

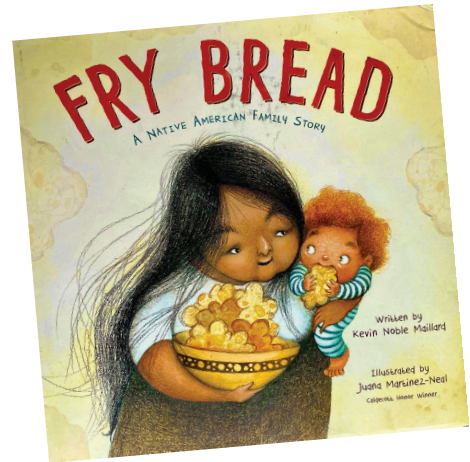
Reviewed by Jill DeVilbiss

## Fry Bread, A Native American Family Story

Written by Kevin Noble Maillard

Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Roaring Brook Press, 2019



discover more. On a basic level, this book delves into what fry bread is as the author speaks of it through time, through history, and through us.

He tells us bread is food, shape, sound, and art:

“The Skillet clangs on the stove  
The fire blazes from below  
Drop the dough in the skillet  
The bubbles sizzle and pop”

This presents an open invitation for Orff Schulwerk teachers to explore those shapes and sounds. Opportunities abound for students to create art while learning about Native American culture.

Fry bread is time. The text, along with Juana Martinez-Neal's illustrations of beautiful children and adults, gives us a glimpse into the cultures of some of the 573 federally recognized Native American tribes, names of which are listed in the front and back inside covers and throughout the book. The illustrations share the warmth and uniqueness of these Indigenous people. They are old, young, light, dark, curly-haired, straight-haired, abled, disabled, large, and small. A common feeling of happiness, tradition, pride, sharing, and caring shines through Martinez-Neal's depictions.

Fry bread is history and nation. The author's detailed notes at the end of the book explain how fry bread grew out of a need to survive. When the U.S. government forced Indigenous people to leave the land they had lived on for centuries, they were given government-issued foods they had never seen before. They used

48

I live on the ancestral lands of the Northwest Band of Shoshone. When my children were young, every summer I took them to The Festival of the American West where we purchased fry bread. We all loved the warm, golden bread—it was crisp on the outside and chewy on the inside. We ate it with honey butter, or if it was close to dinner time, with beans, cheese, and lettuce, referred to as a Navajo Taco. Local Indigenous people were always the ones who made and sold it.

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My warm memories piqued my interest in *Fry Bread, A Native American Family Story*. Although I neither identify as Indigenous nor participate in these communities, I understand the importance of finding primary sources and culture bearers. I was grateful to see that author Kevin Noble Maillard is a member of the Seminole Nation, Mekusukey band. Also a journalist, Maillard's extensive endnotes and bibliography demonstrate authenticity and offer many opportunities to research and

these unfamiliar ingredients to create fry bread, an indication of their vast resiliency.

Maillard concludes by sharing that fry bread is us:

“We strengthen each other  
To learn, change, and survive  
Fry bread is you”

*Fry Bread, A Native American Family Story* is a beautiful, bridge-building book that teaches about Indigenous people, their resiliency, pride, and culture. And yes, a recipe for fry bread that I intend to make and share with my family is featured at the back of the book. ■