

BOOK REVIEWS

Walam Olum. The Migration Legend of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians. A New Translation, Interpreted by Linguistic, Historical, Archeological, Ethnological, and Physical Anthropological Studies. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1954. Pp. xiv, 379. Maps. Ills. Pictograph Concordance and Index. \$15.00.)

The production of this beautiful quarto volume is an outstanding event in the history of American publications. The "Walam Olum," known to students of Indian history for more than a century as the tribal chronicle of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, first came into the hands of a white man, an unidentified "Dr. Ward," probably somewhere in the White River region of Indiana. Since this part of the old Northwest Territory was where the Delawares as a tribe made their last independent stand against the encroaching frontier on their ancient land claims, the new translation of their tribal legend from the Creation to the arrival of the Europeans on the shores of North America was fittingly undertaken through the interests of the Indiana Historical Society. The book is particularly interesting to Oklahomans since here within the borders of the state the most of the Delawares still live.

An interpretation of the expression "Walam Olum" gives the meaning "Red Score" or "Painted Record." This story of this great Algonquian people, the Delaware, is judged the most important and one of the most interesting recorded traditions of Indian origin in America north of Mexico, and may be classed as an example of purely American literature. The Delawares long ago preserved their *Walam Olum* or "Painted Record" through many generations, by means of pictorial symbols painted on sticks kept in bundles. None of these sticks are in existence today but strangely and fortunately, copies of the pictographs and the Delaware text accompanying them made by the historian of natural science, Constantine S. Rafinesque, are in the Brinton Memorial Library of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

The chain of events through which the ancient Delaware record has been preserved and its publication in part three times within a century are amazing, from the day that the bundles of painted sticks and their Delaware text were reported by Rafinesque to have been given into his hands by his friend, "Dr. Ward," in 1822. Rafinesque spent a long period in study of this primitive record and published his findings in his book, *The American Nations*, in 1836, but his presentation was discredited and ranked as a fake among leading scientists of the time.

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, the son of a wealthy French family, had been reared in affluence and privately educated, circumstances that undoubtedly gave bent to his natural disposition for independent action and thought. He never conformed to some of the accepted ways and viewpoints of scientists of his day nor to the approved habits in civilized living. While at times, he showed that he could apply himself to money making, his fascination for natural science made him absent minded and careless in person, which led to the disdain of his fellowmen who considered him flighty and of little worth. He served as a professor of botany, history and modern languages in Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky from 1819 to 1826, then embarked upon an independent career of scientific study and writing, and died in 1840 in abject poverty, without public notice. As time passed, his works and contributions in the field of natural history were accorded acclaim, and now they are looked upon as those of a genius and great pioneer of Natural Science in America. A biographer states that Rafinesque's contemporary fame was "injured, in fact, quite as much by his superior intelligence as by his shortcomings." In 1924, his remains were brought from an obscure burial place and reinterred on the campus of Transylvania College, in Kentucky, with honors appropriate to a great man.

Of the two publications on the Walam Olum after 1836, that of Daniel G. Brinton, the noted Ethnologist, in his *The Lenape and Their Legends* (Philadelphia, 1885), shows grounds for belief in the Delaware legend but does not give complete proof of its authenticity. Finally, in 1931, a recently published method for study of American Indian cultures was brought to the attention of the Indiana Historical Society, and a specially appointed committee through this became enthusiastically convinced that the method suggested further study of the Delaware "Red Score" tradition which would prove it authentic.

After twenty years in re-examination of Rafinesque's manuscript materials on the Walam Olum and study of its problems, seven specialists in their fields at the University of Indiana have given the results of their work in this handsome volume presenting the new interpretation of the Lenni Lenape text. There are 203 pages showing fine photographic prints of Rafinesque's original manuscript, each print accompanied by its new translation by Dr. C. F. Voegelin, head of the Department of Anthropology in Indiana University, besides the interpretation of the pictographs by Eli Lilly and ethnological observations by Erminie Voegelin, all presented in Part I of the volume. Part II gives supporting evidence, including history of the Walam Olum manuscript by Paul Weer; archeological consideration by Glenn Black; and anthropological data by Georg K. Neumann.

A lovely color reproduction of the miniature of "Constantine S. Rafinesque, 1783-1840." in Transylvania College serves as the frontispiece of this publication. There are two end paper maps of

North America in color, one showing the probable route of the ancient migration of the Lenni Lenape; and the other, the locations of the prehistoric cultures in Northeastern United States. Other interesting additions are a bibliography of the works of Rafinesque and a list of references on the Walam Olum. The whole volume is indeed a work of art, one that every student of American literature and history should own and cherish.

—Muriel H. Wright

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Reminiscences of the Indians. By Cephas Washburn. Edited by Hugh Park. (Van Buren: Press-Argus Printers, 1955. Pp. 192. \$3.75.)

This reprint is issued in limited edition of a now rare book that was first published by the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Virginia, in 1869, nine years after the death of the author. The title page of the original gives this data: "*Reminiscences of the Indians.* By the Rev. Cephas Washburn, A.M., many years superintendent of the Dwight Mission among the Western Cherokees of the Arkansas. With a Biography of the Author by Rev. J. W. Moore, of Arkansas. And an introduction by Rev. J. L. Wilson, D.D., Secretary of the Foreign Missions."

The original volume, particularly the *Reminiscences*, is important in the annals of Oklahoma, and the 1955 reprint with additions and notes by Hugh Park now available for wider reading make it a distinct contribution in the field of history.

The Reverend Cephas Washburn, a recent graduate of the University of Vermont, was appointed by the American Board for Foreign Missions to serve as missionary among the Cherokees in Georgia. A year later, he was commissioned by the American Board to commence a mission among the Western Cherokees in Arkansas. He was joined in this work by his brother-in-law, the Reverend Alfred Finney, who also recently graduated from Dartmouth College. The two with their young families made the hazardous journey west, stopping for some months at Elliot, the Choctaw Mission in Mississippi, and at length reached the Western Cherokee settlements in the White River region of Arkansas Territory, in July, 1820. Here they met James Orr, of New York, and Jacob Hitchcock, of Massachusetts, who had been appointed by the American Board as helpers in the new mission. The party visited the Council of the Western Cherokees, and with its permission selected a location for the mission near the present site of Russellville, in Pope County, Arkansas. Two log cabins were soon erected here in the wilderness and the station was named "Dwight," in honor of the late Reverend Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College and a charter member of the American Board. Other helpers and teachers joined the mission, and the work flourished despite many discouragements.

In a treaty of 1828 with the Government, the Western Cherokees traded their lands in Arkansas for a new country west in the Indian Territory, and the next year moved to this region now included in Northeastern Oklahoma. Consequently to remain near the Cherokees, Dwight Mission was moved to a new site near present Marble City, in Sequoyah County.

Cephas Washburn, a practical and capable man in mundane affairs but first of all a man of God devoutly dedicated to bringing Christianity to the Indians, served Dwight Mission for over twenty years, a work that brought to the Cherokees an incalculable beneficial influence. His *Reminiscenses* in the form of letters written in a clear and interesting style, reveal much first hand information on the life and customs of the Cherokees of that early day. Glimpses are also had of the Osages and of the Osage-Cherokee War waged in the first years of Dwight Mission in Arkansas.

Hugh Park has added much of value to the reprint in his notes on the "Cephas Washburn Family." At first glance, one may think the reproduction of the famous Currier & Ives print, "The Arkansas Traveler," is irrelevant until it is learned that the painter of the original was Edward Payson Washburn, the youngest son of the pioneer missionary, Cephas Washburn. This book in its neat format is of absorbing interest for its story of early days in the Arkansas-Oklahoma region.

—Frank F. Finney

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Beyond the Cross Timbers. The Travels of Randolph B. Marcy, 1812-1817. By W. Eugene Hollon. (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1955. Pp. xiii, 270. Ills. Bibliographical note. Index. \$4.00.)

Beyond the Cross Timbers is the intriguing title given Dr. Hollon's book on the life of Randolph Barnes Marcy. Such a biography of General Marcy is long overdue for the intimate details of his life during his fifty years of service in the Army have not been recounted in the many publications referring to his exploits. The book is particularly interesting to Oklahomans for it rounds out the saga of a West Point graduate who had more to do with the development of the Indian Territory in the field than any other officer in the United States Army before the Civil War. So familiar is his figure in the records of this region that even the amateur student of Oklahoma history knows something about "Captain Marcy."

Captain Marcy is known in this State's history as the founder of army posts in the Indian Territory, the blazer of the noted California Road across the country, the commander of the survey of Red River that finally determined the southern border of Oklahoma, and as an authority on the Indian tribes and the author of books now counted

as primary sources for historical data of his time. More than these contributions, he looms in the records as a leader on the frontier beyond the Mississippi since he traveled as far and wide as any explorer of the Nineteenth Century, and personally conducted five major expeditions through the West.

Beyond the Cross Timbers gives a graphic picture of army life at many isolated frontier posts of early days. It tells of Captain Marcy's family and of his lovely wife who followed her soldier-husband and made a home for him at many lonely posts in the wilderness including the Indian Territory. Then there is the story of the daughter, Mary Ellen Marcy, and her marriage to Lieutenant George B. McClellan who became his father-in-law's commanding officer in the Civil War and the opponent of Abraham Lincoln in 1864.

Dr. Hollon has made a fine contribution in this new work of his, on the travels of Randolph B. Marcy. And its publication has made another beautiful book produced by the University of Oklahoma Press.

—Muriel H. Wright

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma