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Columbia River Basketry: Gift of the Ancestors, Gift of the Earth. By Mary Dodds Schlick.

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Author

Cohodas, Marvin

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and merely collected here without thought as to their coherence. Especially in the context of publications and conferences (not to mention legislation) that address the concern of museums' indigenous subjects, and in the context of Ames's own experiences with native communities, this book falls far short of its potential.

Diana Drake Wilson
Pitzer College

Columbia River Basketry: Gift of the Ancestors, Gift of the Earth. By Mary Dodds Schlick. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 232 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$35.00 paper.

Mary Dodds Schlick brings to the writing of *Columbia River Basketry* more than three decades' experience with the basketry and basket weavers of what she calls the mid-Columbia river region of Washington and Oregon, comprising the Yakima, Warm Springs, and Umatilla reservations. Underlying the text is an unstated though central connection with the basketry collections and exhibits of the Maryhill Museum of Art in Washington State.

Schlick selects five basket types for intensive treatment. Four of these are well known to collectors: the twined hat often associated with Umatilla people; the round, twined bag associated with the Wasco and Wishxam; the coiled and imbricated basket associated with the Klikitat; and the flat, twined bag associated not only with the Yakima but also with the Nez Perce, who are outside of the region under consideration. A fifth type, the folded bark basket, which Schlick connects with the region of Mount Adams, will be new to most readers. Schlick provides details on weaving materials and techniques, and she situates local basket collections, assembled in the early twentieth century, in the broader curio trade associated with the arts and crafts movement, the expo-related craze for exotic home decorations, and railroad tourism. All sections are lavishly illustrated with drawings of weaving techniques and examples of baskets as well as with photographs of mid-Columbia natives spanning the twentieth century. Since the wealth of information provided on these basketry types has no parallel in the literature, Schlick's book is a necessary addition to the library of those interested in Native American basketry.

Like most involved in researching native basketry, Mary Schlick developed this interest outside of academics and has acquired

considerable knowledge of the material through collecting, through learning the weaving techniques, and through observation of contemporary native practices, providing insights that are exceptional in the basketry literature. Except for Wasco designs, which strike her as "mythic," she wisely chooses to avoid symbolic interpretation. Particularly unique and admirable are Schlick's presentation and celebration of basketry in current native practice, which she enhances by frequently quoting contemporary weavers, attempting to give them voice whenever possible. She is also responsive to the increasing role of basketry and other social practices in constructing and asserting native identity.

Schlick models her text according to what she defines as the native mode of transmitting knowledge, speaking frequently of grandmothers who do not explain their weaving techniques but instead work at their basketry while spinning instructive stories to keep the attention of their grandchildren. Now a grandmother herself, Schlick closely identifies with this procedure and continuously interweaves personal narratives of her "discovery" of objects or of knowledge about them in the explanatory text. Collectors and regional readers interested in local native life are likely to find the narratives personable and disarming.

Schlick designed the text in part as a handbook for collectors and curators, and indeed her approach is explicitly curatorial, calling for the preservation and interpretation of baskets in museums and native cultural centers and privileging a metonymic function for baskets as texts in which distinct native lifestyles and world views may be read and in which their "survival" may be traced. However, Schlick uses the baskets to construct a narrow and picturesque view of native society and history, with all evidence of conflict in past or present excised in favor of "a life of contentment, free from want, a life in harmony with the creator" (p.22). She presents only those aspects of native life that she considers "traditional": the making of baskets or their use in ritual and in gathering food. Schlick is quite aware of postcontact changes in basketry materials, designs, and uses, but she privileges those she is able to authenticate through placement in nature, in myth, in ritual, or in a nebulous "past" in which she conflates all pasts—the time when the previous generation was alive, the time of first European contact, or the time of the earliest archaeological remains, which she equates with the time of myth. The ahistorical approach is evident in her treatment of designs

that reflect Euro-American presence (for example, a rodeo narrative that is mentioned in passing), without inquiry into the reasons why this scene would have been important to weavers and their audience at the time the basket was woven. Similarly, myth and ceremony are never discussed in depth but are presented merely because baskets are mentioned or included. Present weavers are similarly authenticated insofar as they learned weaving from their grandmothers. Schlick thus constructs basketry as a sign of "tradition" and survival of the past—as a "Gift of the Ancestors."

Schlick also constructs basketry as a symbol of the special relationship that native peoples are considered to maintain with nature and spirituality: as a "Gift of the Earth." Although she quotes basketry generalist Ed Rossback's insightful explanation that we use baskets to represent our romantic, urban views of self-sufficiency in preindustrial nature (p. 120), Schlick seems unaware that this relationship to the objects could color and undermine many aspects of her study. Enthusiasts may be intrigued by her poetic association of the five basket types with different seasons of the year, but critical readers will recognize that she legitimates her selective and decontextualized treatment of baskets by naturalizing the text as a complete seasonal cycle located in a nonindustrial relationship to nature.

Schlick's use of baskets to construct native life metonymically in terms of the past, nature, and the sacred conforms to widely held notions of primitivism, of the "premodern" Other artificially constructed to define by opposition the nature of "modern" industrial society. For example, although Euro-Americans also have ancestors and a relationship to the natural environment, in this book the words *ancestor* and *nature* refer solely to native peoples. That she could use a 1924 touristic photograph (p. 29) of mid-Columbia natives lined up before tipis and displaying their most elaborate ethnic costumes to illustrate "Columbia River Life" demonstrates how pervasive this lopsided primitivist construction has become. The book, like the museum displays on which it is explicitly modeled, functions as a *tableau vivant*, freezing a moment of the narrowly constructed past so that it may always remain to offset and edify the present.

Throughout her text, Mary Schlick works to convince her reader that all the baskets under discussion are "works of art," a categorization designed to increase not only their economic value but their social value as well. Using notions that have circulated

in the literature on basketry for a century, she simultaneously maintains their authenticity as utilitarian artifacts and their independence as objects of aesthetic contemplation, i.e., as both “primitive” and “art.” To support their aesthetic value, Schlick situates the individual maker historically, providing some biographical and stylistic details, even discussing the use of weavers’ “signatures,” and occasionally narrating the circumstances of an object’s creation. To support their artifactual value, Schlick describes an ethnographic context of often-ritualized functions and family ownership of designs, and she narrates circumstances of the object’s acquisition, constructing her own biography through these “souvenirs” of significant events.

The production of objects for sale in the curio trade poses a particular problem of authentication for Schlick, as for other authors. Using notions of both modernism and primitivism, she suggests that the precurio economy involved trading among specialized producers such as basket weavers, and she constructs such specializations through bourgeois notions of “natural” talent and freedom of career choice. She deals selectively with those basket types made for sale that had indigenous functions, and she limits commercialization to the coiled and imbricated baskets associated with the Klinkit, claiming, for example, that the flat bags with corn husk designs were rarely made for sale—a claim belied by the very photographs she includes (e.g., p. 175). Schlick constructs the period of the curio trade climax (c. 1880–1920) as a time of unusual prosperity in North America, ignoring the social costs of rapid industrialization and conflicts over immigration and unionization.

This positivist tone appears throughout: Euro-Americans appear only as scholars, collectors, and benefactors, while the lives of native peoples are depicted as harmonious and satisfying—not powerless so much as not needing power. Some of these positivist statements seem to embody a native voice speaking to the larger society, although they are not the only native voices demanding consideration. Such narrow representations carry additional baggage when they are conveyed by a member of the Euro-American majority, who, for more than a century, have defined native authenticity as a series of rules for behavior, constructing a boundary the breach of which not only brings the stigma of inauthenticity but also constitutes a possible impediment in political and legal struggles. Instead of rounding out the picture of present and past native lifestyles and relations to the Euro-

American society, Schlick presents a curatorially selected view of "traditional" native ways, defining the parts of native history that have meaning for us rather than for them; she furthers this authoritative stance with her narratives of personal triumph.

Several logistical problems should also be mentioned. Although the book has an extensive glossary and bibliography, the index is wholly inadequate, and the single sketch map does not include most of the places mentioned. The abundant photographs and detailed captions contain important information that is not discussed in the text (i.e., the documentation of Yakima weaver Cecilia Totus or the canning of huckleberries) or may contradict it. The book is also hampered by inaccuracies arising from weak research, by continual repetition, and by often wholly gratuitous narrations of myths. However, these judgments are made according to the standards of a professional audience, to which the book is only partly directed. The audience of collectors and aficionados, to which publications on native basketry historically have been directed, will likely find Mary Schlick's book both satisfying and informative.

Marvin Cohodas
University of British Columbia

Cowboys and Indians, Christmas Shopping. By Carter Revard. Norman, OK: Point Riders Press, 1992. 64 pages. \$8.00 paper.

Point Riders Press, edited by Frank Parman, is one of several presses that have continued to publish Native American writers for many years. Others include the West End Press, edited by John Crawford; Strawberry Press, edited by Maurice Kenny; and Greenfield Review Press, edited by Joseph Bruchac. These editors and publishers have provided valuable access to book publishing for beginning writers and others who otherwise would not have printed exposure. Carter Revard is one such writer; his first book *Ponca War Dancers*, published in 1980, comes from Point Riders Press, in Norman, Oklahoma. *Cowboys and Indians, Christmas Shopping*, his second full-length collection, is also from Point Riders Press.

Cowboys and Indians presents new and selected poems by Revard, including work from the chapbooks *My Right Hand Don't Leave Me No More* and *Nonymosity* and from anthologies such as *Earth Power*