JUVENILE LITERATURE


This book for young readers is a fictionalized day-in-the-life account from the perspective of a nine-year-old Nisenan girl. It features an area map, activities, and a discussion of basketry materials.


This book for younger readers includes a Pomo creation story, prehistory, historical chronology, and a look at contemporary Pomo life. It is illustrated with historic and contemporary photographs.


The Coast Miwok features contemporary photos and an overview of Coast Miwok history. A simple book for young readers, it includes a basket weaving activity using paper strips.


This text for grades 4-12 offers an overview of California’s indigenous peoples. It includes discussion of basket types and techniques, along with interviews with basketmakers. The book also explores problems that contemporary basketmakers face, such as pesticide exposure and limited access to native plants.


This short book for older students includes an historic timeline and map of Native American groups and communities. It also discusses diversity, assimilation, broken treaties, and self-determination. While the book does not focus on a specific group or area, it is a text that gives valuable discussion points and study questions for students at the intermediate school level.

Native Ways is a great collection of stories and oral histories emphasizing the diversity of California Indian culture. The collection includes historic and contemporary photos and nicely interweaves details of current and past lifeways. This text is appropriate for intermediate and advanced readers.


Many people from different groups share their childhood in this collection; which also includes archival photographs from Edward S. Curtis and others. There is a nice juxtaposition of stories, games, pranks, and of childhood fears and memories of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Older children would enjoy reading these stories on their own, while select stories could be read aloud to younger children.


This book for older children looks at a year in the life of a fourteen-year-old Maidu girl. While fictional, it incorporates historic events and cultural details. The weaving of Nesuya’s basket is used as a metaphor for her maturation; which culminates at the Otsu, a mourning ceremony. Adolescents should be able to relate to this book while learning about Nesuya’s experiences.


This book is a decent regional resource if read with a critical eye. There are many classroom activities included as well as creation and morality stories from Thomas C. Blackburn’s December’s Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives (1975). There are some typographical errors, but the recommended discussion questions and activities would be useful for classrooms.


Two young Maidu brothers escape an Indian residential school in the 1930s and find their way home to Susanville, California. They are reunited with their family in this book, which is based on true stories told to contemporary artist Judith Lowry, by her father and uncle. Her images illustrate the book and bring the story to life.

This book, filled with contemporary photographs, follows Carly Tex, an eleven-year-old Western Mono basketweaver, and her family as they prepare for the annual California Indian Basketweavers Gathering. It discusses plant gathering and preparation as well as difficulties faced when trying to find native plants today. The book also shows Carly spending time with her family, playing with friends, and going to school.

ADULT LITERATURE
(Most are appropriate for advanced juvenile readers.)


This book is a thorough examination of Indian boarding schools in the United States. It provides both political and oral histories from Native and non-Native perspectives. While focusing on the phenomenon of boarding schools from a national perspective, the book gives valuable background about this time in American history.


Precious Cargo includes contemporary photographs of cradle baskets—commissioned for the Precious Cargo exhibit—from twenty California tribes. It also includes a great amount of information on materials, weaving techniques, and childbirth and childrearing traditions. The book includes interviews with the basket weavers.


This publication explores Karuk history and culture and includes many historic photographs. It also relates the story of the Hover family and their ties to Karuk basketry. The book goes into detail about technique and materials. It also includes a pictorial catalog of the Clark Memorial Museum’s collection.


This book explores various California Indian basketmaker areas, giving a geographic and cultural overview for each. The author examines the modern resurgence of basketry and includes information on materials and techniques. Interviews with the artists are included as well.

This is a good reference book for anyone to have on hand. It explores lifeways, geographic areas, ecological influences, resources, and material culture. Appendices cover commonly-used plants, pronunciations, and museum resources.


Hurtado explores the use Indian labor under both Mexican and American rule in the mid-nineteenth century. He also offers a detailed description of Native Californians’ involvement in the Gold Rush. This section includes a discussion of Native women panning for gold with baskets. The book includes a valuable set of maps, tables, historic illustrations, and photographs.


This book about California Indian culture, past and present, boasts photographs and the author’s paintings. Poetry, memories, and experiences are all tied together in this informative and attractive book.


The Way We Lived is a wonderful compilation of stories from all over California. It brings together old tales and modern voices with excellent photographs and commentary from the editor. This collection illustrates the diversity of Native California and serves as a nice companion to Native Ways: California Indian Culture and History (edited by Margolin and Montijo).


This book, partially written from interviews with tribal members, describes the pre-contact Washo way of life. While it does not claim to be a complete history of the Washo, it is a detailed account of what the Washo see as the unique aspects of their own culture and history. Numerous photographs and Washo words enhance the well-written history.


This short but dense book written by Marie Potts, a Mountain Maidu activist and graduate of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, describes the history and culture of the Northern Maidu. The twenty short chapters cover subjects including foods and plants,
conservation methods, doctoring, baskets and basketmaking, and personal reminiscences. The book is filled with photographs, including one of Potts wearing a basket cap.


Originally published in 1902 by the Smithsonian Institution, this book is an exhaustive look at basketry across America. It includes 248 plates and 212 illustrations. While its language is archaic, this book is still of value for its detailed discussion of materials and techniques.


This is a beautifully written biography exploring the life of a Pomo basket weaver and medicine woman. The story combines McKay’s biography with the author’s own discovery of family and identity in contemporary Native California.


This book is a valuable resource for librarians, teachers, parents, or anyone else choosing books for children. It clearly describes twelve essential points to consider when examining literature for juveniles.