

BOOKS ABOUT, OR FEATURING, AMERICAN INDIANS THAT ARE NOT RECOMMENDED

The idea behind these reviews and the Criteria linked below is to give educators, media specialists and parents a starting point for evaluating books for themselves. Texts that have American Indian themes, characters, motifs and topics are far too numerous for us to review all of them. Additionally, more are published each year. We would like for educators, media specialists and parents to learn to evaluate books in order to discern for themselves if the texts give accurate and authentic portrayals of American Indians. There are so many good, accurate, respectful books on our [Recommended Books](#) list, that there does not seem to be much reason to continue to use the books below.

Some of the books on this list have been reviewed by a panel of American Indian parents of students in the Chapel-Hill Carrboro School district, and some have been reviewed by online sources, which are linked. And some we leave to you to analyze for yourself using the [Revised Criteria from How to Tell the Difference](#) adapted from oyate.org.

The books on this list largely present American Indians in a stereotypical, inaccurate light and/or with a Eurocentric viewpoint.

-- North Carolina State Advisory Council on Indian Education

American Indian Festivals, A True Book, by Jay Miller

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

I really wanted to like this non-fiction book and be able to recommend it. There are several positives. The Meet the Author section tells us that Mr. Miller belongs to the Delaware Wolf clan. It also says he has attended most of the festivals described in the book. He is a professor who has written several books about American Indians for the True Book series. A positive in the book is that the first two pages are written in the present tense. We know that the overwhelming number of people think of Indians as in the past and extinct; therefore, it is very important to show many, many photographs of contemporary Indians and make sure students (and teachers) read texts in which Indians are written about in the present tense.

However, there are also a number of instances in the text where it refers to generalized Indians, resulting in inaccurate information and supposition for readers as well as other issues:

- The first page begins, "Like their ancestors, American Indians celebrate many festivals." This statement is inaccurate. Indians are not a monolithic body with one set

of beliefs and practices. It goes on to say, “Each event is a way of keeping in touch with past and of bringing together everything in nature: plants, animals, Earth, and sky in song and dance.” An accurate version of that text would be, “Many American Indians celebrate festivals, like their ancestors before them. For those who practice the traditional ways, ...” 80% of Indian America are urban Indians - Indians who live in cities and towns, not reservations, and who may or may not practice traditional ways. Obviously, even for those who live on reservations, practicing traditional ways is a personal choice.

- There are several other references on the first few pages to “...Indians...”, again giving the impression of a monolithic, generic, like-minded body.
- On page 8, there is a map of North America with 8 tribes listed and general geographic areas labeled (“Northwest, Plains, Southwest, Southeast”). It turns out that in later pages, these are the tribes referred to, however, the “Northwest” is never tribalized. The author continually refers to, “the people of the Northwest”. There are many tribes in that geographic region (Northwest is a geographic region, not a people). Specifically grounding the text in a tribe helps make the text accurate as well as shows that Indians are *not* a large, monolithic body, but very separate tribal identities.
- “Every year when a plant grew ripe again, people celebrated a Return Food ceremony. Women were often in charge of these festivals...” What ‘people’ is the author referring to? A tribe or tribes, needs to be named. As an Indian person, I have never heard of the term ‘Return Food’ ceremony. Also, written in the past tense.
- The sections on the Numa, the “people of the Northwest”, the Mandan, and subsequent festivals are written in the past tense. Fix: write in the present tense, or find a contemporary tribe to be the representatives of described event.
- “Every person and tribe had places that were holy. Year after year, members of a family would go to the same place to meet a spirit and get help.” Inaccurate. A more accurate statement would be “Some people and tribes had places . . .” and then specify the tribe.
- The ‘Today’ section is two paragraphs. In part, it says, “These festivals still bring many people together to sing and dance and pray. It’s a meaningful time for people who still share and believe in giving thanks. It’s a special time for those who still believe in the power of the spirits to help them make the world a better place.” A better way to educate readers about American Indian festivals today would be to tell the festivals that are held today.

Because of the issues in this book leading to misconceptions, I cannot recommend this book.

An Indian Winter, by Russell Freedman

Arrow to the Sun, by Gerald McDermott

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2006/10/gerald-mcdermotts-arrow-to-sun-gerald.html>

Bearstone, by Will Hobbs

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/search?q=bearstone>

Benchmark Literacy, Readers' Theater

Glooscap Makes the Seasons, A Canadian Legend by Carol Pugliano-Martin

Rough-Faced Girl, A Native American Cinderella Tale by Joanna Korba

(there may be others in this series with similar issues)

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

My overall concern with these books is that unless a teacher is extremely well-versed in both culturally responsive teaching and accurate American Indian information, specifically in giving students immersion in contemporary Native culture, students will be left with the stereotypical impression of Indians as only existing in the past, and having legends and traditional tales as their largest part. If using these books, a teacher would have to go overboard to give students an accurate portrayal of Indians today in order to counteract the impact of doing a reader's theater with historical Indians in legends. Perhaps the teacher would also give accurate information about contemporary Indians first and do a reader's theater about Native people going to school and working to be doctors, scientists and lawyers?

As a Native person, a teacher, and one who educates about culturally responsive teaching, as well as about Native tribes, I would probably not use these books for instruction. I might, if I had spent several weeks grounding students in the reality of Native life today and then used it to hone students' analytical and judgemental abilities as far as stereotypes are concerned.

Additionally, The Rough Faced Girl is not grounded in a tribe but refers to a generalized "Indian".

Black Elk A Man With A Vision, A Rookie Biography series by Carol Greene

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This text seems to contain facts intermingled with the author's speculation or fiction writing: "But the grown ups said that white soldiers were coming. Black Elk's mother told him to stay near their tepee. Black Elk was three years old. He felt afraid." I doubt that there was any recorded notes on the three year old's feelings in 1866 that the author accessed. There are a number of similar instances in the book, which are a non-Native person's suppositions. The entire text is written from a Eurocentric point of view, with this odd mixture of mingling facts with fiction. Young readers would have difficulty separating the two. The suppositions and the point of view from which the story is told serve to further stereotypes about Native people. A biography that tells the facts about Black Elk without being intermingled with fiction would serve students better.

Brother Eagle, Sister Sky by Susan Jeffers

Review:

<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/mendoza.html>

Caddie Woodlawn by Carol Ryrie Brink

Review: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2007/03/reflections-on-caddie-woodlawn-teaching.html>

Calico Captive by Elizabeth Speare

Review by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This book is so filled with hateful and stereotypical language about Indians that I hardly know where to start. If I started listing example after example, I'd fill pages and end up rewriting here the entire book. Almost every page has offensive references. I hate to think of Native students in our schools who had to read this.

Cherokee: Checkerboard Social Studies Library Native Americans, by Richard Gaines

Reviewed by Michael Lambert

I do not recommend this book. This short book sets out to describe the Cherokees. It is divided into short chapters that describe various aspects of Cherokee life, culture, and society. Without explaining that this is largely a description of the Cherokees prior to contact the book discusses the Cherokees almost exclusively in the past tense. A short section at the end is given to the history of the Cherokees since contact but the focus is almost exclusively on how precontact cultural forms have been maintained into the present. Notably, and very problematically, the cover does depict an Eastern Band member but this person is performing a dance that is not typically practiced by Cherokees. I see the cover as emblematic of the selective misrepresentation that runs throughout this book.

Copper Magic, by Julia Mary Gibson

http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/05/copper-magic-by-julia-mary-gibson-or.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+AmericanIndiansInChildrensLiterature+%28American+Indians+in+Children%27s+Literature%29

The Corn Raid A Story of the Jamestown Settlement by James Lincoln Collier

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This fiction book is part of the Jamestown's American Portraits series. This book is filled with offensive, condescending language toward and about Indians. Indians are portrayed as aggressive savages, nobles, childlike, lacking in intelligence, manners, and morals. Indian society is held against the standard of Colonial society and found inferior. Examples:

- “ ‘There’s an Indian stole the hoe!’ The Indians loved our hoes. They loved our axes, shovels, knives, swords, anything made of metal.” - from entire first section on the Indian main character stealing a hoe. Insinuation: Indians are thieves.
- “He wasn’t wearing anything but a loincloth.” Fix: “He was wearing a loincloth.
- “He’d caught the Indian stealing. One Indian boy more or less didn’t count for anything, anyway. Suddenly, I felt sorry for the boy. He didn’t move a muscle. He sat there with nothing on his face, waiting to be shot.” Insinuation: Indians are thieves with stereotypical, non-expressive blank poker faces.
- “I speak English good.” - from the “Indian boy” (Indian main character). This

stereotypical 'Ugh, me Tonto' form of speech is throughout the entire book. Fix: do not have Native people speak in 'early Indian jawbreaker'. Native tribes had very nuanced, complex languages. The fact that many chose to learn English is a plus for them. Have them speak in a normal conversational tone. Or have the English speak in their language.

- "Was he trying to make himself brave so he would die like a man? What would I have done in his place? Would I take it like a man if the Indians were torturing me the way they tortured prisoners - breaking my bones one at a time or holding my feet in a fire, first one foot, then the other, then a hand, and so forth? The Indians did that to each other when they took prisoners, and they did it a couple times to the English too." Fix: spend as much time on the torture the English gave to Indians as the time spent on torture Indians gave. None was mentioned.
- "I never saw an Indian who couldn't eat. It was their way - eat everything in sight when they had the chance, then go hungry without complaining when hard times came." Insinuation: Indians are greedy and can't manage their resources.
- "English people work too hard." - from the Indian main character in a conversation about work. Insinuation: Indians are lazy.
- "But Weetopin figured that going to church beat weeding tobacco seedlings. Besides he got to put on a clean shirt and trousers. As we rowed across the river to Jamestown, he kept trying to look in the water to see how grand he looked in English clothes." Insinuation: English clothes are better than Indian clothes and he is lucky to be wearing them.
- "The Indians aren't Christians. They aren't the same as us. They don't count. They'll kill you just as soon as look at you. ..turn your back on him and he'll put a knife in you." - from the owner of the farm. The author's defense may be that this was to show the thinking of the time. It gives the same offensive impression whether that is the reasoning or not.
- "... getting murdered by Indians." The author's defense may be that this was to show the thinking of the time. It gives the same offensive impression whether that is the reasoning or not.
- "We die. Indian not afraid to die." - from Indian boy main character.
- Section on being black: "Being a person and being black just didn't go together. It was like a fish perched in trees and birds swimming underwater." "... I was curious to see if the color would rub off." Insinuation: Black people are not people.
- "I'd sure rather have a lot of dead Indians on my soul than dead Englishmen. . . The Indians weren't so much people to me as the English were." Apparently, neither are Indians.
- "... he began to count the days on his fingers - he didn't know the English days of the week too well, forever confusing Tuesday and Thursday and forgetting which came first, Saturday or Sunday." Insinuation: Indians are dumb.

The entire book is filled with this sort of language. If the author is using it as an example of the thinking of the time, that is never addressed in an author's note or by any other means.

Dear America Series, Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie, The Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell, by Kristiana Gregory

Dear America Series, The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow, The Diary of Sarah Nita, a Navajo Girl, by Ann Turner

Dear America Series, The Journal of Jesse Smoke, A Cherokee Boy by Joseph Bruchac

Dear America Series, Land of the Buffalo Bones, The Diary of Mary Ann Elizabeth Rodgers, An English Girl in Minnesota, by Marion Dane Bauer

Dear America Series, My Heart Is On The Ground, by Ann Rinaldi

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/search?q=dear+america+series>

The Double Life of Pocahontas by Jean Fritz

The Education of Little Tree by Forrest Carter

Reviews:

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/Resources/mod/glossary/showentry.php?courseid=8&eid=9142&displayformat=dictionary>

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2007/11/where-is-your-copy-of-education-of.html>

Follow the Dream: The Story of Christopher Columbus by Peter Sis

http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/07/follow-dream-story-of-christopher.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+AmericanIndiansInChildrensLiterature+%28American+Indians+in+Children%27s+Literature%29

Ghost Hawk by Susan Cooper

Review: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/search?q=ghost+hawk>

Paul Goble books

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2009/07/about-paul-goble-and-his-books.html>

Hau Kola Hello Friend, by Paul Goble

Review: please see

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2009/07/about-paul-goble-and-his-books.htm>

The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses, by Paul Goble

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/06/paul-gobles-girl-who-loved-wild-horses.html>

I Am Native American, Our American Family series, by Ana Sage

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This non-fiction book has a number of positives. There is no indication if the author is Native, but the subject is a contemporary Hopi child describing his life. He tells that there are hundreds of Native tribes, and that he lives in Arizona on a reservation. This grounding in a real Indian child's life and tribe is refreshing, as is the fact that it is set in the present at all. That being said, there is only one photograph of the Hopi (or any Indians) in clothing that other students would recognize as contemporary clothing. This is a missed opportunity to show teachers and students that there is a thriving life in Indian Country *today*. Because the overwhelming number of people think of Indians as in the past and extinct, it is very important to counter every drop of that misrepresentation with a hundred drops showing Indians in modern life.

There are also a number of instances where the child's family's way is generalized to "all Indians":

- the section on reservations never mentions that 80% of Indians in the U.S. do *not* live on reservations. This omission leads the reader to think that Hopis (and generalizing to other Indians) mostly live on reservations. It states, "The Native Americans were moved to reservations." That is not entirely accurate. Some were. Some were not.
- "Native Americans have a lot of respect for nature." That is not accurate, since Native Americans are not a monolithic body with one attitude toward nature. Accurate would be, "Many Native Americans have a lot of respect for nature", or "Respect for nature is one of the traditional values of many Native Americans."
- "Each Native American tribe has special ceremonies to honor their spirits." That is patently untrue.
- "Crafts are a very important part of the Native American tradition. Women and girls weave all kinds of baskets and rugs." This is inaccurate. Accurate would be, "Crafts are a very important part of tradition to many Native Americans. Men and women, boys and girls weave baskets and rugs, carve, draw, paint and bead." Perhaps the author should then follow that with, "Among the Hopi, the women and girls weave . . . " if that is accurate to the Hopi.

Because of the positives in this book, I really wanted to like it. It could have been an effective, accurate stereotype buster if it had been more accurate. As it is, I'd have to recommend not using this book, especially since there are so many good, accurate books about Native Americans to use in its place.

I Heard the Owl Call My Name, by Margaret Craven.

Reviewed by Valerie Lambert (Choctaw Nation).

I do not recommend this book. With the exception of several “progressive” Indian youth, it represents American Indians and American Indian tribes as unable to cope in the modern world and as destined to become extinct. The book is a non-Indian fantasy of who and what Indians are/were, and spends much time and attention on so-called Indian spirituality. Problematically, it represents Indians as the consummate environmentalists, quickly dying in a world polluted by and shaped by others. In these pages, Indians are represented almost entirely as victims.

If You Lived With The Cherokee, by Peter and Connie Roop

Reviewed by Michael Lambert

This book is not all bad. I can only recommend the final 10 pages, however. This is such a short portion of the book that I would not recommend this book at all out of fear that a teacher would be tempted to let the students read the preceding 66 pages. This book is good in that it explicitly sets out to describe the Cherokees during a specific period (1740-1838). The bad is that most of the description is very stereotypic and static and fails to fully capture the transformations that occurred during this very dynamic period of Cherokee history. This is partially achieved in the final 10 pages of the book.

If You Lived With The Sioux, by Ann McGovern

Indian in the Cupboard by Lynn Reid Banks

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/02/elizabeth-birds-survey-of-top-100.html>

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/10/lynne-reid-banks-indian-in-cupboard.html>

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

Review:

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/Resources/mod/glossary/showentry.php?courseid=8&eid=9147&displayformat=dictionary>

Life on the Oregon Trail, Picture in the Past series by Sally Senzell Isaacs.

Reviewed by Valerie Lambert (Choctaw Nation).

I recommend this book except for page 14. The book is good and accurate, delivering generally positive images and representations of Indians. I was relieved to see that the context in which pioneers travelled on the Oregon Trail is never described as “empty” or void of a human presence. The most serious problem occurs on page 14, when the text describes that, on the Oregon trail, there existed white “guards against wild animals and Native Americans who tried to steal the animals.” Here the allegation that Indians are not just wild animals but also thieves is highly disturbing.

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2006/09/little-house-on-prairie-yesterdays.html>

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/11/little-house-on-prairie-pioneers-with.html>

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2008/02/american-indians-in-fact-and-fiction.html>

Molly's Pilgrim by Barbara Cohen

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This is a fiction story of a Yiddish girl who has moved from her home country (Russia?) and the discrimination she faces from classmates, centered around Thanksgiving. Some issues in the book:

- “It was a good story. It was about the Pilgrims and how they started the holiday of Thanksgiving.” Interesting concept about the start of Thanksgiving, which is actually a controversial topic.
- The teacher speaking, ‘ “We’ll make a model of the Pilgrim village . . .celebrating the first Thanksgiving.” She sounded excited. “We’ll make the houses and the church here in school. But I want you to make the people. The boys can make Indians, and the girls can make Pilgrims.” ‘ Is this gender-typing? I get the feeling the author is assigning the rougher, rowdier crowd the rougher, rowdier group and the tamer crowd the tamer group.
- The teacher looking at the dolls the students made, “Why, Michael, what a magnificent headdress. Where did you find so many feathers?” The students were not asked to make dolls of chiefs who had earned the right to wear headdresses. Just ‘Indians’. The assumption that ‘Indians’ wear headdresses with many feathers is a stereotype.
- The teacher, “...do you know where the Pilgrims got the idea for Thanksgiving?....They read in the Bible about the Jewish harvest holiday of Tabernacles....The Pilgrims got the idea for Thanksgiving from Jews like Molly and her mama.” The origin of Thanksgiving is quite a controversial topic. The author’s statements from the teacher about its origin would be debatable, to say the least.

While this book may have some redeeming features in teaching students tolerance for “different kinds of Pilgrims”, its issues outweigh any benefit. There are a number of book options that teach this concept without these issues.

Mr. Tucket by Gary Paulsen

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/07/gary-paulsens-mr-tucket.html>

Native American Lore and Legend Series, The Rourke Corporation (publishers), 1996

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

- ***Brave Bear and the Ghosts A Sioux Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic

- ***Sunflower's Promise A Zuni Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic
- ***Coyote and the Grasshoppers a Pomo Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic
- ***Red Hawk and the Sky Sisters A Shawnee Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic
- ***First Woman and the Strawberry A Cherokee Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic
- ***Song of the Hermit Thrush An Iroquois Legend***, adapted and retold by Gloria Dominic

This series follows the format of an adapted story followed by non-fiction information, a glossary and a timeline at the end of the book. There is no explanation in any of the books as to who the author is, or what her relationship is to the tribes in order to be qualified to tell their stories. There is no acknowledgement of the source of the stories. Which elder told her the stories? When tribes' stories are 'retold' by those outside of the culture of the story's origination, there is a great risk of misrepresenting certain important aspects of the story. When a story is 'adapted', that risk increases, since that indicates that the author has taken it upon themselves to edit the story, most likely cutting parts of cultural importance and/or adding parts that are not culturally a part of the tribe's original story. The tradition of oral stories are important - they are learning tools, medicine wheels. They have included for generations parts that are culturally needed and do not include parts from other cultures. It is important to hear them from a valid and acknowledged source and faithfully record them. If an author was told a story from a valid elder, it is most likely that elder would be acknowledged in the book.

The non-fiction section of the books is written in the past tense, and therefore serves to reinforce stereotypes. In this 'non-fiction' section, there are also inaccuracies, for example, "Unlike other native peoples, the Pueblos were able to spin, weave and dye cotton and wool from very early on." (*Sunflower's Promise*). This is a false limitation. In *First Woman and the Strawberry*, it is not made clear that the Cherokee now reside in two locations - both powerful federally recognized tribes. Instead, the focus is on the Oklahoma Cherokee, leaving students with the impression that the Cherokee are based in Oklahoma.

There is also a "Today" section, which is quite small (two paragraphs at the most, compared to nine to twelve paragraphs focusing on history and written in the past tense. There is also undesirable phrasing here. *Sunflower's Promise* and *Red Hawk and the Sky Sisters* state, "... non-native careers such as doctors, lawyers, writers and fire fighters." and "... non-native careers such as law, education and the arts." Are students to think that Natives can not normally be doctors, lawyers, writers and firefighters? Are Native students to think that is unusual? Are there certain jobs I'm not supposed to have as a native person? Despite the 'today' concept of this paragraph or two paragraphs, the illustrations and photos used are historical. There is only one photograph in one book (*First Woman and the Strawberry*) that is contemporary.

The timeline is similarly problematic, as it ends decades before the books were published. It would have been a fairly simple matter to find out current major tribal initiatives to include in the books, but 1987 is the most current entry on the timelines, with most ending in

the 1960s.

There are also inaccuracies in the glossaries. For example, in *Coyote and the Grasshopper*, “Sweat lodge: A structure where men meet to talk, sweat and sleep.” They were used by men and women. In *Red Hawk and the Sky Sisters*: “Our Grandmother: A female deity worshipped as the Creator by the Shawnee.” A more accurate definition would be, “The Creator, according to the Shawnee and many other Native American tribes.”

Native Americans, The Nature Company Discovery Libraries, Time Life Books, Dr. David Hurst Thomas, Lorann Pendleton

Native Americans, A New True Book series, by Jay Miller

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This non-fiction book starts out with a mixed message. There is a photograph of a Native person wearing feathers and leggings, riding a horse adorned with feathers and beads. The caption reads, “Books and movies made the Indians famous for their love of horses and daring deeds. But not all Native Americans wore feathers or rode horses.” If this was the point they intended to make, it seems they might have instead used a photograph of Native person not in feathers and riding a horse. The book is full of garbled history and inaccuracies, such as:

- “Every tribe... had its own name. The name of each tribe meant they were the best human beings there were.” Inaccurate. Accurate would be: the names of the tribes usually meant a version of ‘the people’.
- “People who lived along the same river shared the same land, language, customs, rituals and beliefs.” Inaccurate. Accurate would be: Peoples from the same linguistic group shared many of the same customs and language similarities. These linguistic groups could be regionally close or far away from each other.
- “Every tribe thought it was different from its neighbor.” Thought? They were different. This is an example of Eurocentric writing.
- There is a section called ‘Farmers and Caretakers’ which describes Native American farmers, and then says, “The caretakers, who hunted animals and gathered plants, took good care of their environment. They took only what they needed to feed themselves. They always prayed to the spirits of the plants and animals to thank them for the nourishing food. In North American, farmers lived mostly in the east and south. Caretakers lived in the west and north.” Inaccurate. The largest problem here is the use of ‘caretakers’. ‘Caretakers’ is not a ‘category’ of Indians. This garbled information also leads the reader to think that they didn’t hunt, gather plants, etc. in the east and south.
- “Every tribe had a special place where they spent the winter together.” Patently inaccurate. Not every tribe moved for the winter, by any means.

The rest of the book is filled with similar inaccuracies and garbled information. Additionally, it is called “Native Americans, A New True Book”, which would lead me to believe that it would give accurate information about Indians past and present. However, only two photographs of many show Native people in other than traditional clothing or in historical illustrations. There

are two paragraphs at the end of the book about Indians today. And even that part furthers stereotypes, stating, "They live again in harmony with the land and waters." This is an example of presenting Indians as a monolithic body with one attitude toward nature - that relentlessly ecological, nature-loving, spiritual Indian stereotype. Indians are separate people. Some follow traditional ways, some do not. Some value nature, some do not.

The Navajo, A New True Book series, by Alice Osinski

North American Indian Sign Language by Karen Liptak

People of the Breaking Day, by Marcia Sewall.

Reviewed by Valerie Lambert (Choctaw Nation).

This book has many weaknesses. However, some Indians, particularly those who are members of tribes that are headquartered in what is now the Northeastern United States, may find it useful and enriching. Because of this, I cannot 'not recommend' this book. Sewall's opening descriptions are highly stereotypic and describe people to whom no Indian child today could relate. There is a good amount of material that is specific to the Wampanoag and is presented as such. Oddly, the book is written in the present tense, though it is clearly about an era prior to the arrival of the Europeans. The book appears well-researched. Its weaknesses are that it is boring and includes nothing about contemporary Wampanoag or Northeastern U.S. Indians.

Review by Kara Stewart (Sappony). This book's oratorical style reinforces stereotypes. It lacks any grounding in a time period with a complete absence of any contemporary information about the Wampanoag, which reinforces the stereotype that Indians are only a part of the past, not current times. There is also an overemphasis on 'one with nature, our animal brothers, we see visions' things. This book simply reinforces stereotypes instead of truly educating about the Wampanoag with accurate information.

Pocahontas Daughter of a Chief, A Rookie Biography series by Carol Greene

The Pomo, A New True Book, by Mary M. WorthyLake

Run Away Home by Patricia McKissack

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

I love Patricia McKissack's book. I am definitely a fan of hers. It's very sad that there are a number of sections in this book relating to Indians that make me uncomfortable enough that I put this book on the non-recommended list. This is a fiction book set in the late 1800s. Ms. McKissack states in the Author's Note that her great-great-great-grandfather was Native American and that this book is based on a family legend of how his family found an Indian child that joined their black community. She researched the event and filled in the blanks with speculation - this is, after all, a fiction book. Here are some examples of parts that I feel could have been written in a better way:

- “We got us a load of Apaches....Meanest bunch of cutthroats ever walked on two feet.” I realize the author is attempting to depict a soldier’s view at the time, based on the time period. However, there is nothing to mark that for the readers, which will be children.
- There is much reference to Geronimo, who plays a part in the story, being on the train that came to the main character’s town. Taken all together, the descriptions add up to a stereotype:
 - “Geronimo showed no sign of submission fear of his captors.”
 - “Lozen and Geronimo were very much like the slaves Papa had told me about - the ones who showed no fear of their white masters - the ones the masters called ‘crazy’ when they fought back or when they couldn’t break their spirit.”
 - “... the old warrior...His head rested squarely on his shoulders... there was a sureness in his walk and a straightness in his back...was right at six feet, solidly built, muscular...”
 - “... Just then Geronimo turned his head slowly and made a small gesture with his hands. Buster [main character’s dog] stopped barking instantly and sat calmly beside me... “Did you see that?” Private Meeks said, “...Geronimo does have magic powers.” Papa in the story says that it has nothing to do with magic, it’s kindness. But by that time, the stereotype damage is done.
 - “I was more interested in what they said about Geronimo. Did he really have magic powers?” Even her main character didn’t listen to Papa when he said it wasn’t magic - not sure how the readers will not buy into the stereotype.
 - “I saw the boy who had been sitting next to Geronimo leap through an open window and roll into darkness. He never made a sound. It happened so fast ...Meeks, Jamison, Wratten, and twenty other soldiers weren’t thirty feet away from him, yet they hadn’t seen or heard a thing. It was as though the boy was invisible... magically invisible.” More stereotypes - the silent, speedy, magical Indian. I’d really appreciate the book much more if the author had not depersonalized Indians with these stereotypes, but had written about the Indians as real, individual people with flaws and weaknesses. The boy could have tripped but gotten away anyway. The repeating of the ‘silent Indian’ stereotype wasn’t necessary and only furthers stereotypes in children’s minds. Indians are no quieter than anyone else. It’s a learned skill, not inherent.
 - “I looked in Geronimo’s eyes. ... I felt my inner self being lifted, higher and higher into the air...soaring on the wings of a great bird. I felt a gush of freedom that took my breath like a powerful wind. ... then the spell was broken and Geronimo bounded up the steps and into the coach...In his own magical way Geronimo had asked me not to tell what I had seen.” It is one thing for an author to write about someone giving another person a warning glance that is understood due to the circumstances; quite another to turn it into inherent magical powers.
 - “Maybe the Indian was nearby, watching and waiting for a chance to come in and kill us all!” Another unnecessary, tired stereotype.

- ‘ “Mrs. Crossman, are you part Indian?” He wasn’t the first person to ask and with good reason. Her skin was dark, reddish brown. She had black oval-shaped eyes, high cheekbones and straight black hair.” ‘ The fabled and tired high-cheekbones and straight black hair stereotype, here for students to soak up.
- About the Indian character: “Sky is prepared to kill his enemies in ways you can’t even imagine...”

Although she does go on to make the Indian character multi-dimensional later in the book, all in all, this seems to be a book that was written by a person who had good intentions, but ended up promoting stereotypes by the way parts of it were written. This makes me sad because she is such an awesome author. This book could have been a stereotype-busting vehicle instead of the opposite. Lost opportunity. This book remains on the non-recommended list because of the stereotypes it promotes.

Salt: A Story of Friendship in a Time of War by Helen Frost

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2013/10/initial-thoughts-about-helen-frosts.html>

Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2007/04/more-on-sign-of-beaver-below-is-essay.html>

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/search?q=sign+of+the+beaver>

The Sioux, Indigenous Peoples of North America series, by Gwen Remington

Small Wolf, An I Can Read Book, by Nathaniel Benchley

Review by Kara Stewart (Sappony).

This early reader’s central concept is the continual encroachment of white people leading to the continual removal of Native people. While this seems a Native-friendly theme, the execution renders the book an overall no-go, and a book that serves instead to reinforce negative stereotypes of Indians. One positive in the book is that the author has the Indian father in the story speak ‘normally’ and conversationally, not in early-Indian ‘jawbreaker’.

One irritant is the name of the main character, and title of the book, “Small Wolf”. Indian names are given or chosen respectfully and with personal reason. While they are many times beautiful, giving a character a name that ‘sounds Indian’, but is in actuality an invented name with no meaning, is neither respectful nor accurate and only serves to further stereotypes about Indians.

Another problem is that the story has no grounding in time or tribe. The illustrations show Indian children running naked and men with loincloths. The white people wear European Dutch colonists’ clothing. From this and the storyline of the Natives’ selling of Manhattan, we take it that this is in the past. However, when stories are approached this way,

students (and adults) perceive that Indians are in the past, part of history only, extinct. There is no mention what tribe the main characters are from. The Canarsee are mentioned in the story as having sold the island of Manhattan. So we know we are geographically based in Manhattan, but that is all.

An inaccuracy in the book are the illustrations that show the Indians living in and constructing tipis. Indians on the East Coast did not live in tipis.

The story line also depicts Indians passively accepting white encroachment, making no attempt to regain the land for their homes and hunting. In the book, they simply continue to move over and over. Although this is the “positive” point the story is trying to tell, the implementation falls flat as non-accurate.

I also find the main character’s reaction to white people, clothing, houses and animals condescending and overblown, making the Indian main character seem simpleminded, even with the understanding that this is his first time in contact with white people. Additionally, there is a glaring inaccuracy in that description. “I saw a man all painted white!” he said. “His hands and face were white, and his jaws were fat, and he had teeth like a medicine man - or a devil!” The man had previously been described thusly, “The man had a fat jaw and cracks between his teeth. Small Wolf thought the man was wearing some devil mask.” There is no generic Indian (as the tribe of Small Wolf is not named) Indian medicine man who has cracks between his teeth. Or would be referred to by a Native child as ‘a medicine man - or a devil!’ Those two concepts are very far apart and a Native child would not confuse them with each other.

These are just some of the inaccuracies and misrepresentations in this book that further stereotypes about Indian people.

The Spirit of Native America, Beauty and Mysticism in American Indian Art, by Anna Lee Walters

Review by Kara Stewart (Sappony)

This book is not for elementary schools. The readability and density are too high and the topics covered are complex enough to lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions. This book may be suitable for a high school teacher to use as additional to instruction that is well-grounded in fact and exposure to contemporary Native life.

Squanto Friend of the Pilgrims by Clyde Robert Bulla

Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner

Review:

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/Resources/mod/glossary/showentry.php?courseid=8&eid=9180&displayformat=dictionary>

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson

Review: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/search?q=spirit+bear>

The True Story of Pocahontas by Lucille Recht Penner

Reviewed by Kara Stewart (Sappony).

“The True Story of Pocahontas”, an early reader, is anything but. Here are *some* of the problematic issues:

- The entire book is an oversimplification of a very complex and disputed series of historical events.
- There is no grounding in a year, although this is supposedly a book from which students will learn historical ‘facts’.
- The Indians’ reaction to white people’s unfamiliar clothing, ships, housing and mannerisms is overblown and condescending. Ex.: “They call the ships ‘floating islands’. What are they doing here? Men get off the ships. How strange they look! They have hair on their faces. The newcomers wear strange clothes...” and “One man points a big stick. Boom! Boom! Smoke and fire shoot out. A bird falls down dead. Is this magic?”
- Indians are made to seem childlike and naive: “Some Powhatans trade corn to the strangers. They get pretty glass beads, bells and little mirrors.”
- Pocahontas learns things from the English children, but apparently, she has nothing to teach them. “Pocahontas races and plays games with the English children. She learns to turn somersaults. It’s fun! She turns over and over.” There is no mention of them learning any games from her.
- Chief Powhatan is made to seem vain, foolish and greedy. “...Captain Smith tells him that King James has sent him presents. They are waiting in Jamestown. ‘Bring them here to me,’ Chief Powhatan says. ‘I am a king, too!’ King James has sent the Chief a copper crown, a bright red cloak, a basin and a pitcher, and a big bed with a canopy. It is hard work to drag the presents through the woods. The Chief puts on the red cloak. He sits on the bed. In return, he gives the Englishman his deerskin cloak, his moccasins, and some baskets of corn.”
- There are 3 illustrations depicting Native men aggressively, with scowls on their faces and in aggressive postures. There are no such illustrations of white men.
- The transformation of Pocahontas from an Indian into a proper English woman takes place over several pages. The presentation leads one to think that the English way of life is overall better than the Native (although there are a few sentences about “Where is the sky? Where are the trees? At home Pocahontas could see for miles.” - which wouldn’t have been accurate at that time due to forestation, anyway). She is told, “... she will be treated like a princess. ... where people are kind to her... They give her English clothes to wear and new leather shoes” (implication: her own weren’t good enough). “She eats with a knife and spoon. She learns to say grace before she eats.” (implication: she had no manners until the white people taught her manners). “Pocahontas becomes a Christian. She is given a new name: Rebecca.” (although these things may be true, there is no mention of her reaction or her acceptance/non-acceptance of them. It is stated in a way that leads readers to believe that this was the right and good way to be). Pocahontas’ life in England is written to seem very attractive to young children, with the implication that she was better off than when she was at home, with her Native ways. “Pocahontas goes to many parties. The women dress in silk and satin. . . Pocahontas acts like a princess. . . They call her the

Indian Princess. She is even introduced to Queen Anne.” Native life is contrasted unfavorably in these sections that deal with the ‘Englishification’ of Pocahontas. The problems in this book are more numerous than just the items on this list. This book promotes a negative view of Indians, deals in a simplistic (and not necessarily factual) way with a complex historical situation that had many nuances, and the title makes it all the more ironic.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech

Review:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/02/thoughts-on-sharon-creechs-walk-two.html>

World Book Encyclopedia Presents North American Indians, Make It Work series, by Andrew Haslam

Written in Stone by Rosanne Parry

Review:

http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/03/rosanne-parrys-written-in-stone.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+AmericanIndiansInChildrensLiterature+%28American+Indians+in+Children%27s+Literature%29

Young Wolf and Spirit Horse by Janice Shefelman