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as well as in native studies. Her talents lie in presenting clear, focused stories. Indeed native studies instructors such as Janice Acoose believe that, because of writers such as Maracle, "white Canadians are finally going to know us."

Linda Fritz
University of Saskatchewan

The Red Record: The Wallam Olum, the Oldest Native North American History. Translated and annotated by David McCutchen. Garden City Park, New York: Avery Publishing Group, 1993. \$14.95 paper.

What can I say? Here is a book endorsed by a Delaware tribal council, with a foreword by Linda Poolaw, respected leader, and quotes from various Lenape elders. Here is also a book done with naïve but good intentions, but no scholarly authority. Maybe it would be best to say that all of my elders agreed, when I asked about the authenticity of the *Wallam Olum*, that it was "nuchkway, worthless and of no account." Even the elders quoted as saying that this text was like the Delaware Bible never actually thought so but were trying to be nice to an earnest visitor.

Still, a lot of work and graphic design went into this book. It is very pretty and will, no doubt, be bought by many romantics and used in many classrooms. It needs, therefore, serious evaluation.

Part of the problem with this text is its history. We know that bark or wood slabs decorated with images were collected from Delaware living in Indiana in 1820 by a Dr. Ward. He gave them to Constantine Rafinesque, a prodigy with a wide range of interests, from careful scientific botany, to wild claims about his findings, to the sale of various snake oil medicines. At that period, Rafinesque was the most distinguished scholar on the frontier, serving as professor of botany, natural history, and modern languages at Transylvania University in Kentucky.

The Delaware were just leaving Indiana at this time, and at least two Dr. Wards went through the region. One was the botanist John Russell Ward, and the other was the physician Malthus Ward. Rafinesque was intrigued by the gift of the slabs and pursued various lines of research, including a letter to the *Cherokee Phoenix* and a quest for a Delaware speaker who could provide words for the emblems. Terms were eventually attached to the designs on

each slab, but it is unclear whether these came from a native speaker. They more easily could have come from a dictionary of Delaware composed by Moravian missionaries. Certainly, many of the terms are not standard Delaware.

While in Indiana, the Delaware went through a religious revival under the stimulation of a woman prophet known as Beata, her Moravian baptismal name. Witches were purged from the community, and young men rose to leadership of a revived society. The Delaware annual thanksgiving rite, the Gamwing or Big House, achieved its final version at this time. Under the apostate Beata's direction, it renewed older practices and blended them with features of Protestant Christianity.

This context was a likely one in which an elder might pull together themes from Delaware literature and compose an epic like the *Wallam Olum* to provide a unifying text for the new-found unity of the Indiana Delaware. William Newcomb made this argument for the *Wallam Olum* in 1955, and it still seems valid, particularly since the Delaware were then moving westward and the text would have provided retroactive claims to these lands.

With increasing white settlement, the Delaware were pressured out of Indiana to Missouri. The slab record was given to Dr. Ward, perhaps in return for curing a dangerous medical condition. For some reason, the slabs were expendable.

That the text was not made up entirely is indicated by snatches and fragments of it in the writings of John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary to the Delaware and other tribes. The text built on these foundations but gained epic proportions because of its time and place.

Because the slabs were collected in Indiana, Eli Lilly devoted some of his considerable fortune to subsidizing research into the record. Scholars such as Carl Voegelin received initial funding to study the Delaware language so that his findings could be applied to the study of the text. Archaeologist Glenn Black was similarly funded. Rev. Carl Fleigel was employed to search all the Moravian records for mention of the *Wallam Olum*, but he did not find a single reference. Instead, he assembled an invaluable index to these documents for which scholars remain grateful. In 1954, Lilly edited a lavish volume from the Indiana Historical Society that assembled all of the research he had funded. None of the reports was conclusive that the text was Delaware in origin or intent.

In its existing form, the text tells of the grand migration of the Delaware from the west, across the Mississippi to their homeland

in the drainage of the Delaware River along the Atlantic coast. Along the way, they joined with the Iroquois to battle the mighty Talegas, who appear to have been Mississippian mound builders. The framing of the text is an elaborate genealogy of chiefly succession by name, covering forty generations.

Without any appreciation of the grammar of the native language or the overall context, McCutchen has presented detailed depictions and a superficial description that is likely to impress the uncritical. Every image from Rafinesque's surviving notebooks is printed in red, superimposed over dozens of maps purporting to show the Delaware migrations from Siberia to the Atlantic, across the entire American continent. He counts generations in the text and determines that the record spans the dates 1396–1820, or 424 years.

To fit the chronology to the landscape, McCutchen resorts to a sliding scale so that mileage varies with time and place. He says the text consists of 687 words with 183 emblems, divided into five books, which he believes fit on 22 slabs, but with the number of designs varying on each one. After a brief introduction about his motivation and the book's arrangement, McCutchen presents each book divided into titled chapters, each a certain number of lines in length. Then he includes a brief Delaware account of their fate since 1600, continuing the genealogy of chiefs. A final chapter compares the text with the Bible, Greek myths, Norse sagas, and Mayan epics. Traditions of sacred engraved tablets from the Hopi and Ojibwe are also mentioned.

Throughout, McCutchen exalts the virtues of the Delaware, their ancestors, and their leaders. Instead of looking at the place of the Delaware within the Algonquian language family, he refers to all of the members of the Algic Stock as Lenape, placing the Delaware at the center of a grand confederacy. This is flattering, but, at best, hyperbolic. No wonder the Delaware have endorsed this book. Yet much of it rings hollow. What appears to be precision and certainty is smoke and mirrors. Substance is sacrificed in favor of pretty surface.

The *Wallam Olum* deserves a great deal of attention because it is a literary epic. Yet it is probably not native in intent or origin. None of the cultural concerns of the Delaware are part of the account. The numbers used do not match up with those important to the culture. The designs do not have other expressions or modalities in Delaware art. Heros and events are presented in cryptic fashion, but clans are not mentioned. Except for the language used, and not

even much of that, there is little to link this text to a Delaware source.

In sum, I am reminded of the Piltdown find, which scholars were so ready to accept until it was exposed as a hoax. Combining a treated human skull with the jaw of an ape, Piltdown "man" had a large brain capacity but many primitive features. Everyone wanted the larger brain case and so accepted flimsy evidence. Since Charles Darwin was also involved and was a supporter of the find, important reputations were at stake.

In purporting to the trek of a famous tribe, the Delaware, from Siberia to the Atlantic, the *Wallam Olum* has a similar appeal to scholars and others seeking to justify both the theory of the Bering land bridge and tribal origin sagas. But it is too good to be true. The Delaware know only too well that they have always lived on this land, this back of the turtle.

Jay Miller

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Robert Davidson, *Eagle of the Dawn*. Edited by Ian Thom, with essays by Aldona Jonaitis, Marianne Jones, and Ian M. Thom. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993. 180 pages. \$50 cloth.

Robert Davidson, Eagle of the Dawn is a catalog of the recent one-man exhibit of retrospective works by this highly developed and inspired leader in contemporary Haida art. Only the second one-person show of First Nations artwork to be held at the Vancouver Art Gallery of British Columbia (the first was the Bill Reid retrospective in 1974), the show and catalog contain artworks by Davidson that span a period from 1959 through the time of the 1993 exhibit. Davidson's work includes sculptures and relief carving in wood, argillite, and bronze; engravings and fabrications in silver and gold; serigraphs; and paintings on paper as well as on traditional skin hand drums. The catalog is well organized around the essays, separating the body of works into three chronological sections (1960–79, 1980–87, and 1988 to the present) that alternate illustrations of works from these periods with each of the differently focused articles. Thom's essay, which is the one to address Davidson's work most directly, employs a number of pieces from the exhibition within its text to illustrate progressive changes over time in Davidson's conception of and skill in work-