

## INCOL 2014

### American Indians (not) in Children's and Young Adult Literature

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American Indians in Children's Literature

Thank you!

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## Native nations are sovereign!



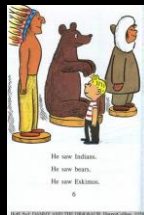
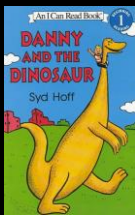
Bounded land marked with signs



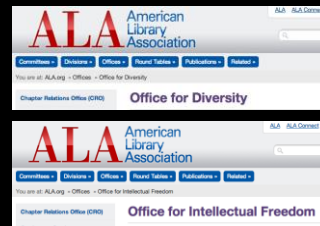
Drive too fast? Tribal police issue ticket! Payable to tribe, contest Before tribal judge.



We remember books we read as  
young people, but generally  
don't notice stereotypes:



Use ALA offices to guide  
collection development



## Research studies on impact of stereotypes:

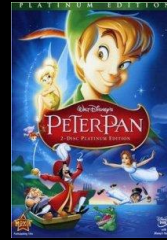
1999: Brophy

2008: Fryberg, Marcus, Oyserman, Stone

2010: Tippeconnic and Faircloth

2012: Education Week

## Disney videos?



Do you remember the song  
“What makes the  
red man red?”

[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=Y\\_at9dOE1Qk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_at9dOE1Qk)

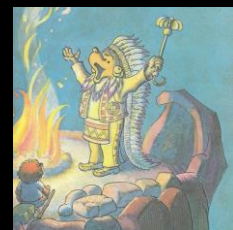
## Toys



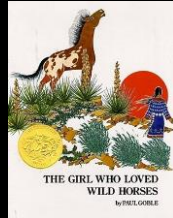
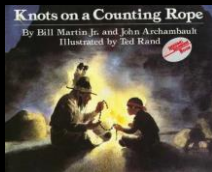
## Mascots...



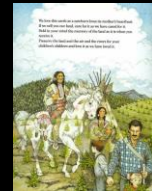
Popular books with much-loved characters dressed  
as stereotypical Indians



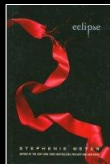
Reading Rainbow featured two books about Native people, but what tribe?!



In best seller, tribe and illustrations do not match.



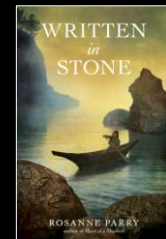
Bestseller misrepresented tribe, and, reviews did not note Native content or problems with it.



New book uses "Indian Princess" stereotype. Author created Native story and petroglyphs to fit her fiction.

The latter are author's creative license, but there is already far too much fiction that misrepresents Native people.

Why add to it?



2013 Cooperative Children's Book Center,  
University of Wisconsin

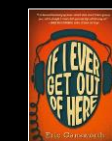
34 books by/about American Indians/First Nations

Reese analysis (research in progress)

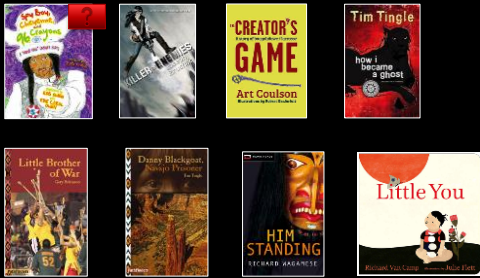
First sample:

Fiction published in US, N=14

Major publishers: 6 books,  
5 with serious problems

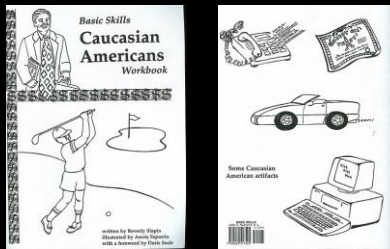


Small Publishers: 8  
7 that are terrific (one not available)



**Conclusion:**  
In the sample, books from small publishers are more reliable (accurate, free of stereotypes) than books from large publishers.

Develop a critical eye...

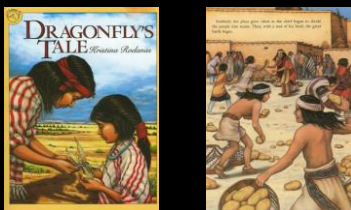


Strategy to become adept at selection of books by/about American Indians:

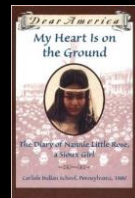
Know one nation in-depth.  
Read its website, writers of fiction and nonfiction who are of that nation.

*Internalize* that information! Your expertise will help you develop a critical eye that can spot problems in materials of other nations.

Example: Expertise in Pueblo traditions of "throw" (sharing of harvest) would help you spot problems in this book:



Example: Knowing about devastation wrought by boarding schools would help you recognize its misrepresentation



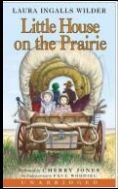
Scholastic, 1991

*School Library Journal*: "An excellent addition to a popular series."

*Booklist*: "A solid addition to the Dear America series."

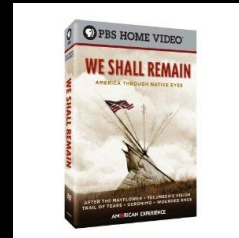
*Kirkus*: "A strong addition to Rinaldi's ongoing historical explorations."

Example: Knowing facts about Indian Removal and Native culture would help you recognize problems in classics



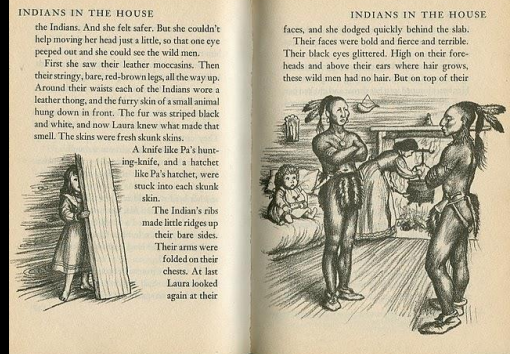
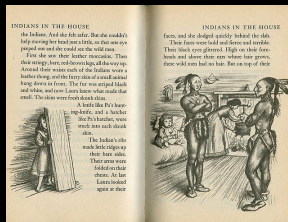
1804: Indian Territory created  
1845: almost 100,000 Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminoles in Indian Territory  
1866: Laura Ingalls born  
1868: Charles Ingalls moves family to Indian Territory.

Resource that can help:  
Trail of Tears episode



After watching video, study these pages:

p. 1  
p. 6  
p. 55 - 56  
p. 122  
p. 134 - 139  
p. 211  
p. 229  
p. 290-291



## Nonfiction (bio)



Harcourt, 2008

Three hundred years ago, there was no United States of America. Instead, there were thirteen English colonies in North America.

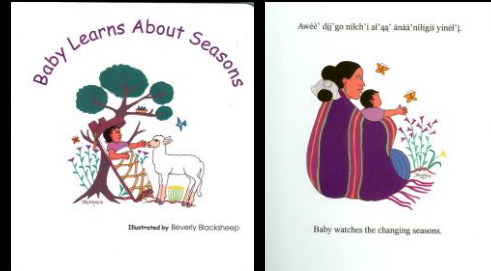
Three hundred years ago, there was no United States of America. **Instead, there were hundreds of Native Nations. Europeans who had fled Europe had come to North America and were occupying lands that belonged to the Native Nations. These Europeans set up thirteen English colonies.**

Collection Development guides by Disher (2007) and Larson (2008) state books can be weeded on these criteria:

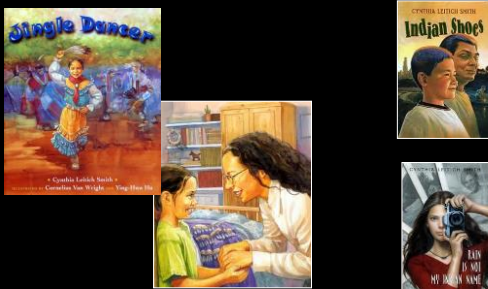
- Misleading
- Inaccurate
- Racial Bias
- Stereotyping
- Balance

Better Choices!  
Here's a look at some  
outstanding books.

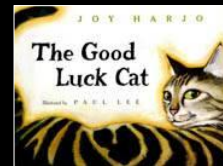
Bilingual board book series  
(English/Navajo) from Salina Press



Cynthia Leitich Smith's picture book,  
middle grade, YA:

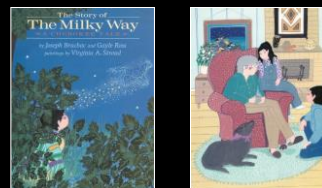


A cat story by Joy Harjo



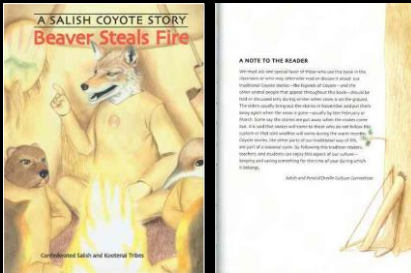
Traditional Stories:  
Where are they shelved?  
With folktales?  
Or with world religions?

Book opens/closes with present-day family;  
a powerful visual that says 'we are still here'

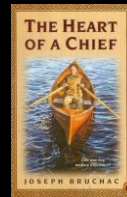




Tribes publishing their stories, with rich notes to the reader:



Bruchac story where protagonist in present-day classroom 'speaks back' to content in *The Sign of the Beaver*



Protagonist in *The Heart of a Chief*.

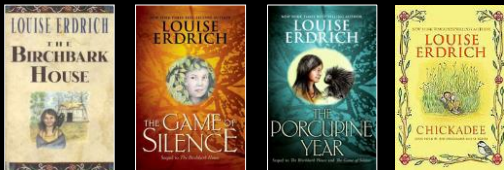
"The end of the book... At the end the Indians just go away.

But that isn't what happened. We didn't go away.

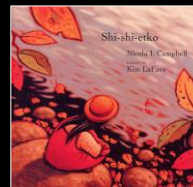
They tried to drive us off the land. They put bounties on our scalps. They burned our villages. But we didn't go away. We're still here."



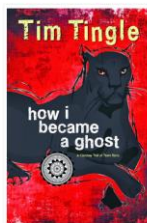
Erdrich's award-winning series of same period as *Little House* series, looks at cultures coming into contact with each other, but does not demonize 'other'



Picture books about boarding school, by Native artist/illustrators



Tim Tingle's HOW I BECAME A GHOST



One of the things I noticed right away when I started to read Tim Tingle's *How I Became a Ghost* is the prominence of the setting, and the words he chose for that setting:

Chapter 1  
**Talking Ghost**  
Choctaw Nation, Mississippi, 1830

Wednesday, May 29, 2013

What I Like about Eric Gansworth's IF I EVER GET OUT OF HERE

America—or any nation—celebrates moments and events in its history that show that nation in a good light. Noting those moments is important, but so is noting that there is not a single story within any nation. Not everyone celebrates those same moments. Some people have a different view of those moments.

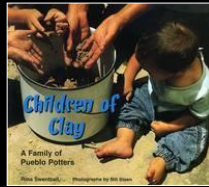
Take, for example, the celebration of United States Bicentennial. In the opening pages of his *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, Eric Gansworth's protagonist looks down the street at his elementary school. He imagines teachers getting ready to celebrate the U.S. Bicentennial, and notes that the teachers would be puzzled that the celebrations would not be a priority on the reservation.

Knowing that Gansworth pokes at that celebration might turn you off. You might think that his book is an anti-American screed.

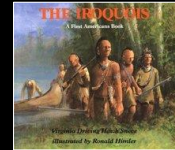
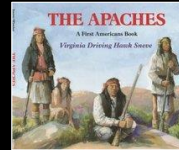
Rest easy. It isn't.



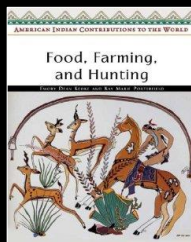
## Lerner's "We Are Still Here" nonfiction series



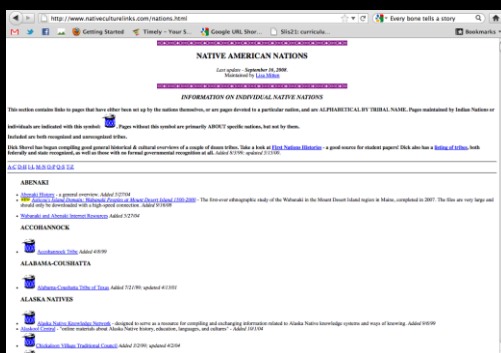
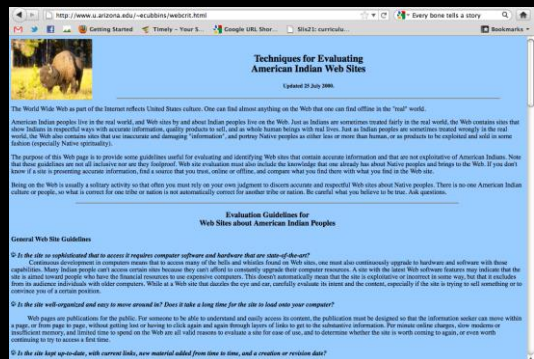
## Sneve's First Americans series, published by Holiday House



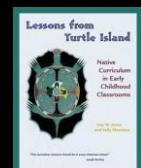
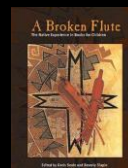
## American Indian Contributions to the World series (5 books)



*Food, Farming, and Hunting*  
*Trade, Transportation, and Warfare*  
*Science and Technology*  
*Medicine and Health*  
*Buildings, Clothing, and Art*

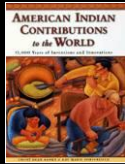
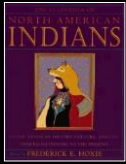


## Helpful books for professional development





Must-have encyclopedias. Older publication years, but reliable! Get used copies!



## Native awards...

American Indian Library Association

Lacapa Spirit Prize

Wordcraft Circle