

Book Reviews

The Delaware Indians: A History. By C. A. Weslager. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1972. Pp. xix, 546. Maps, illustrations, notes, appendices, index. \$17.50.)

Nineteenth century critics of federal Indian policy often used the example of the Delaware Indians to demonstrate the destructive effect of repeatedly removing tribes from one location to another. Modern scholars often mention the dramatic decline of Delaware population before 1867 while the Indians were being moved gradually from the Delaware Valley to Indian Territory, where they were merged with the Cherokee and ceased to exist as an independent political entity. Yet despite this interest and the obvious importance of the tribe in the colonial and early national periods, Weslager's new book is the first modern history of the Delaware people.

Although Weslager has attempted to develop an ethnohistorical account of the Delaware and does describe their culture at the time of white contact, this is primarily a tribal history presented in the general chronological framework of United States history. It is not a well balanced survey. Occasionally he presents more background material from United States history than necessary, and, although he carries his story to the present, the emphasis is on the early and best known period of the tribe's history, which also falls within the area of Weslager's previous research. About two thirds of the text is devoted to the period before 1783. This is unfortunate because, although the author indicates that an entire book could be written about the Delaware's sojourn in Indiana, only a chapter is devoted to this subject. Little attention is given to the history of the Delaware in the twentieth century. Moreover, one might debate the inclusion of an entire chapter on the Walam Olum, the wood or bark tablets that some believe is a record of the Delaware's past and others discount as a fake. Weslager believes they are authentic.

Weslager writes with a loose, folksy style, and includes details that will be of interest to local historians. He is careful to include precise geographical locations and to identify various Delaware, a difficult task considering the variety of English spellings of Delaware words and the fact that the English, Dutch, and Swedes had different ears for recording Indian names. In these and other areas he has been assisted by Delaware informants. Attention to local details, however, apparently prevented the author from giving fuller accounts of more important events.

Portions of the history of the Delaware have been presented before and often in greater depth, especially in Anthony F. C. Wallace's *Teedyuskung, King of the Delawares* and Randolph

Downes' *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio*. Although Weslager indicates the use of extensive manuscript collections, most of the citations are from previously published primary and secondary works. It is most unfortunate that he has chosen not to include a bibliography. As ethnohistory, it falls short of the high standards set by Wallace or John Ewers; as tribal history, it does not match the quality of recent tribal studies by historians such as Donald Berthrong, Arrell Gibson, or William Unrau. However, it is the only modern history of the Delaware and will serve as a guide until a more balanced history is written.

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The Iroquois in the American Revolution. By Barbara Graymont. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972. Pp. x, 359. Maps, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$11.50.)

The Iroquois were indeed an unfortunate people, who were forced to enter the Revolutionary War in which they did not have the remotest interest. What made the Revolution so crucial for the Iroquois was ironically not the losing side they chose but the great sufferings they had to go through. Even pro-American Iroquois who sought American protection in Schenectady in 1780 experienced unusual misery, suffering famine, cold, and disease. Physical devastation, a civil war, and the disintegration of the confederation accelerated the eventual decline of Iroquoian power. Such is the story Professor Graymont tells in great detail. In writing mainly a narrative history, she makes two important contributions. First, the book explores the Iroquois' political and military activities during the Revolution as has never been done before. The author tells the story well through such colorful figures as Sir William Johnson, Samuel Kirkland, Sir John Johnson, Philip Schuyler, Cornplanter, Blacksnake, and, above all, her hero, Joseph Brant. Second and more important, she fully examines the cultural dimension of the Iroquois, showing how native myth, symbol, and tradition played a significant role in their dealings with the whites.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, the Six Nations of the Iroquois confederacy were determined to remain neutral and resisted pressures from both sides. Graymont points out that the Iroquois' ultimate reasons for supporting the English were not only their traditional friendship with the British but generous supplies of British goods. Totally lacking in such supplies, the Americans failed even to keep the natives neutral. Once the natives fought in the battles of Fort Stanwix and Oriskany in the summer of 1777, their