

Turtle and Pretty Crane

Teacher's Guide and Introduction to the Story Told by Keith Bear



Flute player and storyteller Keith Bear. (Courtesy of Keith Bear)

**Developed by Susan Eleuterio with assistance from Linda Ehreth and Troyd Geist
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Introduction

This teachers' guide is designed to accompany the story "Turtle and Pretty Crane" featured in the enhanced CD *Morning Star Whispered* and in the associated documentary produced by Prairie Public Broadcasting and the North Dakota Council on the Arts. The enhanced CD *Morning Star Whispered* was produced by the North Dakota Council on the Arts and Makoché Recording Company with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. This CD and documentary will introduce your students to the art, history, culture, and talent of Keith Bear, a US Army veteran, an award winning Mandan and Hidatsa flute player, storyteller and traditionalist of exceptional talent living in Drags Wolf Village on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation of northwestern North Dakota.

Keith spent much of his youth in foster homes and as a young adult was involved with the American Indian Movement (AIM). Quickly becoming disillusioned with that organization, he moved from place to place, working oil rigs and boxing. Then, keeping a promise to his dying mother, Keith returned home and reconnected with his culture through the "sacred branch of the Tree of Life," the flute, that told him, "You are a child and must learn to walk a new way."

Through extended family members, friends, and ceremonies Keith learned traditional songs, beadwork, porcupine quillwork, flute music, and traditional stories; crediting people like Naomi Black Hawk, spiritual leaders and healers Ralph and Sammy Little Owl, Tony Mandan, and Lydia Sage-Chase for teaching him to "walk a new way." Today he even performs the sacred Buffalo Dance, a ceremony only honored tribal members may perform.

Bear, whose name in the *Nu E'ta* (Mandan) language is *O'Mashi! Ryu Ta^*, meaning "Northern Lights," has performed nationally at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, the Library of Congress American Folklife Center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the National Museum of the American Indian, as well as internationally in Switzerland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, Austria and Canada.

Keith has become an acclaimed flute player and storyteller presenting in schools, concerts, and festivals throughout the United States and internationally. His flute music is featured on several CDs, including *Echoes of the Upper Missouri* and *Earthlodge* with the latter receiving a Best Traditional Album award from the Native American Music Association. (Source: Keith Bear and Troyd Geist)

Overview

"The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Sahnish live in the Missouri River area. Historians document the first tribe to occupy this area was the Mandan with the Hidatsa. The Sahnish moved up the river later. The Mandan and Hidatsa people were originally woodland people who moved to the plains at various times. One theory is the Mandan moved from the area of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa to the plains in South Dakota about 900 A.D., and

slowly migrated north along the Missouri River to North Dakota about 1000 A.D. The Hidatsa moved from central Minnesota to the eastern part of North Dakota near Devils Lake, and moved to join the Mandan at the Missouri River about 1600 A.D. The Mandan and Hidatsa believe they were created in this area of the upper Missouri River and have always lived here.

According to anthropologists, the Sahnish people lived in an area that extended from the Gulf of Mexico, across Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Dates of migrations for all three Tribes have been determined by archeological investigation of village sites constructed along the Missouri and elsewhere. Many of these sites, although collapsed and abandoned long before, were excavated along the Missouri River during the 1950's and 1960's.

In 1995 the North Dakota Historical Society completed the Missouri Trench National Historical Landmark Theme Study that summarized the archeological investigation of the Missouri River area from southern South Dakota through North Dakota to Montana. Many of the sites were of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Sahnish origins.

Ethnographers (people who study cultural societies) group people by the languages they used or were likely to be used by a single group at one time. Indian nations were divided into several linguistic groups. The Mandan and Hidatsa tribes belong to the Siouan linguistic group, along with the Crow, Dakota, Lakota, Yanktonai, Assiniboine, Iowa-Oto- Missouri, Quapaw, Omaha-Ponca-Osage-Kansa. The Sahnish belong to the Caddoan linguistic group, along with the Pawnee, Caddo, Wichita, Anadarko, Skidi, Tawakoni and Waco.

This overview links the oral and written histories of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Sahnish to provide a more accurate viewpoint. The oral tradition preserved the history and ceremonies of the Tribes through a strict and sacred process, thereby adding to the validity of oral tradition

Mandan and Hidatsa Tribes Thrived

As European explorers discovered the Mandan and Hidatsa, they had created a focal point of trade on the Missouri River. All of the plains tribes came to barter for agricultural goods and products. Called the 'Marketplace of the Central Plains,' the Mandan established what was to be the forerunner of trading posts that came later to the area. The Mandan prospered and grew powerful up to 1772. Their remaining history is summed up in their own tradition as related to Lewis and Clark and Maximilian.

Formerly they lived happily and prosperously in nine large villages on the Missouri near the mouth of the Heart River. Six or seven of these villages were on the west side and two or three were on the east side of the river. For a great many years they lived there when one day smallpox came to those on the east side of the river. The survivors then proceeded up the river some forty miles where they settled in one large village. Lewis &

Clark report that the tribes battled with other Sioux as they were weakened by succeeding epidemics.

Small Pox Decimates People and Culture

Each tribe maintained separate bands, clan systems, and separate ceremonial bundles. After the devastation of the small pox epidemics of 1792, 1836, and 1837, homogenous societies evolved for economic and social survival. The three tribes lived in earth lodges, were farmers, hunted wild game and relied heavily on the buffalo for food, shelter, clothing, and animal parts for making various utensils and garden tools. They maintained a vast trading system and were considered middlemen by neighboring tribes with different types of trade products.” (From: *Historical Overview*, MHANation.com, the official website of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, known as the Three Affiliated Tribes and Keith Bear’s website: <http://www.keithbear.net/index.php>)

“Today the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (Sahnish) live together as the Three Affiliated Tribes on the Fort Berthold Reservation in west-central North Dakota, encompassing Lake Sakakawea.” (From: <http://www.trailtribes.org/kniferiver/whos-who.htm>)

Note to Teachers:

Lesson 1 should be used before watching the documentary and listening to the story, Lessons 2 and 3 are designed to be used when your students watch the documentary and/or listen to the CD and Lesson 4 is designed to be used after your students have finished watching the documentary and/or completed listening to the CD.

(Please note: Your public library should have a copy of the enhanced CD *Morning Star Whispered* which can be used or can be ordered. See resources below.)

Grade Level Focus:

High School

Connections with North Dakota Arts Grades 9-12 Standards and Benchmarks

Music

Standard 6: LISTENING

Students listen to, analyze, and describe music.

12.6.1 Know the uses of the elements of music in the analysis of compositions representing diverse genres and cultures.

Standard 8: MUSIC AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Students understand the relationship between music, the other arts, and other disciplines.

12.8.1 Know how artistic elements and processes are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts.

12.8.2 Understand the ways in which the principles and concepts of various disciplines outside the arts are related to those of music.

Standard 9: MUSIC, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

Students understand music in relation to history and culture

12.9.1 12.9.2 12.9.3

Know representative examples of music from a variety of cultures and historical periods. Know sources of American music, the evolution of these genres and musicians associated with them.

English Language Arts

Standard 1: *Students engage in the research process*

Organizing Research Information

- 9.1.5 Organize information from a variety of sources: eg. Chronological
- 9.1.6 Summarize information
- 9.1.8 Use primary and secondary sources

Standard 2: Students engage in the reading process

LITERARY ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES

9.2.9.-9.2.12

Identify character, setting, plot, stanza, act, scene, chapter, verse, article, fiction, nonfiction, and point of view

Analyze an author's use of literary techniques and devices; i.e., mood, foreshadowing, flashbacks, dialogue, and poetic license

Identify universal themes

Explain ways in which the setting affects the development of a story

Standard 3: *Students engage in the writing process*

Benchmark Expectations

- 9.3.7 Organize and write compositions for self and family
- 9.3.8 Use supporting details

Standard 4: *Students engage in the speaking and listening process*

Benchmark Expectations

Conversation, Group Discussion and Oral Presentation

- 9.4.4 Engage in a group discussion
- 9.4.5 Use critical listening skills, ie, reflection

Standard 5: *Students understand media*

Benchmark Expectations

- 12.5.2 Using Media for a Purpose
- Create a media project for a purpose

Standard 6: *Students understand and use principles of language*

Social Studies

Standard 1: *Students apply Social Studies skills and resources.*

Resources 8.1.2 Use various primary and secondary resources (e.g., historical maps, diaries, speeches, pictures, charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines specific to North Dakota) to analyze, and interpret information.

Research Processes 9–12.1.4 Draw conclusions based on the research processes (e.g., collect, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information)

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Use media (e.g., oral, written, websites, computer simulations, multimedia resources) to access, record, analyze, and communicate information relating to social studies

Standard 5: Concepts of Geography

Human Geography Achievement Descriptors *Analyze the Earth's human systems* (e.g., population, culture, settlement, economic interdependence)

Interpret the relationships between physical environments and society (e.g., humans modify environment, environment modifies society, and use, distribution, and importance of resources)

Standard 6: Human Development and Behavior

Students understand the importance of culture, individual identity, and group identity.

Explain the various purposes of social groups, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function (e.g., minority groups, cliques, counterculture, family relations and political groups)

Analyze conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions (e.g., gender roles, social stratification, racial/ethnic bias)



Flute carved by Keith Bear to resemble a crane's head. Decorated with rabbit fur, feathers, and a painted morning star design. (Troyd Geist, North Dakota Council on the Arts © 2004)

Objectives

- 1) Provide historical and cultural context for the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” by comparing it to legends from other cultures. (Overview and Lesson 1)
- 2) Provide an opportunity for students to use critical listening skills and reflection (Lessons 2 and 3)
- 3) Help students make connections between “Turtle and Pretty Crane,” other literature and family stories (Lesson 3)
- 4) Help students see relationships between physical environment, society, and culture (Lesson 3 and 4)

Outcomes

- 1) Students will compare legends from different cultures and to the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” (Lesson 1)
- 2) Students will listen closely and be able summarize the key elements (plot, characters, action, metaphors and symbols) in the story (Lessons 2 and 3)

- 3) Students will describe natural landmarks through a written story (Lesson 3)
- 4) Students will describe how music is used to enhance the story (Lesson 2)
- 5) Students will make connections between stories from literature, their families, and community and this legend (Lessons 3 and 4)

Pre-Listening Lesson Plan (Lesson 1)

Goal: To prepare students to listen to the story “Turtle and Pretty Crane” in context with legends from other cultures

Students will use elements from nature/music to create a poem or song.

Time Needed: 1-2 classroom periods

Equipment needed: Projector, computer, screen

Directions:

- 1) Have students read the following:

“The cultures of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara of North Dakota are shaped by the Missouri River, the ‘Great Smoky Waters’ along which gardens grew, and by the skies that guided the tribes in practical and spiritual matters. For generations, the People, dwelling upon the human condition, looked to the Heavens for guidance and hope. These stars still whisper to those willing to hear—none so more than the Morning Star—the mystical transition between light and dark, day and night. It is this star that leads the Sun in its path to the creation of a new day. It is this star, the Morning Star, upon which many still gaze.” (Troyd Geist, *Morning Star Whispered: Traditional Stories and Flute Music*.)

The legends of the tribes reflect natural phenomena such as stars, rivers, animals, and the shape of the land itself. Legends from cultures around the world also reflect natural phenomena. The story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” introduces a legend, which ends in the red star (Mars) in the sky as a symbol of love.

Mars has been an important part of legends for many cultures over time.

- 2) Direct students to this link: Windows to the Universe
<http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mars/mars.html>
and have them click on the “Myth and Culture” Link
<http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mythology/planets/Mars/mars.html>

Select three students to read (one for each) the three paragraphs on different cultural views of Mars: *Roman, Hindu and Mayan*

(Note: you can choose between different reading levels)

- 3) Have students make a list of elements in the three versions
(War, natural events such as spring, conflict, love, medicine, etc)

- 4) Show students this link to look at Mars. *Flight through Vallis Marineris on Mars*; 3D animation. Credit: ESA and Hubble European Space Agency Information Centre (M. Kornmesser and L.L. Christensen.)
http://www.spacetelescope.org/videos/html/astro_t.html
(Note: You'll need Quicktime to play the video)
- 5) Ask students to select a piece of music which reflects what they have seen and heard about Mars from the legends and the visuals and to write a short poem or song incorporating a legend about Mars (this last part can be homework)
- 6) Poems and songs should be turned in before you listen to the CD and/or watch the documentary (ask students to include a link if possible to the music that they want to include).



Lessons for Use Along with the documentary and/or CD (Lessons 2 and 3)

Goals:

To have students use language arts skills to analyze the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” and to compare it to legends from other cultures and literature

To have students write a family or personal story using elements of nature in imitation of “Turtle and Pretty Crane”

Time Needed: 2 classroom periods

In the story “Turtle and Pretty Crane,” Keith Bear makes connections between places and events (the river and seeing a girl bathing; hunting buffalo by using the river; finding the girl he loves along the river, and eventually what happens to the boy and girl - who turn out to be elements of nature).

Directions:

- 1) Give students note cards.
- 2) Direct students to use one side of the card to summarize elements of the story including characters, setting, and plot as they listen to the story. They should use the other side of the card to write down themes, symbols and metaphors from the story (love, rivalry, fighting, dreams, tragedy, medicine, illness, death, transformation into natural elements). Ask them especially to note metaphors such as the buffalo heart, and the sweetgrass bracelet for love, and symbols such as the use of the number three, for instance, which is often a magical number in legends and stories.
- 3) Play the documentary
- 4) Divide students into teams - have them describe universal themes the story covers (becoming a man/woman, falling in love, not having a lot of money or possessions, boys teasing one another, how we try to get the attention of someone we like, rivalries between people, fighting/war, and tragedy)
- 5) Each team should also explain how the flute music underscores each element (at what points in the story does Keith use the music?) In the CD version, Keith talks about the songs the young man needs to learn, and Grandfather tells the young man, “Ask the flute to sing for you - the sacred branch.”

- 6) Have students compare and contrast Turtle and Pretty Crane to the legends of Mars they read earlier by using a Venn diagram. Ask them what Mars symbolizes for each culture, and what natural elements were incorporated into each legend. They should describe how natural elements are used as symbols and metaphors (planets for war, plants as a symbol of life, etc) in legends. For instance in the CD version of the story “Turtle and Pretty Crane,” the boy offers the girl a buffalo heart, and she asks, “‘is this the only heart you have for me?’ He offers her a sweetgrass bracelet and tells her ‘this is how I feel...All through the night I dreamed of you...I twisted the sweetgrass, and the sun began to shine, the birds began to sing... my mind was a cloud, my tongue was thick.’ Then he took the flute and played that song.” Ask students to describe other metaphors from the story; particularly what happens to the boy and the girl.
- 7) Have students brainstorm a family or personal story about the elements of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” (becoming a young man or woman, falling in love, rivalry or jealousy, conflicts, tragedies, adventures) on a note card.
- 8) Students should then re-write the story as a legend (they can use initials or change names for privacy) incorporating as many natural elements or place based connections as possible (stars, water, time of day, season, natural landmarks, and transformations to natural elements such as stars, animals, birds, or landmarks such as stones or mountains).



Lesson 4 (To be used after watching the documentary and/or playing the CD)

Goals:

Students will read and evaluate their own stories and poems

Students will compare family stories and literature to the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane”

Students will reflect on the purpose of legends such as “Turtle and Pretty Crane”

Time Needed: 1 classroom period

Directions:

- 1) Put students into teams of four
- 2) Have students share their poems/stories from Lessons 1 and 3 with their team - pick one for the team to read/demonstrate for the class.
- 3) Each team reads the selected poem/story to the class (along with playing the music). This could be made into a media project if there is time.
- 4) Class votes on the best poem/story and discusses comparisons to the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane” and other literature you have read in class.
- 5) Ask students: What similarities are there between your family story/poem and the story of “Turtle and Pretty Crane”? How do we use stories and legends today to explain events? How is music used to tell stories? What is your favorite piece of music that also tells a story? What purpose do you think this story has served for the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara? Why do some stories such as Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* continue to be told many years after they were written?

Resources

North Dakota Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program

For more information, contact Troyd Geist at (701) 328-7591 or tgeist@nd.gov.

http://www.nd.gov/arts/whatsnew/publications_recordings.html

Morning Star Whispered: Traditional Stories and Flute Music by Keith Bear

This recording, produced by the North Dakota Council on the Arts and Makoche Recording Company, features Keith playing music on flutes he carved himself and telling stories involving the Morning Star and other astronomical bodies. The enhanced component provides cultural context to the stories told and ‘the stars’ [Sun, Moon, Mars, Venus, comets, etc.] referenced in the audio component through images of traditional art, text involving folk beliefs, an interactive map, audio interviews, and animation from NASA and the European Space Agency.

This CD is \$14.98 (plus \$4.25 shipping & handling per order [not per CD]). To purchase this CD, contact Makoché Recording Company at 208 N 4th St., Bismarck, ND 58501; telephone: 800.ND.SOUND; web site: www.makoche.com; or email: info@makoche.com.

The following sound clips are available:

Track 2, [*Northern Lights*](#)

Track 6, [*All Through the Night*](#)

Track 3, [*Sticks a Feather in His Head*](#)

Keith Bear’s Website

<http://www.keithbear.net/>

<http://www.keithbear.net/mandan.php>

North Dakota Council on the Arts: Arts in Education Program

Artist in Residence Artists Roster

Artists represented on the Artist-in-Residence Roster have successfully undergone a peer panel review process that evaluates their artistic and instructional abilities as they relate to artists working in a school residency program. The roster is a resource guide for communities searching for qualified professionals to conduct residencies in schools and other educational settings. Artists provide students the environment to develop critical thinking skills, help build confidence, share their ideas with others, and be involved in the creative process.

http://www.nd.gov/arts/arts_ed/roster_folk.html

Arts in Education Grants for Teachers and Schools
Need help? Call (701) 328-7593 or e-mail lehreth@nd.gov.

All NDCA grants are only available online. To apply for a grant, or for more information, please visit: <http://northdakota.cgweb.org>

Artist in Residence. The Artist in Residence program provides matching funds for schools and other non-profit organizations to bring artists into North Dakota schools and communities to conduct residencies of three days or longer. This program is designed to provide students, teachers, and community members with hands-on experiences and personal interactions with working artists. Residencies give students an understanding of quality art and appreciation for cultural traditions. [Guidelines are available via this link.](#)

- Maximum grant: 50% of the artist's negotiated fee and expenses
- Deadline dates: April 1 and November 1 (submitted online)

Schools and Artists as Learning Teams (SALT) is a professional development grant program that supports and strengthens partnerships between schools, community arts organizations and artists. Through thoughtful collaboration, teachers and artists create opportunities for success so that all students achieve to high standards. The grant can be renewed for up to three years, dependent on legislative funding, which allows the opportunity to stretch and explore what it means to work collaboratively. [Guidelines, program overview and FAQ's are available via this link.](#)

- SALT Grant Program Time Frame/Deadlines Application deadline: Applications must be submitted by August 1.
- Notification: All applicants will be notified of funding status on or about September 1.
- Grant period: Grants begin in September and ends by June 30.

Teacher Incentive. The Teacher Incentive program is a means of providing financial assistance to teachers who wish to explore new and creative ways of incorporating the arts into the non-arts curriculum of a classroom. Projects may involve the visual arts, poetry/fiction writing, performing arts, architecture, folk arts, or any combination of artistic disciplines. [Guidelines are available via this link.](#)

- Maximum grant: \$300
- Deadline dates: April 1 and November 1 (submitted online)

Mandan Nation Website
<http://www.mhanation.com/main/main.html>

Resources about Cranes

<http://www.savingcranes.org/>

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/cranes/gruscana.htm>

<http://www.fws.gov/audubon/>

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/herps/amrepnd/species/grappseu.htm>

Discovering Lewis & Clark: Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara

<http://www.lewis-clark.org/content/content-channel.asp?ChannelID=149>

Florida Center for Instructional Technology Clip Art

<http://etc.usf.edu/clipart>

