

Nations. The publication of *Haa Aani* should remind us that anthropologists can be important allies in the struggle for self-determination and decolonialization.

First Peoples in the Americas have repeatedly been forced to assert ownership of the land, to stand up and say: *Haa Aani*, this is our land. Even when the newcomers do not listen, elders

and community leaders continue to stand up and repeat: this is our land, we were born here, and our grandparents and their grandparents before us were born here, back to before the time Raven brought light to the people. *Haa Aani* is a document that should be read and pondered by all those concerned for the rights of First Peoples.

*Those Who Fell from the Sky:  
A History of the Cowichan People*

Daniel P. Marshall

Duncan: Cultural and Educational Centre, Cowichan Tribes,  
1999. 194 pp. Illus., map. \$29.95 paper.

By Terry Glavin

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**T**HIS IS NOT a work of independent scholarship. It was undertaken by a graduate student in history, but it is a commissioned work that was vetted by a group of Cowichan elders, a "history book committee," and senior tribal officials. It is the Cowichans' authorized, approved, and "official" version of history. It does not pretend to be otherwise, and it is a useful and valuable work, in spite of these things and because of them.

Originally intended as a book for Cowichan youth, *Those Who Fell from the Sky* evolved into a book specifically intended to educate the general public about the Cowichan peoples, their history, and the ways the Cowichans have met the challenge arising from long-standing trespasses upon Aboriginal title in British Columbia. The Cowichan tribes' contemporary re-

sponse to that challenge is their participation in the British Columbia Treaty Process as well as in public education efforts, of which this book is a part.

*Those Who Fell from the Sky* presents a version of the Cowichans' oral traditions that follows a single narrative line of the sort that tends to lose the nuances and the vitality of the original stories. Still, the contribution made by "official" histories such as these, as long as they are understood to be mainly descriptions of stories rather than the stories themselves, should not be underestimated. *Those Who Fell from the Sky* allows the Cowichan peoples to present the history of their "land claims" on their own terms. This should be of broad interest, if only because it was the failure of the Crown and the Cowichan peoples to conclude a treaty in the 1860s that marked the

beginning of British Columbia's "Indian land question." But more important, and precisely because it is an authorized history, it is a formal invitation to settler communities to see the landscape around them in ways normally reserved to the Cowichan peoples.

Throughout British Columbia, tribal groups are routinely confounded by internal debates that hinge on arguments about whether it does more harm than good to allow the general public to comprehend specific features of the landscape in ways that are revealed in oral histories. The Cowichan elders clearly decided that more good than harm can come of such knowledge. The result is a sort of public map of the Cowichan territory, one that encourages non-Aboriginal people to understand and respect the significance of certain landmarks and features of that territory. Vancouver Island communities that have sprung up in and around the Cowichan Valley cannot help but be enriched by *Those Who Fell from the Sky* and brought closer to the Cowichan peoples through a new appreciation of the landscape.

There are problems with *Those Who Fell from the Sky*. Fully eight pages are given over to a story of dubious veracity, reprinted from Anne Cameron's *Daughters of Copper Woman*, apparently because the story involves the Cowichan. The term "sovereignty" is used throughout where "Aboriginal title" would have been accurate and uncontroversial. Also, the book con-

cludes with a meditation upon the isolation of the Cowichan Valley's settler cultures from the Cowichan communities in their midst, juxtaposing the Clemclemuluts longhouse with the nearby South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club to make the case that "segregation ... is still a feature of the Cowichan Valley today." If segregation persists, then it is doubtful that the tennis club, any more than the longhouse, is evidence of it.

Still, *Those Who Fell from the Sky* contributes to a deeper understanding of the need for reconciliation between British Columbia's settler cultures and Aboriginal cultures. It does much to explain why the law demands a reconciliation between Crown sovereignty and Aboriginal title in British Columbia. It also hints at a different sort of history – one in which Native and settler communities have struggled to live together, as neighbours, in spite of everything. In the Cowichan Valley, the first White settlers were no less fervent than were the Cowichan peoples in their faith that the "land question" would, ultimately, be resolved amicably and fairly. This faith persists, after all these years, and it reveals a shared history British Columbians can look back upon without shame. It is a tradition carried by Daniel P. Marshall himself, the nominal author of *Those Who Fell from the Sky*, whose own great-great-great-uncle built the first road from Somenos to Maple Bay in 1864. Histories like these we desperately need.