

First American Stories

With the educational hot-button being "multiculturalism", many parents and teachers are searching for new and authentic stories and nonfiction titles that can enrich their childrens' understanding of the first Americans, their lives, their beliefs, their culture.

Joseph Bruchac, master storyteller, co-author of the "Keepers" series (Fulcrum Publishing) and recognized scholar is featured on *The Boy Who Lived With the Bears and other Iroquois Stories* (HarperChildren's Audio, 11.95) which also includes the hilarious tale of when Turtle declared war on man, as well as How the Birds Got Their Feathers and others. Bruchac's telling is masterful, powerful, haunting. You can listen to this tape dozens of times and never tire of its magic. Bruchac speaks for the Native American community in many of his books, of which there are over a hundred. His voice is strong and pure, gentle but strong.

Geri Keams, storyteller and author, tells traditional myths of the Dineh, about First Man, First Woman, Coyote Brings Fire and more, on *Sacred Twins and Spider Woman and other Navajo Creation Stories* (HarperChildren's Audio, \$11.95). Her lovely voice, her sense of the poetic as well as her love of the tales themselves, shine through brightly.

Jennifer Owings Dewey's *Stories on Stone: Rock Art Images from the Ancient Ones* (Little Brown, \$16.95) introduces young readers to petroglyphs, the indecipherable messages left a thousand years ago by the

Anasazi, now vanished, the "ancient ones" who inhabited Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, Canyon de Chelly, Hovenweep, and left us messages which we cannot read.

The Hopi: A First Americans Book by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, illustrated by Ronald Himler (Holiday House, \$15.95) fits into a series which includes the Sioux, the Navajos, the Seminoles, Nez Pierce and Iroquois. Sneve is also author of a handsome and authentic volume, *Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth*, illustrated by Stephen Gammell. The lifestyles, beliefs, stories, material culture of these peoples are all portrayed with care, with lavish illustrations throughout, making this whole series a "must have" for every library and classroom that purports to have a good "First Americans" selection.

Gerald Hausman's *Eagle Boy: A Traditional Navajo Legend* illustrated by Cara and Barry Moser (HarperCollins, \$14.95) is a compelling tale about destiny, tricksters, and obedience, a timeless story you can read again and again. Penny Pollock's *The Turkey Girl: A Zuni Cinderella Story* illustrated by Ed Young (Little Brown, \$16.95) intrigues kids of all ages with its compelling artwork and uncompromising ending of loss due to inconstancy. *Ahaiyute and Cloud Eater* by Vladimir Hulpach, illustrated by Marke Zawadzki (Harcourt Brace and Co, \$16) also a Zuni legend, tells of a boy's coming-of-age quest to bring rain back from the monster sky snake who lives far to the east. The illustrations are spectacular! *The Magic of Spider Woman*, by Lois Duncan, illustrated by

Shonto Begay (Scholastic, \$14.95) is a handsome retelling of the story of Weaving Woman, whose soul was trapped in a blanket by her drive for perfection.

For a complete list of appropriate titles, read Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale's *THE BROKEN FLUTE* or *THROUGH INDIAN EYES*, both of which are comprehensive surveys of children's literature from the Native American point of view. On the Oyate website (www.oyate.org) you will find a comprehensive survey of titles to include as well as titles to avoid, and by all means, order a catalog.

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