

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians. By Hilary Stewart, with foreword by Bill Reid.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4cw3h22b>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 9(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1985-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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his chosen story while simultaneously providing not only a keener understanding of those events, but also a keener understanding of the fundamental sweep of Indian/white relations *en toto*. Kenny's vision of intercultural dichotomization thereby extends both an approach to historiography and a basis for topical analysis.

As a book, *Blackrobe* succeeds admirably on two distinct planes. First, in remaining true to itself and offering an explanatory power well beyond its literal capacity, it links itself to the Native American storytelling tradition from which Kenny (and, arguable, all Indian poets) draws sustenance, and maintains Kenny's unquestionably high standard of artistic completion as a poet. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, the book provides a virtual roadmap by which readers may begin to follow the trails of *eros/thanatos* conflict threading through the entirety of Kenny's earlier output; he has finally placed the tools of arriving at this deeper logic into general circulation.

Ward Churchill

University of Colorado/Boulder

Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians. By Hilary Stewart, with foreword by Bill Reid. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984. 192 pp. \$24.95 Cloth.

Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians describes the diverse and complex ways that the peoples of the Northwest Coast used products from the red and yellow cedar trees in the lush Pacific rainforests. Hilary Stewart, an author with strong interests in botany and ethnology, began exploring plant uses of the Northwest Coast peoples because she was intrigued "that people lived so well and for so long using almost exclusively the materials of their environment. . . ." Her deep admiration for the resourcefulness of these peoples makes *Cedar* an animated study as well as an informative one.

In *Cedar*, Stewart presents a detailed description of the objects the Northwest Coast Indians made from cedar products, and the technologies they developed to make them. Her text documents the physical appearance of the objects, how they were made, and the role they played in the lives of the men and women who used

them. She devotes special attention to variations in the ways different regional groups, or different individuals within the same group, used cedar. Her interest in the beliefs and legends surrounding the cedar tree is evident throughout her writing.

Cedar opens with a foreword by Haida artist Bill Reid in which he recalls words he wrote about the west coast cedar almost twenty years ago. Stewart explains her goals and methodology in the short Introduction. Part 1, "People of the Cedar," describes the pervasive role cedar played in the lives of the Northwest Coast peoples. Part 2, "Cedar: The Tree," gives botanical information about red and yellow cedar and discusses legends about the origin of the cedar forests. It is illustrated with photographs, maps and detailed sketches by the author.

The main body of the book is comprised of four chapters corresponding to the four substances the Northwest Coast peoples harvested from cedar: wood, bark, withes and roots. Part 3, "Cedar: The Wood," begins with a description of the major tools of the woodworkers. A section on technologies provides detailed accounts of various ways woodworkers felled trees, split planks, joined wood, steamed and bent wood, and finished surfaces preparatory to carving or painting. Again, Stewart's precise drawings demonstrate techniques clearly.

Stewart then turns to a discussion of the actual objects manufactured from the wood of the cedar. Sections feature canoes; houses and other structures; carved poles, posts and figures; steambent wood, planks and boards; and other everyday uses of wood. The text mentions comments of early foreign explorers who encountered these impressive objects. It also describes the use of the objects and various methods of manufacture, paying special attention to differences between the cultural groups on the Northwest Coast. The text is illustrated with historic and contemporary photographs, and with excellent sketches demonstrating techniques vividly.

Part 4, "Cedar: The Bark" describes methods of gathering bark, uses of unprocessed bark, and techniques for processing bark. A section on basketry and other weaving presents precise illustrations showing different weaving patterns. It also pictures Stewart's sketches of many kinds of cedar bark baskets and discusses ways both women and men used them. The sections on matting, clothing, cordage, and shredded bark uses are similarly illustrated.

In Part 5, Stewart focuses on the "withes," which she describes as "the branchlets that hang down from the main branches of the cedar in long, graceful curves." She discusses their use in ropes; in lashing and sewing; and as materials for making baskets and other containers. Part 6, "Cedar: The Roots" contains sections on gathering and preparing roots, cedar root basketry, and other uses of roots. Again, Stewart's drawings illustrate her text with exemplary clarity. The text concludes with Part 7, "Cedar: Spiritual Realms." Here, Stewart explores beliefs and taboos about cedar; rituals; healing, and prayers. The book ends with a bibliography and index.

Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians is remarkable in the scope of its coverage. Stewart mentions repeatedly that the study is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to give a glimpse of the extraordinarily diverse and creative ways Northwest Coast peoples used products from cedar. Nevertheless, her discussion provides an extremely broad range of information.

Stewart draws liberally from sources in the fields of anthropology, history, art history, archeology, and botany. Ignoring boundaries that are so often too rigid, she demonstrates what each of these disciplines can offer the others. She also frequently quotes interviews with contemporary artists, and reflects on her feelings as she watches them create useful objects from wood, bark and root. She describes her own growing understanding as she experimented herself with various techniques. Her personal observations give the text a refreshing tone of intimacy.

Stewart's work is particularly unique because of the use of her precise sketches to portray objects and methods of manufacturing them. These attractive black-and-white drawings are always clear and direct, with no unnecessary embellishment. Most depict actual objects from thirty institutions and several private collections. Reference keys identify both the cultural group to which the artist belonged and the collection in which the actual object now resides. The succinct labels are hand-lettered in pleasing script.

The information presented in *Cedar* is easily accessible to a general audience as well as to specialists. When used, technical terms are explained. Occasionally footnotes would have proven helpful. While Stewart always identifies the historic figures she quotes by name, the specific source may be vague. The reader sometimes must skim through the four-page bibliography to locate the document from whence the quote came.

Stewart frequently cites evidence about Native uses of cedar before extensive contact with foreigners. She also pays tribute to the contemporary revival of interest in former uses of cedar, which she sees as the outgrowth of a movement which has made the Northwest Coast peoples "again a positive force in the land, facing up to governments, industry and the business world—and themselves." In contrast, she rarely addresses the changes in Native uses of cedar that were precipitated by foreign manufactured goods, new tourist trade markets, and the demographic devastation of contact with foreigners. Many of these changes are quite evident. Others, such as the role of cedar products in tourist markets, are less obvious. Explicit discussion of some of the changes would have added additional interest. However, as the study is intended to focus on traditional uses of cedar, it seems unfair to fault it for this omission.

In its effective use of sketches and its appeal to a general audience, Stewart's *Cedar* closely resembles two of her previous publications, *Indian Artifacts of the Northwest Coast* and *Indian Fishing: Early Methods on the Northwest Coast*. In *Cedar*, Stewart uses that tree as the unifying theme to explore the daily, ceremonial and spiritual lives of the Northwest Coast peoples. *Cedar* is essentially a study of some intimate and ingenious ways that people have interacted with their environment. It speaks of the past, but it also speaks to the present.

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Spirit Mountain: An Anthology of Yuman Story and Song. Edited by Leanne Hinton and Lucille Watahomigie. Tucson: Sun Tracks and the University of Arizona Press. 344 pp. \$37.50 Cloth. \$19.95 Paper.

Spirit Mountain is a representative collection of narratives and songs from Yuman oral tradition. The Yuman Indian peoples are members of a number of tribes of Native Americans who have lived since pre-contact days in the area of the Southwest that is now Arizona, southern California, and northern Mexico. The Yuman tribes speak various distinct, but closely related languages, and share many cultural traditions, including a rich oral tradition that plays an important role in preserving cultural values, as well