

Apache Creation Story

Animals, elements, the solar system, and natural phenomena are revered by the Apaches. That which is beyond their understanding is always ascribed to the supernatural.

In the beginning nothing existed--no earth, no sky, no sun, no moon, only darkness was everywhere.

Suddenly from the darkness emerged a thin disc, one side yellow and the other side white, appearing suspended in midair. Within the disc sat a small bearded man, Creator, the One Who Lives Above. As if waking from a long nap, he rubbed his eyes and face with both hands.

When he looked into the endless darkness, light appeared above. He looked down and it became a sea of light. To the east, he created yellow streaks of dawn. To the west, tints of many colours appeared everywhere. There were also clouds of different colours.

Creator wiped his sweating face and rubbed his hands together, thrusting them downward. Behold! A shining cloud upon which sat a little girl.

"Stand up and tell me where are you going," said Creator. But she did not reply. He rubbed his eyes again and offered his right hand to the Girl-Without-Parents.

"Where did you come from?" she asked, grasping his hand.

"From the east where it is now light," he replied, stepping upon her cloud.

"Where is the earth?" she asked.

"Where is the sky?" he asked, and sang, "I am thinking, thinking, thinking what I shall create next." He sang four times, which was the magic number.

Creator brushed his face with his hands, rubbed them together, then flung them wide open! Before them stood Sun-God. Again Creator rubbed his sweaty brow and from his hands dropped Small-Boy.

All four gods sat in deep thought upon the small cloud.

"What shall we make next?" asked Creator. "This cloud is much too small for us to live upon."

Then he created Tarantula, Big Dipper, Wind, Lightning-Maker, and some western clouds in which to house Lightning-Rumbler, which he just finished.

Creator sang, "Let us make earth. I am thinking of the earth, earth, earth; I am thinking of the earth," he sang four times.

All four gods shook hands. In doing so, their sweat mixed together and Creator rubbed his palms, from which fell a small round, brown ball, not much larger than a bean.

Creator kicked it, and it expanded. Girl-Without-Parents kicked the ball, and it enlarged more. Sun-God and Small-Boy took turns giving it hard kicks, and each time the ball expanded. Creator told Wind to go inside the ball and to blow it up.

Tarantula spun a black cord and, attaching it to the ball, crawled away fast to the east, pulling on the cord with all his strength. Tarantula repeated with a blue cord to the south, a yellow cord to the west, and a white cord to the north. With mighty pulls in each direction, the brown ball stretched to immeasurable size--it became the earth! No hills, mountains, or rivers were visible; only smooth, treeless, brown plains appeared.

Creator scratched his chest and rubbed his fingers together and there appeared Hummingbird.

"Fly north, south, east, and west and tell us what you see," said Creator.

"All is well," reported Hummingbird upon his return. "The earth is most beautiful, with water on the west side."

But the earth kept rolling and dancing up and down. So Creator made four giant posts--black, blue, yellow, and white to support the earth. Wind carried the four posts, placing them beneath the four cardinal points of the earth. The earth sat still.

Creator sang, "World is now made and now sits still," which he repeated four times.

Then he began a song about the sky. None existed, but he thought there should be one. After singing about it four times, twenty-eight people appeared to help make a sky above the earth. Creator chanted about making chiefs for the earth and sky.

He sent Lightning-Maker to encircle the world, and he returned with three uncouth creatures, two girls and a boy found in a turquoise shell. They had no eyes, ears, hair, mouths, noses, or teeth. They had arms and legs, but no fingers or toes.

Sun-God sent for Fly to come and build a sweathouse. Girl- Without-Parents covered it with four heavy clouds. In front of the east doorway she placed a soft, red cloud for a foot-blanket to be used after the sweat.

Four stones were heated by the fire inside the sweathouse. The three uncouth creatures were placed inside. The others sang songs of healing on the outside, until it was time for the sweat to be finished. Out came the three strangers who stood upon the magic red cloud-blanket. Creator then shook his hands toward them, giving each one fingers, toes, mouths, eyes, ears, noses and hair.

Creator named the boy, Sky-Boy, to be chief of the Sky-People. One girl he named Earth-Daughter, to take charge of the earth and its crops. The other girl he named Pollen-Girl, and gave her charge of health care for all Earth-People.

Since the earth was flat and barren, Creator thought it fun to create animals, birds, trees, and a hill. He sent Pigeon to see how the world looked. Four days later, he returned and reported, "All is beautiful around the world. But four days from now, the water on the other side of the earth will rise and cause a mighty flood."

Creator made a very tall pinon tree. Girl-Without-Parents covered the tree framework with pinon gum, creating a large, tight ball.

In four days, the flood occurred. Creator went up on a cloud, taking his twenty-eight helpers with him. Girl-Without-Parents put the others into the large, hollow ball, closing it tight at the top.

In twelve days, the water receded, leaving the float-ball high on a hilltop. The rushing floodwater changed the plains into mountains, hills, valleys, and rivers. Girl-Without-Parents led the gods out from the float-ball onto the new earth. She took them upon her cloud, drifting upward until they met Creator with his helpers, who had completed their work making the sky during the flood time on earth.

Together the two clouds descended to a valley below. There, Girl- Without-Parents gathered everyone together to listen to Creator.

"I am planning to leave you," he said. "I wish each of you to do your best toward making a perfect, happy world.

"You, Lightning-Rumbler, shall have charge of clouds and water.

"You, Sky-Boy, look after all Sky-People.

"You, Earth-Daughter, take charge of all crops and Earth-People.

"You, Pollen-Girl, care for their health and guide them.

"You, Girl-Without-Parents, I leave you in charge over all."

Creator then turned toward Girl-Without-Parents and together they rubbed their legs with their hands and quickly cast them forcefully downward. Immediately between them arose a great pile of wood, over which Creator waved a hand, creating fire.

Great billowy clouds of smoke at once drifted skyward. Into this cloud, Creator disappeared. The other gods followed him in other clouds of smoke, leaving the twenty-eight workers to people the earth.

Sun-God went east to live and travel with the Sun. Girl-Without- Parents departed westward to live on the far horizon. Small-Boy and Pollen-Girl made cloud homes in the south. Big Dipper can still be seen in the northern sky at night, a reliable guide to all.

The Comanche Creation Story and The Release of the Wild Animals

One day the Great Spirit collected swirls of dust from the four directions in order to create the Comanche people. These people formed from the earth had the strength of mighty storms. Unfortunately, a shape-shifting demon was also created and began to torment the people. The Great Spirit cast the demon into a bottomless pit. To seek revenge the demon took refuge in the fangs and stingers of poisonous creatures and continues to harm people every chance it gets...

...Long ago two people owned all the buffalo. They were an old woman and her young cousin. They kept them penned up in the mountains, so that they could not get out. Coyote came to these people.

He summoned the Indians to a council. "That old woman will not give us anything. When we come over there, we will plan how to release the buffalo."

They all moved near the buffalo-enclosure. "After four nights," said Coyote, "we will again hold a council as to how we can release the buffalo. A very small animal shall go where the old woman draws her water. When the child gets water, it will take it home for a pet. The old woman will object; but the child will think so much of the animal, that it will begin to cry and will be allowed to keep it. The animal will run off at daybreak, and the buffalo will burst out of their pen and run away."

The first animal they sent failed. Then they sent the Kill-dee.

When the boy went for water, he found the Kill-dee and took it home. "Look here!" he said to his cousin, "this animal of mine is very good."

The old woman replied, "Oh, it is good for nothing! There is nothing living on the earth that is not a rascal or schemer."

The child paid no attention to her.

"Take it back where you got it," said the woman. He obeyed. The Kill-dee returned.

The people had another council. "Well, she has got the better of these two. They have failed," said Coyote; "but that makes no difference. Perhaps we may release them, perhaps we shall fail. This is the third time now. We will send a small animal over there. If the old woman agrees to take it, it will liberate those buffalo; it is a great schemer."

So they sent the third animal. Coyote said, "If she rejects this one, we shall surely be unable to liberate the game." The animal went to the spring and was picked up by the boy, who took a great liking to it. "Look here! What a nice pet I have!"

The old woman replied, "Oh, how foolish you are! It is a good for nothing. All the animals in the world are schemers. I'll kill it with a club."

The boy took it in his arms and ran away crying. He thought too much of his pet. "No! this animal is too small," he cried.

When the animal had not returned by nightfall, Coyote went among the people, saying, "Well, this animal has not returned yet; I dare say the old woman has consented to keep it. Don't be uneasy, our buffalo will be freed." Then he bade all the people get ready just at daybreak. "Our buffalo will be released. Do all of you mount your horses." In the meantime the animal, following its instructions, slipped over to the pen, and began to howl. The buffalo heard it, and were terrified. They ran towards the gate, broke it down, and escaped. The old woman, hearing the noise, woke up.

The child asked, "Where is my pet?" He did not find it.

The old woman said, "I told you so. Now you see the animal is bad, it has deprived us of our game." She vainly tried to hold the buffalo back.

At daybreak all the Indians got on their horses, for they had confidence in Coyote. Thus the buffalo came to live on this earth. Coyote was a great schemer.

Southeastern Tribal Origins--In the Beginning

Southeastern Indian traditions indicated their belief in an Upper World, a Lower World, and This World, where they, the animals and plants, lived and thrived. Early on in This World, some extraordinary humans and animals came down to visit from Upper World. Later, they returned to their previous world, where they felt more comfortable. Mankind of This World in time learned to resolve frictions and to maintain some order between themselves and the other two worlds. They became mostly villagers and agriculturists with more permanent tribal homes, since they were not nomadic by nature. Their tribes enlarged and prospered as hunters, fishermen, builders, and skilled craftsmen, including the women's abilities in weaving, basketry, and herbal medicines; the latter maintaining the good health of their people.

In the beginning, water covered everything. Wind asked, "Who will make the land? Who will make the land appear?"

Lock-chew, the Crawfish, said, "I will make the land appear."

So he went down to the bottom of the water and began to stir up the mud with his tail and his claws. He brought up some mud to a certain place and piled it up until it made a mound.

The owners of the land at the bottom of the water said, "Who is disturbing our land?" They kept careful watch and discovered it was Crawfish. When they started toward him, Crawfish stirred up the mud so much with his tail that they could not see him.

Lock-chew continued to pile up mud, until it came out on top of the surface of the great water. This is how land first appeared. It was so soft that Wind said, "Who will spread the land to make it dry and hard?"

Hawk and Buzzard appeared. Because Buzzard's wings were larger, he tried first. He flew, fanning the soft earth and spreading it all about. When he flapped his wings, hills and valleys were formed.

"Who will make the light?" Wind asked. It was very dark.

Yo-hah, the Star, said, "I will make light." It was agreed. The Star shone forth, but its light only remained close to the Star.

"Who will make more light?" Wind asked.

Shar-pah, the Moon, said, "I will make enough light for all my children and I will shine forever." But the world was still too dark.

T-cho, the Sun, said, "Leave it to me to make enough light for everyone everywhere."

Sun went to the East and suddenly enough light was everywhere. As Sun travelled over the earth, a drop of blood fell from the sky to the ground. From this spot sprang the first people, the children of the Sun they were called, the Yu-chis.

The Yu-chis wished to find their medicine since a large monster had destroyed some of their people. The Yu-chis cut off its head, but the next day its head and body were together again. They killed the monster a second time. Again, its head grew back on its body.

A third time, they cut off its head. They placed the head on top of a tall tree, so the body could not reach the head. The next morning, the tree was dead and the head had rejoined the monster's body. They killed it once more, putting its head at the top of a cedar tree. The next morning the cedar tree was still alive, but covered with blood from the head. The monster remained dead.

This is how the Yu-chis found their great medicine, the Cedar Tree. Fire was soon discovered by boring a stick into some hard, dry weeds.

The Yu-chis selected a second medicine, as each one made a picture of the Sun upon their door.

In the beginning, all of the animals could talk with one another. All animals and people were at peace. The deer lived in a cave watched over by a Yu-chis keeper. When the Yu-chis became hungry, the keeper selected a deer and killed it for their food. Finally, all of the deer were set free with the other animals, and a name was given to every animal upon the earth.

This is how it was in the beginning with the first people, the Yu-chis Indian tribe.

California Creation Story (Yokut)

A Great Flood had occurred upon Earth long, long ago. While Earth was still covered with water, there were no living creatures upon the land.

Then out of the sky one day glided an enormous Eagle with a black Crow riding upon its back, searching for a place to light.

Around and around Eagle flew until he discovered a projecting tree stump, or what appeared to be a stump, upon which he landed to rest. There was a home at last upon the flat surface, which was amply large enough for Eagle and Crow to roost upon.

From here, they surveyed the greenish gray water as far as they could see. The sky was a gorgeous bright blue with a few white drifting clouds, occasionally swirled by a passing breeze. All seemed serene to Eagle and Crow.

Small fish were visible below the water, sometimes leaping out of the sea playfully. Hunger caused Eagle and Crow to swoop down, catching a meal for themselves from time to time. Soon a game developed between the two birds to see which one would be the winner in the fish-catching contest. Upon their return to the stump, however, they always shared the reward.

Because of Eagle's great size and wingspan, he soared to great heights and surveyed widely, as the two birds often flew in opposite directions exploring for land. But no land did they find. No other flying creatures did they see. But they always returned to their home base on the tree stump.

Between them, they wondered "How can we possibly think of a way to make land?"

"We know we cannot dive deep enough to find dirt, and the fish are of no help except to provide food."

Day after day these scenes were repeated, exploring in search of land or wondering how to create land, only to return to their stump and catch more fish.

One morning soon thereafter and much to their surprise, a Duck was swimming around and around their stump. Occasionally, it dived deep in the water, rose to the surface chewing small fish, twisting its head from side to side trying to swallow its meal. One time, Duck emerged with more mud than fish in its mouth.

Eagle and Crow bird talked excitedly about this! "Can Duck possibly bring up enough mud for us to build land?" they wondered.

How could they let Duck know that mud was what they needed most?

An idea occurred to Eagle, which he bird talked to Crow, "If we supply fish for Duck, maybe he will bring up more mud than fish."

By trial and error, the two birds caught fish for Duck, placing them at the edge of the stump, until Duck learned that the fish were for him in exchange for mud!

When Duck appeared on the surface after a deep dive, Eagle and Crow brushed off the mud from Duck's bill and his body with their wings. Progress was slow but steady.

Gradually, Eagle had a pile of mud on his side of the stump and Crow had a similar pile on his side. Each placed fish on his own side for Duck, who now responded by carrying more and more mud to Eagle and Crow. This became a great game of fish-and-mud exchange.

Duck worked very hard, consequently he was always hungry. The birds were surprised at how large each one's mud pile grew every day. In bird talk they said, "Duck is helping us to make a new world. This we will share equally."

Occasionally, Eagle and Crow flew toward the horizon, exploring for any new signs of land. But they returned with nothing new to report; however, they noticed a slight lowering of water around the tree stump.

"Surely, the flood must be coming to an end," Crow and Eagle bird talked.

Each day they watched for a change in the waterline. Each day their piles of mud seemed higher and higher. Faithful Duck kept up his good work as Eagle and Crow caught fish for him and scraped off mud from him for each side of the new world.

Another time, Eagle flew high and far in search of dry land, not returning until late. The sun set and darkness enveloped his world on the stump. Next morning, to Eagle's surprise, he saw how much more mud he had acquired, and he was pleased. But after looking across at Crow's mud pile, Eagle was astounded to see that Crow had given himself twice as much mud while Eagle was away.

"Was this Crow's idea of sharing the new world equally?" accused Eagle.

Of course, they quarrelled all that day and the next over Crow's unfairness. But the following day, they went back to work making their new land. Eagle decided that he must catch up. He caught two fish for Duck and put them in his usual place. Duck responded by bringing up mud twice to Eagle in exchange for his two fish. All three worked very hard for many, many moons.

Gradually, Eagle's half of the new world became taller and taller than Crow's half, even though Crow seemed to work just as hard as Eagle. Duck was faithful to his task, never tiring in his effort to supply mud. Of course, Duck continued to give Eagle twice as much mud for his two fish. Crow never seemed to notice why Eagle's half became higher and higher than his half.

One morning, as the sun rose brightly, the two birds looked down through the water and saw what appeared to be land!

"So that is where Duck finds the mud," they bird talked. They were pleased to see that the water was subsiding. How they hoped that soon they would be high and dry on their new world.

But all was not so easy, for that very night lightning flashed across the waters and thunder rolled and rolled from one horizon to the other followed by a heavy, drenching rain. Eagle and Crow sought shelter in holes they dug into the sides of their mud piles. All night long the rain continued to fall, washing away much of the new world into the sea.

As the rain stopped and the sun rose, Eagle and Duck looked out upon the waters and saw an arc of many colours reaching from one edge of the horizon across the sky to the other horizon. This brilliant display held their eyes in wonderment. What did it mean? They marvelled at how long the colours lingered in the sky. Eagle flew toward the scene for a closer look, returning when the arc disappeared.

In bird talk, Eagle and Crow decided that the storm of the night before must have been a clearing shower. They began their land- building project again, hoping that Duck would resume his work as mud-carrier. Soon the sun's rays burned strong and hot, packing the mud until it was hard. Duck appeared and the team of three continued to build the two halves of the new world.

Day by day, the waters subsided and new land began to show above the waterline but far, far below the new creation by Eagle and Crow. Eagle's half became taller and taller and hard packed by the hot sun. Crow's share of the new world was still great, but never could become as large as Eagle's half of the new world.

In retelling this creation story, Yokut tribal historians always claim that Eagle's half became the mighty Sierra Nevada Mountains. They also tell how Crow's half became known as the Coast Mountain Range. Yokut historians end their tale by saying that people everywhere honour the brave and strong Eagle, while Crow is accorded a lesser place because of his unfair disposition displayed during the creation of the new world by Eagle and Crow.

Aztec Creation Story

The mother of the Aztec creation story was called "Coatlique", the Lady of the Skirt of Snakes. She was created in the image of the unknown, decorated with skulls, snakes, and lacerated hands. There are no cracks in her body and she is a perfect monolith (a totality of intensity and self-containment, yet her features were square and decapitated).

Coatlique was first impregnated by an obsidian knife and gave birth to Coyolxauhqui, goddess of the moon, and to a group of male offspring, who became the stars. Then one day Coatlique found a ball of feathers, which she tucked into her bosom. When she looked for it later, it was gone, at which time she realized that she was again pregnant. Her children, the moon and stars did not believe her story. Ashamed of their mother, they resolved to kill her. A goddess could only give birth once, to the original litter of divinity and no more. During the time that they were plotting her demise, Coatlicue gave birth to the fiery god of war, Huitzilopochtli. With the help of a fire serpent, he destroyed his brothers and sister, murdering them in a rage. He beheaded Coyolxauhqui and threw her body into a deep gorge in a mountain, where it lies dismembered forever.

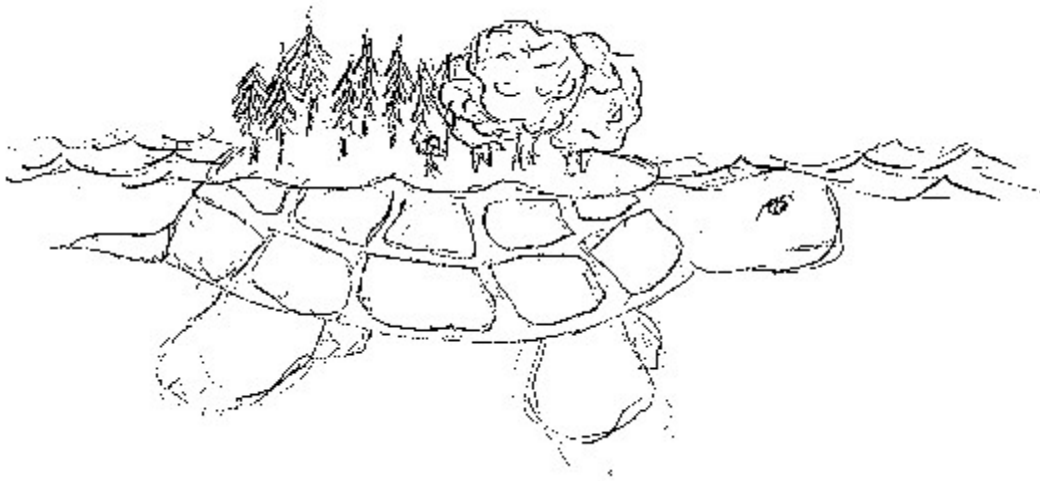
The natural cosmos of the Indians was born of catastrophe. The heavens literally crumbled to pieces. The earth mother fell and was fertilized, while her children were torn apart by fratricide and then scattered and disjointed throughout the universe.

- Ometecuhli and his wife Omecihuatl created all life in the world.
- Their sons:
 - Xipe Totec - The Lord of the Springtime
 - Huitzilopochtli - the Sun god
 - Quetzalcoatl - the Plumed Serpent
 - Tezcatlipoca - the god of Night and Sorcery.
- Coatlicue - She of the Serpent Skirt.

Iroquois Creation Myth

Long before the world was created there was an island, floating in the sky, upon which the Sky People lived. They lived quietly and happily. No one ever died or was born or experienced sadness. However one day one of the Sky Women realized she was going to give birth to twins. She told her husband, who flew into a rage. In the center of the island there was a tree which gave light to the entire island since the sun hadn't been created yet. He tore up this tree, creating a huge hole in the middle of the island. Curiously, the woman peered into the hole. Far below she could see the waters that covered the earth. At that moment her husband pushed her. She fell through the hole, tumbling towards the waters below.

Water animals already existed on the earth, so far below the floating island two birds saw the Sky Woman fall. Just before she reached the waters they caught her on their backs and brought her to the other animals. Determined to help the woman they dove into the water to get mud from the bottom of the seas. One after another the animals tried and failed. Finally, Little Toad tried and when he reappeared his mouth was full of mud. The animals took it and spread it on the back of Big Turtle. The mud began to grow and grow and grow until it became the size of North America.



Then the woman stepped onto the land. She sprinkled dust into the air and created stars. Then she created the moon and sun.

The Sky Woman gave birth to twin sons. She named one Sapling. He grew to be kind and gentle. She named the other Flint and his heart was as cold as his name. They grew quickly and began filling the earth with their creations.

Sapling created what is good. He made animals that are useful to humans. He made rivers that went two ways and into these he put fish without bones. He made plants that people could eat easily. If he was able to do all the work himself there would be no suffering.

Flint destroyed much of Sapling's work and created all that is bad. He made the rivers flow only in one direction. He put bones in fish and thorns on berry bushes. He created winter, but Sapling gave it life so that it could move to give way to Spring. He created monsters which his brother drove beneath the Earth.

Eventually Sapling and Flint decided to fight till one conquered the other. Neither was able to win at first, but finally Flint was beaten. Because he was a god Flint could not die, so he was forced to live on Big Turtle's back. Occasionally his anger is felt in the form of a volcano.

The Iroquois people hold a great respect for all animals. This is mirrored in their creation myth by the role the animals play. Without the animals' help the Sky Woman may have sunk to the bottom of the sea and earth may not have been created.

BLACKFEET CREATION TALE

Chewing Black Bones, a respected Blackfeet elder, told Ella E. Clark the following creation myth in 1953. Clark later published the account in her book, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies.

Old Man came from the south, making the mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there --arranging the world as we see it today.

He made the Milk River and crossed it; being tired, he went up on a little hill and lay down to rest. As he lay on his back, stretched out on the grass with his arms extended, he marked his figure with stones. You can see those rocks today, they show the shape of his body, legs, arms and hair.

Going on north after he had rested, he stumbled over a knoll and fell down on his knees. He said aloud, "You are a bad thing to make me stumble so." Then he raised up two large buttes there and named them the Knees. They are called the Knees to this day. He went on farther north, and with some of the rocks he carried with him he built the Sweet Grass Hills.

Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground and in it made all kinds of roots and berries to grow: camas, carrots, turnips, bitterroot, sarvisberries, bull-berries, cherries, plums, and rosebuds. He planted trees, and he put all kinds of animals on the ground.

When he created the bighorn sheep with its big head and horns, he made it out on the prairie. But it did not travel easily on the prairie; it was awkward and could not go fast. So Old Man took it by its horns, led it up into the mountain, and turned it loose. There the bighorn skipped about among the rocks and went up fearful places with ease. So Old Man said to it, "This is the kind of place that suits you; this is what you are fitted for, the rocks, and the mountains."

While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt and turned it loose to see how it would do. It ran so fast that it fell over some rocks and hurt itself. Seeing that the mountains were not the place for it, Old Man took the antelope down to the prairie and turned it loose. When he saw it running away fast and gracefully, he said, "This is what you are suited to, the broad prairie."

One day Old Man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son.

After he had molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people." And then he covered it up and went away. The next morning he went to the place, took off the covering, looked at the images, and said "Arise and walk." They did so. They walked down to the river with their maker, and then he told them that his name was NAPI, Old Man.

This is how we came to be people. It is he who made us.

The first people were poor and naked, and they did not know how to do anything for themselves. Old Man showed them the roots and berries and said "You can eat these." Then he pointed to certain trees, "When the bark of these trees is young and tender, it is good. Then you can peel it off and eat it."

He told the people that the animals also should be their food. "These are your herds," he said. "All these little animals that live on the ground -- squirrels, rabbits, skunks, beavers, are good to eat. You need not fear to eat their flesh. All the birds that fly, these too, I have made for you, so that you can eat of their flesh."

Old Man took the first people over the prairies and through the forests, then the swamps to show them the different plants he had created. He told them what herbs were good for sicknesses, saying often, "The root of this herb or the leaf of this herb, if gathered in a certain month of the year, is good for certain sickness." In that way the people learned the power of all herbs. Then he showed them how to make weapons with which to kill the animals for their food. First, he went out and cut some sarvisberry shoots, brought them in, and peeled the bark off them. He took one of the larger shoots, flattened it, tied a string to it, and thus made a bow. Then he caught one of the birds he had made, took feathers from its wing, split them, and tied them to a shaft of wood.

At first he tied four feathers along the shaft, and with this bow sent the arrow toward its mark. But he found that it did not fly well. When he used only three feathers, it went straight to the mark. Then he went out and began to break sharp pieces off the stones. When he tied them at the ends of his arrows, he found that the black flint stones, and some white flint, made the best arrow points.

When the people had learned to make bow and arrows, Old Man taught them how to shoot animals and birds. Because it is not healthful to eat animals' flesh raw, he showed the first people how to make fire. He

gathered soft, dry rotten driftwood and made a punk of it. Then he found a piece of hard wood and drilled a hole in it with an arrow point. He gave the first man a pointed piece of hard wood and showed him how to roll it between his hands until sparks came out and the punk caught fire. Then he showed the people how to cook the meat of the animals they had killed and how to eat it.

He told them to get a certain kind of stone that was on the land, while he found a harder stone. With the hard stone he had them hollow out the softer one and so make a kettle. Thus, they made their dishes.

Old Man told the first people how to get spirit power: "Go away by yourself and go to sleep. Something will come to you in your dream that will help you. It may be some animal. Whatever this animal tells you in your sleep, you must do. Obey it. Be guided by it. If later you want help, if you are traveling alone and cry aloud for help, your prayer will be answered. It may be by an eagle, perhaps by a buffalo, perhaps by a bear. Whatever animal hears your prayer you must listen to it."

That was how the first people got along in the world, by the power given to them in their dreams.

After this, Old Man kept on traveling north. Many of the animals that he had created followed him. They understood when he spoke to them, and they were his servants. When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains, he made some more mud images of people, blew his breath upon them, and they became people, men and women. They asked him, "What are we to eat?"

By way of answer, Old Man made many images of clay in the form of buffalo. Then he blew breath upon them and they stood up. When he made signs to them, they started to run. Then he said to the people, "Those animals--buffalo--are your food."

"But how can we kill them?" the people asked.

"I will show you," he answered.

He took them to a cliff and told them to build rock piles: "Now hide behind these piles of rocks," he said. "I will lead the buffalo this way. When they are opposite you, rise up."

After telling them what to do, he started toward the herd of buffalo. When he called the animals, they started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the piles of rock. Then Old Man dropped back. As the people rose up, the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped over the cliff.

"Go down and take the flesh of those animals," said Old Man.

The people tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, broke off some pieces with sharp edges, and told the people to cut the flesh with these rocks. They obeyed him. When they had skinned the buffalo, they set up some poles and put the hides on them. Thus they made a shelter to sleep under.

After Old Man had taught the people all these things, he started off again, traveling north until he came to where the Bow and Elbow Rivers meet. There he made some more people and taught them the same things. From there he went farther north. When he had gone almost to the Red Deer River, he was so tired that he lay down on a hill. The form of his body can be seen there yet, on the top of the hill where he rested.

When he awoke from his sleep, he traveled farther north until he came to a high hill. He climbed to the top of it and there he sat down to rest. As he gazed over the country, he was greatly pleased by it. Looking at the steep hill below him, he said to himself, "This is a fine place for sliding. I will have some fun." And he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all the Blackfoot tribes as "Old Man's Sliding Ground."

Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfoot and went away toward the west, disappearing in the mountains. Before he started, he said to the people, "I will always take care of you, and someday I will return."

Even today some people think that he spoke the truth and that when he comes back he will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have hidden. Others remember that before he left them he said that when he returned he would find them a different people. They would be living in a different world, he said, from that which he had created for them and had taught them to live in.

Hawaiian Creation Myth (Birth of Hawaii)

For many months Pele followed a star from the northeast, which shown brighter than the rest, and migrated toward it. One morning, Pele awoke to the smell of something familiar in the air. In the distance could be seen a high mountain with a smoky haze hiding its peak. Pele knew she had found her new home. She named the island Hawai'i.

Pele, carrying her magic stick Pa'oa, went up to the mountain where a part of the earth collapsed into the ground. She placed the stick into the ground. Pele called this place Kilauea. Inside the Kilauea Crater was a large pit. She named it Halema'uma'u, maumau being the fern jungle surround the volcano. Halema'uma'u would be her new home.

There was a fire God living on Kilauea named 'Ailaa (forest-eater). He and Pele both wanted Kilauea for their home. They started throwing fire balls at each other, causing considerable damage. 'Ailaa fled and still hides in the caverns under the earth. Pele alone would rule the Island of Hawai'i. The people of the island loved and respected the Goddess Pele. The egg her mother gave Pele hatched into a beautiful girl. Pele named her new sister, Hi'iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele (Hi'iaka of the bosom of Pele). Kamohoali'i, the shark God taught Hi'iaka the art of surfing.

Pele fell in love with a man she saw in a dream. His name was Lohi'au, a chief of the island of Kaua'i. Pele sent her sister Hi'iaka to fetch Lohi'au on Kaua'i to bring him back to Hawai'i to live with Pele. Hi'iaka would have fourty days to bring Lohi'au back or Pele would punish the girl by hurting Hi'iaka's girlfriend Hopoe. Upon reaching Kaua'i, Hi'iaka found Lohi'au dead. She quickly rubbed his body with herbs and chanted to the Gods for help; bringing the young chief of Kaua'i back to life. Grateful for Hi'iaka's help, Lohi'au agreed to return with her to the Big Island.

The fourty days had passed. Pele suspected that Hi'iaka and Lohi'au had fallen in love and were not coming back. In her fury, Pele caused an eruption which turned Hopoe into stone. On her return to Hawai'i with Lohi'au, Hi'iaka found Hopoe, a statue in stone. Hi'iaka, filled with sadness and anger decided to take revenge. Leading Lohi'au to the edge of the Halema'uma'u crater where Pele could see them, Hi'iaka put her arms around Lohi'au and embraced him. Furious, Pele covered Lohi'au with lava and flames.

The two sisters, anger subsided, were remorseful. One lost a friend, the other a lover. Pele decided to bring Lohi'au back to life to let him choose which sister he would love. Pele was sure Lohi'au would choose her. Lohi'au chose Hi'iaka. Pele, with aloha, gave the two lovers her blessing and Hi'iaka and Lohi'au sailed back to Kaua'i.

Pele still lives on Hawai'i where she rules as the fire Goddess of the volcanoes. The smell of sulphur reminds the natives that she is still there in her home, Halema'uma'u, her fiery lava building a new island to the south, still submerged, named Loahi.

LAKOTA CREATION MYTH

A long time ago, a really long time when the world was still freshly made, Unktehi the water monster fought the people and caused a great flood. Perhaps the Great Spirit, Wakan Tanka, was angry with us for some reason. Maybe he let Unktehi win out because he wanted to make a better kind of human being.

Well, the waters got higher and higher. Finally everything was flooded except the hill next to the place where the sacred red pipestone quarry lies today. The people climbed up there to save themselves, but it was no use. The water swept over that hill. Waves tumbled the rocks and pinnacles, smashing them down on the people. Everyone was killed, and all the blood jelled, making one big pool.

The blood turned to pipestone and created the pipestone quarry, the grave of those ancient ones. That's why the pipe, made of that red rock, is so sacred to us. Its red bowl is the flesh and blood of our ancestors, its stem is the backbone of those people long dead, the smoke rising from it is their breath. I tell you, that pipe, that *chanunpa*, comes alive when used in a ceremony; you can feel power flowing from it.

Unktehi, the big water monster, was also turned to stone. Maybe Tunkshila, the Grandfather Spirit, punished her for making the flood. Her bones are in the Badlands now. Her back forms a long high ridge, and you can see her vertebrae sticking out in a great row of red and yellow rocks. I have seen them. It scared me when I was on that ridge, for I felt Unktehi. She was moving beneath me, wanting to topple me.

Well, when all the people were killed so many generations ago, one girl survived, a beautiful girl. It happened this way: When the water swept over the hill where they tried to seek refuge, a big spotted eagle, Wanblee Galeshka, swept down and let her grab hold of his feet. With her hanging on, he flew to the top of a tall tree which stood on the highest stone pinnacle in the Black Hills. That was the eagle's home. It became the only spot not covered with water.

If the people had gotten up there, they would have survived, but it was a needle-like rock as smooth and steep as the skyscrapers you got now in the big cities. My grandfather told me that maybe the rock was not in the Black Hills; maybe it was the Devil's Tower, as white men call it, that place in Wyoming. Both places are sacred. Wanblee kept that beautiful girl with him and made her his wife. There was a closer connection then between people and animals, so he could do it. The eagle's wife became pregnant and bore him twins, a boy and a girl. She was happy, and said:

"Now we will have people again. *Washtay*, it is good."

The children were born right there, on top of that cliff. When the waters finally subsided, Wanblee helped the children and their mother down from his rock and put them on the earth, telling them: Be a nation, become a great Nation – the Lakota Oyate."

The boy and girl grew up. He was the only man on earth, she the only woman of child-bearing age. They married; they had children. A nation was born.

So we are descended from the eagle. We are an eagle nation. That is good, something to be proud of, because the eagle is the wisest of birds. He is the Great Spirit's messenger; he is a great warrior. That is why we always wore the eagle plume, and still wear it. We are a great nation.

It is I, Lame Deer, who said this.

The Arikara Creation Story--How Corn Came to the Earth

A long time ago giants lived on the earth, and they were so strong they were not afraid of anything. When they stopped giving smoke to the gods of the four directions, Nesaru looked down upon them and was angry. "I made the giants too strong," Nesaru said. "I will not keep them. They think that they are like me. I shall destroy them by covering the earth with water, but I will save the ordinary people."

Nesaru sent the animals to lead the ordinary people into a cave so large that all the animals and people could live there together. Then he sealed up the cave and flooded the earth so that all the giants drowned. To remind himself that people were under the ground waiting to be released after the floodwaters were gone, Nesaru planted corn in the sky. As soon as the corn ripened, he took an ear from the field and turned it into a woman. She was the Mother-Corn.

"You must go down to the earth," Nesaru told her, "and bring my people out from under the ground. Lead them to the place where the sun sets, for their home shall be in the west."

Mother-Corn went down to the earth, and when she heard thunder in the east she followed the sound into the cave where the people were waiting. But the entrance closed behind her, and she could find no way to lead the people out upon the earth. "We must leave this place, this darkness," she told them. "There is light above the ground. Who will help me take my people out of the earth?"

The Badger came forward and said: "Mother-Corn, I will help." The Mole also stood up and said: "I will help the Badger dig through the ground, that we may see the light." Then the long-nosed Mouse came and said: "I will help the other two."

The Badger began to dig upwards. After a while he fell back exhausted. "Mother-Corn, I am very tired," he said. Then the Mole dug until he could dig no more. The long-nosed Mouse took the Mole's place, and when he became tired, the Badger began to dig again. The three took turns until at last the long nosed Mouse thrust his nose through the ground and could see a little light.

The Mouse went back and said: "Mother-Corn, I ran my nose through the earth until I saw light, but the digging has made my nose small and pointed. After this all the people will know by my nose that it was I who dug through the earth first."

The Mole now went up to the hole and dug all the way through. The sun had come up from the east, and it was so bright it blinded the Mole. He ran back and said: "Mother-Corn, I have been blinded by the brightness of that sun. I cannot live upon the earth any more. I must make my home under the earth. From this time all the Moles will be blind so they cannot see in the daylight, but they can see in the night. They shall stay under the ground in the daytime."

The Badger then went up and made the hole larger so the people could go through. When he crawled outside the Badger closed his eyes, but the rays of the sun struck him and blackened his legs and made a streak of black upon his face. He went back down and said: "Mother-Corn, I have received these black marks upon me, and I wish that I might remain this way so that people will remember that I was one of those who helped to get your people out."

"Very well," said Mother-Corn, "let it be as you say."

She then led the way out, and the people rejoiced that they were now upon the open land. While they were standing there in the sunshine, Mother-Corn said: "My people, we will now journey westward toward the place where the sun sets. Before we start, any who wish to remain here--such as the Badger, Mouse, or Mole--may do so." Some of the animals decided to return to their burrows in the earth; others wanted to go with Mother-Corn.

The journey was now begun. As they travelled, they could see a mountainous country rising up in front of them. They came to a deep canyon. The bluff was too steep for the people to get down, and if they should get down, the opposite side was too steep for them to climb. Mother-Corn asked for help, and a bluish-grey bird flew up, hovering on rapidly beating wings. It had a large bill, a bushy crest and a banded breast. The bird was the Kingfisher. "Mother-Corn," it said, "I will be the one to point out the way for you."

The Kingfisher flew to the other side of the canyon, and with its beak pecked repeatedly into the bank until the earth fell into the chasm. Then the bird flew back and pecked at the other bank until enough earth fell down to form a bridge. The people cried out their thanks. "Those who wish to join me," said the Kingfisher, "may remain here and we will make our homes in these cliffs." Some stayed, but most journeyed on.

After a while they came to another obstacle--a dark forest. The trees were so tall they seemed to reach the sun. They grew close together and were covered with thorns so that they formed an impenetrable thicket. Again Mother-Corn asked for help. This time an Owl came and stood before her, and said: "I will make a pathway for your people through this forest. Any who wish to remain with me may do so, and we shall live in this forest forever." The Owl then flew up through the timber. As it waved its wings it moved the trees to one side, so that it left a pathway for the people to go through. Mother-Corn then led the people through the forest and they passed onward.

As they journeyed through the country, all at once they came to a big lake. The water was too deep and too wide to cross, and the people talked of turning back. But they could not do this, for Nesaru had ordered Mother-Corn to lead them always toward the west. A water bird with a black head and a checkered back came and stood in front of Mother-Corn, and said: "I am the Loon. I will make a pathway through this water. Let the people stop crying. I shall help them."

Mother-Corn looked at the Loon and said: "Make a pathway for us, and some of the people will remain with you here." The Loon flew and jumped into the lake, moving so swiftly that it parted the waters, and when it came out on the other side of the lake it left a pathway behind. Mother-Corn led the people across to dry land, and some turned back and became Loons. The others journeyed on.

At last they came to a level place beside a river, and Mother-Corn told them to build a village there. "Now you shall have my corn to plant," she said, "so that you, by eating of it, will grow and also multiply." After they built a village and planted the corn, Mother-Corn returned to the Upper World.

The people, however, had no rules or laws to go by, no chiefs or medicine men to advise them, and soon they were spending all their time at playing games. The first game they played was shinny ball, in which they divided into sides and used curved sticks to knock a ball through the other's goal. Then they played at throwing lances through rings placed upon the ground. As time went on, the players who lost games grew so angry that they began killing those who had beaten them.

Nesaru was displeased by the behaviour of the people, and he and Mother-Corn came down to earth. He told them that they must have a chief and some medicine men to show them how to live. While Nesaru taught the people how to choose a chief through tests of bravery and wisdom, Mother-Corn taught them songs and ceremonies. After they had chosen a chief, Nesaru gave the man his own name, and then he taught the medicine men secrets of magic. He showed them how to make pipes for offering smoke to the gods of the four directions.

When all this was done, Nesaru went away toward the setting sun to prepare a place for new villages. Mother-Corn led the people in his tracks across plains and streams to this country where Nesaru had planted roots and herbs for the medicine men. There they built villages along a river that the white men later called the Republican River, in Kansas.

On the first day that they came to this country, Mother-Corn told them to offer smoke to the gods in the heavens and to all animal gods. While they were doing this, a Dog came running into the camp crying, and he accused Mother-Corn of doing wrong by going away and leaving him behind. "I came from the Sun," he cried, "and the Sun-god is so angry because I was left behind that he is sending the Whirlwind to scatter the people."

Mother-Corn called on the Dog to save the people by appeasing the Whirlwind. "Only by giving up my freedom," the Dog replied, "can I do this. No longer can I hunt alone like my brother the Wolf, or roam free like the Coyote. I shall always be dependent upon the people."

But when the Whirlwind came spinning and roaring across the land, the Dog stood between it and the people. "I shall always remain with the people," he shouted to the Whirlwind. "I shall be a guardian for all their belongings."

After the wind died away, Mother-Corn said: "The gods are jealous. If you forget to give smoke to them they will grow angry and send storms."

In the rich earth beside the river the people planted her corn, and then she said: "I shall turn into a Cedar-Tree to remind you that I am Mother-Corn, who gave you your life. It was I, Mother-Corn, who brought you from the east. I must become a Cedar-Tree to be with you. On the right side of the tree will be placed a stone to remind you of Nesaru, who brought order and wisdom to the people."

Next morning a Cedar-Tree, full-grown, stood in front of the lodges of the people. Beside it was a large stone. The people knew that Mother-Corn and Nesaru would watch over them through all time, and would keep them together and give them long life.