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a white lawyer; Henry Buffalowind is an Indian lawyer. Rod Grease is a friend. Tuna Charlie is a fishing companion. The Blood Donor Center is called Dr. Dracula's Bank. Workers there are called vampires. Being in jail is like being in food heaven. Indian officials who are acting illegally hate the media, calling them "bleeding heart liberals." Irony is embedded in many of the poems and stories. And, at one point, bitterness against some white and Indian malefactors comes out in "1854-1988," which concludes with these lines:

Anishinaabe have survived
 missionaries and miners
 timber barons and trappers,
 we'll survive the bureaucrats
 and policy makers.
 Bury the sellouts deep, their
 grandchildren will want to
 piss on their graves.
 The bottom line is the bottom line (p. 148).

Like Luke Warmwater, who is known on the reservation as a good storyteller, Jim Northrup tells stories well. His poems and stories are a delight to read. They have the sparseness and directness of traditional Indian literature. Northrup currently writes a column, which he calls "Fond du Lac Follies," for the reservation newspaper *The Circle*. In these columns, his trenchant and witty remarks about life on the rez in northern Minnesota make me look forward to other works containing his views of life on and off the reservation.

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Where the People Gather: Carving a Totem Pole. By Vickie Jensen. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992. 190 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

This is a book that seems as complex as the monumental carving it describes. Although the work has some shortcomings, there are areas where it exceeds expectation.

The subject of *Where the People Gather* is the carving of a totem pole by noted Nishga carver Norman Tait. The Nishga (or Nisga'a)

are a Tsimshian group of coastal British Columbia. Tait carved his first pole in 1973 and has produced over twenty major works since then. The focus of the study is a pole carved in 1985 named *Wilt Sayt Bakwhlgat*, "the place where the people gather." It is a forty-two-foot ceremonial doorway pole that now graces the Native Education Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Traditionally, a family would hire a carver to create a pole with specific crests. The Native Education Centre asked Tait to carve a pole representing all Indians, but he refused. Instead he created a pole that relates to a story he painstakingly learned from an elderly Tsimshian woman about the first man learning to live on earth with the creatures of the forest, sea, and air. Actually, by linking pole carvings to oral literature, Tait may have followed another tradition. Tsimshian carver David Boxley says his people "used totem poles as a library, to help them remember stories."

Jensen is an excellent photographer. Because I knew this, I expected that the book would sit nicely on a coffee table for visitors to enjoy. Jensen took over twenty-two hundred negatives and eight hundred color slides to produce what the dust jacket claims is the first book to document the entire process of carving a totem pole. The visual images do not disappoint. Unfortunately, all of the 125 photos reproduced in the book are black-and-white. The only color photos to be found are the two on the dust cover, and they demonstrate that only with color can the richness of the medium be portrayed. Conspicuously missing, too, is a photograph of the entire, raised pole.

Beyond the photographs, Jensen interviewed and observed members of the carving crew during the entire three-month project. Much of the documentation presented is in the words of the participants. The real strength of the book—and what makes it fun to read—is the excellent view of the social interactions involved in creating the pole. The book provides an insightful look at the group dynamics of the carving crew. At one point, Norman Tait assigns a carving task to try to regain the involvement of a carver. Tait observes, "A lot of heading up a carving project is psychology!" (p. 62)

Where the People Gather will not satisfy those who seek an introduction to the Northwest Coast art of carving totem poles. These audiences would be better directed to four works by Hilary Stewart (*Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast; Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians; Totem Poles; and Looking at Totem Poles*).

Although, commendably, the work uses spellings currently in use by the Nisga'a Tribal Council, there is no pronunciation guide. Also lacking are an area map and a glossary for cultural terms such as *clan*, *frontal post*, and *house post*. The introduction contains too many oversimplified statements for my liking. For example, Jensen implies that all Northwest Coast tribes carved "monumental totemic sculptures" (p. 3) and are matrilineal cultures that differentiate clans.

The work begins with Jensen and Tait striking an agreement to cooperate in documenting the pole. It then skips over several important steps in the pole's history: (1) the selection process for the commission; (2) the commission contract; and (3) the decision process in locating a pole. These elements would provide a base for the economic thread that follows the carving of the pole. Although the story is not well developed, however, it is fascinating.

The pole was obtained at a commercial log-sorting yard. There is no discussion of why it was not located and cut in the woods. Although the completed pole is associated with the head carver, much of the work is accomplished by a foreman (Norman's brother, Robert "Chip" Tait) and apprentices. Jensen records a modern enactment of a tradition that calls for anyone who helps the carving crew (in moving the pole, for example) to assist the crew financially. The author brings up the issue of how each apprentice incurs expenses in gaining a set of tools and commissioning a regalia of their own design for the pole-raising ceremony, but we are left wondering about how much (if anything) they receive for their work and the amount of the commission for the pole.

The book contains a number of topics—many presented by Chip Tait—that should provoke conversation among artists and art historians. These include discussions of how Norman's style has changed, how carvers respond to critics, the use of traditional versus available tools, and design tracing and its relation to traditional practices.

Perhaps the most controversial statement is Norman Tait's opinion about what makes a "master carver." He believes that a master carver must be able to work in a variety of media (wood, silver, bone, flat design, and bark) to design and create a wide array of items, including masks, jewelry, totem poles, canoes, houses. Beyond that, he claims that a master carver must not only create in the style of his own culture but also should master those

of other cultures. These requirements seem stringent. They perhaps define a "master artist" rather than a "master carver."

When the pole was finished, a pole-raising ceremony took place. At that time, the pole was named using verbiage from human naming ceremonies. According to Nishga belief, the pole then began a life of its own. In a similar way, *Where the People Gather* has taken on a life of its own, perhaps one that will usher in other studies that examine the issues it has raised.

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