



Keeper of the Delaware Dolls

Lynette Perry, Manny Skolnick

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Rich in images and gently told, *Keeper of the Delaware Dolls* is the story of a Delaware Indian woman, Lynette Perry, and the remarkable life she has led in rural Oklahoma throughout the twentieth century. As Perry reflects, hers is a life "lived to old rhythms played by a country fiddle and an Indian drum," a fluid merging of square dances and Delaware stomp dances. Through her eyes, readers are afforded a rare glimpse of how the world of the Delawares has persisted and remained meaningful into the modern era.

A recurring theme in Perry's life has been the making and keeping of dolls, a practice joining her to her female Delaware ancestors. Her great-grandmother Wahoney (Ma Wah Taise) was a doll keeper who died at the age of 108 in 1909. Believing the Delawares' old world to have slipped away, Wahoney asked that her dolls be buried with her. Unlike her great-grandmother, however, Perry feels that the abiding force of traditional Delaware culture has returned to her, time and again, throughout her long life. In an effort to connect to her Native past, she has revived the doll-making craft.

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