



Gold Midwest Independent Publishers Association Book Awards for “Multicultural” and “Religion/Philosophy”

“Seldom-seen photographs of Native American women, most of them from the later 19th century are interwoven with oral accounts, songs, and other documents that offer priceless glimpses into the little-understood lives and experiences of America’s foremothers.”—*Library Journal*

“Focusing on the nomadic Plains tribes, the book pairs writings and oratory alongside stunning photographs. The editors hold fast to those individuals who received their (oral) training from the ‘old timers,’ people who knew the pre-reservation way of life that honored women as the complementary equals of their husbands.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

\$14.95, 176 pages, paperback, 6x7.25
80 sepia photographs
ISBN:978-0-941532-87-7
Lexile® measure—1070L, Grade 8 and up

SUMMARY

- ❖ An award-winning book presenting the remarkable spirituality of American Indian women in the pre-reservation days of the 19th century
- ❖ Shows the essential role of women in the religion, values, governance, education, and arts of their tribes
- ❖ Features an informative introduction by Janine Pease, National Indian Educator of the Year and founder of Little Big Horn College
- ❖ Contains over 110 inspiring quotations by or about American Indian women, with sections on “The Role of Indian Women,” “Celestial Femininity,” “Intercessors with the Sacred,” and “Women’s Voices”
- ❖ Includes over 80 rarely seen b/w photographs, some published for the first time, conveying the “spirit” of these extraordinary American Indian women
- ❖ A companion volume to the bestselling, *Indian Spirit*, also edited by Michael and Judith Fitzgerald

ABOUT THE BOOK

What was the role of women in the world of nomadic American Indians in the 19th century? *The Spirit of Indian Women* provides a unique glimpse into a world that is almost inaccessible in our time. Through the combined power of photos, art, and the wisdom of traditional voices, modern readers can come to feel something of the timeless spirit of Indian women.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Michael Oren Fitzgerald is editor of numerous award-winning titles. He is an acknowledged authority of the culture and religion of the Plains Indians, and has taught at Indiana University.

Judith Fitzgerald is an artisan, calligrapher, and graphic designer. With her husband, Michael, she has edited and illustrated five award-winning titles.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN WOMEN — WISDOM TALES DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. Why have Western accounts of the American Indians tended to neglect the role of women? What does this say about Western society and about its approach to history?
2. American Indian women performed a role different, but complementary, to that of the men. Outline the roles performed by each and discuss whether or not this division of labor made women equal to men.
3. American Indian writer Charles Eastman (*Ohiyesa*) has remarked that “the position of woman is the test of civilization.” What rights and privileges did American Indian women enjoy? How do they compare with the rights and privileges of Western women in the 19th century? Do you think women today have greater rights and privileges?
4. American Indian women were the primary socializers of children. What role did mothers and (particularly) grandmothers play in educating the children? Can you find any parallels with contemporary methods of schooling and education?
5. American Indian culture and education was of a predominantly oral, not written, nature. Discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of oral-based vs. written-based culture and education.
6. In Western society education is often defined in terms of “literacy.” Is the oral-based culture of the American Indians therefore “illiterate” and lacking in educational value?
7. American Indian religion contains many examples of celestial women who entered this world to establish sacred rites and teachings to help the tribes. Which example of celestial femininity impressed you most and why?
8. American Indian religion and spirituality is closely tied to virgin nature and mother earth. How does this affect the role played by women in the tribe’s ceremonial life?
9. What themes were most striking for you in the section on American Indian “Women’s Voices”? Which was your favorite “women’s voice” and why?
10. In your view what best describes the “spirit” of American Indian women? What values can this “spirit” teach us today?