

Then she disappeared as a mist disappears so that the young man knew that she was *wakan*. He returned to the camp and told these things to the people and the council decided to do as she had instructed the young man. They made preparations for the feast and in a few days they saw four puffs of black smoke under the sun at midday, so they prepared for a feast and all dressed in their best clothing and sat in the circle ready to be served and every man bowed his head and looked toward the ground. Suddenly the women began uttering low exclamations of admiration, but all the men steadily kept their eyes toward the ground except one young man and he looked toward the entrance of the camp. He saw a puff of black smoke which blew into his eyes and a voice said, "You have disobeyed me and there will be smoke in your eyes as long as you live." From that time, that young man had very sore eyes and all the time they were as if biting smoke was in them.

Then the woman entered the circle and took the food and served it, first to the little children and then to the women and then she bade the men to look up. They did so and saw a very beautiful woman dressed in the softest deer skin which was ornamented with fringes and colors more beautiful than any woman of the Lakota had ever worked. Then she served the men with food, and when they had feasted she told them that she wished to serve them always; that they had first seen her as smoke and that they should always see her as smoke. Then she took from her pouch a pipe and willow bark and Lakota tobacco and filled the pipe with the bark and tobacco and lighted it with a coal of fire.

She smoked a few whiffs and handed the pipe to the chief and told him to smoke and hand it to another. Thus the pipe was passed until all had smoked. She then instructed the council how to gather the bark and the tobacco and prepare it, and gave the pipe into their keeping, telling them that as long as they preserved this pipe she would serve them. But she would serve them in this way. When the smoke came from the pipe she would be present and hear their prayers and take them to the *Wakan Tanka* and plead for them that their prayers should be answered.

After this she remained in this camp for many days and all the time she was there everyone was happy for she went from tipi to tipi with good words for all. When the time came for her to go, she called all the people together and bade the women to build a great fire of dried cottonwood, which they did. Then she directed all to sit in a circle about the fire and the shaman⁶ to have an abundance of sweetgrass. She stood in the midst of the circle and when the fire had burned to coals she directed the shaman to place on it the sweetgrass. This made a cloud of smoke and the woman entered the smoke and disappeared. Then the shamans knew that it was *Wohpe* who had given the pipe and they appointed a custodian for it with instructions that it was to be kept sacred and used only on the most solemn and important occasions. With due ceremony they made wrappers for the pipe so that it is *wakan*. The shamans instructed the people that they could make other pipes and use them and that *Wohpe* would be in the smoke of any such pipe if smoked with proper solemnity and form.

Thus it was that the Beautiful Woman brought the pipe to the Lakotas.

[1980]

6. shaman: *Shaman* is actually a term for an East Asian medicine man. Walker may have misunderstood or mistranslated the Lakota term *wicasa wakan*, a man who acquires power through a "vision quest," a process of deep understanding of the world of the spirits.

Akimel O'odham (Pima)

The Akimel O'odham, commonly known as the Pima, are among the earliest residents of the Southwest. They are descendants of the ancient Hohokam, who as early as the second century BCE began to develop an expansive and complex civilization in what is now southern Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. Culturally similar to the natives of central Mexico, the Hohokam lived in large adobe towns, which the Spanish would call "pueblos," and built an extensive system of canals to irrigate their arid farmlands. Following a series of droughts, however, the Hohokam abandoned their majestic pueblos and moved into smaller villages along the Salt and the Gila rivers. They were an agricultural people, who developed prosperous farms and villages. When Spanish explorers encountered these dispersed peoples in the early 1600s, they renamed them the Pima and the Papago. In the eighteenth century, the Spanish were allied with the Pima against the incursions of the Apache. In the nineteenth century, Pima villages became trading posts, selling animals and food to settlers bound for southern California and those participating in the California gold rush of the late 1840s. As part of the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, however, the Pima lands in Mexico became part of the United States. The prosperity of the Pima farmers and traders ended, and the tribe was soon consigned to the Gila River Reservation, established in 1859. Today, the Pima and Papago tribes have reclaimed their original names, the Akimel O'odham (River People) and the Tohono O'odham (Desert People).

bedfordstmartins.com/americanlit for research links on Native American tales and stories

Reading "The Story of the Creation" (Pima). The Pima did not have a written language, and much of the record of their complex culture is lost. But some of their stories were preserved orally in tribal culture and finally transcribed by J. William Lloyd, a physician and writer. At the Pan-American Fair in Buffalo, New York, in 1901, Lloyd met Edward H. Wood, a Pima whose uncle, Thin Leather, knew many of the Pima stories and legends. Together Lloyd and Wood worked with Thin Leather in Arizona to collect and record Pima narratives. The following story begins in a way similar to that of the book of Genesis, but this Pima creation myth draws on many elements of the natural landscape of the Southwest. The text is taken from the collection put together by Lloyd and Thin Leather, *Aw-Aw-Tam Indian Nights, Being the Myths and Legends of the Pimas of Arizona* (1911).

Nooee was given all power, but he did not do the work he was created for. He did not care to help Juhwertamahkai, but let him go by himself. And so the Doctor of the Earth himself created the mountains and everything that has seed and is good to eat. For if he had created human beings first they would have had nothing to live on.

But after making Nooee and before making the mountains and seed for food, Juhwertamahkai made the sun. In order to make the sun he first made water, and this he placed in a hollow vessel, like an earthen dish (*huas-hah-ahy*) to harden into something like ice. And this hardened ball he placed in the sky. First he placed it in the North, but it did not work; then he placed it in the West, but it did not work; then he placed it in the South, but it did not work; then he placed it in the East and there it worked as he wanted it to. And the moon he made in the same way and tried in the same places, with the same results.

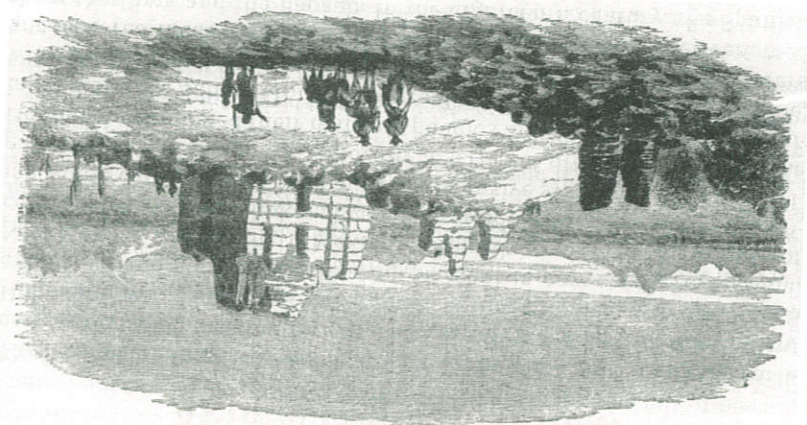
But when he made the stars he took the water in his mouth and spurted it up into the sky. But the first night his stars did not give light enough. So he took the Doctor-stone (diamond),¹ the *tone-dum-haw-teh*, and smashed it up, and took the pieces and threw them into the sky to mix with the water in the stars, and then there was light enough. And now Juhwertamahkai, rubbed again on his breast, and from the substance he obtained there made two little dolls, and these he laid on the earth. And they were human beings, man and woman.

And now for a time the people increased till they filled the earth. For the first parents were perfect, and there was no sickness and no death. But when the earth was full, then there was nothing to eat, so they killed and ate each other. But Juhwertamahkai did not like the way his people acted, to kill and eat each other, and so he let the sky fall to kill them. But when the sky dropped he, himself, took a staff and broke a hole thru, thru which he and Nooee emerged and escaped, leaving behind them all the people dead.

And Juhwertamahkai, being now on the top of this fallen sky, again made a man and a woman, in the same way as before. But this man and woman became grey when old, and their children became grey still younger, and their children became grey younger still, and so on till the babies were grey in their cradles. And Juhwertamahkai, who had made a new earth and sky, just as there had been before, did not like his people becoming grey in their cradles, so he let the sky fall on them again, and again made a hole and escaped, with Nooee, as before. And Juhwertamahkai, on top of this second sky, again made a new heaven and a new earth, just as he had done before, and new people.

But these new people made a vice of smoking. Before human beings had never smoked till they were old, but now they smoked younger, and each generation still younger, till the infants wanted to smoke in their cradles. And Juhwertamahkai did not like this, and let the sky fall again, and created everything new again in the same way, and this time he created the earth as it is now.

1. diamond: Probably a quartz crystal, which is prevalent in the Southwest.



Casa Grande

This is a drawing by J. Ross Browne of the Casa Grande, or the "Big House," an imposing four-story structure built in the fourteenth century by the Hohokam, ancestors of the Akimel O'odham (Pima). Located in present-day Coolidge, Arizona, the ruins became the first archaeological site in the United States to be protected as a national monument in 1892. The drawing of the ruins appeared as an illustration in Browne's *Adventures in Apache Country* (1869).

THE STORY OF THE CREATION

In the beginning there was no earth, no water—nothing. There was only a Person, *Juhwert-a-Mah-kai* (*The Doctor of the Earth*).

He just floated, for there was no place for him to stand upon. There was no sun, no light, and he just floated about in the darkness, which was Darkness itself.

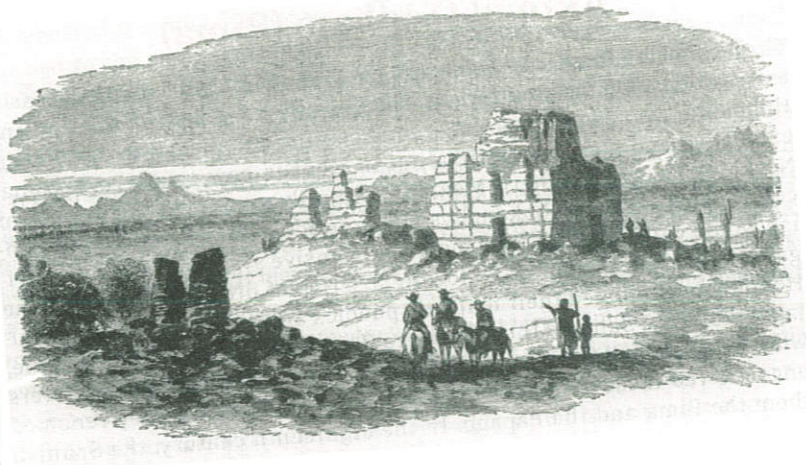
He wandered around in the nowhere till he thought he had wandered enough. Then he rubbed on his breast and rubbed out *moh-hah-tack*, that is perspiration, or greasy earth. This he rubbed out on the palm of his hand and held out. It tipped over three times, but the fourth time it staid straight in the middle of the air and there it remains now as the world.

The first bush he created was the greasewood bush. And he made ants, little tiny ants, to live on that bush, on its gum which comes out of its stem.

But these little ants did not do any good, so he created white ants, and these worked and enlarged the earth; and they kept on increasing it, larger and larger, until at last it was big enough for himself to rest on.

Then he created a Person. He made him out of his eye, out of the shadow of his eyes, to assist him, to be like him, and to help him in creating trees and human beings and everything that was to be on the earth.

The name of this being was *Noo-ee* (the Buzzard).



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¹ A mineral found in the Southwest.



Canyon de Chelly

In this famous photograph, taken by Edward S. Curtis around 1900, riders on horseback and a dog travel across the wide expanse of Chinle Wash against the dramatic background of the sandstone cliffs of Canyon de Chelly, in the heart of what is now the Navajo Nation.

forcedly removed to eastern New Mexico. Hundreds died during the 350-mile trek, which the Navajo called "The Long Walk," and more than two thousand died in a smallpox epidemic the following year.

In 1868, the Navajo leader Barboncito negotiated a new treaty, and his decimated tribe was granted a small reservation in their traditional homeland. Later additions vastly increased the size of the reservation, which now covers more than 27,000 square miles in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. It is by far the largest reservation in the United States, with more than one hundred chapters or communities within the reservation, the name of which was changed from the Navajo Indian Reservation to the Navajo Nation in 1969. Today, the Navajo have achieved a high degree of self-determination, and with more than 250,000 members it is the most populous Indian tribe in the United States.

But at first the whole slope of the world was westward, and tho there were peaks rising from this slope there were no true valleys, and all the water that fell ran away around among the mountains, and over the earth, to cut valleys with his wings, so that the water could be caught and distributed and there might be enough for the people to drink.

Now the sun was male and the moon was female and they met once a month. And the moon became a mother and went to a mountain called *Tahs-my-et-tahn Toe-ahk* (sun striking mountain) and there was born her baby. But she had duties to attend to, to turn around and give light, so she made a place for the child by tramping down the weedy bushes and there left it. And the child, having no milk, was nourished on the earth.

And this child was the coyote, and as he grew he went out to walk and in his walk came to the house of Juhwertamahkai and Nooee, where they lived.

And when he came there Juhwertamahkai knew him and called him *Toe-hahus*, because he was laid on the weedy bushes of that name.

But now out of the North came another powerful personage, who has two names, *See-w-huh* and *Ec-ee-toy*.

Now *Seeurhuh* means older brother, and when this personage came to Juhwertamahkai, Nooee and *Toehahus* he called them his younger brothers. But they claimed to have been here first, and to be older than he, and there was a dispute between them. But finally, because he insisted so strongly, and just to please him, they let him be called older brother.

[1911]

Navajo

The Navajo are descended from the Athabaskan, who migrated from Asia to North America about three thousand years ago. By 1400, the Navajo—who call themselves the *Dine'*, meaning "The People"—occupied lands in the lower Colorado Plateau, northwest of present-day Santa Fe, New Mexico. They were primarily nomadic hunters who maintained seasonal residences in summer or winter hogans, houses built of a framework of logs and covered with brush and earth. Contact with the neighboring Pueblo people introduced the Navajo to farming, pottery making, and weaving, and they adopted horsemanship and shepherding from the Spanish. From the time of their first contact in 1598, however, the Navajo strongly resisted Spanish incursions into their homeland, which became part of the United States following the Mexican War of 1846–48. Subsequent skirmishes between the Navajo and the U.S. Cavalry culminated in 1863, when troops under the command of Colonel Kit Carson ravaged the Navajo homeland, killing sheep and horses, burning crops and homes, and finally destroying the peach tree orchards in the Canyon de Chelly. Faced with starvation, many of the Navajo surrendered in the spring of 1864 and were