

American Indigenous Peoples Annotated Bibliography

Adult

Authors

[Alexie, Sherman](#)

Sherman Alexie is an enrolled member of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and grew up in Wellpinit, Washington, on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Winner of the PEN Faulkner and National Book Award, he is a poet, writer, and filmmaker. In 2015, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His most recent book is a memoir: *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*.

[Deloria Jr., Vine](#)

Vine Deloria, Jr. was a Standing Rock Sioux lawyer, teacher, activist and writer. After completing his schooling, he worked as the executive director for the National Conference of American Indians (NCAI) from 1964-1967, where he advocated for the rights of Native Americans. In 1969, he wrote the groundbreaking work *Custer Died For Your Sins*. In his writings, he dealt with the history of multiple broken treaties between tribes and the U.S. government, as well as analyzing the effects of anthropologists, missionaries, established religion, government agencies, and the termination policy on native culture, sovereignty, and economics.

(Adapted from <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2016/11/remembering-vine-deloria-jr/>)

[Erdrich, Louise](#)

Louise Erdrich, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, is the author of many novels as well as volumes of poetry, children's books, and a memoir of early motherhood. Her novel *The Round House* won the National Book Award for Fiction. *Love Medicine* and *LaRose* received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. Erdrich lives in Minnesota with her daughters and is the owner of Birchbark Books, a small independent bookstore. Her most recent book, *The Night Watchman*, won the Pulitzer Prize.

(<https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/authors/louise-erdrich>)

[Momaday, N. Scott](#)

N. Scott Momaday is a renowned writer who celebrates Native American art and oral tradition in his novels and essays. A member of the Kiowa tribe, he is also a poet, playwright, painter, photographer, storyteller, and professor of English. His first novel, *House of Dawn*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, making him the first Indigenous American to receive that prize. He was named a UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2003, and received the National Medal for the Arts in 2007. His works have been translated into seven languages.

(Adapted from <https://www.arts.gov/honors/medals/n-scott-momaday>)

Books - Fiction

[Orange, Tommy. *There There*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.](#)

There There follows twelve Native Americans who have come to the Big Oakland Powwow for very different reasons. They are coming to make amends, for a fresh start, to honor the memory of a loved one, to honor their culture, and to honor their family. One young man has a dark plan, one which will destroy his life, and possibly the lives of everyone he meets. Told together, these stories give full scope to the lives of urban Native Americans as they wrestle with their weighty cultural history and spirituality while living in a modern American city.

Books - Non-Fiction

[Black Elk. *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux, as told through John G. Neihardt \(Flaming Rainbow\), illustrated by Standing Bear*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961. Reprint.](#)

Black Elk Speaks, the story of the Oglala Lakota visionary and healer Nicholas Black Elk (1863–1950) and his people during momentous twilight years of the nineteenth century, offers readers much more than a precious glimpse of a vanished time. Black Elk's searing visions of the unity of humanity and Earth, conveyed by John G. Neihardt, have made this book a classic that crosses multiple genres. Whether appreciated as the poignant tale of a Lakota life, as a history of a Native nation, or as an enduring spiritual testament, *Black Elk Speaks* is unforgettable. (from the publisher)

[Midge, Tiffany. *Bury My Heart at Chuck E Cheese's*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.](#)

Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese's is a collection of hysterical and moving observations from a Native woman living in America, woven together to form a compelling memoir. Tackling issues from Standing Rock to grief, and the complications of identity, Midge compels the reader into her world and the issues that make up her vision. Humor is used as an act of resistance, meshed with commentary on popular culture, media, feminism, identity, race, and politics.

[Washuta, Elissa. *White Magic*. Portland, OR: Tin House, 2021.](#)

White Magic is an essay collection in which author Elissa Washuta explores her identity as a Native American woman and witch. In a life surrounded by cheap reproductions of Native spiritual tools, Washuta explores both the sale and whitewashing of her ancestral magic. Throughout the essays, Washuta comes back to her failed romantic relationships and her battle with substance abuse and how both ultimately led her to seek her own understanding of Native spiritualism.

Teen

Books

[Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York, NY: Little, Brown, and Company, 2007.](#)

In his first book for young adults, bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by acclaimed artist Ellen Forney, that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live. (from the publisher)

[Little Badger, Darcie. *Elatsoe*. Hoboken, NJ: Levine Querido, 2020.](#)

Elatsoe is a seventeen year old girl living in an alternate version of America where magic, monsters, and indigenous lore are commonplace. She, like many generations of women in her Lipan Apache family, can raise the spirits of dead animals. When her cousin dies in what is being reported as a mysterious car crash, Elatsoe sets off with her family, her best friend, and her ghost-dog Kirby to uncover the truth behind his death.

Graphic Novels

[Dembicki, Matt \(ed.\). *Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Books, 2010.](#)

Trickster is a graphic and comic adaptation of 21 Native American tales, with stories and art styles as diverse as its dozens of contributors' ethnicities and tribal origins. This anthology hosts a strong collective of Nation-spanning indigenous artists, from the Navajo of New Mexico, to the Winnebago of Nebraska, to the Penobscot Nation of Maine, retelling stories that were previously preserved orally. Finally, timeless fables, cautionary tales, and indigenous myths of thieving bears, talkative rabbits, and marriage-saving coyotes come to life for a wider audience.

Children

Fiction

[Day, Christine. *I Can Make This Promise*. New York, NY: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2019.](#)

When Edie discovers a box of letters hidden in her attic signed "Love, Edith" with photos of a Native American woman who looks just like her, she happens upon the realization that her family has been hiding her Native American ethnicity from her entire life. From here on, Edie takes her family to task, questioning, prodding, and

continuing to unearth the truth until she gets answers in this enticing drama about honoring one's Native American heritage, and the lengths one has to go to unearth tragic family and social histories that pervade our everyday lives.

[Young, Brian. *Healer of the Water Monster*. New York, NY: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2021.](#)

As Nathan begins another boring summer staying with his grandma Nali and rough and tumble uncle Jet on the Navajo reservation, he happens on an extraordinary discovery in the middle of the desert: The Water Monster, a divine being from the Navajo Creation Story, whose sickness has prevented rainfall in the desert for more than 30 years. Nathan's discovery heralds a quest that leads him to the Third World, a mystical land being ravaged by outside forces. *Healer of the Water Monster* uses Navajo myths and teachings to illustrate beautiful points about family, healing, and creation, with realistic depictions of Navajo individuals at its center.

Non-Fiction

[McGinty, Alice B. *The Water Lady: How Darlene Arviso Helps a Thirsty Navajo Nation*. New York, NY: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2021.](#)

Darlene Arviso, also known as the "Water Lady" to the Navajo youth she delivered hundreds of gallons of water to, is the true story of an unsung hero of the Navajo community. This unconventional biography is an account of a single day of Arviso's water-trucking duties. Cody, the boy of a family who awaits water on a particularly seething desert day, jumps for joy when she arrives in her iconic yellow water tanker, and offers her a sip of water. While this might chronicle a seemingly simple and low-key encounter, this event is just one of many in Darlene Arviso's essential duty, delivering water to more than 200 thirsty families each month.

[Smith, Cynthia Leitich \(ed.\). *Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids*. New York, NY: Heartdrum, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2021.](#)

Edited by award-winning and bestselling author Cynthia Leitich Smith, this collection of intersecting stories by both new and veteran Native writers bursts with hope, joy, resilience, the strength of community, and Native pride. (from the publisher)

[Trottier, Maxine. *Native Crafts: Inspired by North America's First Peoples*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2000.](#)

Kids Can Press provides clear step-by-step instructions for making American Aboriginal crafts; items of artistic and cultural importance such as jewelry, pottery, moccasins, and dolls in different mediums (corn cob, corn husk, clay) are respectfully and accurately depicted and re-constructed for creation. Moreover, each craft is color-coded to a particular region of Canada, America, and Northern Mexico.