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is possible, including learning their native languages, if they but put their hearts and minds to the task.

I also appreciate that Hinton has allowed native people, such as Elsie Allen, Frances Jack, Linda Yamane, and L. Frank Manriquez, to speak from her pages in their own voices. We hear the voices of anthropologists such as A.L. Kroeber, Edward Sapir, and John Peabody Harrington as well. Raised together in unison, these are the voices of Grandmother and Grandfather, interwoven in the California mosaic.

Finally, I am glad that Old Man Coyote is there, too, disappearing and reappearing from chapter to chapter. Coyote is a survivor, and he will not be forgotten. He has survived the millennia, extricating himself time and time again from almost impossible predicaments. The California Indian languages are a lot like Coyote. They continue to survive, although we are left wondering how they will manage to extricate themselves from this predicament. Like Coyote, they will find a way.

E. Breck Parkman

Iroquois Fires: The Six Nations Lyrics and Lore of Dawendine (Bernice Loft Winslow). By Dawendine (Bernice Loft Winslow), with introductory and afterword material by George Beaver, Bryan Winslow Colwell, Donald Smith, and Robert Stacey. Ottawa: Penumbra Press, 1995. 157 pages. \$19.95 paper (Canadian).

Iroquois Fires is a collection of poetry and prose written by Dawendine (Bernice Loft Winslow), born in 1902 on the Six Nations Reserve, Grand River, Ontario, the daughter of a Cayuga mother and a Mohawk father. It is a valuable addition to a growing body of fine literature produced by Native Americans. Although the book has only recently been published, the writings themselves date from the middle of the century. Their publication at last is most welcome.

The book contains three different segments. Part I, entitled "Lyrics," consists of Dawendine's poetry. Part II, "Lore and Legends," is a collection of prose writings that includes Dawendine's telling of traditional Iroquois myths and tales and her personal reminiscences of childhood experiences. The third segment of the book consists of an introduction and afterword by Robert Stacey, Bryan Winslow Colwell, and Donald Smith outlin-

ing the life and the educational and literary contributions of Dawendine.

An understanding of Dawendine's background is helpful in evaluating and appreciating her prose and poetic works. Dawendine's parents were well-educated, prominent members of their community. Her mother, a teacher by profession, taught her children to be literate in English and in the five Iroquois languages. She also taught them traditional crafts and household skills. Dawendine's father was a successful farmer who was chosen to be a Mohawk Wolf Clan chief and a member of the Six Nations Council in 1910. Both parents participated in traditional Longhouse rituals and in Christian churches. Dawendine herself became a member of the Anglican church but retained her early affiliation with and respect for Iroquois religion. From her parents, Dawendine ("the Dawn") absorbed the values of tradition, education, and self-expression. Although Dawendine eventually left her native home in 1943, she never abandoned her community or her cultural heritage. Indeed, her life's work was the transmission of Iroquois traditions to the younger generations of native children as well as the communication of Iroquois culture and values to Canadian and American audiences.

The material contained in parts I and II of *Iroquois Fires* differs not only in its content but in its purpose. The "Lore and Legends" in part II are examples of Dawendine's interpretations of Iroquois stories as she presented them to audiences when she lectured throughout North America in her long career as a champion of the preservation and transmission of Iroquois culture. Her style of writing (and presumably of speaking) is engaging and conversational in tone. Especially when relating Iroquois myths, Dawendine's prose takes on a lyrical quality. It is easy to see why she was a popular storyteller in her day. She traveled widely and spoke in schools, colleges, social clubs, and community meeting halls to audiences often composed of people who had little knowledge of Indian culture or history other than the smattering of stereotypes that they were taught in American/Canadian schools. In the minds of many of these people, native societies no longer existed. Dawendine evidently was quite successful, because of both her personality and her oratorical gifts, in educating the people who were exposed to her wisdom and wit. Her public speaking tours ended in 1938 after the birth of her first daughter and resumed in the 1960s shortly after her husband, Arthur Winslow, died.

The poetry contained in part I has a much more intimate purpose, namely the expression of Dawendine's own personality, thoughts, and emotions. Significantly, Dawendine began to write poems, "word pictures" as she called them, after she moved from Ontario to Massachusetts with her husband in 1943. It is tempting to interpret Dawendine's literary output beginning at that juncture as a means of keeping alive her vital link with her own heritage. Many of her lyrics are evocative of the pull between her life as a citizen of North America and her emotional and creative ties to her Iroquois homeland. Some of her best poems are mirrors of her own upbringing and experience as a woman educated in both Iroquois culture and Canadian society. Two of these are particularly effective. One, entitled "An Indian Speaks on Christmas Eve," contains three stanzas of similar form, each beginning with the Christmas scene and then shifting to an Iroquois theme. The other, "Iroquois Exile," is even more explicit:

I live in a city,
I, an Iroquois born,
Beloved earth torn
From me. Forever worn
Now the habiliments,
Grey, of a city. (p. 57)

The theme of exile is expressed again in a poem called "Spirit Fires (for Iroquois Dead in World War II)" that mourns the lonely burial of servicemen far from their native earth, warriors who "fell on alien Trails, Beside unknown waters" (p. 67).

A number of poems in this collection are written in memory of members of Dawendine's family such as "Wild-Flower Petals Fall," the title coming from her mother's Cayuga name De-yohnt-ji-jo-kwa-tah, or "she who scatters the petals of flowers." The poem uses the rhythmic style of Cayuga condolence rituals in recounting the death and eternal spirit of her mother. Although this poem, and others similarly dedicated to specific people, have an obvious personal motivation, their content is universal. Universality is, in fact, one of the basic qualities of Dawendine's poetry. Any reader can appreciate the feelings and respond to the scenes she creates, because the themes of exile, loneliness, and longing for a (perhaps idealized) more secure time are valid for all people.

The material contained in *Iroquois Fires* was compiled by Robert Stacey, Donald Smith, and Bryan Winslow Colwell, all of whom

had a personal relationship with Dawendine or with her illustrator, C.W. Jeffreys. Jeffreys's drawings nicely supplement the book, as do a number of photographs from Dawendine's own collection.

When considering Dawendine's role today, it is necessary to remember the social and political context of her times in the early and middle twentieth century. It is difficult to say whether the general public (whoever that is) today is any more aware of the realities of Native American life and history than was Dawendine's audience. If they are, perhaps Dawendine and others like her can take some of the credit for the progress.

Nancy Bonvillain

Iroquois Medical Botany. By James W. Herrick, edited and with a foreword by Dean R. Snow. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995. 278 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

In his foreword, Dean R. Snow explains that James Herrick's *Iroquois Medical Botany* is published as one of a series of publications arising from the Mohawk Valley Project. This volume is Herrick's 1977 dissertation, edited and revised in 1989 by the author, Snow, and William Starna. Snow envisions the volume, with its extensive plant list, as a botanical reference guide for archaeologists in their interpretations of the remains of nonfood plants that may have been used in medicinal or religious contexts.

At the time it was written, Herrick had other ambitions for the volume. He intended to present a picture of Iroquois concepts of health, illness, and medicine within the larger matrix of Iroquois religious and cosmological beliefs. The plant list was initially an appendix of the raw data from which Herrick conducted his analysis. In the published version, although the plant list comprises the last chapter it takes center stage. This is partly because, in the 1989 revisions, most of the attention was paid to the plant list, and few of Herrick's narrative chapters were revised. As a result, these chapters (1 through 5) are outdated. To read in a 1995 publication about a "recent" work on folk medicine that was published in 1970 is disconcerting and may lead the reader to search through the foreword and the preface for clues as to exactly what was revised in this volume. This is not to say that one should simply skip the narrative chapters, although Snow, by suggesting