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Voices from the Delaware Big House Ceremony. Edited by Robert Grumet. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. 240 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

Delawares occupy one of the most incongruous positions in North America. Ancient residents of the middle Atlantic Coast, they were the first populous and farming speakers of an Algonkian language to encounter many Europeans, misleading these foreigners in their own subsequent take on Native linguistics. Moreover, a trade jargon rapidly developed whose simplified grammar and wording introduced many terms into English that have come to represent “Indian stuff” like moccasins, corn pone, wigwams, and so forth, along with a great deal of confusion.

Known to themselves as Lenape (with major subdivisions of Munsee and Unami), they have somehow become Lenni Lenape, a childish reduplication that does have a certain endearment attached. And overshadowing all of this has been their adversarial relationship with the over-demanding Iroquois to their north. Forced out of the East, they now reside officially in Oklahoma and Ontario, though the main body has not entirely emerged from the US-instituted merge within the Cherokees in 1867, despite their own separate federal acknowledgement a few years ago.

That there remains a Lenape identity today, after half a millennium of outside pressures, is a testament to the subject of this book—the Gamwing or annual Big House ceremony that took place after the harvest and before the hunt to give thanks to the world. Nowhere in this collection, however, is that all-important fact noted.

Instead, using his position within the National Park Service, Grumet assembled this text as a partnership project with the various modern Delaware communities. Even before that, however, was the involvement of all these agencies in the reburial of ancestral remains found on Park Service property in New York Harbor. In his preface and acknowledgments, he surveys the field from his own perspective. Characterizing my own lifetime of research among Lenape in terms of gestalt, and then interpreting that as a “mix” (p. xiv) misses the point that a gestalt had an integrity entirely its own, though adapted to changing circumstances and neighboring temperaments.

Beginning with a pronunciation guide by Bruce Pearson that matches technical and community alphabets, the volume then presents “Delaware Commentaries” by representatives from four communities: Ruthe Blalock Jones, an artist who has herself researched the Gamwing with her elders; Marlene Molly Miller of Wicsonsin; Michael Pace of eastern Oklahoma; and Darryl Stonefish of Moraviantown, Ontario. Each speaks to the significance of being Delaware and believing in the power of spirit. All are Christian in some sense, so it is sadly ironic that fundamentalist (Baptist, Methodist, and the like) opposition that helped end the Gamwing has now been turned into support for its memory.

The body of the text includes a description of the 1900s Oklahoma version by Terry Prewitt, before extracting chronological accounts starting with Dutch, British, and Colonial sources. Not surprisingly, missionaries had the most (highly critical) to say about this Native worship. That it belonged to a

farming tradition with substantial housing and a complex account of genesis only added to their ire. One showdown came in Indiana, during the time of Tecumtha and his brother the Shawnee Prophet. Others, hastening the end, came in Oklahoma and Ontario. The core of these accounts, however, is drawn from well-informed and involved Native leaders working with recorders, often professional anthropologists, to leave behind an adequate description of what they cherished. These recorders included Lewis Henry Morgan, Mark Harrington, and Frank Speck—shining lights for East Coast ethnography. In addition, several Delawares, particularly Richard C Adams and Lula Mae Gibson Gilliland, have themselves penned versions of the rite. That their reports come across as educated and Christian clearly show that cultural bias is not unique to Europe. As corrective, the last section includes the reminiscences (1972-1994) of elders in eastern Oklahoma who attended the last Gamwings as children. Foremost among them were Nora Thompson Dean and Lucy Blalock, my own teachers and clan mother, who devoted their later years to making every effort to set straight a very uneven record of traditional Lenape beliefs and worship. Two appendices list the Delaware and English names of the many people mentioned in all these sources, and provide a glossary of Native terms in varied transcription.

Photographs of key elders, useful maps tracing Delaware migration, and diagrams of the Big House environs help situate the reader. In all, this volume is a useful and timely compendium of the many varied, and sometime conflicting, reports about the single most important ceremony for Lenape survival to the present day, as well as a major ritual in the study of comparative religion. Though it presents only the accounts, devoid of any analysis, deconstruction, or contextualization, the bibliography can lead interested readers in these directions. The support and collaboration of members from many of the modern Delaware communities makes this effort especially worthwhile.

Jay Miller

Tuxwsit Clan

The Washakie Letters of Willie Ottogary, Northwestern Shoshone Journalist and Leader, 1906–1929. Edited by Matthew E. Kreitzer. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000. 331 pages. \$49.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

This very interesting and important volume brings together the newspaper columns written between 1906 and 1929 by Willie Ottogary, a Northwestern Shoshone man living in northern Utah, about his home community and other activities. The columns appeared frequently, but on an irregular basis, in at least five small regional non-Indian newspapers (in Logan, Brigham City and Tremonton, Utah; Malad, Idaho), and were apparently solicited by the editors as part of the process of gathering social information and local news from various communities. Although Ottogary's columns were short in the beginning (roughly 300 words), they became longer and incorporated more topics with time (1,000 to 2,000 words) and his output became more frequent.