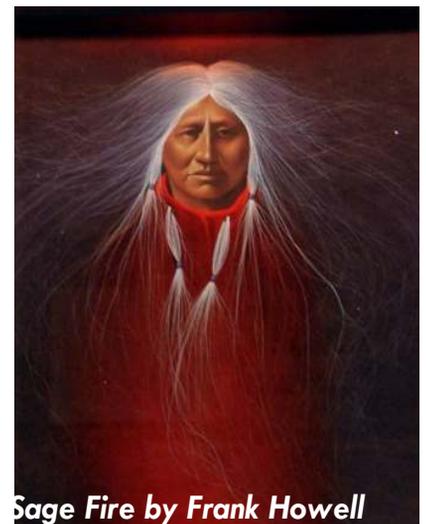
Long ago, in ancient times, in land called Turtle Island, Grandmother spider, also known as Asibikaashi, helped steal the sun to give to humans, in some stories she helped form humans from clay and made sure this fourth world, the glittering world was safe for them to enter. Even then, she was older than the hills. She helped to show humans beauty and tenderness and spread the teaching of balance and grace to everyone. Even today she helps humans all along their path through life if they ask her.

Grandmother spider taught the Navajo to weave and she protects the dreams of little children all over turtle island. It is rumored it is she who made our human veins and arteries and, she is believed by many to be a powerful medicine woman. Her spiritual power is visible in her silken web, a magnificent joining of the Earth and Sky.

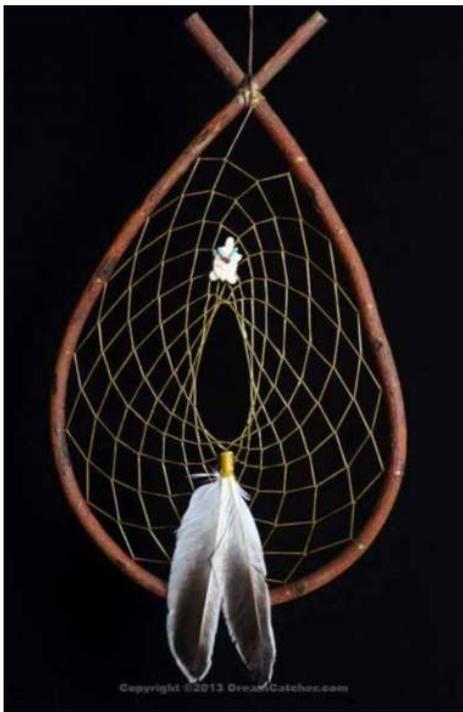
She is considered a kind and generous spirit, a mother figure who guides us and can be trusted to stand up to Coyote when he performs his witchcraft and trickery.

Grandmother spider has a special relationship with the sun and you can easily see her handiwork at dawn if you get up early and look for spiderwebs touched by dew. Today, young weavers are instructed to find a spider web glistening with early morning dew that sparkles in the sunlight and place the palm of their right hand on the webbing without destroying or damaging it. This is so that the gift of weaving can be transferred to the young weaver's spirit forever.

To protect children from bad dreams, Asibikaashi has a difficult time making her journey to all the cradle boards, so the mothers, sisters and nokomis (grandmothers) weave her magical webs to protect



Sage Fire by Frank Howell



*Red Willow Dream Catcher
by Patricia Pacheco, Laguna-Ojibwa*

their new born themselves. Most are in the shape of a circle to represent the sacred hoop of creation, showing how the sun travels each day around the sky. The dream catcher will filter out all the bad dreams and allow only good thoughts to enter into our minds when we are small. With the first rays of sunlight, all the bad dreams caught in the webbing and will vanish.

You will notice a small hole in the center of each dream catcher where these good dreams may come through. This was also a tradition in Navajo rugs before 1900. Rug traders asked the weavers to close this hole for sales to tourists. When we see little spiders and their webs, we should not fear them, but instead respect and protect them.

It is traditional to put a feather in the center of a dream catcher; it means breath, or air. Air is essential for life. A baby watching the air playing with the feather on her cradleboard is always entertained. This lesson comes from the way that the feather flutters in the wind. As for the use of gem stones, this is not something that was done by the ancient ones. Woven dream catchers for adults do not use feathers.

Dream catchers made of willow and sinew are not meant to last. Eventually the willow dries out and the tension of the sinew collapses

the dream catcher. This is supposed to happen. It reflects the passing of youth into adulthood.

Adults should use dream catchers of woven fibers which are made up to reflect their adult "dreams." It is also an accepted tradition in many parts of Canada and the Northeastern U.S. to have the dream catchers in a tear-drop/snow shoe shape.



Hopi Pottery by award-winning Native American Hopi Indian pottery artist, Burel Naha



"Spider Woman taught Navajo women how to weave and she taught the men how to make the loom. The tools for weaving with the Dine people are considered actual beings themselves and are respected as living spirits. They help to create the beautiful rugs and cloth the Navajo are known for. Spider woman, or Spider Grandmother, wove existence together like the

strands of a web. At the beginning of things, Spider Woman spun lines of webs to create the four directions. Then, she created people by molding them from various colored clays, dividing them into clans and giving them each a totem animal.





Rugs are made imperfect with and an escape window, red thread, mistake or hole...only the creator is perfect.

Rug with spirit hole in middle - churro 1341

Navajo Serape with Spider Woman Hole navajorug.com



Toad Steals Fire

Colorado River Indian Tribes

Long ago, when the earth was still very, very young, cold and darkness covered all the land. At this time, no division had yet happened between humans and animals, so both shared the same dim, chilly world without any warmth.

As was the tradition, all the living creatures gathered regularly in council under the dark night sky. They told again and again, the ceremonial stories of a faraway land that had something called “fire”. Although They tried hard to imagine such a wonderful thing, a place of warmth and light, of flames that could burn like ice froze. They could only dream of what it would be like to sit before the hot logs, smell the wood smoke and toast their toes by the hot flames. They even spoke of the God of Fire – a powerful being that threw thunderbolts and arrows of lightening in his rage.



Veracruz ancient toad pot by Thomas Aletto
Colorado River Indian Tribes Museum, Parker, AZ



Annie Fields, 1960, *Dreamers of the Colorado*

One night, after a particularly cold spell, one small animal, a tiny toad, finally spoke up and declared he would go to the Land of Fire to steal some of this famous heat and bring it back for everyone to enjoy. All the other living creatures applauded him and heartily supported his idea. They knew; however, the God of Fire was fierce and would not give up his flames easily.

So, toad set off during the rainy summer months, with the good wishes and prayers of all his companions.

Everyone sincerely hoped he would return with this magical and sacred thing. Toad was the animal best suited for this task because he could cross the desert, walk the forest and dive under water. He took a great leap of faith and set off in a southerly direction.





Indigenous Art, The Canadian Encyclopedia
Flying Frog Headpiece

The God of Fire would not permit anyone to take his fire away. For this reason he still sends thunderbolts and lightning at anyone who carries light or fire. He is always looking for ways to kill them. But Toad entered the house of the God of Fire and stole the fire. He carried it in his mouth, take a look at the little pottery figures of toads that look like they are smoking.

Toad traveled through the waters. Lightning and thunder made a great noise and many flashes all around him. But Toad, also known as Babok, swam on, safe beneath the waters with a little ember in his belly.

Suddenly not only one toad was to be seen, but many swam in the waters, many, many toads. They were all singing and carrying little bits of fire. Bobok had called upon his sons and had given fire to one, then another, until every toad had some. These

carried fire to the land where they were greeted by the Dog, the Roadrunner, and the Crow. Bobok gave his fire to those who could not enter the water.

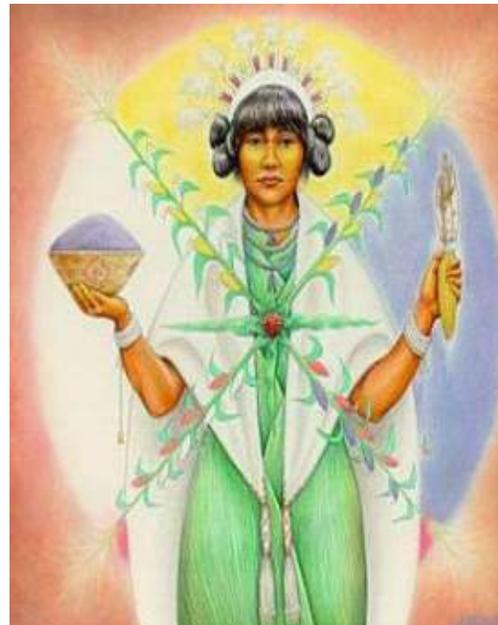
The God of Fire saw this and threw lightning at the Crow and the Roadrunner and the Dog. But many toads kept on coming and bearing fire to the world. These animals gave light to all the things in the world. They put it into sticks and rocks. Now men can make fire with a drill because the sticks have fire in them.



Blue Corn Maiden

Acoma, New Mexico

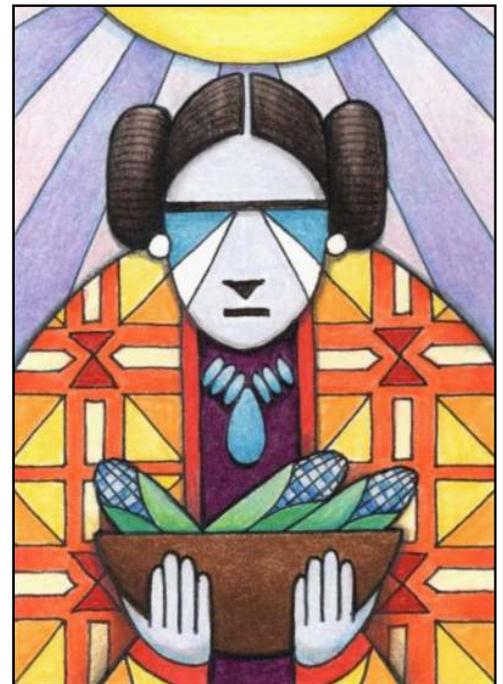
People native to both South and North America are often known as the “corn people” because they depend so much on corn for their main food. The Inca hybridized many different types of corn to enable it to grow in varied and different environments, the sand of the desert, jungle damp, as well as on mountain sides and even in the salt air of the shore.



Hrana Janto, Corn Maiden

According to tradition, Corn Maidens were created in the palm of the right hand of the

Great Spirit as guides for the people of the Earth. People were not always able to determine from among the many plants and animals on the Earth what was good for them to eat—what would nourish them versus what would harm them. So, the Corn Maidens were sent to give each clan a single seed of corn, that, if properly cared for, would feed and sustain all of them. The Corn Maidens sang a song that inspired love and faith in the people. Some people began to tend to the small mound, offering water and caressing the soil around the seed.



Blue, Native American Legend Art Prints

The people took their seeds of corn, considered them sacred and planted them every year in the Spring. Soon they were planting beans to climb up the corn stalk and squash at the base of the mound to shade the dirt and retain the water. This is known as the three sisters in the North East

Slowly, the corn began to grow, breaking through the Earth. Like a child, the plant grew stronger and beautiful with the love and prayers provided by the people. As the plant grew, the people began to realize how cared for they were by the Great Spirit, and their faith grew, too. As their faith grew, mature ears of corn sprouted from the plant. Once the people had the food they needed, the Corn Maidens were no longer needed, and so they returned to their spirit form.

The Hopi people loved above all the corn maidens, even today, they place stones called corn mothers in their fields in the hopes they will protect the crops. Out of the sisters, the most beloved was the Blue Corn Maiden, who brought delicious blue corn to the Hopi people throughout the year, she was not only very beautiful, but a kind and gentle woman as well.

One day during the winter, the Blue Corn Maiden went to gather firewood to warm her home in the pueblo, when she came across the Winter Katsina. (katsina are immortal beings that bring rain, and control many powers of the nature, human and wild. They often act as messengers between humans and the spirit world.)

The Winter Katsina was the one that brought winter to the earth. Upon seeing for the first time Blue Corn Maiden, he fell in love with her, and invited her back to his home. Powerless to say no, Blue Corn Maiden soon became his prisoner when he blocked his door and windows with ice, sleet and snow.

One day while the Winter Katsina was away, Blue Corn Maiden dug her way out, making a tunnel through the snow and found materials to build a fire.



*Nuvadi Dawahoya Blue Corn Maiden Kachina
6 1/2" tall*

She lit a small fire and when warmth entered the room, the snow all melted away and Summer Katsina appeared in time to save her.

Angry that his bride had been saved, Winter Katsina came to fight with Summer Katsina, only to realize that the two of them simply needed to talk it over.

Soon a deal was struck: for half the year, the Blue Corn Maiden would live with Winter Katsina, depriving the people of corn, for the second half of the year she would live with Summer Katsina, and the corn would grow again.

Soon the people began to look upon the Blue Corn Maiden as a sign of springtime.

Have you ever had those days in March when it seems as though spring was on the way, only to have to put up with a snow storm the next day? That's because Winter Katsina is not happy to see Blue Corn Maiden leave for her summer home, and he's throwing a bit of a tantrum.

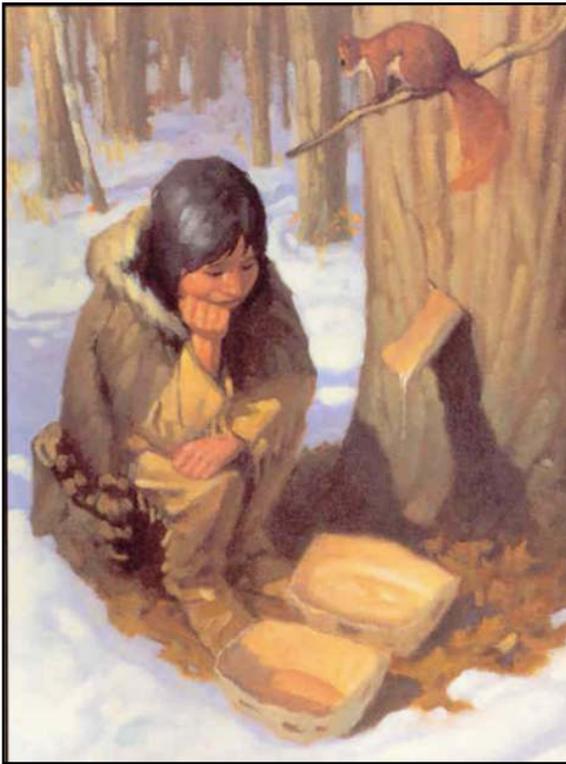


*Blue Corn Maiden Kachina Doll
by Wilmer Kaye (Hopi)*



Sweet Water Maiden

Mi'kmaq, Cape Breton Island, Canada



Sokoki Sojourn

WordPress.com, native maple squirrel tradition

Long, long ago, far, up North where the winters are long, icy and harsh; and the snows are very, very deep; and the wind regularly blows in freezing gusts across the land. There lived an old Mi'kmaq elder who would get up every morning very early to greet the sun.

One day this elder decided to go on a spiritual retreat, to think of a way to help his people. He decided to walk alone into the woods as his wife, his good friend, and mother of his children, had not survived the long hard winter that year, dying of hunger as many in village had.

Not quite awake and tucked softly under her deerskin blanket, the old man's granddaughter faintly heard his footsteps crunching through the snow and ice as he walked out of the village. She peeked out and saw her grandfather's back as he trudged slowly into the deep woods where the huge bull moose live. She asked permission of her mother and soon followed him, carrying with her what little food she could gather.

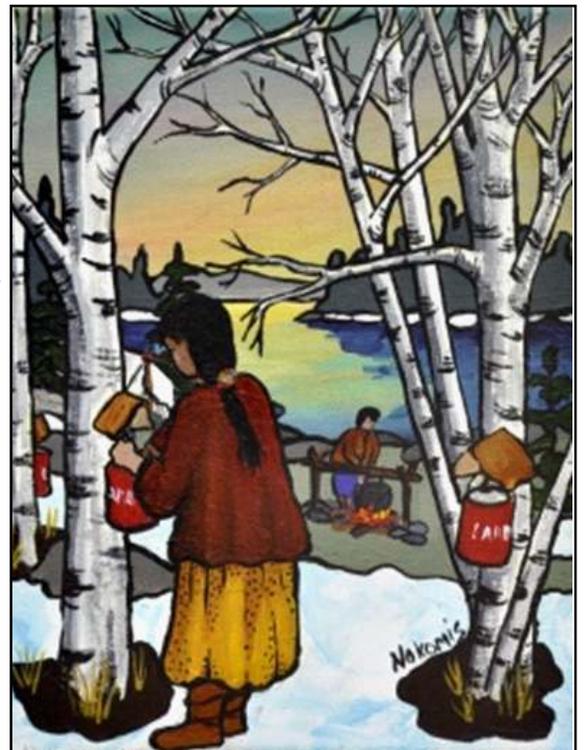
Spring was right around the corner and the day was warm. Grandfather walked slowly, and when he found a little open stream, he set up camp. He built a meager shelter and, striking a blow to the nearest tree, placed his tomahawk for safe keeping up above the snow.

Grandfather then settled back down into his shelter and dreamt of a time when the land was green and he, as a young warrior, was able to run after and catch all wild game he wanted and he fondly remembered swimming with the whales.

The young girl followed her grandfather's footsteps in the snow, and after a while she saw in the distance his tomahawk struck in the tree. She saw the fragile shelter made of bark and branches and she approached quietly knowing he was on a sacred vision quest and she should not disturb him.

She built a small fire nearby to heat some pine needle tea and prepare him a meager meal when she noticed water was running down the handle of her grandfather's ax into his eating bowl. She took the bowl as it was and prepared his simple meal. A sweet aroma drifted into the shelter and her grandfather awoke. Pleasantly surprised to see his granddaughter by a cheerful fire with some hot tea and a meal he gratefully accepted his bowl and ate with a hearty appetite.

Grandfather finished his meal and remarked that there was a foreign taste he did not recognize, sweet and smoky flavor. He glanced up at the nearby tree and noted the sap dripping from his tomahawk. He smiled and told his granddaughter of



Birch Syrup - a Substitute for Maple Syrup
Native Art in Canada
an Ojibwa Elder's Stories



Maple Tree by R.C. Gorman

his powerful vision: the forest trees had told him they would help the village in winters to come.

Recognizing the powerful medicine in the gift from the maple sap, Grandfather knew that this sweet substance would save the village at the end of harsh winters, The trees had kept their promise! He smiled and glad for this new discovery. He gave his granddaughter a new name – sweet water maiden! For, without her, his vision would only have been a dream.

The trees provided the village each spring, sweet water that was shared by all and saved many lives. The Mi'Kmaq say they were the first to boil it down to make the sweet maple syrup we know and love today. They sometimes even cook it more to add to pemmican, which is food

for hiking or they even make delicious maple candy.

One story in particular the 'legend of maple syrup' captured her imagination; she brought it back to life by creating this book, the Indian Maiden Story -Sismoqnapui'skwe'j -Sweet Water Maiden - Legend of Maple Syrup.

Another origin story of the discovery of maple syrup was a tribe member's observation of a squirrel that bit off a branch tip and sucked the sap – if the sap was good for the squirrel, then it should be good for humans too? – but I prefer the legend of Sweet Water Maiden.)

* "Sweet Water Maiden: The Legend of Maple Syrup" by Mary Louise Bernard



The History of the Courting Flute

Dakota, North Dakota

Long, long ago, out on the wide plains where the buffalo roamed wild and free, sat a sad young man. He sat along a well-trodden path from his village to the river. He waited patiently to see a young girl he loved pass by him going to fetch water for her family every day.

He loved this young girl very much but she took no notice of him. She was a wise elder's daughter, graceful and pleasant. She had lots of friends and lots of young men tried to court her.



Better Homes and Gardens Sugar Maple



White Wolf Pack

The sad young man was so shy, whenever he found himself before her, he could not speak. He was brave in battle, and led the buffalo hunt with courage, yet when it came to speaking his love to this girl, he was too shy to make a sound. He would stand helplessly, his eyes looking at the ground, while other young men came with their courting blankets and stood outside the girl's tipi and talked with her and her family. His heart was heavy when he saw the other young men who talked to her so easily, whistled to her to gain her attention, and so easily made her smile. The young man was sure that the girl did not even know he existed.

Courtship among the Dacotah was very formal and took place in full view of the rest of the village. When a young man courted a woman, he dressed and painted himself in his finest clothing. He carried a special blanket, usually woven by the women of his family - which he would invite his intended love to share. **

The shy young man thought about this girl every day and night. In his dreams she was still there before his eyes, yet even in his dreams he lacked the courage to tell her of his love.

One day, he left the village and wandered alone. In despair he drew his bow and without a thought shot an arrow into the air.

To his amazement the arrow stayed in flight. It seemed to him that the arrow pointed a path so he followed in that direction, and when evening came the arrow fell to earth

beside a stream. He made camp and slept beside the stream, and in the morning shot another arrow into the air. Again, the arrow stayed aloft, and pointed the way.

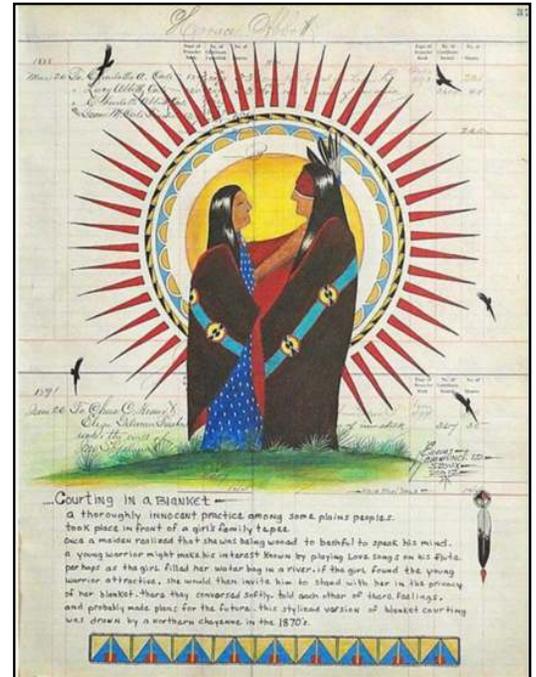
That evening it, too, sank to earth beside fresh water. This continued for a total of four days.

On the fourth day the young man slept at the edge of a forest. In that half-dream state between waking and sleep, two brightly colored birds appeared to him, and told him that they had come to help him. "We have come to give you this flute", one said, and when he blew into the flute he carried, the sound was so beautiful that even the forest stood breathlessly listening.

The birds told him, "The birds in the East heard of your sorrow, and they took pity on you. All the birds helped to make this flute, and their voices sing within it. When you play it for the girl you love, all our voices will sing with you. It is made to bring the song of the birds of the forest to your loved one's ears. Your music will speak

the words of love that your voice alone cannot. The wood is cedar, because cedars grow where the winds blow and the woodpecker made these finger holes with his beak." Then the birds disappeared, but there, lying among the sage leaves, was the flute.

The young man was honored by such a gift. He set off towards his home, his heart light. He played



Courting in a Blanket: Modern day
#Lakota #artist, Evans Flammond Sr.



Nativeamericanfluteshop.com.

the flute as he walked, and the cranes joined in his song. For four days he walked, playing beautiful music, and listening to the sounds of the animals and birds. He imitated the sounds of the animals on his flute, and from those sounds he made songs.

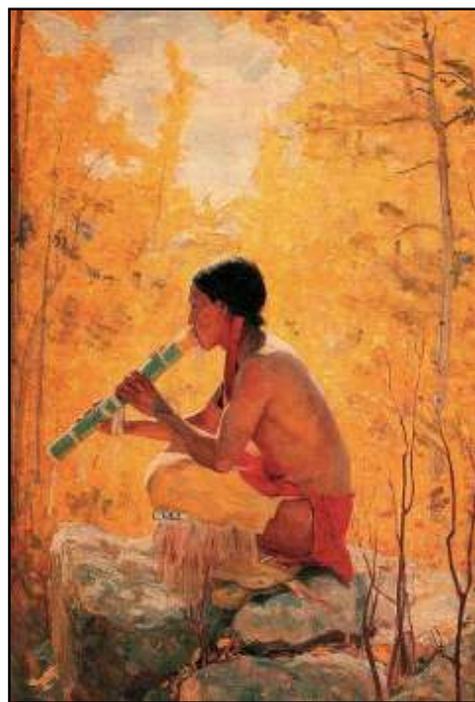
As evening drew near on the fourth day, he reached the hill above his village. There he paused to play his flute, and the sounds of the beautiful music he made carried into the camp and thrilled the heart of every woman there.



White Wolf Pack

But one woman, the girl he loved, knew that the music spoke straight to her heart alone. The girl left her tipi and joined the young man on the hill. She listened to the words of love that his music spoke more eloquently than his voice could express. "I love you. I love you."

It is said that flutes used for courting were thrown away once the object of a man's affections was won. They were not to be used again.



Song of The Aspen
by Bert Geer Phillips

Pbs: Music and song permeated all aspects of Dakota life, from birth to marriage to death. It was, and still is, an essential part of Dakota culture.

Some of the music played at wacipis (or powwows) is decades old, having been passed down from

generation to generation. The same holds true for much of Dakota flute music. The song the young man is playing in Eastman's painting might have been passed down to him by his father as part of his own family's unique cultural heritage or might be one of his own composition to pass down to a future son. Some contemporary Dakota flutists have suggested that many of the songs composed for the flute had lyrics or words to go with them but were unnecessary to sing because the music was so expressive and evocative, full of emotion and romance. As for the flute he is playing, if it is not something he himself made, it, along with the sheath lying at his feet, might also be a family heirloom.

** Star Blankets

The star pattern is derived from early buffalo robe designs. The extermination of the buffalo herds coincided roughly with the implementation of the first mission schools where the craft of quilting was taught. The pattern bears a resemblance to various Anglo-American designs dating to the 18th century.



Drone Cedar Flute Walnut Loon Flute,
Sunreed Instrument

The 8-point star design. This type of blanket is used for honoring, protection and ceremony. The star on the star blanket is the symbol for the morning star – the beginning of a new day/another day of life given by Creator. (The stars are used as teachings and blessings – the standing between light (knowledge) and darkness (ignorance), the morning star inspires understanding and life). To the Sioux people the star blanket is a link between the living and the dead thus by extension symbolizing immortality.

Plains Indians kept track of the passing years by winter counts, pictures painted in spirals, often on the smooth inner hide of buffalo robes. Each tribe recorded its own version of what it experienced as important. But one event on virtually all Plains Indian winter counts was the “smallpox winter.” The smallpox epidemic of 1837–38 all but destroyed the Mandans and severely reduced the Arikaras and Hidatsas. There is little evidence to show this came from infected blankets, more likely it was a communicable disease brought in by fur trappers and traders.



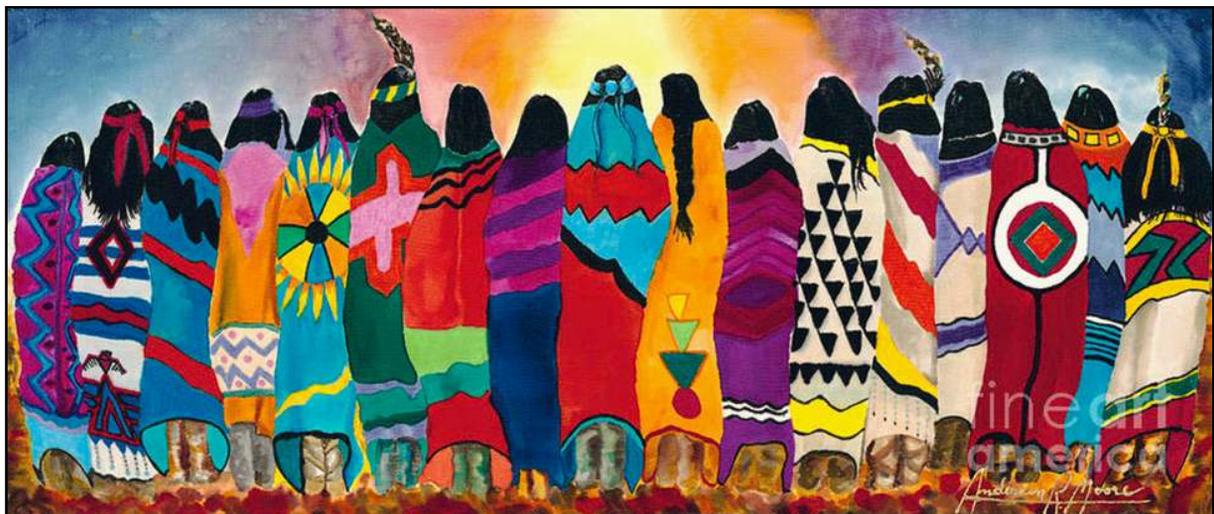
Ceremony

The blanket can be used as a way of honoring individual life changing events (births, deaths, graduations, marriages) such as gift giving ceremonies, a way of recording a significant event, or to provide protection. Blankets replaced the role of the buffalo robes in ceremony as the number of buffalo declined....

“Many an Indian has accomplished his own personal salvation by “going back to the blanket.”

“As the light from the fire illuminated the moving bodies and blankets, the swirling shapes, lines, patterns and colors sprang to life, I no longer saw blankets, but rather the familiar designs of the Holy people coming to life from the sand paintings. I saw moving clouds, glowing sunsets, multi-colored streaks of light, rainbow goddesses, sacred mountains, horned toads and images like desert mirages- all dancing before my eyes.” - Rain Parrish

<https://prezi.com/njzloy2dp6-1/the-meaning-of-a-blanket-is-a-complicated-story-it-can-repr/>



Native Americans Painting - The Blanket Dancers by Anderson R. Moore

