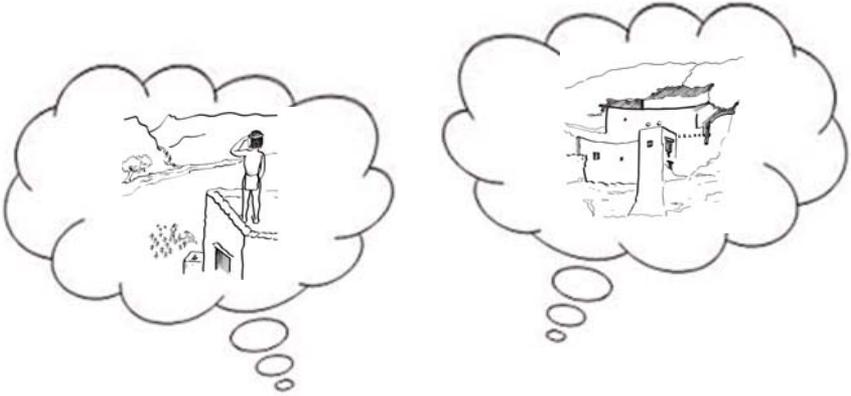




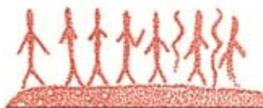
Dr. Art E. Fact presents

Stories of Early Arizona



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Dr. Art E. Fact drawings by Conrad Khin

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We Are The Sinagua



At last the sun began to slide behind the mountain. As soon as it could not be seen, a red glow shone around the peak.

“Grandmother, look quick! Is that what the sky used to look like?” cried Olathe.

Grandmother smoothed her dark, shining hair back from her face and smiled down on Olathe. She sat down on the mat spread on the ground and patted the mat next to her. Olathe came to her side and sat down.

Olathe means
“lovely”



“Tell me again,” she begged.

“You must listen carefully,” Grandmother said, “until you too can tell the story. It will be yours to tell to your children and your grandchildren, until they can tell it too. The story belongs to our family, and it must go on with our family.” Grandmother smiled at her and Olathe felt very important.

“How did it start?” began Olathe. “You were a little girl?”

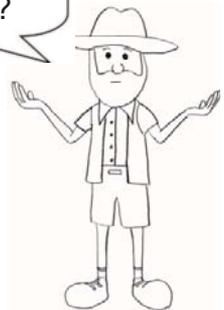
“No,” Grandmother said. “My mother was a very little girl. And it began with a loud noise.”





“There was a rumbling sound that seemed to come from all around them. In those times the houses were built partly underground, and the ground seemed to be making the noise. My mother was very frightened and ran to her family, but even the older people and the leaders were afraid. A man came running into the village, and when the people greeted him, he gave them news that frightened them even more. Not far from his village, the ground had cracked open. and smoke was coming out from inside the crack. His people had run away.

What do you think was happening to the ground?



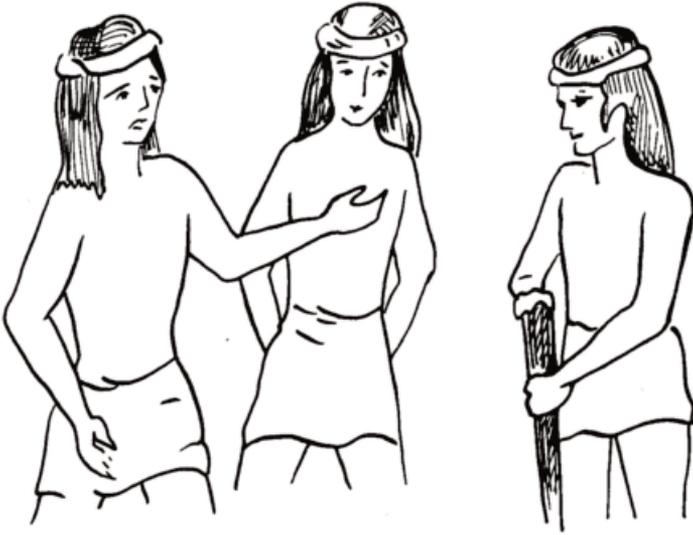
“My mother’s family decided to stay in their home and not run away, but many people were crying and asking the wise ones and leaders what they should do.”

“The next day the rumbling sound was louder, and the sky toward the other village grew darker. Ashes and small pieces of cinder fell from the sky and covered the roof of their house. Loud, sudden crashes were heard from a long way off, and the sky had a reddish glow throughout the day and night.”



What causes ash and cinders to fall from the sky?



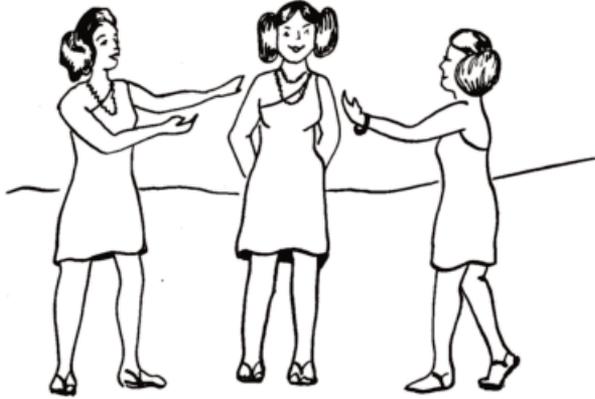


But nothing more seemed to happen in my mother's village, and soon the people got used to the noises, the falling ash, and the ugly smell in the air. It went on for a long time. Then one day, it grew quiet. The men of their village, who had not run away, decided to go see the cracked ground. When they came back, they told wild stories of new mountains made of cinders."

“And now, many changes began in my mother’s village. Soon, the people saw that water stayed in the ground around the edge of the cinders, and they found new streams and lakes. Where the ashes were not too thick, they could even plant crops. They began to think those bad, scary days had been good, after all.”

“New people began to come to the villages. The traders, who went to the high, flat land to the north and to the hot, dry lands to the south, told people of the new water and rich fields. As people found out about the good conditions, more and more of them came.”





“From the mountains came the Mogollon People, from the high, flat country came the Puebloan people, and from the south came the Hohokam farmers.”

“All these different people shared new ideas and customs. My mother was no longer a girl, and now she wore her hair like her best friend, a Pueblo girl, and she had a dress like the ones worn by the Hohokam women. The newcomers had sandals made like hers. The young women laughed at the young men, who traded and copied many things from one another. Now when people married, they built new kinds of houses, close to each other, made of flat stones like the Puebloan houses.”

“Since that time long ago, my mother’s father, her husband, and her sons, my brothers, have farmed here. But now, Olathe, your father and your brother must go and look for a new place for our family. The rain has not come for a long time and the earth no longer gives its strength to our crops.” Grandmother stopped and started off toward the canyons where the men had gone.





“The traders say there is a valley to the south with water that flows in all seasons. Perhaps our family will go there. Then you will have to add that to the story for your children when you are grown.”

“What people are we now, Grandmother?” asked Olathe.

“We are Sinagua, and the others who came to us became Sinagua. We have traded and shared, and we are still Sinagua. If we go south to the Hohokam valley, we go as Sinagua, and we will live with them as Sinagua,” Grandmother said proudly. “Can you remember the story, Olathe?”

“I will remember, but I think I like the glow of the evening sun better than I would have liked the mountain glowing!” laughed Olathe.

As they went up the ladder to the roof opening, they were both thinking of the past and waiting to see what the future would bring.





And so Olathe's people, the Sinagua, came to the Hohokam Valley on the river to the south.

A Full Day



Winona woke up early. The sky was already bright in the roof opening. Quickly she sat up and looked around her. Her mother and little brother Ichesa were already gone. Today was the day to gather guayule and plan for making new balls for the games.

She had slept late! The sleeping blankets were already rolled up. Winona rolled hers, then climbed the ladder to the roof top. Down below, she could see families beginning the long walk up the river. She hurried down the outside ladder to join her family.

Guayule is a desert shrub used to make rubber.

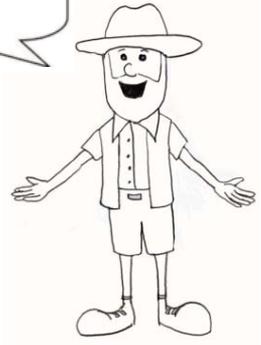


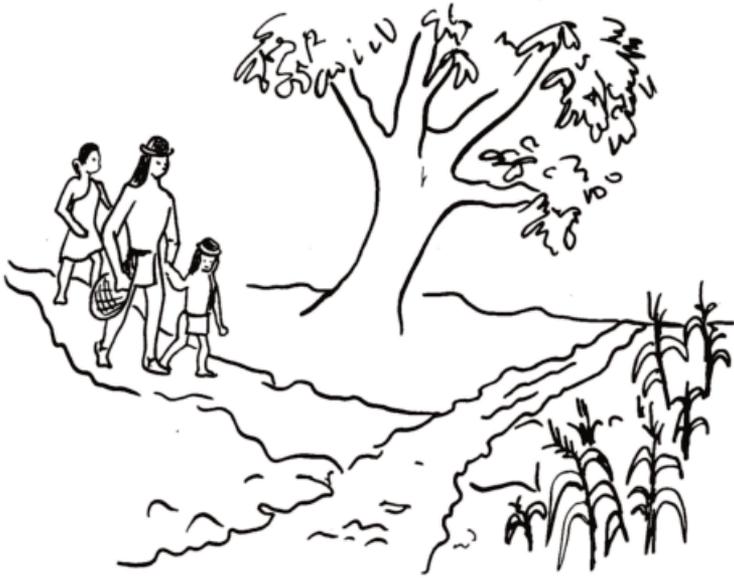
“Did you wait for the sun to wake you?” asked her father. Now that they were down the ladders, Ichessa had been put down from his mother’s back. He was running along the river edge, but he stopped when he saw Winona.

“We were going to go without you,” he teased.

Winona helped her mother fill a small sack with dried corn and deer strips. They carried a pottery scoop for the water they would find.

Winona means
“firstborn daughter”





“The water in the pools will still be cool this time of year,” thought Winona.

Soon the families began walking down the trail. For a while, the ground was very smooth and hard where so many had walked on it, for this was the way to the corn field by the river. When they crossed on the other side of the river, the trail was much more rocky. Winona was glad she was old enough to wear grass sandals. Ichesa scrambled to keep up, but he did not ask to be carried, for his feet were very hard on the bottom. As they came to the guayule flat at the head of the wash, her mother began to gather the bushy plants into piles. Winona knew what she had to do.

Taking the food sack, she called, “Lallo. This way with me.”

Seeing Father and Mother busy, he followed her into the wash. There he could sit in the shade and play with pebbles while Winona got water and soaked the corn and meat to eat. Soon the other fathers and mothers came with Winona back to the wash.

Lallo means
“little boy”

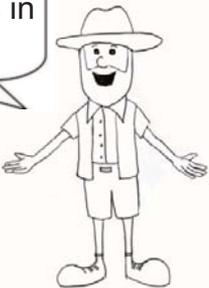


They all rested in the shade and laughed at the small rabbit that ran from under a bush when Lallo kicked at the leaves. Winona's father found a sharp stone that fit his hand, and while the others ate, he stood by the rock wall and scratched figures on it with the stone. As the



others watched, they slowly grew quiet. How happy Winona was that her father was so good at it! Lallo tried to do it too, but the stone slipped from his fingers.

Don't ever scratch or draw on the rocks in the Forest.



“Lallo” said Father “you must try again on the next trip. Soon you will be able to go on with the story for children smaller than you.”

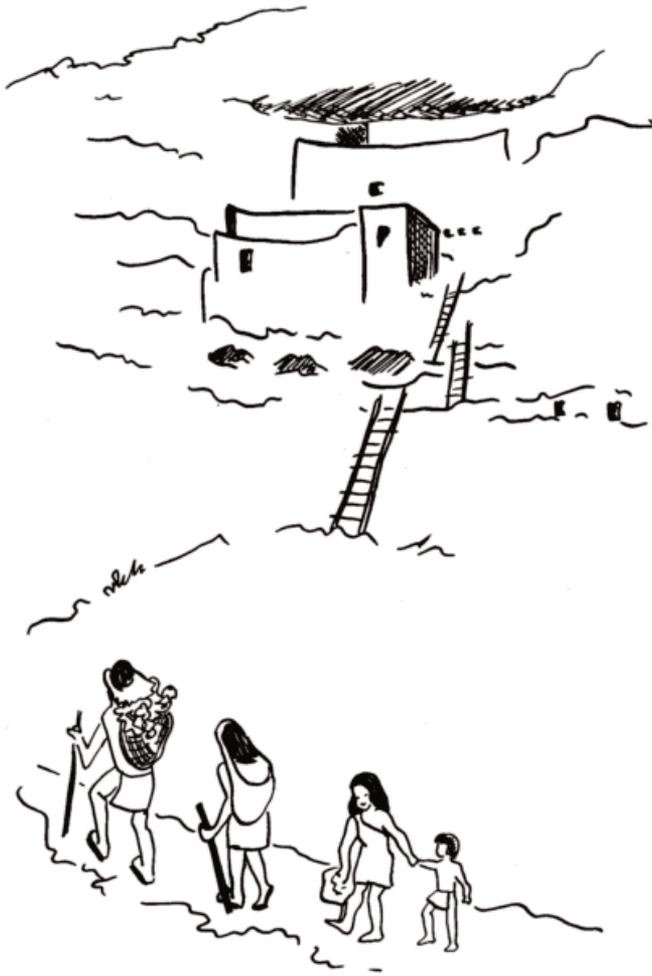


As the shadows in the wash began to move away from them, the people picked up their sacks and moved back to the piles of guayule. Father tied to heavy cotton cord around a big bundle, leaving a big loop in the cord. He put the loop across his forehead, and he and the other men started back toward home.



The mothers followed, talking quietly. Winona walked behind them. She looked at the sunlit cliffs, the spring flowers, and the loads of guayule. She heard Ichesa and the other little ones running and calling behind her. They would make play balls for their clan, and have enough to trade, too. Perhaps she could get a beautiful shell for making a necklace.

As she walked along the trail, she thought, "I would not trade being Winona for anything in the world."



Perhaps another child in some other village was also waiting for the traders to come.

The Traders



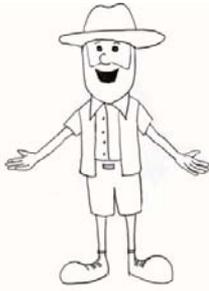
The traders came into sight over the tree tops along the trail. Hania had been standing on the roof watching for them since the first light of the sun revealed the mountain tops. He could look down and see the men at work in the corn fields. Soon they, too, would see the traders and come up to the houses.

Hania means
"spirit warrior"



Hania scrambled down the ladder into his house. His sister Sihu was grinding corn, but

Sihu means
"flower"



he did not speak to her. He must get ready for the traders! All winter, after finishing family chores, he had worked on making necklaces to trade. He had rolled the edges of stone flakes smooth and small and drilled the holes for stringing.

His father said his necklaces were as good as any in the clan. And Hania knew what he wanted! All through the cooling season, the cold, and then the time of warming again, he had remembered the big colored birds the traders carried in cages. They came from a warm land a long way away.



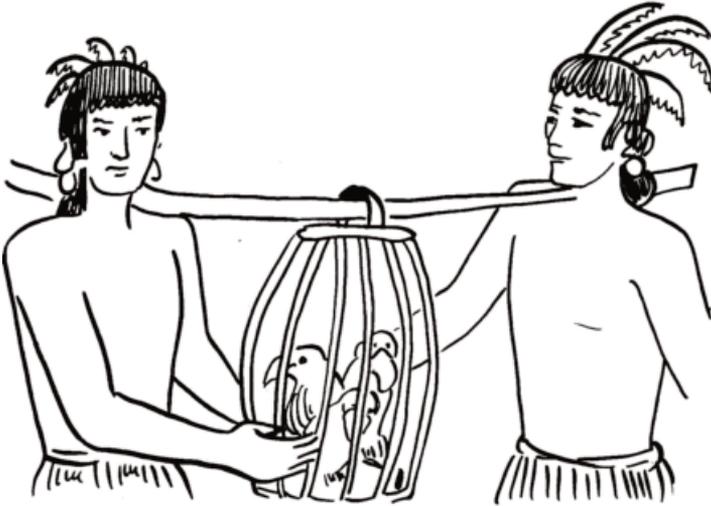
Sihu looked up as he picked up the roll of cloth that held his work.

“Are they here?” she asked.

Hania could only nod because his heart was pounding so loud, it seemed to have shut off his voice! Sihu smoothed her skirt and climbed up the ladder after Hania. All the people were climbing down from their homes and welcoming the traders. Hania darted down to the end of the line of carriers, and there they were!



Three of the huge birds were in a cage carried on a pole between two men. They were so beautiful that Hania could not stop looking at them.



Then he remembered the traders. While the sun climbed high and then started to drop toward the mountains, he waited and waited until the women finished their trades. The men did the weaving, but the women did the trading. Two of the birds were still in the cage, but one had been proudly carried away.



The trader looked around at those who were left. Hania held his necklaces tightly and stepped forward. He spread his cloth and put the necklaces on it. Only three necklaces for such a beautiful bird!

“It will not be enough,” Hania thought and his hopes began to fade.

The trader carefully examined the necklaces, touching and rolling the edges of the beads against his fingers to test their smoothness. Hania swallowed.

“Is it enough for one of the birds?”

Hania's eyes followed the trader's as he looked from the necklaces to the cage. It was very quiet.

Then Sihu stepped forward and got down on her knees next to the cloth. She reached up and took from her ears the blue stone earrings she wore. She put them with the necklaces.



Hania stared at her. Sihu! Who called him “Lazy Boy,” “Clumsy,” and “Sky Dreamer!” Sihu! He looked back at the trader. The trader was smiling now as he waved to the carriers. He took one of the birds and tied a cord to its feet, then handed the cord to Hania. While he held the cord tight, Hania let the bird climb on his arm.



While the last light faded from the roof hole, the family sat together in their house. Hania held the bird while Sihu stroked its feathers.

Mother and Father rolled out the sleeping mats, and Hania whispered to his sister, "Please, I want you to think of a name for it -- a name as beautiful as he is."



Glossary and Pronunciation Guide

From: We Are The Sinagua

cinder: a particle which is partly burned, but no longer flaming. It may be coal, wood or rock

copied: patterned or modeled, imitated

crops: plants grown for food

Hohokam: (Ho-ho'-kam) a name given to early Indian people to the south of the Verde Valley

Mogollon: (Mug'-ee-own) a name given to an early Indian people to the east of the Verde Valley

Puebloan: (Poo-eb-lo-an) an early Indian people to the north of the Verde Valley

Sinagua: (Sin-ah-goo-a) a name given to the early Indian people who lived in the Verde Valley, although we do not know what they called themselves

trader: one who exchanges one kind of thing for another

From: A Full Day

deer strips: thin pieces of meat, salted and dried

dried corn: fresh corn which has been taken off the cob, and the kernels dried

guayule: (gay-yule') a desert plant whose juice may be used to make a substance like rubber

wash: a ditch that carries water after desert rains. It may be eroded and very large.

From: The Traders

clan: an extended family group

examined: looked at very carefully

weaving: strands threaded through each other at right angles in an over-under pattern

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