In 1954 the Indiana Historical Society published Walam Olum or Red Score: The Migration Legend of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians; A New Translation Interpreted by Linguistic, Historical, Archaeological, Ethnological, and Physical Anthropological Studies. The volume was the product of a twenty-year, interdisciplinary study of the tribal chronicle of the Delaware Indians from the time of their migration from Asia to Alaska through their migration across the North American continent. The story was recorded each generation by pictorial symbols painted on sticks and preserved in bundles. Although the sticks are not extant, copies of the pictographs and the Delaware text which explains them were prepared by the nineteenth-century botanist and natural historian, Constantine Samuel Rafinesque. During his tenure as professor at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, Rafinesque obtained "some of the original Wallam-Olum" in 1822 from "the late Dr. Ward of Indiana" who had received them from "the Linapi tribe of Wapahani or White River" in 1820 "as a reward for a medical cure, deemed a curiosity." Initially, Rafinesque considered the sticks to be

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1 Glenn A. Black, Eli Lilly, Georg K. Neumann, Joe E. Pierce, Carl F. Voegelin, Erminie W. Voegelin, and Paul Weer, Walam Olum, or Red Score: The Migration Legend of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians; A New Translation, Interpreted by Linguistic, Historical, Archaeological, Ethnological, and Physical Anthropological Studies (Indianapolis, 1954); cited hereafter as Walam Olum.
“inexplicable,” but after moving to Philadelphia in 1826 he mastered the Delaware language, translated the Walam Olum into English, and published his work under the title *The American Nations* in 1836.2

One of the collaborators in the Indiana Historical Society project, the late Paul Weer, assumed the task of writing a history of the Walam Olum and investigating the relationship between Rafinesque and Ward. He succeeded in tracing Rafinesque’s manuscript through various hands to its present location in the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania. Weer, however, considered the history of the Walam Olum after 1822 “of secondary importance to the documentation of the transfer of the original painted records from the Lenape through Dr. Ward to Rafinesque.” After intensive research into secondary and primary sources, Weer was unable to locate any doctor named Ward in Indiana prior to 1870. In fact, the only Dr. Ward who lived near Indiana was Dr. John Russell Ward, a resident of the Lexington vicinity from 1808 to 1829, who died in Missouri in 1834. Family tradition conveyed “the impression that the doctor was a friend of Rafinesque,” but information concerning his education, medical training, and interests which might link him to Rafinesque could not be found. Weer, therefore, concluded that whether he was the correct Ward could “only be a guess.”3 It must be added, moreover, that Rafinesque’s Dr. Ward was a Hoosier not a Kentuckian, and there is no evidence that Dr. John Russell Ward ever lived in Indiana or even visited there.

Unknown to Weer, however, there was a Dr. Ward living on the White River in Indiana in 1820. His full name was Dr. Malthus A. Ward, and his early years and subsequent career make him a serious contender for the honor of being the first white man to possess the Walam Olum and the man who gave these artifacts to Rafinesque. He was born in Haverhill, New Hampshire, in 1794. After studying under a local physician and attending the Medical Institution at Dartmouth College, he settled in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, in 1815, then moved to Pittsburgh in 1816. In 1819 he moved to Hindostan, a pioneer Indiana village situated on the east fork of the White River near the contemporary town of Shoals, in Martin County. Ward’s lengthy and

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3 *Walam Olum*, 243-65.
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detailed letters written during this period reveal his interest and erudition in both botany and natural history. His interests in these two sciences developed during his student days from 1812 to 1814 at Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, where he attended the lectures of the illustrious Frederick Hall, a professor of natural philosophy whose avocations included natural history.4

After returning to New England from Indiana, probably in late 1822, and earning an M.D. degree at the Medical School of Maine in 1823, Dr. Ward settled in Salem, Massachusetts, where he divided his time between his medical practice and his botanical and natural history interests. He gave popular lectures on chemistry and botany, donated his time to strengthening the scientific holdings of the Salem Athenaeum, and helped found the local lyceum where he delivered talks on gardening and natural history. As superintendent of the East India Marine Museum—which contained “curiosities” from beyond the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn—he systemized the exhibits and prepared a catalogue of its holdings. He also participated in the establishment of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and became its first professor of botany and vegetable physiology.5

Dr. Ward’s reputation won him an appointment to the new position of professor of natural history at the University of Georgia in 1832. Besides teaching courses in botany, minerology, geology, chemistry, and history, he began a minerological and geological cabinet and developed the University Botanical Garden. After resigning his teaching position he concentrated on horticulture by operating a commercial nursery, adapting various fruits to the local area, helping organize the state horticultural and pomological societies, and exchanging seeds and plants with prominent botanists such as Andrew Jackson Downing and John Torrey. According to his obituary, he contributed “freely but . . . anonymously” to scientific journals; however, only one of his publications can be identified. After his death in 1863 he was remembered as “one of the best practical botanists” of the South.


5 See note 4 above.
Rafinesque undertook the task of translating the Walam Olum after he left Kentucky to live in Philadelphia. With the help of two other men and a Lenape-English dictionary written by Moravian missionaries, Rafinesque completed his translation in 1833. The two illustrations on the facing page were taken from the manuscript of Rafinesque's translation. Each of them shows a Delaware pictograph, the meaning of the pictograph expressed in the words of the Delaware language, and Rafinesque's translation of the Delaware words into English. The translations printed below each illustration and the illustrations themselves were taken from *Walam Olum*, 68-69. They are reproduced here by courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.
"All of them said they would go together to the land there, all
who were free..."

"... the Northerners were of one mind and the Easterners were
of one mind: it would be good to live on the other side of the
frozen water."
who “did more to introduce and disseminate fruits and flowers
than anyone in the state” as well as one “who pursued the sci-
ence of natural history with a quiet enthusiasm that conducted
him to wide attainments in that department.”

This brief sketch of Ward’s career suggests that he was no
ordinary frontier doctor. If he received the Walam Olum from
the Delaware Indians in Indiana in 1820, he would have recog-
nized the importance of transferring it to Rafinesque, who, in
Weer’s words, “was the most qualified individual then in the Ohio
Valley to appreciate its value.”

Although Dr. Ward never mentioned Rafinesque in either
his letters or his manuscript notes, the celebrated botanist re-
peatedly referred to a Dr. Ward of Indiana as a collaborator. For
example, in regard to certain plant specimens, he wrote, “They
were chiefly discovered in 1818, or given me since by . . . Dr.
Ward.” In regard to the Lophactis, he wrote: “I noticed in 1818
this plant on the Wabash, but out of blossom; in 1821 Dr. Ward
brought me a perfect specimen from White R. Indiana.” In ad-
dition, he included Ward among the “Professors and Doctors”
who have “added to my N. Amer. herbaris” and named a variety
of Saint-John’s-wort “Hypericum wardianum.” Finally, in 1836
he described Ward as one of his botanical “friends and assist-
ants,” a collector rather than a writer, from whom “I have re-
ceived much help by gifts or exchanges of specimens, new facts
and observations.”

Unfortunately, there is no definite proof that Malthus A.
Ward was the Dr. Ward to whom Rafinesque referred or from
whom he obtained the Walam Olum. Circumstantial evidence,

* See note 4 above. The only one of Ward’s publications which can be iden-
tified is a speech he gave before the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1831
which was published by that organization and reprinted in the New England
Farmer and Horticultural Journal.
* Walam Olum, 250.
* Manuscript notes, Rafinesque Papers (American Philosophical Society,
from Illinois, &c.,” Atlantic Journal and Friend of Knowledge, 1 (Winter, 1832),
Botanical Collections of Professor C. S. Rafinesque,” ibid. (Spring, 1833), 167;
idem., New Flora and Botany of North America . . . (4 vols., Philadelphia, [1836-
1838]), II, 8-9; Walam Olum, 261-262. Each of the four volumes of New Flora
give 1836 as the date of publication on their respective title pages. The dates of
1836-1838 used here are taken from a 1907 study of the publication dates of
New Flora and Flora Telluriana. See John Hendley Barnhart, “The Dates of
Rafinesque’s New Flora and Flora Telluriana,” Torreya, VII (September, 1907),
177-182. The Lophactis quotation is taken from a manuscript in the Rafinesque
Papers. When Rafinesque’s manuscript was published in the Atlantic Journal the
Lophactis quotation was set incorrectly and thus reads differently than what
Rafinesque actually wrote. See Walam Olum, 262.
however, indicates that he was. He left Pittsburgh in 1819 and probably arrived in Indiana the same year. In 1821 he delivered the Fourth of July oration in Hindostan in which he describes local events of the previous year, and in February, 1822, he received $6.00 from the town clerk for unspecified services. Since he was certainly in Hindostan in 1820, perhaps he was on a botanizing excursion to the northeast on the main branch of the White River where all of the Delaware towns were located and obtained the sticks there; or, perhaps he performed his curious cure on a member of one of the bands of Delaware who were then migrating from Indiana and obtained the sticks from them in the vicinity of Hindostan. Either is possible. Ward's documented residence in Indiana proves that he was in the right location at the right time to acquire the Walam Olum in 1820 and to transfer it to Rafinesque in 1822. That Rafinesque received a plant specimen from the White River in 1821 from Dr. Ward also lends credence to the conclusion that Malthus A. Ward was the person in question.

Although no documentary evidence exists, it is likely that Rafinesque and Ward became acquainted in Pittsburgh. While Ward was practicing medicine there from 1816 to 1819, Rafinesque visited three times: in the summer of 1818, the fall of 1818, and the early summer of 1819. Since it is clear from Rafinesque's "A Life of Travels" that he sought out prominent figures wherever he went, it is plausible that he would have wanted to meet Ward's medical partner, Dr. Felix Brunot, who was a foster brother of the Marquis de Lafayette. Also, since Ward had forsaken Kittanning for metropolitan Pittsburgh in order to find a more intellectual environment, it is inconceivable that the neophyte natural historian would not have wanted to pick the brain of the famous Rafinesque, as he had the members of the Yellowstone Expedition which halted briefly in Pittsburgh in 1819. It is even possible that Ward accompanied Rafinesque when he traveled to Lexington to assume his teaching post at Transylvania. Rafinesque departed Philadelphia in May, 1819, stopped
in Pittsburgh, "went down the Ohio in a keel boat," and began his lectures at the University in the fall. Ward, according to his Day Book, was on a boat on the Ohio River in June, 1819, but is silent as to his destination. Even if the two did not make the trip together it is possible that they knew each other in Pittsburgh before they migrated west to Indiana and Kentucky.

While many of the known facts about Malthus A. Ward's life tend to support the tentative conclusion that he was the Dr. Ward from whom Rafinesque received the Walam Olum, one major problem exists. Ward did not die until 1863. Yet, in an 1836 work Rafinesque refers to "the late Dr. Ward" and in an 1837 work, includes him among botanists "who have fallen victim to their zeal in arduous travels, or from diseases contracted by their labors." However, there are two possible explanations which may reconcile the apparent contradictions of the evidence. One is that Rafinesque actually believed that his old friend had died. After Ward began his duties at the University of Georgia he became an infrequent correspondent because of numerous burdens and responsibilities. In 1832, when he was elected to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, he explained to Dr. Samuel G. Norton, secretary of that prestigious science organization, that his "time and attention" were "so employed by the duties of my situation" that he had "absolutely no time." If Ward stopped writing to Rafinesque in the early 1830s, the latter may have concluded that he had died. The second explanation is that Rafinesque may have been referring to two different Dr. Wards. Significantly, his remarks were made in two separate publications. The one placing Dr. Ward among the botanists "who have fallen victims" appeared in his New Flora and Botany of North America and perhaps alluded to Dr. John Russell Ward who died in Missouri in 1834. The other—"the late Dr. Ward"—appeared in his The American Nations. Recognizing that this was the first published translation of the Walam Olum and that Dr. Malthus A. Ward had provided the painted sticks, Rafin-
esque may not have meant that his benefactor had died but sim-
ply that he had left Indiana.\footnote{Dr. Charles Boewe has suggested that Rafinesque, whose native tongue was French, frequently used "late" in English in instances where one whose native tongue was English would write "earlier," "previous," or "former." For example, in "A Life of Travels" he writes: "I met here Mr. Ismar lately from Mexico..."; and "Meantime wishing to spread some of my late labors, I issued this year two pamphlets..." Rafinesque, "A Life of Travels," 331-32; Charles Boewe to David O. Powell, May 28, 1985.}

Who was "the late Dr. Ward of Indiana?" If more of Malthus Ward's letters had survived that question could probably be an-
swered definitively. Nevertheless, although conclusive proof is lacking, circumstantial evidence points to Dr. Malthus A. Ward as the source of Rafinesque's Walam Ohm.