

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Raising Ourselves: A Gwich'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River. By Velma Wallis.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32t402>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 27(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2003-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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The work seems part Louis Rodriguez, with a city-tough voice, along with touches of the late Gwendolyn Brooks (also a Chicago poet) and echoes of Amiri Baraka. Two-Rivers' voice is directly in the tradition of protest authors or poetry of witness. He seeks to set the record straight, to confront oppression by acknowledging the pride of his roots. "I'm not an artifact!" he exclaims in "Passing Through" and later adds, "So why do you look at me / like you're looking at the past?" (p. 16). He confronts Indian stereotypes: "And now you are talking at us like / we are your personal Tontos" (p. 51), as well as historical injustice and the policies that have hindered Native rights, as in "Special Rights": "We remember Sand Creek / Great Swamp and Wounded Knee. / . . . / Special Rights?" (p. 40). A similar theme permeates such poems as "Not on the Guest List," "Accessing Imagined History," and "Rambo to Flambeau" about a "lynch mob" of Indian-haters protesting Native land-use rights (p. 67).

Two-Rivers's writing has its lyric moments. Such works as "Indian Land Dancing," "Old Man and Renegade Boy," "She Sings as She Dances," and "Words of Love" celebrate inspiring people and the land. He can write softly as in such poems as "Campsite 1996":

I'm gifted a brief slice of eternity.
 A valley of vagueness unfolds.
 I can only peer into it
 and so I listen
 hoping for revelation,
 or is it verification
 of what my elders told me?

Such quiet moments are few, sprinkled here and there as if to assuage the confrontational aesthetics of the book-at-large that streams through its content without any sectional divisions.

Pow Wows, Fat Cats, and Other Indian Tales is a book with an agenda. The writing seems at times as hard as the concrete of Chicago's Division Street, the tone as jarring as the rattle of a passing El train. Two-Rivers does not offer easy reading, but provides a collection that takes on those with "powerful arguments and powerful friends / and politicians" as in "Crandon Is a *Windigo*" (p. 73). The Windigo, "Beast-symbol of madness and hunger" (p. 11), seems much like Ginsberg's Moloch in *Howl*. When we recognize such monsters, we need to "Beware!" (p. 73), because like Crandon of the Crandon Mining Company, "He's talking to your senator!"

Philip Heldrich

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Raising Ourselves: A Gwich'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River. By Velma Wallis. Kenmore: Epicenter Press, 2002. 212 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

Raising Ourselves fits into a growing genre of Native American women's autobiography, with stylistic and thematic twists worthy of note. Unlike such autobiographies as *Halfbreed* (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Goodread

Biographies, 1973) by Maria Campbell and *Lakota Woman* by Mary Crow Dog (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), Wallis frames her story within her childhood, expanding beyond the age of twenty only in the last few pages. Beginning with a day when she was six years old, Wallis uses both the voice and viewpoint of a prepubescent child. As her story unfolds, Wallis changes voice to match the age, and perspective to match the limitations of her maturity at each level. The woman speaking at the end of the story reflects the thoughtfulness and education of a woman of middle age, neither an innocent six-year-old, nor an embittered adult. Nonetheless, everything about Wallis's childhood might lead welfare workers and psychologists alike to bewail the future of such a person. Since Wallis is in fact a successful author who demonstrates her commitment to restructuring life for Gwich'in people, as well as others, scholars of social work should examine this text with great care for an insider's insight into areas of pressing concern today.

While other Native women's autobiographies feature the writers, or subjects if penned by another writer, as women facing such adult problems as spousal abuse, child-care issues, and alcohol abuse, Wallis describes these problems from the perspective of a child who has witnessed and endured them. Her story thus goes beyond the ambivalence of parental interests toward learning to recognize the patterns of her parents' alcoholism. The Wallis children had to find ways to fend for themselves with poorly stocked cupboards, as well as being sent to stay with relatives in other villages in Alaska for indefinite periods.

More than anything else, Wallis describes her helplessness in the school system. She was born a year after Alaska became the forty-ninth state of the United States. Among other changes, education in Alaska shifted from federal to state control, so that by the time she was ready to enter school, she faced situations that neither her parents nor her older siblings encountered. One of these might have been an improvement over the federal period in which villages had two schools, one for Native children and the other for white children. The federal period promoted open racism within the villages, as children in the Native school endured treatment that their neighbors and mixed-blood relations did not: prohibition from entering the community store or the white school. Wallis went to school with children of families who were already labeled as Native, white, or halfbreed through the federal program. On pages 88–89 she describes an incident in which she was forced to make a choice of whether to side with a full-blood Gwich'in boy or to join forces with the bullies who were kicking the boy as he lay in a fetal position on the ground. She kicked, and ran away. It was a choice she faced without the benefit of adult supervision or intervention. A few pages later she narrates the only situation during her childhood in which any adult (in this case it was one of her adult sisters) protected her from a bully who had stolen her Halloween candy (p. 94). These graphic descriptions of her childhood not only reflect shifting trends in governmental policies about education, but also point to a serious structural void in Alaska Native village life to protect children either inside or outside the home from bullies, gangs, or violent acts of racism.

Wallis's work points to other areas in which the colonial presence disrupted and nullified the integrity of family life. Cultural systems of explaining life cycle events, such as death, birth, and growing up no longer exist. Nonetheless, Wallis describes some of the persisting Gwich'in traditions as they impacted her childhood. Gwich'in midwives gathered as a group in the Wallis home to assist in the birth of Wallis's younger brother, Brady, something that must also have happened when she was born. The midwifery custom continued almost to the 1980s in rural Alaska, and has since been replaced by the Indian Health Service's insistence on hospitalization in an urban center, along with extended residence away from the village. The termination of midwifery represents an end to one of the last bastions of public recognition of Gwich'in cultural and legal authority over the intimate areas of life. Since the Gwich'in midwives also represented one of the few public displays of traditional healing methods, as well as traditional religious beliefs and customs regarding shamanism, Wallis's childhood depicts a significant era in Gwich'in history: a time when coming of age occurred primarily, but not entirely, in the absence of the old traditions.

Through narrative about her forebears, Wallis takes us through earlier periods of Gwich'in history, which mirror events elsewhere on the continent: the struggles of orphans and widows left in the wake of devastating epidemics. *Raising Ourselves* takes us through these historical facts from the perspective of family oral traditions about the pain, sorrow, and courage to continue represented by her ancestors. Her family stories also reveal the humor, religious beliefs, and edges of bitterness that fueled daily life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in northeastern Alaska. Wallis's introduction of the topic reveals much about the nature of education in this area, an absence of the Native voice in its own history. She writes "As a youngster I heard no mention of the epidemics" (p. 42), but learned of them indirectly through her father's aversion to public feasts, as well as the repeated use of the phrase "dirty Indians," a phrase that she repeats and analyzes throughout the book.

Raising Ourselves echoes the writings of other Native American women who have testified to the ugliness of spousal abuse in their homes. Like the autobiography of Mi'kmaq poet, Rita Joe (for more information see *The Song of Rita Joe: Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq Poet* by Rita Joe and Lynn Henry, Gynergy Books, 2002), Wallis addresses actual events with seeming openness and occasional humor, while simultaneously avoiding detailed descriptions of what must have been brutal moments between her mother and father. Perhaps the most revealing of these is a game the Wallis children performed. "No one wanted to be Mom, but every one wanted to be Daddy" (p. 107), as Daddy hit Mommy while the children begged him to stop.

As she observes in her afterword, Wallis seeks a reawakening of the Gwich'in resourcefulness that helped them persist for millennia before alcohol and other colonial intrusions broke through the traditional fabric of child-rearing customs, education, and food production. Although the pages of *Raising Ourselves* describe a number of social dysfunctions, there is also a consistent message of compassion and hope that persists within the Wallis

family, undoubtedly nurtured by her Gwich'in family and friends. She credits her deceased brother, Barry, for inspiring her to see herself not as a failure, but as a unique person, capable of success.

Raising Ourselves adds a dimension of intergenerational need, solution-finding, and cultural persistence to the emerging literature about Native North American women and their families. Although this is a text that can provide a useful addition to courses about Native cultural problems, Native biography, and autobiography, it can give Native youth a framework of understanding their own lives. Because of her graphic descriptions of her life as an elementary student who eventually dropped out of school, this is also a book that educators might consult for analysis of classroom dynamics.

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The Renaissance of American Indian Higher Education. Edited by Maenette K. P. Benham and Wayne J. Stein. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2003. 284 pages. \$20 cloth.

Statistics abound telling us that American Indians/Alaskan Natives have the least education of the total U.S. population, and—not coincidentally—are also the poorest. But there is hope. Funding by philanthropic organizations, along with tribal funds and government programs is enabling tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) to flourish nationally. Their goal is quality education for Native American youth, education that strengthens involved tribes and communities.

In 1994 a partnership between the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and several TCUs set up the Native American Higher Education Initiative (NAHEI). This partnership built on the work of the first TCUs—led by Navajo Community College in 1968. With five other colleges following shortly after, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was established in 1973. Their efforts and support for the TCUs increased steadily so that by the 1990s there was a foundation to permit both expansion and assessment of the TCUs.

The story of the NAHEI program stresses the power of networking. Members share their stories, their processes, and ideas to help educated Indian people “who know and identify with their own culture and yet are prepared to live in and contribute to a multicultural, global society” (p. xx). Subtitled “Capturing the Dream,” the NAHEI story describes a dedicated set of schools in which students, faculty, presidents, and staff are committed to creating and bolstering TCUs. These schools focus on maintaining traditional language and culture, developing socially and economically strong communities, giving students access to needed skills for success both on and off reservations and enabling the current schools to increase and improve their viability.

The Renaissance of American Indian Higher Education focuses on ongoing needs, ways, and means of teacher preparation, program assessment,