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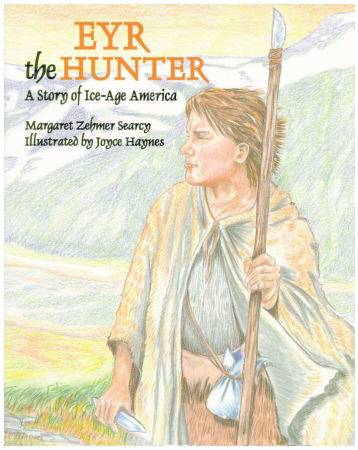
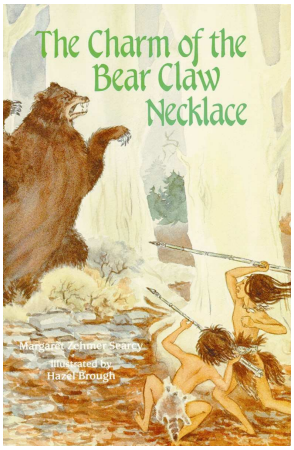
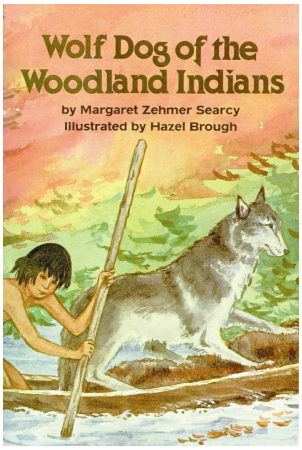
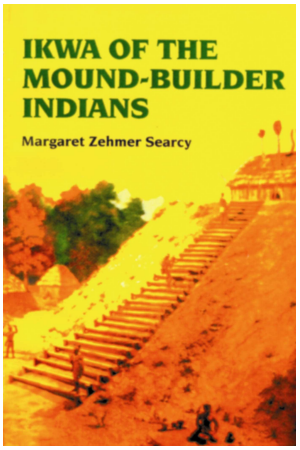
Study Guide
Eyr the Hunter: A Story of Ice-Age America
The Charm of the Bear Claw Necklace
Wolf Dog of the Woodland Indians
Ikwa of the Mound-Builder Indians









These fictional accounts of prehistoric Native Americans were written by Margaret Zehmer Searcy, a cultural anthropologist, who taught courses about Native Americans for twenty-four years in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama. All background details have been carefully researched in order to make these stories educational as well as entertaining. Each book describes a different archaeological period.

These books are widely used by school systems, museums, and libraries. The series is designed for the intermediate reader, but has been used in adult literacy programs because of the factual content. The activity chart contains suggestions for classroom projects that have been successfully carried out by students and teachers in the past. Margaret Searcy lectures throughout the country teaching Native American studies, conducting teacher workshops, taking part in adult or young writers' conferences, and participating in storytelling. She has served as lecturer and media consultant for the Alabama Arts Council and the Alabama Humanities Foundation. Books by Searcy have been approved for distribution by RIF, the Smithsonian, and by The American Museum of Natural History, as well as various school systems. She was selected as one of three authors writing appropriate books for Indian education by the Equal Educational Opportunity Team, U. of South Dakota. She is an adopted Mowa Choctaw.

This Guide to Stories of Prehistoric America
Created by
Margaret Zehmer Searcy

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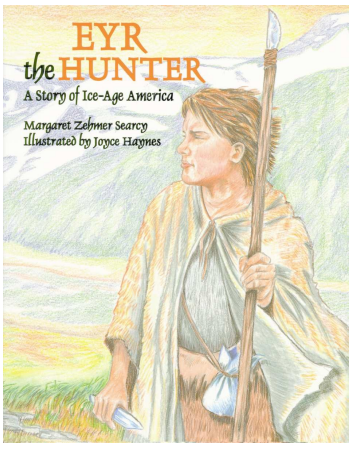
Eyr the Hunter: A Story of Ice-Age America
(© 1995, The Paleolithic Culture Period)
Illustrated by Joyce Haynes



This exciting, fact-filled story describes life in the Arctic approximately 12,000 to 14,000 years ago. Eyr, a young boy on his first hunt alone, accidentally starts an out-of-control fire and encounters more huge animals than he can handle. Eyr is a member of a small family band, having no chief, written laws, schools, permanent living places, means of transportation, pottery, metallurgy, farming, domesticated animals, or recorded information. His people share everything they have as they move from place to place following trails of large animals. Small animals and a few plants are welcomed additions to the sometimes meager food supply. Their group can be no larger than the food supply can support during the "starving time." Since they have not learned to polish stone tools, their weapons are limited. They do not know how to make a bow and arrow, and it is questionable whether they know how to make a spear thrower (atlatl). They are thought to have believed in many gods and spirits. Details about clothing and housing at this time are limited. Some tools have been found in caves, and a cave is mentioned in the story.

This story is told in rhymed couplets, because ancient storytellers often used poetry to help future generations remember details accurately. Today approximately one student out of every seven speaks a language other than English. This story is designed to help all students learn the stress patterns and intonation of English. The story is factual fiction to enable the reader to have fun while learning.

Recommended for additional background material: William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crewel.

RELATED TOPICS

Geologic Ages, Pleistocene, Beringia, earth science, Arctic regions, ocean currents and depths, Arctic lights, length of day and night, weather, glaciers, moraines, crevasse, tundra, loess, erosion, wild fires, fire safety, Pleistocene flora and fauna—animals, birds, and fish, migratory patterns, spawning and hibernation, the food chain, band societies, ancient man. The glossary contains many of these terms.

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At the end of the Pleistocene (the Ice Age), the world gradually began to get warmer; and the giant Pleistocene animals, together with some small ones, died out. Family bands following game trails, always seeking food, had reached the tip of South America and had made their way across North America into the Deep South by 12,000 B.P. (before present). Look at maps then and now.

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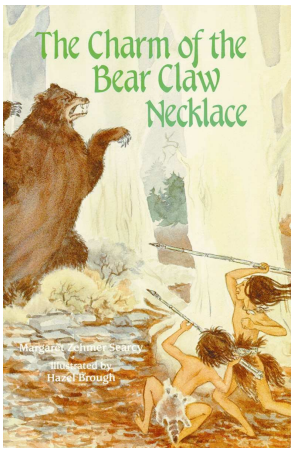
T***he Charm of the Bear Claw Necklace***
(© 1981, The Archaic Culture Period)
Illustrated by Hazel Brough

"This exciting fictional account is based on archaeological facts and written for the intermediate reader by an accomplished storyteller and professional anthropologist. It is the fast-paced story of a small band of Stone Age Indians who lived over 7,000 years ago in what is now the southeastern United States. Wild animals, a love affair with an enemy stranger, raging floods, and sibling rivalry all contribute to a drama so intense that the young reader is unaware that a thorough knowledge of some aspects of the Archaic Culture Period is being gained at the same time the story is enjoyed for its own sake. The Charm of the Bear Claw Necklace is both charming and archaeologically accurate. Mrs. Searcy does an excellent job, and it succeeds in a way that will be attractive to young readers. I strongly recommend it."



--Roy S. Dickens,
Georgia State University

As time passed, family-related bands of ancient peoples living in the southeast learned to utilize many plants and animals. Their remains have been found at countless sites. A number of changes took place. These people often camped by the waterways during pleasant weather and enjoyed mussels, fish, and other aquatic foods. When the weather was less favorable, the family band often camped in a cave or bluff shelter and depended upon other foods. Slowly they added additional plant food to their diet. They used a new tool, the atlatl (throwing stick), which enabled them to throw a dart much farther and with a greater thrust. They hunted deer, elk, and other game. Their only domesticated animal was the dog. While these people often moved seeking food, they frequently returned to the same sites. These people learned to polish stone and to make stone bowls and more durable axes. Polished weights adorned their throwing sticks. As they became more familiar with the wild plants around them, their skill in healing increased. The lifestyle of these people in the story is patterned to some extent after ethnographic accounts of known migratory bands and upon archaeological remains of former Archaic inhabitants. These people had no formal teachers, chiefs, or specified leaders. They were governed largely by group opinion and by the guidance of the elders. Families were organized in small migratory hunting and gathering bands, but their utilization of the area became more regularized as they seasonally changed their campsites according to the availability of particular foods and environmental factors.

RELATED TOPICS

Archaeology, national and state parks, bluff shelters, migratory patterns of animals and band societies, seasonal changes, medicine, native plants, marriage and the family, and hunting and fishing.

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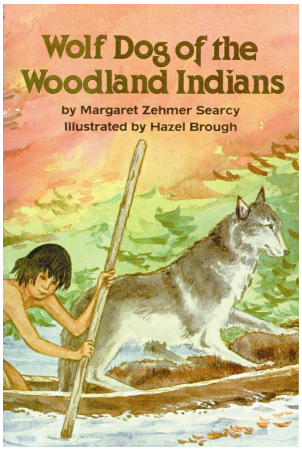

Wolf Dog of the Woodland Indians
(© 1981, The Woodland Culture Period)
Illustrated by Hazel Brough

Woodland Indians living in the southern part of the United States two thousand years ago had a better knowledge of beneficial plants and their uses than earlier groups. Gathering and hunting were essential for their way of life. They were able to remain in one place for longer periods of time, and village life evolved as they learned to farm. As they became more sedentary, the size of the group grew. Slowly their means of group control, trade, and religion became more structured. They began to make pottery. They had abandoned the throwing stick, and instead utilized the bow and arrow.

During long dry periods, food became relatively scarce, often resulting in migration and aggressive conflict between neighboring groups. This is the story of a boy named Cub and his dog Wolf. The dog is half wolf. Cub's family and the village elders become convinced by a visiting trader that Wolf is dangerous, and that he should not be allowed to live, especially at a time when food is scarce. Cub refuses to accept this verdict by fleeing into enemy territory with his beloved pet, embarking on an eventful journey that is filled with experiences that reveal how Cub's people lived and dealt with their world.

RELATED TOPICS

Farming, domesticated plants, wild plants, droughts, the food chain, caves, stalagmites and stalactites, wolves, village life, community welfare, trade, and burial mounds.

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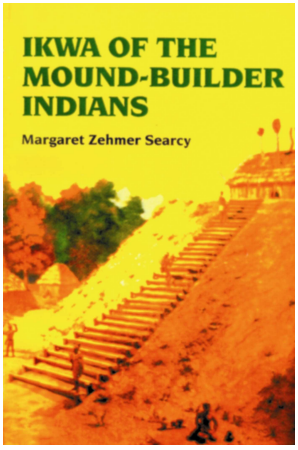
Ikwa of the Mound-Builder Indians
(© 1974, The Mississippi Culture Period)



"This delightful and imaginative book creates a real world for the young reader in which the life of a southeastern United States Indian of over eight hundred years ago is described. Ikwa is a young girl of twelve who is leaving childhood and maturing into a woman who will take her place in her community proudly and honorably. This well-written, plausible story has elements of suspense and surprise and realistically portrays the life of the Mississippi Temple Mound Builders. In telling the story of Ikwa, Searcy describes the customs of people. The Alligator Tribe, principally an agricultural unit, lived in houses, had a public square in their village and were ruled by town elders. The author tells how a canoe was made, how pottery was made and decorated, and how a sleeping mat was woven. She also shows how people of this ancient village dealt with a motherless family, a fire, and marriage customs. The illustrations are a vital part of the story, and some are pictures of dioramas and village scenes created by the Museum of Natural History at The University of Alabama. Others are original drawings showing tattoos, clothing and hairstyles, and designs on artifacts. A stimulating book for young students."

--AAAS Science Books

RELATED TOPICS

Marriage and the family, spouse selection and desirable qualities, childcare, political organization, Mississippian Culture, village organization, social responsibility, trade and trade routes, games.

Recommended by Elementary School Library Collection.

Winner of the Charlton W. Tebeau Prize for the best book for children and young people about a Florida-related subject, the Florida Historical Association, 1974.

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ACTIVITIES

1. Create a junior museum. Get contour maps of your area and mark sites of artifacts found by students. Number and record all artifacts. Display marked artifacts and maps. All artifacts must be displayed in a locked glass case or encased in heavy industrial plastic material. Using a sewing machine, a plastic sack can be made. Use plastic sheeting designed for under-slab housing construction. Put artifacts held in place with Stikki Wax—bought at school supply houses—on bulletin boards. The artifacts can be removed easily at a later date. Using a sewing machine, sew the bulletin board holding the artifacts inside of the plastic sack. This will keep the artifacts from being lost.

2. Map locations in your county of known archaeological sites, historic sites, and present day sites on contour maps of your area. Make an educated guess about the locations of fields, woods, and habitation sites of ancient people by studying relief maps. Which streams and rivers did they travel? At what time of the year? Raised plastic relief maps can be obtained from Hubbard, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. Color-coded pins can mark sites.

3. Locate all museums, universities, reservations, and Amerind parks in your state. Write to them to find what help and resources are available. Plan a field trip. You may want an expert to visit your class. Many states have excellent materials for you. Some states, educational institutions, or museums publish textbooks about Native Americans and their archaeological remains in that state. Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Alabama are three examples.

4. Order the National Geographic Map of North American Culture Areas: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, P.O. Box 2895, Washington, D.C. 20077-9960. Note the differences in lifestyles according to time, means of subsistence, and geographical environment. Farming was not begun in the southeast until the Woodland Period.

5. Create an Indian village. One group of young children started with refrigerator crates, which they painted with mud to imitate wattle and daub used in southern housing. They used long-leaf pine needles to represent thatching. They created an entire village, including a field of native vegetables. These children loved going to the library in order to obtain exact details about early Indians. This project was headed by Bank Street College of Education working in Tuskegee, Alabama. Even though students were in the third grade, they eagerly read, with help, museum publications and government documents. Their academic progress was outstanding. They asked the author to write a book for them, and so she wrote her first children's book***, Ikwa of the Mound-Builder Indians***.

6. Write to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs to get a map of Native American Reservations or to the U.S. Govt. Printing Office. Your congressman's office will help you with this. Let your students write to him/her to get the address.

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7. Write to a Native American tribal office and arrange with a reservation school(s): pen pals, visits, computer visits, scrap book exchanges. Describe your hometown, state, and lifeways for them. Have fun making and receiving a cookbook.

8. Create your own archaeological dig. Bury archaeological materials and professionally dig them up using proper techniques for recording, photographing, identifying, interpreting, and displaying artifacts.

9. Study Native American music, dance, and instruments. Invite experts to visit and demonstrate. Make some instruments: pottery drum, rattle, rasp, clack sticks, and flute. Listen to tapes, films, etc. Try to write a poem, story, or song that is patterned after those written by Native Americans. Using a rhyming dictionary, convert a story to poetry. Do these exercises both collectively and individually. Adapt your work as a ballet or opera. See ***Eyr the Hunter*** or *The Race of Flitty Hummingbird and Flappy Crane*. Write or read to the beat of a drum, keyboard, or tape.

10. Read ***Eyr, Ikwa, The Charm***, or ***Wolf Dog*** and create a daily journal for your favorite character. Write a continuation of one of the books. Present the story as a drama, ballet, or operetta. Design scenery for the set. Make costumes out of newspapers for the characters. Use a stapler to join parts of your costume. Two children can work together to dress a third child.

11. Discuss, study, and make baskets, mats, tanned skins, woven clothing, bead work, lithic and wooden tools, or water crafts. (Read ***Ikwa*** for details about a canoe and pottery.) Making a dugout canoe or wooden mortar is a semester-long project. After school the teacher burns the areas to be removed, and the students scrape the burned areas during school hours and place the clay that keeps other areas from burning. Timber companies have delivered and given schools logs for special projects.

12. Study Native American artifacts used in food preparation. Make a mortar and pestle out of a hickory log. See pictures in ***Ikwa***. Food items are discussed in all four books. Hopefully someone in your group has found a mano and stone metate, nutting stones, a hand axe, dibble, hoe, scrapers, choppers, and stone knives. These items are quite common and museums often will lend them to educational institutions. Make utensils, cooking pots, and other items. Mix temper with your clay. Damp clay and lack of temper can cause pots to break when they are fired. See pictures in ***Ikwa***.

13. Make a native fire hearth and use it for cooking purposes. Mississippian fire hearths were made of clay approximately four inches thick. They were bounded by a raised ring of clay. A fire was built in the hearth, the clay was heated, and ashes could be pushed aside. Bread cakes, covered by an upside-down pot, could be baked. Hot coals and ashes could be banked around the pot. Corn in shucks and unpeeled potatoes can be encased in mud and baked; beans sweetened with maple sugar can be baked in a pottery bowl. Cornmeal coated fish, cooked rabbit, or turkey and hush puppies fried in corn oil (since bear grease and passenger pigeon fat can't be obtained) can be served as an authentic Native American dinner. Many food items con be boiled.

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Some foods were smoked over a fire to preserve them. Early groups boiled foods by dropping hot rocks into liquid in stone bowls, turtle shells, and other containers. Other items were steamed in a hole or roasted over a fire. Check the Bureau of American Ethnology publications for specific foods for specific areas of the country. Buffalo meat is available at certain times, consult the Bureau of Indian Affairs for sources. The Mowa Choctaw Tribe raises alligators. Phone (334) 829-5000.

14. Discuss and gather some wild plant foods. How were they used? Where found? Be sure to teach your students that Indian girls and boys were too smart to eat strange plants. With highly intelligent tribes, medicine was always taken in the presence of the medicine giver.
Some wild plant foods eaten by eastern tribes: acorns, pecans, hickory nuts, chestnuts, beechnuts, pine nuts, muscadines, blackberries, raspberries, blackgum berries, honeylocust pods, mulberries, palm berries, wild peas, wild rice, persimmons, plums, seagrape, sugar maple, sweet gum, black walnuts, wild sweet potatoes, cane, prickly pears, chinquapins, and many others.
(See Swanton, Hudson, and Burt and Ferguson listed in the bibliography for additional foods and specifics.)

15. Plant an Indian garden using authentic seeds, tools, and practices. Some seed companies specialize in seeds of early food plants. The U.S. Corps of Engineers in Mobile, AL, has assisted groups in the past.
Some domesticated plants: corn, pumpkins, squash; beans, goose foot; sunflowers; gourds; large-seeded sumpweed.
(Hudson discusses many of these and assigns some to specific time periods.)

16. Plan a Native American feast using only those foods native to this hemisphere. Some schools hold a week-long celebration and invite experts to join them. Native foods can be found in all books in Searcy's intermediate series. Processing acorns or making hickory balls is a safe, enjoyable project. Taste an acorn. If your acorns are mildly bitter, remove all shells. Grind the nut meats. Bring water to a boil. Remove water from heat. Add ground acorns, and allow mixture to cool. Drain water from ground nuts. Repeat process until all bitterness is gone. Until the bitterness has been leached out, do not cook the acorn meal. Add or mix the acorn meal with many foods cooked in various ways. To make hickory balls, remove green hulls. Put nuts in a bag, and pound nuts until shells and nut meats are completely pulverized. Roll mashed nuts into balls and wrap in corn shucks or grape leaves. Hickory balls can be eaten raw or added to soups, stews, or breads. Add or mix hickory paste to water to make hickory milk.
(See Swanton and Hudson for food items: animals, fish, aquatic life, wild and domesticated plants and insects.)

17. Learn how, when, and where animals were hunted. Discuss conservation practices. Some of the animals that were important food items varied according to time, group, and place. Notice the foods listed in each story. What animals had migrated in the story of Eyr? Some animals widely used in the eastern part of the country include: deer, elk, bison, beaver, opossum, panther, rabbit, raccoon, muskrat, squirrel, otter, polecat.

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18. Study how, when, and where aquatic animals were obtained and used. Fishing methods include: nets, baskets, weirs and fish drives, hook and line, stupefacients, bow fishing, spear fishing, grappling, alligator and manatee capture, turtle capture and egg gathering, whaling. Many kinds of fish and shellfish were eaten, including those we catch and eat today: crabs, lobsters, snails, eels, crawfish, mussels, clams, alligators, and oysters. Building a weir is important to Cub in ***Wolf Dog***. Ikwa uses a fish trap.

19. Study how, where, and when birds were hunted. Study migratory patterns, snares, bird thrashing, use of feathers and eggs. Study traps, snares, blowguns, spears, bows and arrows, and atlatls. Some of the birds that were important for both food and feathers were quail, ducks, geese, turkeys, and passenger pigeons. Passenger pigeon fat was an important source of oil. Birds especially important for feathers include egrets, herons, eagles, swans, ibis, ducks, and turkeys. Feathers were used in making some clothing and personal items and adornment and in decorating some baskets.

20. Study roles and uses of insects and snakes. Discuss them as food. Discuss the food chain. Insects that were eaten include fleas, lice, locusts, and wasps in the comb, and certain kinds of beetles.

21. Learn the types of watercraft, canoes, rafts, kayaks, long boats, or bull boats used in your area. Where and how were they made? Make a model. Discuss water safety. See ***Ikwa*** and ***Wolf Dog.***

22. Discuss the hunting and fishing regulations each group might have had. Discuss conservation. Hunting methods are a part of the story of ***Eyr*** and ***The Charm of the Bear Claw Necklace***.

23. Read Searcy's three elementary picture books and discuss the purposes of the storytellers. Myths and legends are entertaining and often are teaching-learning aids. Have students write a story patterned after a Native American folktale or myth. Illustrate and dramatize a myth. ***Alli*** was danced as a ballet, ***Flitty*** was sung as an operetta, and ***Ikwa*** was dramatized in a television series on APT.

24. Play Amerind games. Game playing served as means of teaching survival skills, of obtaining healthful exercise, of settling disputes, and of having fun. Make a ball court and play Indian games. Read about games in ***Ikwa***. (Read Burt and Ferguson, Swanton, and Hudson for details about games.)

25. Learn the uses of Amerind dogs. They sometimes served as an aid in hunting, as beasts of burden, and as food. Read ***Wolf Dog*** and discuss Cub's decision regarding Wolf's future. Study the lifestyle of wolves. Write a different ending to ***Wolf Dog***. (The author did for her first version and later changed the ending completely.)

26. Learn some Amerind funeral customs, types of burials, reaffirmation of status of the living, and disposal of goods of the dead. See ***Ikwa*** and ***Wolf Dog*** for three types of burials.

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*Books designed for easier reading.

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