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effects of humans on the distribution and range of certain plant species. At the time of Gilmore's writings, it was generally accepted that Indians did not materially alter the native vegetation of the Plains and prairies. Gilmore was of the belief that there were many examples of plants whose natural occurrence had been altered by Indian activity and that Indians had a significant effect on the composition of the prairie.

Most subsequent ethnobotanies of the region, such as *The Economic Botany of the Kiowa Indians as It Relates to the History of the Tribe* by Paul A. Vestal and Richard E. Schultes (1939), rely to some extent on Gilmore's earlier work, demonstrating its enduring value and importance as a primary source of information. Kelly Kindscher in his recent book entitled *Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie* (1987) stated that Melvin Gilmore's work in the 1910s made "the most important contribution to the ethnobotany of the region" and that Gilmore "understood the spirit of the prairie."

Gilmore was one of the first professionals to point out that the discipline of ethnobotany encompassed more than J. W. Harshberger's (1895) early definition of "the uses of plants by aborigines." Gilmore argues in his book that plant-human relationships are the underpinnings of an ethnic group's material and spiritual culture, and, therefore, ethnobotanical study is fundamental to understanding other related fields such as linguistics, folklore, and ceremonial life. His insights formed the basis for a new definition of ethnobotany—concerned not only with uses of plants but with the entire range of relations between native people and plants. His book is fundamental reading not only for those interested in understanding the indigenous cultures of the northern Great Plains but also for those interested in the evolution of the field of ethnobotany.

Kat Anderson

Voices of the Wind: Native American Legends. By Margot Edmunds and Ella E. Clark. New York: Facts on File, 1989. 368 pages. \$27.95 cloth.

When the earth was created, the plants and animals interacted intimately with each other. The various elements of life spoke with each other and learned from one another. The mountains, lakes, rivers, fog, clouds, and other elements of nature were filled with

spirit. The Creative Power flowed through nature like a great force before humans emerged on the earth and became a part of the creation.

It was at this time that Five Wolf Brothers and Five Cold Wind Brothers joined forces to bring ice, wind, and snow to the Northwest. The seasons disappeared, and the land became locked in continual winter. When the Chinook Salmon made their way up the Columbia River, they found their way blocked by ice. Salmon Chief challenged the Five Cold Wind Brothers to a wrestling match, a fight that resulted in the death of Salmon Chief, his wife, and all his tribe.

The Wolf Brothers and Cold Wind Brothers butchered the Salmon People, cutting out and destroying the eggs found in Salmon Chief's wife. They smashed all the eggs but one, which was lodged between two rocks and could not be reached. They left it to dry in the wind, but the Creator saw what had happened and sent rain to wash the egg into the river. The egg developed in the sand and became a salmon that returned to the ocean. Grandmother greeted and raised him. When he was old enough, he returned up the Columbia to challenge the Cold Wind Brothers. He killed all five of them, and the land again enjoyed seasons. However, Young Chinook Salmon allowed the younger sister of the Cold Wind Brothers to escape. She returns now and then to blanket the Northwest with Arctic wind and cold.

A variation of this story appears in *Voices of the Wind*. The tale is one of near death and rebirth of Salmon, the benevolent kindness of the Creator, and the nurturing character of the elder Grandmother. It is a story filled with action and meaning, played out by the wind and animals so familiar to the Pacific Northwest. The stories found in this volume originated in many parts of the country, and they are divided geographically by culture regions. The book contains stories from the Northwest, Southwest, Great Plains, Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast. The stories vary, but all of them deal with the forces of nature, plants, and animals. Many of the tales deal with creation, which is depicted as a process and movement rather than an event. Music, song, and dance, as well as family, morals, and medicine, are elements of the stories. The authors offer an array of stories from selected tribes that will enrich what we know of Native American oral literature.

Tribal elders argue that the old stories are the first literature and history of America. They are history that happened in chronological time but are intended to be preserved orally for all time. Each

time these stories are told, the storyteller and the audience recreate a portion of the original creation. They are taken back to a time when the earth was young. They learn again the historical lessons of past wisdom given to us by Coyote, Fox, Corn, Mountains, and the like.

Some of the introductions to the stories are superficial and lack an understanding of the Indians and stories presented in the book. Still, this flaw should be overlooked, since the heart of *Voices of the Wind* is the numerous stories shared by Native Americans from many regions of the country. This is a handsome volume, enhanced by pen sketches by Molly Braun. It will be of use and interest to scholars and general readers alike.

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