Coast Salish Gambling Games
Lynn Maranda
Ottawa: National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper Number 93, 1984. xi + 141 pp. gratis (paper)

Reviewer: Joan Megan Jones
University of Washington

At first glance, this publication appears to be a solid, workmanlike compilation of archival and ethnographic sources which bears the mark of its student origin as the author's Master's Thesis at the University of British Columbia in 1972. However, a far more complex interpretive study soon emerges to intrigue the reader.

The first part of this work describes various forms of Coast Salish gambling games and traces their history from reconstructions of precontact play to the one surviving bone game that is played at the present time. Maranda has done a good job of compiling material from archival and ethnographic literature in order to provide a thorough and complete examination of the structure of three types of games, their rules of play, and a description of the variety of gaming pieces based on a brief museum study.

Drawing from observations of play on Indian reserves in southern British Columbia and northwestern Washington state, Maranda presents the rules and structures of the present-day form of the surviving bone game. In addition, the social setting and accompanying activities of singing and drumming are described.

If this were the total extent of Maranda's work, her carefully researched material would be a useful contribution to the ethnohistoric literature on Northwest Coast Indians. However, Maranda has gone on to present an intriguing interpretation of Coast Salish gambling as a form of social expression and a practice which was associated with the concept of spirit power.

Maranda develops a case that relates success in gambling to the possession of lay spirit powers associated with wealth. Although the evidence for this connection as drawn from the literature is somewhat slim, she makes a strong and convincing presentation. Furthermore, gambling was not a private or isolated activity between two people, but a social occasion involving groups of participants who included onlookers, singers, and drummers. Maranda then takes a conjectural leap to suggest a social function for gambling.

The notions of wealth, prestige and power which were so pervasive in Northwest Coast Indian cultures all acquired social meaning and validation through a public ceremony or activity within the community. Although Maranda states that it would be reasonable to presume that the social aspect of gambling functioned as a public validation of the players' spirit powers, there is no direct evidence in the literature affirming this connection.

Thus, according to Maranda's reconstruction, Coast Salish gambling was not just a simple game of chance, but was, instead, a complex of functions which operated on several levels within the social fabric. The most important of these functions were as a means of obtaining wealth goods for potlatching and as a means for validating and demonstrating one's spirit power affiliations.

Maranda's discussion of wealth, power and gambling and their functional interrelationships is a wholly interesting reconstruction. Its major weakness lies in a

relative insufficiency of documentary evidence for the conclusions. For example, she treats the subject of proceeds from gambling only marginally, devoting only a few sentences to that topic. This reviewer was left with unsatisfied curiosity about this aspect of the gambling complex, and wanting more than a cursory treatment.

As a whole, this publication makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of Northwest Coast Indian literature and adds interesting descriptive data, plus an intriguing interpretation of a topic which has not had enough previous study.

The Tribal Living Book: 150 Things to Do and Make from Traditional Cultures
David Levinson and David Sherwood
Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books, 1984. viii + 222 pp. $12.95 (paper)

Reviewer: H.E. Devereux
Laurentian University

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a trial run must be worth a thousand pictures. *Tribal Living* is subtitled: *150 Things to Do and Make from Traditional Cultures*. In this case, "tribal" refers to traditional, non-Western, non-industrialized cultures who gain their living from the land. This volume is written by anthropologists and can be used as an anthropological teaching resource even though it is intended for a much wider readership of any age who might require information about "natural living, alternative life-styles and appropriate technologies" (p. vii).

The categories of activities covered in this book are: dwellings, basic skills and materials (e.g., stone flaking), crafts (e.g., making a clay water jar), the food quest (e.g., food preservation), recreation (e.g., dental pictography) and the aesthetic notions realized in such practices. Each category includes from four to twelve activities.

Instructions for each activity are given in the text. The text provides a short introduction to each subject, including geographical distribution and relationship to a particular culture where relevant. The materials are carefully listed, and most are available naturally in North America. Particular techniques are described, and a time estimate for completing each project is given. The text for each project is accompanied by line drawings.

The appendices for this volume include a world map with the general locations of all 111 tribal cultures which are represented. There is also a substantial bibliography of sources related to each category of activities.

At present, there are a number of books on the market oriented to "natural living." One of the earliest of these is Ernest Thompson Seton's beloved old classic, *Two Little Savages*. Nevertheless, *Tribal Living* is obviously superior to other books of this type in that it is authored by specialists with a professional understanding of human society and culture.

The selection of projects in this book is extremely varied with respect to general topic, place of origin, and dimensions and levels of skills required. The instructions are succinct, and the line drawings are precise as a result of first hand experience. The text is non-technical and could be understood by almost any age group.