

Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness to Light

written by Tim Tingle

illustrated by Karen Clarkson

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction/Memoir

Format: 40 pages, 8-1/2" x 11"

ISBN: 9780892394753

Reading Level: Grade 3

Interest Level: Grades 2–6

Guided Reading Level: O

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
3.7/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Discrimination, Families, Grandparents, Native American Interest, Texas

Resources on the web:
leeandlow.com/books/saltypie

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

SYNOPSIS

Bee stings on the backside! That was just the beginning. Tim was about to enter a world of the past, with bullying boys, stones and Indian spirits of long ago. But they were real spirits, real stones, very real memories. . . .

In this powerful family saga, author Tim Tingle tells the story of his family's move from Oklahoma Choctaw country to Pasadena, TX. Spanning 50 years, *Saltypie* describes the problems encountered by his Choctaw grandmother--from her orphan days at an Indian boarding school to hardships encountered in her new home on the Gulf Coast.

Tingle says, "Stories of modern Indian families rarely grace the printed page. Long before I began writing, I knew this story must be told." Seen through the innocent eyes of a young boy, *Saltypie* is the story of one family's efforts to honor the past while struggling to gain a foothold in modern America.

Awards

- Paterson Prize for Books for Young People, The Poetry Center at Passaic County Community College
- Skipping Stones Honor Award, Skipping Stones Magazine
- Storytelling World Honor Award, Storytelling World

BACKGROUND

How Much Can We Tell Them? From Author Tim Tingle

"My father was the finest welder I ever knew. He welded together pipelines that carried oil beneath the ground. He could make anything out of iron—a swing set for a playground, a flagpole, a bicycle rack, even a ring with my brother's initials. My father was an American Indian, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

My grandmother, my father's mother, grew acres of vegetables and raised chickens, both for the meat and for the eggs. She was also an Oklahoma Choctaw. As a child she attended an Indian boarding school, where she was punished for speaking her language, the Choctaw language. She was determined that all of her children graduate from high school, which they did.

My Aunt Juanita was Choctaw, too, an American Indian like my dad. She married a dairyman with a hundred cattle. They lived in Cypress Fairbanks, west of Houston. My Choctaw uncles Billy and Boyd played football at the University of Houston before becoming coaches, Billy at Spring Branch and Boyd at Freeport, Texas.

I always knew we were Choctaws, but as a child I never understood that we were Indians. The movies and books about Indians showed Indians on horseback. My family drove cars and pickup trucks. Movie Indians lived in teepees. We lived in modern houses. Indians in books and on television hunted with bows and arrows. My father and my uncles hunted, too, with shotguns, but mostly they fished. They kept my grandmother's freezer filled with fish from Galveston Bay.

Were we real Indians? Yes. We still are real Indians, modern Indians. Like many Americans, we celebrate our history, our Choctaw-American history. We know our history never included teepees or buffaloes. We were people of the woods and swamps of what is now called Mississippi. Early Choctaws had gardens and farms. For hundreds of years, they lived in wooden houses. Education of the young was always important. Young men served in the Choctaw military, not as braves or warriors, but as highly respected defenders of our homes and towns.

Long before explorers arrived from Europe, we had a government, a Choctaw national government. We selected local and national leaders. We recognized women as equal citizens. In truth, women were the principal landowners, so it could be said that women recognized men as equal citizens. My grandmother's natural guidance of the Tingle family is a continuation of this tradition, with women as leaders.

In 1830, the Choctaw Nation was forced to move west in a great American tragedy, the Trail of Tears. In many ways the story *Saltpie* is a continuation of this trauma of removal. When my grandmother felt the sting of a stone thrown by a young man who knew nothing about her, only that she was Indian, the fears returned. People respond to trauma in many ways, but a very natural response is to cling to family.

As a book of family bonding, *Saltpie* will touch the hearts of readers. Passing references to the Indian boarding school experience and the Trail of Tears will sound familiar to many. But there is a nagging problem in *Saltpie*: the boy throwing the stone. Who is he and why is he doing that?

I feel that I should motion to you now, quietly and in tiny gestures unseen by anyone else, so I can share a whispered secret, a secret only a few outside of Indian Country even suspect. Are you ready? Ok. Listen closely. Indians know of many wrongs done to them and their friends and relatives that we seldom speak about. When Indian storytellers and writers get together, we often ask, "How much can we tell them?"

How much can we tell them before they cover their ears and refuse to listen to our stories? Many non-Indian people have difficulty believing that bigotry could still be alive, or could ever have been alive, in the settling of our nation, in our dealings with Indians.

Who is that boy and why did he throw that stone?

Consider the following stereotypes: While some Indians were savages, most Indians were gentle lovers of nature. Indians dressed in beautiful beaded animal skins and eagle feathers. Most Indians followed the buffalo, ate the buffalo, and lived in teepees made from the buffalo. Indians were brave but unable to survive in the modern world. We saved the Indian. We educated the Indian.

Most children's literature available in libraries today promotes these stereotypes. Make no mistake; these are stereotypes. "How much can we tell them?" Can we tell them that the vast majority of children's books written about Indians in America were not written by Indians? Can we somehow convince them that this matters?

I know. To many readers this thought is new.

Here is an idea, a simple one. To teachers and parents who want to help displace the stereotypes about American Indian people, at some point during the reading of *Saltpie*, ask your listeners, "What do Indians wear?" Smile and nod at the answers. Moccasins, feathers, beads, animal skins. Then tell your students and children, in your own words, "If I were you, I would have probably said the same thing. But your answers are not correct." Then hold the book up for students to see, any page will do.

"This is what Indians wear. Indians are modern people." Enjoy the sound of your voice saying these words. The sound of spoken truth is beautiful and strong.

If the dialogue about American Indians is to have any true importance, it must begin with this understanding: Indians are modern people. Indians serve in the United States military, as soldiers, sailors, and marines. Indians are schoolteachers, lawyers, businessmen and businesswomen, home builders, doctors, and writers.

So, who is that boy and why did he throw the stone?

Maybe it was a stone of misunderstanding, thrown by a boy who simply didn't know. He didn't know that Indians are Americans, that Indians are modern people, that Indians are friendly neighbors who love their families, their homes, and care about education. If we can assume he didn't know, let us forgive him. Let us teach his grandchildren, so they will pocket their stones and extend a hand in friendship.

In 1963 President John F. Kennedy said, "For a subject worked and reworked so often in novels, motion pictures, and television, American Indians are the least understood and the most misunderstood of us all."

Might we now begin—one parent, one child, one teacher, one classroom at a time—a real and more truthful education about American Indians.

We are a nation dedicated to the freedoms so aptly voiced in the Bill of Rights. Freedom is for all Americans, for all colors and blends, for all beliefs. We, as a people, celebrate the revealing of previously hidden truths. If wrong exists, we want to know it. We want to change it. If wrongs existed in the history of our nation, we want to hear of them. And why? My Choctaw friend Tony Byars, an Indian boarding school attendee and celebrated United States Marine, said it best. "We want to know of these wrongs," said Tony, "so they will never happen again." Now is a great time to be an American Indian."

Note about Terminology

When using this guide, teachers are encouraged to incorporate local Indigenous histories into the discussions. We acknowledge that terms may vary by region when discussing Indigenous communities. For example, discussions may include a specific tribe name and/or may use more general terms such as Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, or First Nations that are neither intended to minimize nor elevate any one tribe. Furthermore, the term Native is used to identify Indigenous people, as this is a commonly used term in some Indigenous communities. Teachers are encouraged to speak about Native Americans in present tense and acknowledge that all Native Americans carry rich cultures and traditions. A Native American's identity is not tied to the United State of America's recognition as people.

Choctaw

It is important to note that a tribe may have multiple bands, each with potentially distinct cultures and traditions. *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* is specific to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. There are three federally-recognized Choctaw bands: Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, and Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. It should not be assumed that all three are exactly the same. Teachers are encouraged to visit the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's website to learn more information about the tribe's history, culture, traditions, current events, and many other elements that make up their community at: <https://www.choctawnation.com/>.

Native American Oral Storytelling

Oral storytelling is a way people from a variety of backgrounds may share traditional stories and songs across generations. Prior to colonization in the present-day United States of America, storytelling exist-

ed. Oral storytelling remains a way that Native American communities share wisdom and preserve rich cultures and traditions. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians indicate that many of the stories they share are folktales (known as Shokka annopa). Animal characters are noted in many of the stories. The aim of some stories was to teach a lesson. (<https://www.choctaw.org/culture/ihinoshi.html>).

Thomas King's book *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* is an additional reference when thinking about the role of storytelling in our daily lives. Although King's book is not necessarily appropriate for students in grades 1 to 7, it is a recommended book for teachers to gain a deeper understanding about storytelling from a Native American perspective. (<https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/the-truth-about-stories>)

Treaties

Treaties are a controversial issue in what is known as Indian Country. In *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light*, the section titled "How Much Can We Tell Them?" specifically mentions the forced relocation of the Choctaw Nation in 1830 in what is now known as the Trail of Tears. The discussion of treaties and subsequent treaty rights deserves attention in understanding the political nature of being Native American, sovereignty rights, and agreements between two sovereign nations (in this case, the United States of American and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma). It is suggested that primary source treaty documents are shared with students to better understand the intentions and implications of treaties on Native American people. The following website is a resource for primary source treaty documents: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nationtonation/>

Indian Boarding Schools

The character, Mawmaw, once lived at the Tuskahoma Academy in Oklahoma. These boarding schools, known as Indian boarding schools, are still around today. However, some of the schools have closed. Whether or not the school remains open or is now closed does not take away from the outcome of such Indian boarding schools. Teachers are encouraged to explore the following website and integrate information about Indian boarding schools into their studies: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>. A list of Indian boarding schools past and present can be found on the aforementioned website, specifically on the following page: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/list/>.

Stereotypes about Native Americans

In *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light*, the author and illustrator pull on stereotypes to, perhaps, engage the reader. The author discusses stereotypes specifically in the section titled "How Much Can We Tell Them?" Tim Tingle suggests on how to address stereotypes about Native Americans in your classroom: Ask students "What do Indians wear?" Listen to student responses. Next, show students any page of the book and say "This is what Indians wear. Indians are modern people." For more information and resources on how to teach about contemporary Native people, consult Learning for Justice (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2017/with-and-about-inviting-contemporary-american-indian-peoples-into-the>), Dr. Debbie Reese's website, American Indians in Children's Literature (<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>), the National Museum of the American Indian (<https://americanindian.si.edu/>), Indian Country Today (<https://indiancountrytoday.com/>), and other reputable sources from Native people.

Choctaw Women

Some tribes have gender roles while other tribes may view gender as fluid. The author notes that “In truth, women were the principal landowners, so it could be said that women recognized men as equal citizens.” The power, influence, and importance of women in Choctaw ways is underscored in the book *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* as Mawmaw (the author's grandmother), is a central character in the story. You might consider the following website to dive deeper into understanding the positionality Choctaw women hold in their Tribe at: [https://choctawschool.com/home-side-menu/biskinik-archive-\(history,-news,-iti-fabvssa\)/2012-articles/women-%E2%80%93-the-givers-and-supporters-of-life.aspx](https://choctawschool.com/home-side-menu/biskinik-archive-(history,-news,-iti-fabvssa)/2012-articles/women-%E2%80%93-the-givers-and-supporters-of-life.aspx)

Reading is Fundamental Saltpie Guide

Check out the educator lesson plan and activities for *Saltpie* (<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/book/Saltpie-choctaw-journey-darkness-light>), a title featured in RIF's Multicultural Book Collections. To find other free activities that inspire young readers as well as learn more about Reading Is Fundamental, visit [RIF.org](https://www.rif.org).

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Create a class KWL chart exploring discrimination, American Indians (or Choctaw, specifically), or storytelling.
- Look at the cover of *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* and make predictions about the book.
- Use the interactive map at <https://native-land.ca/> to explore the importance of place in storytelling and our lived experiences.
- Discuss how certain identities may face discrimination in society. Your school may explore what it takes to be a No Place for Hate school (see <https://www.noplaceforhate.org/>).
- Use the following website to explore as a class the impact of Indian boarding schools on individuals, family, and cultures: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>.

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

- Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, illustrations, and "How Much Can We Tell Them?"

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- the historical trauma of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as it relates to settler colonialism
- how discrimination exists today, including in Indian boarding schools past and present
- the role of families in sustaining and revitalizing cultural ways of knowing and doing
- how life lessons were learned through lived experiences

Encourage students to consider why the author, Tim Tingle, would want to share his story with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

cicadas, clan, footfall, Indian, Indian boarding school, *Saltpie*, spirit, Tuskahoma Academy in Oklahoma

Academic

aroma, beneath, crumpled, dashed, dawn, enlightenment, exam, garage, gardenias, gripped, heap, junior, misunderstanding, peered, remarkable, replaced, roosting, scrunching, shuffling, squishing, stumbling, sundown, tossed, transplant, welder, whipping, whispered, yellowjacket bees

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Who is the narrator of the story?
2. Who defines Saltpie for the narrator?
3. What is Saltpie?
4. In 1915, the narrator's family relocated from Oklahoma to which state?
5. What happened to Mawmaw as she went outside to greet the dawn?
6. Why does Mawmaw put her thumb in Pawpaw's empty cup before pouring in coffee?
7. Who informed the narrator why Mawmaw puts her thumb into empty cups before pouring into them?
8. What was discussed during the evening talking time with family?
9. What happened in 1970 that brought the Tingle clan together?
10. Why was Mawmaw unable to come home for Christmas when she was in the Tuskahoma Academy in Oklahoma?
11. Toward the end of the book, Aunt Bobbie lined up all of Mawmaw's grandchildren. What did Aunt Bobbie plan to do in this scene?
12. How does the narrator suggest that people can "leave happy footfalls"?
13. In the section titled "How Much Can We Tell Them?", what does the narrator mean when he says "I always knew we were Choctaws, but as a child I never understood that we were *Indians*"?
14. In 1830, the Choctaw Nation was forced to move west. What is the name of this specific forced relocation? (Acknowledge that this is not the only forced relocation of American Indian peoples.)
15. What are some stereotypes the narrator shares about American Indians?
16. What does the narrator mean when he writes "Indians are modern people"?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How do you describe the relationship the narrator has with Mawmaw? Provide examples from the book to support your response.
2. A boy threw a stone at Mawmaw which injured her. How does the incident with the stone impact Mawmaw's life and that of her family?
3. The book defines Saltypie with examples. Provide examples of your own understanding of Saltypie.
4. The word survivance is not specifically mentioned in the book. Based on the conversation the narrator had with Aunt Bobbie regarding Mawmaw and the coffee cup and the subsequent evening talking time, how would you define survivance? (The ancestors shown in the hospital waiting room illustration is another example to help discuss survivance.)
5. Describe what the narrator means when they said "At Mawmaw's, it always seemed that if you waited quietly, you could know things that ought to be known, hidden in the sounds." Encourage responses to include students' lived experiences that speak to this direct quote from the book.
6. What purpose does the evening talking time play in the story? How does the evening talking time relate to students' lived experiences? What kind of questions or conversations would they have with their families if they were involved in an evening talking time? Who would be at the evening talking time and why?
7. How does the hospital waiting room illustration help the reader better understand that American Indians are "modern people" as the author described later in the book? What details do students notice and observe from the illustration?
8. Why did the author include the section about Mawmaw as a little girl at Tuskahoma Academy in Oklahoma, an Indian boarding school?
9. How might Mawmaw's experiences at the Tuskahoma Academy in Oklahoma shape her lived experiences compared to your own schooling? Compare and contrast Mawmaw's experiences with your own.
10. How does the author's choice to write in first person impact the telling of the story?
11. How might the story be different if it was told from the perspective of Mawmaw?
12. How was discrimination explained in the story?
13. In addition to Mawmaw gaining eyesight toward the end of the book, what other meanings could be behind the "darkness into light" part of the book title?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Reflect on how you have followed or plan to follow the author's ending advice of "We all leave footfalls, everywhere we go. We change the people we meet. If we learn to listen to their quiet and secret music, as my Mawmaw did, we will leave happy footfalls behind us in our going."
2. In the section at the back of the book titled "How Much Can We Tell Them?", the author writes about changing incorrect information in the telling of history. Share one story you heard about Native Americans – maybe based on a stereotype – and how reading *Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* has changed your understanding.
3. Select a character from the book. Compare and contrast the character to your own lived experiences or that of a close relative. You might create a Venn Diagram to help organize your thoughts.
4. Tell a story about a lesson you learned from your family. You might pick a story about discrimination, identity, or family as shared in the book.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to tell what they learned about one of the spreads. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about a character of their choosing from the book.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. In reading *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light*, identify a moment when a character learns something new about themselves and/or their community. How do you think this moment in the book made the character feel and why?
2. How did Mawmaw deal with the discriminatory behavior she experienced in the story? What did you learn from reading about Mawmaw's experiences with discrimination? What do you think the stone throwing represented? Why do you think the author chose to begin the story with that incident?
3. Look at the illustration for either the evening talking time or the hospital room with many of the ancestors present. What emotions do you feel from the illustrations? What colors, body language, or images support your emotions in the illustration?
4. Look at the black and white photographs included in the section titled "How Much Can We Tell Them?" What kind of emotions describe how these images make you feel? Do certain images make you feel different emotions from other ones? If so, can you sort the images into certain emotions?
5. Find an illustration(s) that represent(s) your understanding of the word "*Saltpie*" in the book. What emotions do you connect with the word "*Saltpie*" and the illustration(s) you selected?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Think of your cultures and traditions in your own home.** Compare and contrast the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma culture and traditions to your own.
- **Interview a family member about family history.** Create a web that documents your family's physical moving. This may be moving within the same town/city or moving to different states or countries.
- **Have students independently read create Cornell Notes** (see <https://lsc.cornell.edu/how-to-study/taking-notes/cornell-note-taking-system/> for further information) **or a modified version of such notetaking on the section titled in the back of the book, "How Much Can We Tell Them?"** What did students learn from this exercise?
- **Look up and read the other Tim Tingle books available from Lee & Low Books** (*House of Purple Cedar* (leeandlow.com/books/house-of-purple-cedar), *Crossing Bok Chitto* (leeandlow.com/books-crossing-bok-chitto), and *Stone River Crossing* (leeandlow.com/books/stone-river-crossing)). Make text-to-text connections between *Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* and one of Tim Tingle's other books. What do these books have in common? How are they different? What do you think are similar themes across Tim Tingle's books? What do his characters have in common? How are they different? Students can write an analytical essay comparing Tim Tingle's books and share their responses with a partner, small group or whole class.
- **Encourage students to write a poem or other type of writing piece about a childhood memory or something that is meaningful to them about their identities, cultures, or heritages.** Using inspiration from *Saltpie*, have students think about what they want to communicate about themselves, their families, and/or their favorite childhood experiences. What do they want to share and why did they pick that particular thing to write about? Students can share their work with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. Consider creating a class book with illustrations and have the book available to students in the classroom library.
- **Have students read Tim Tingle's Author's Note, "How Much Can We Tell Them?" from the back of the book.** Afterwards, have students reflect on the following guiding questions in an essay: What did they learn from this section after reading *Saltpie*? What did they connect with? What did they learn that was new? How did this affect what they now think

about the story? Why do you think author Tim Tingle wanted to include this in the back of the book? Why do you think he wrote *Saltypie* after reading "How Much Can We Tell Them?"

- **As a follow-up activity, have students read Dr. Debbie's review of *Saltypie*** (<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2010/04/tim-tingles-Saltypie.html>). What did they learn from Dr. Debbie Reese's review? What does she write about Tim Tingle's Author's Note, "How Much Can We Tell Them?" Have students write a reaction essay in response to Dr. Debbie's Reese's review, and the importance of *Saltypie* as well as Tim Tingle's Author's Note.
- **Complete one or more of the interactive lessons about the book at:** <https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/book/Saltypie-choctaw-journey-darkness-light>. What did students learn from doing this activity?
- **Seek out culturally sustaining/revitalizing texts for students below:**
 - Find books that feature Native People in the present. Lee & Low titles include *This Land is My Land* by George Littlechild (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/this-land-is-my-land>), *Kiki's Journey* by Kristy Orona-Ramirez (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/kiki-s-journey>), *When the Shadbush Blooms* by Carla Messinger (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/when-the-shadbush-blooms>), *The Blue Roses* by Linda Boyden (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-blue-roses>), *All Around Us* by Xelena González (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/all-around-us>), and *Where Wonder Grows* by Xelena González (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/where-wonder-grows>).
 - Find books that present Native People accurately such as *Buffalo Song* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/buffalo-song>), *Crazy Horse's Vision* by Joseph Bruchac (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/crazy-horse-s-vision>), *Blessing's Bead* by Debby Dahl Edwardson (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/blessing-s-bead>), *Sky Dancers* by Connie Ann Kirk (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/sky-dancers>), *Giving Thanks* by Chief Jake Swamp (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/giving-thanks>), *The People Shall Continue* by Simon J. Ortiz (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-people-shall-continue>), *Crossing Bok Chitto* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/crossing-bok-chitto>), *Stone River Crossing* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/stone-river-crossing>), and *Indian No More* by Charlene Willing McManis with Traci Sorell (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/indian-no-more>).
 - Find biographies of Native People, such as *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path* by Joseph Bruchac (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/jim-thorpe-s-bright-path>), *Bowman's Store* by Joseph Bruchac (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/bowman-s-store>), *Quiet Hero* by S.D. Nelson (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/quiet-hero>), and *Louis Sockalexis* by Bill Wise (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/louis-sockalexis>).

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Think of your cultures and traditions in your own home.** Compare and contrast the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians culture and traditions to your own, both from what they learn in the book and from other reputable resources, including [Choctaw.org](https://choctaw.org).
- **Look at the illustration of the family in the hospital waiting room.** Write down three questions you would ask one of the people about their culture, traditions, family, etc. in the illustration. Students may ask a variety of questions. Encourage students to use questions that start with one of the following words: how, why, would, could, or should.
- **Primary Source Analysis.** Show students primary source images from the government-run boarding schools. Some include <http://home.epix.net/~landis/primary.html>, <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/38528>, <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/19785>, and <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007661485/>. Have students analyze the images using the Library of Congress's primary source analysis tool (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf). What did they learn about Native American Boarding Schools from this activity? For additional information and activities about Native American Boarding Schools, consult PBS' documentary, *Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools* (<https://www.pbs.org/video/unspoken-americas-native-american-boarding-schools-oobt1r/>) in addition to Lee & Low's *Home to Medicine Mountain* (leeandlow.com/books/home-to-medicine-mountain).
- **The book includes elements of historical trauma.** Take time to discuss with the class what historical trauma is and how healing spaces need to consider historical trauma that can be intergenerational.
 - Historical Trauma in Native American Communities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qppilbNiDc4>
 - Intergenerational Survivor and Healing from Matthew Shorting (Anishinaabe): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecgXgHQySiE>
 - For more information on how to teach about historical and generational trauma with culturally responsive practices, consult the following resources: "Embedding Culturally Responsive Practices into Trauma-Informed Schools" (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/blogs/blog42_embedding-culturally-responsive-practices.asp#:~:text=Historical%20trauma%2C%20or%20multigenerational%20trauma,strategies%2C%20such%20as%20avoidance%20of), The Administration for Children and Families' section on trauma (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit/trauma-concept>), the APA's "Trauma-Informed School Practices" (<https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/newsletter/2017/12/generational-trauma>), and more.

Science/STEM

(HS-LS1-4 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes)

- **Explore the American Egg Board's website at:** <https://www.incredibleegg.org/>. In the book, *Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light*, MawMaw and the narrator looked for "blood spots on the yellow yolks." In the book, Mawmaw threw such eggs with these characteristics in the trash, classifying them as "bad eggs." On the American Egg Board's website, look for recipes and read about the science of eggs.

Art & Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Have students create a collage of their family photos, recipes, and/or videos.** Students can write a short piece discussing highlights or themes from their family photos, recipes, and/or videos.
- **Look at the illustration of the family in the hospital waiting room.** Write down three questions you would ask one of the people about their culture, traditions, family, etc. in the illustration. Students may ask a variety of questions. Encourage students to use questions that start with one of the following words: how, why, would, could, or should.
- **Visit the book illustrator's (Karen Clarkson) website:** <https://clarksonart.com/choctaw-art>. Find one piece of artwork from her online collection and discuss what you think was the artist's intent in the piece.
- **Have students research Native writers and illustrators today.** If available, have students consult the librarian for help with researching and/or acquiring these books. Consider having the class generate a list of questions about the author or illustrator's work that they can send to the author or illustrator to encourage collaborative dialogue. Additionally, have students read Dr. Debbie Reese's blog posts about Native authors and illustrators. ([https:// americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/05/why-i-advocate-for-books-by-native.html](https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2014/05/why-i-advocate-for-books-by-native.html))

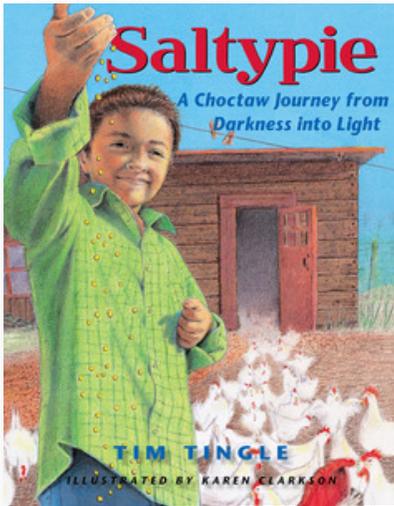
School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Encourage students to interview family members about a favorite or impactful childhood memory.** How did that event influence the family member? How did it affect the person's life moving forward? Consider having students, if comfortable, share their findings with a partner, a small group, or whole class.
- **Similarly, ask students to speak with family members about their traditions how their traditions are special to them.** What is unique about each family's traditions? How did it influence them throughout their lives?
- **If applicable, have students and families research more about the Choctaw people, in history and in present today.**
- **Have students bring home *Saltypie* and share the book with other family members.** Ask students to start a discussion about what their families learned from and connected with in the text.



Ordering Information

General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/saltpie

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue,
New York, NY 10016

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Tingle is an Oklahoma Choctaw and an award-winning author and storyteller. He travels all over the US doing school visits and storytelling festivals. As a visiting author and performer, Tingle reaches audiences numbering over 200,000 annually. He has completed numerous speaking tours for the U.S. Department of Defense, performing stories to children of military personnel stationed in Germany. In 1993, he retraced the Trail of Tears to Choctaw homelands in Mississippi and began recording stories of tribal elders. From talks with Archie Mingo emerged *Crossing Bok Chitto*, Tingle's first illustrated children's book. This history-based tale is the inspiration for *Stone River Crossing*. The plot is filled with elements of Choctaw culture, plus a colorful dash of Choctaw magic realism. Tingle lives in Texas.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Karen Clarkson, Choctaw artist and tribal member, lives in San Leandro, California with her husband Bill and their two dogs. A trip to Paris when she was ten inspired her to study the old masters but she feels she came into her own as an artist when she started creating portraits of Native Americans. She first started learning about art by drawing pictures of all her relatives. In this way she felt as if she knew many of her ancestors even though she had never met them. *Saltpie* is her first book. More information about Karen, including examples of her work, can be found on her website: <https://clarksonart.com/>

REVIEWS

"A grandmother's life story centers this welcome depiction of a contemporary Choctaw family... Tingle provides a corrective view of contemporary Native American life, as his author's note reveals was his intent. Clarkson's evocative illustrations bathe each scene in a soft light that accentuates the warmth of the family's love." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Moving back and forward in time, Tingle (Walking the Choctaw Road) offers a tribute to his grandmother, Mawmaw, in a quietly poetic story about dealing with adversity." —*Publishers Weekly*

"We can, if we choose, leave happy footfalls, and books like this one can help us do that." —*Dr. Debbie Reese of Nambé Pueblo, American Indians in Children's Literature*

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.