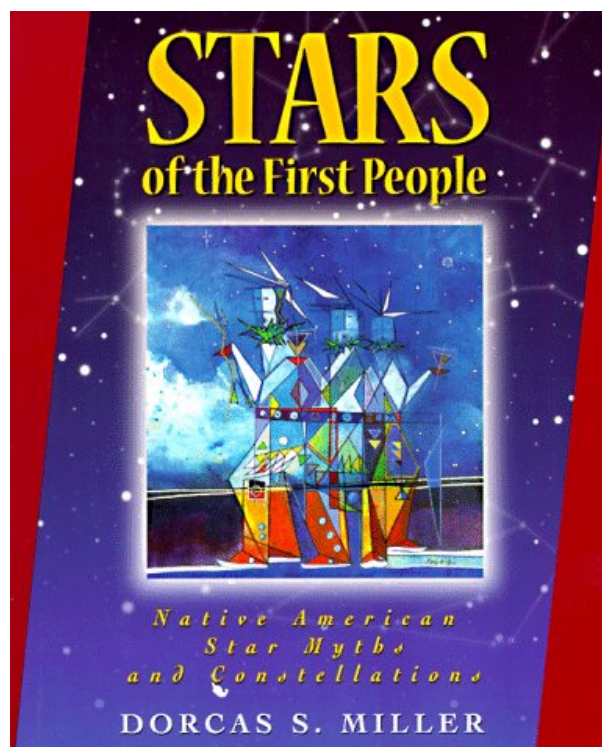
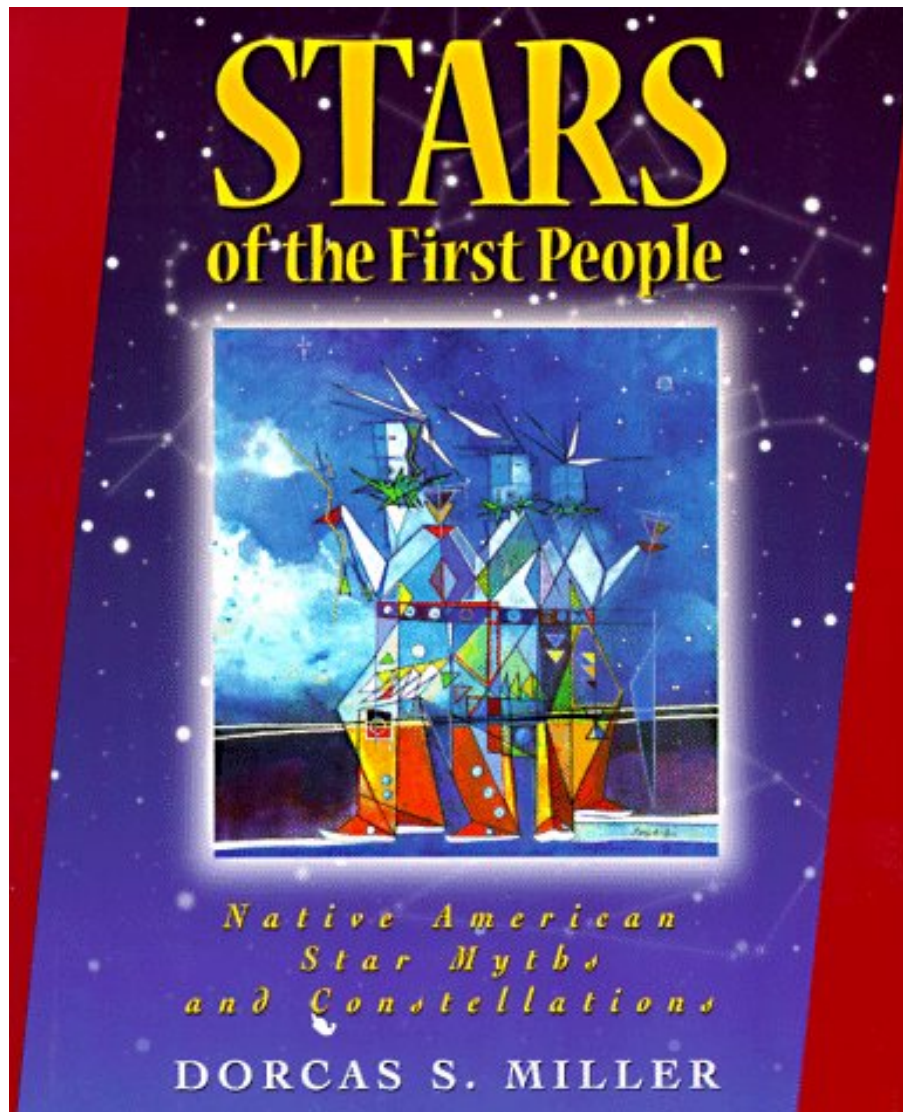


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A guide to Native American constellations and folklore. 75 stars charts, 9 regional maps, and b/w illustrations.

"An excellent and unique book ... well written, and extremely comprehensive."

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## Most helpful customer reviews

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Well-written book with information hard to find elsewhere

By Dr. James V. Blowers

This is one of the most complete set of Native American star legends that I have seen. The author first reviews the standard Greek and Roman myths that have given us our constellation names. For each region of North America, he devotes an entire chapter to star legends from indigenous people that live in that region. At the end of each chapter he lists standard constellations and groups and the Native American legends behind each, and at the end of the book he provides an overall listing. Some interesting similarities come out

- for example, the Big Dipper is a bear in standard Greek and Roman and in many Native American myths, and Sirius is a dog or wolf star in standard and in Native American myths. The stories are well written and can be used anywhere where storytelling is called for - for example, to groups of children. For a good summary of Native American myths, look to this volume. I just wish there was a similar compendium of ALL the world's indigenous star myths.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

More hopeful than the Greeks: Native American star myths

By Kate Slater

Dorcas Miller's book is a gateway into our North American sky. I have already given my first copy to a scout leader. Her organization is superb: sky-watchers can pick a star or constellation and use the reference guide to access all its stories; ethnographers can follow the chapter organization by region and tribe. I will annotate her lists as I add other sources and tales.

Miller starts with the conventional Greek constellations that still map our sky for professional astronomers, providing myth summaries and seasonal sky maps. Her stick figures of these constellations are a delight and I copy their details onto the daily sky charts from the internet.

Both the Greeks and our First Peoples filled their skies with peoples and animals. Only a few identities, such as bear and dog, straddle both hemispheres. Greek heroes and heroines may be banished forever to the sky by the action of the gods as punishment, or placed by a friendly god to protect them from the angered one. Animals and humans are often antagonists. I can't think of a creation myth. The dead didn't go there.

Our First Peoples connection with the sky seems ongoing and personal- get lost and you may wander into it. Die and you may walk up the Milky Way, past guides and obstacles. Suffer and you may find an opening to the sky or a rescuer who will take you into it; you may be homesick, come and go, but finally choose the sky. If you navigate by the stars, why not? It may be a refuge. The myths feel contemporary, the characters often ordinary, and creation feels recent. The animals may be small and hungry, brave or lazy.

Miller provides the myth texts as she finds them, supplementing with discussion and drawings- maps of their known or probable stars and historic diagrams such as rock art that may be relevant. The bibliography is broad. This book will be a good anchor for collecting other North American books coming into print or reprint. `

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

a well-rounded presentation of North American star lore

By Don Childrey

Curious about the stories that different Native American peoples told about the stars? Dorcas Miller's "Stars of the First People" will go a long way towards satisfying your curiosity. Focusing on the peoples of North America, she has pulled together a robust collection of tales and star lore and grouped them by region. Plentiful sketches, star maps, and charts accompany the text to provide a visual reinforcement of the material contained in the stories.

In addition to the star lore, Dorcas has also included a decent amount of background information on the individual tribes to help the reader better understand the context of the star stories. In the back of the book you'll find an extensive set of notes and bibliographic references for those interested in further reading on this subject.

Don Childrey, author of "STAR TRAILS - Navajo"

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